



Board Chair's Report – AGM 2023

In my final report as Club captain a year ago, I was pleased to report a successful year for the club in terms of finances and general operations. I attributed much of this, and the progress made in the last few years to 'an extended period of stability in our staff, board and membership', critical factors in ensuring that we continue to progress. This trend has continued for the most part in 2023, particularly with our staff. Membership numbers have grown, particularly in categories that have been on the low side in years gone by. We have successfully completed a few projects around the club, all within budget and all as part of our goal to 'future-proof' the business. These include the wet area of the gents' changing room, the outdoor terrace, tree harvesting and storm damage clean up on the Arndean Course and some overdue improvements to our kitchen equipment. The new board will be reviewing the results of the member survey we conducted in the summer to prioritise projects to further improve the Muckhart experience.

Each year I thank our staff for their hard work and dedication, often at testing times and 2023. Increased business levels bring added pressure to the team and all of our staff members have responded well. Head Greenkeeper Paul Wilkie has once again led his team by example and we can all agree that the courses were presented at their best this season. The feedback received from members and visitors is a sure sign that Paul's long-term plans are bearing fruit. He has been ably supported by William, Sandy, Alistair and Euan in all weather conditions and no matter what task is required.

We have become accustomed to Steve McIvor's management of the Pro Shop and golf operation and this year was no different. Steve's customer service skills are well known and once again he has managed a busy golf calendar and shop operation with aplomb. He was assisted through the season by Lewis, Alex and Rosemary, about all of whom we received many positive comments from members and visitors. Joe also put in many hours at the pro shop and in the second half of this year we have enjoyed having Wilfie Timney on the team. Wilfie's flexibility (bar shifts as well) and his technical skills are impressive and he is educating some of us from older generations!

Apart from providing great support on the golf side, Joe Watts has settled into his wider role well. He is hardworking and efficient and as predicted a year ago, has proved to be a valuable asset to the club.

The biggest event in terms of staff this year was undoubtedly the return of Karri Staszek as Bar Manager. Bar business has been growing steadily since the days of Covid-19 and when the board decided that we should install a manager in this area it made sense to contact our most popular and hard-working staff members in recent years. Karri was keen to return and has made an immediate impact. Her enthusiasm and experience are welcome and with her on board, we can approach the next season with confidence. Before Karri returned, our summer team of Eilidh, Sarah, Ellen, Adam, Douglas, Jack M, Harrison, Fraser, Jack, Rosemary, Julie, Luke, Grace and Tessa worked hard and while most of went back to university in August, we were pleased that Eilidh and Sarah have remained available to support Karri over the winter.



Stewart Barlow has tackled the ongoing challenge of the catering operation throughout the busiest season in years. This is a difficult area and I urge everyone to remember that this critical aspect of the club requires support from us as members.

Elsewhere, you will have read of another successful season for all sections and I thank Mike Seath (Gents Captain), Irene Reid (Ladies Captain), Ian Barker (Seniors Captain) and Tim Barrett (Junior Convenor) for running their respective sections so well this year. Congratulations to our 2023 club champions: Gents; James Barrett, Ladies; Eilidh Watson, Seniors; Stewart Pollock and Juniors; Lewis Seath.

Touching again on the Board of Directors, with five departures and four arrivals scheduled for vote on the agenda, this AGM will result in more changes than we have seen in recent years.

Gillian Doig, who was elected as Club Captain at last year's AGM, stepped down in August. This was a blow for the board, and a loss for the club as a whole but we respect Gillian's decision and I am keen to acknowledge her contribution, not only during her time as Club Captain but in the preceding three years she spent on the board, two of them as Ladies Captain. Over the last seven years, I have worked with many board members and not many have brought the commitment or skills that Gillian did.

My thanks go to Irene Reid and Scott Marshall for the time they have given the board over the last two and three years respectively. After six years of providing legal advice across all areas, we all owe Ben Thornber our gratitude. Many would look back at the last few years of recovery at Muckhart Golf Club and not be aware of Ben's contribution but I can assure it has been significant. That he has promised to continue to help even without being a director speaks volumes and is reassuring for us. In contrast, Chris Higgo's impact at the club over the last six years has been evident every day. Not only stepping in as Treasurer when the most important thing we needed was to get our finances in order but Chris' involvement in every area of the club has been positive and productive. Again, in typical fashion, Chris has made himself available to our incoming Treasurer and I am sure their handover will be extensive and effective. On a personal note, I would like to thank Chris not only for his hard work and contribution but also his friendship and support. Finally, after seven years on the board, Rosemary Turlik is also stepping down. Seven years is a long time in any situation but the last seven years given the work required at Muckhart Golf Club in 2017 seems a lot more. Rosemary's common sense, practical approach and overwhelming desire to see the club succeed have all proved to be valuable assets. She calls herself 'the cupboard cleaner' but we are all well aware that her contribution extends well beyond that. I wish all of our 'retiring' directors all the best.

Recently, we as a board have co-opted Graeme McCarte and Dot Nesbit onto the board as they begin their respective tenures as Treasurer and Ladies Captain. At the AGM, these appointments were confirmed, along with those of Natalie Barrett and Andy



Hepburn. With Tim moving into the position of Club Vice Captain, Natalie has agreed to take on the role of Junior Convenor. She and Tim have been running the junior section this year and Tim will continue to do so but there is no doubt that Natalie will add value to the board as a whole. Andy has agreed to join the board to work closely with, and support, Paul Wilkie and the Greenkeeping operation, acting as a conduit between Paul and the board. I look forward to working with Graeme, Dot, Natalie and Andy.

While change is essential, stability is reassuring and apart from acknowledging the efforts of Ian Barker, Mike Seath and Tim Barrett this year, I thank them for staying on and look forward to continuing the hard work with them. That only leaves our Honorary President, Johnny Stewart. I don't recall giving Johnny the chance to step down – a shrewd move on our part. Johnny brings much to the board and we all appreciate his input when requested. His management of the tree harvesting and tidy up of the damage caused by Storm Arwen is also much appreciated.

A year ago, we implemented a long-term succession plan with regard to board roles and this included my own retirement from the board in December 2023. Sometimes plans do not work out and with a one year 'gap' looming in 2024, the board asked me if I would be prepared to stay on another year, as Club Captain, to work with Tim Barrett, who had already agreed to become Club Captain in 2025. Staying on in any capacity was not something I was aiming for and I much preferred the plan we made last year but I could understand the board's rationale and can assure you of my commitment.

I would like to take this opportunity to show appreciation for our corporate partners who continue to support us through tee sponsorship. This is vital for us and I am well aware that more than half of our partners are club members. We look forward to continuing to work with these worthy companies.

As always, my final thanks go to our members, without whom we cannot even start to imagine achieving any of our goals. We are lucky to have supportive and active members and thanks mainly to you, particularly those who willingly volunteer so much of their time on a regular basis, I can confidently declare that the club is thriving. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my gratitude to every single one of you for your continued support of Muckhart Golf Club.

Chris Turlik
Board Chair 2023