



## THE SMALLER COMMITTEE

Ray Burniston writes about the formation of Green and House Sub-Committees.

*(reviewed September 2011)*

Following the paper on committees in the previous issues we shall now look at the formation of Green & House Sub-Committees to run alongside the small committee proposal.

In trying to reduce the main committee to a small streamlined system you will often get the comment from members that it is undesirable to have control of the club in perhaps only 6 - 8 elected members. However by having the two major spending committees in operation with a representative on the main committee allows a further six or eight persons to be involved but at the same time keeps the main committee down to the reduced size. The total constitution of the club under this system would be as follows:

### Management Committee

Consists of eight elected members as follows:

Club Chairman }  
Finance Member } Elected for a three year term.

Chairman Green } Elected annually by Green  
Vice Chairman Green } Committee (1)

Chairman House } Elected annually by  
Vice Chairman House } House Committee (2)

Club Captain }  
Ladies' Captain } Elected annually.

The Green and House Committees will consist of four members on each and who have been elected for a period of three years. These committees then elect their representatives to the Management Committee. It is advisable for both Management and Sub-Committees to allow persons to be eligible for re-election after the first three-year period. It is important to have clearly defined terms of reference for these two sub-committees (Green & House) and these should be along the following lines but will obviously vary with clubs.

## (1) Green Committee - Points to consider

For some reason or other this is the Sub-Committee that many Club members wish to become a member of.

Most of us can relate to the club member elected to this committee on the Saturday evening and finding him holding court in the bar the following Sunday as an expert on all matters to do with greenkeeping. The fact that the Head Greenkeeper at the Club has many years of experience and has been trained through the appropriate organisations is meaningless, even the poor Secretary despite many years in the job and having worked with expert greenkeepers does not matter to our newly elected member who knows exactly what is wrong and has the remedy for it.

This is perhaps a somewhat cynical view of the Green Committee but if it disappeared tomorrow and the Head Greenkeeper along with the Secretary/Manager were left to get on with it, working to a plan agreed with the Management Committee would the golf course suffer? Most clubs do however have a Green Committee so in suggesting the Terms of Reference we will attempt to give it a role that will help the club rather than hinder it. Set up correctly, the Green Committee can provide valuable help to the club and an input that deals with the views and wishes of members.

### General

The size and character of the Committee is very important, get this wrong and the club could go from crisis to crisis.

The Head Greenkeeper/Course Manager is an essential member of this committee, not from the voting aspect but to provide the committee with the expertise without which the committee would be like a rudderless ship. The Secretary/Manager must also be a member to provide input concerning the overall management of the club. It should then have three/four elected members of the club, one of which would be elected chairman. Although the chairman might have to be elected annually it would be important to try to have some sort of continuity by having the same person for a few years.

It is also the pattern at many clubs to have the Captain and Vice Captain as members of this committee. At some clubs the Professional is also invited to attend but this I think, really depends on the calibre of the club professional and many professionals at busy clubs would not have time to get involved. Always try to get different golfers on this committee rather than all low or high handicappers. There is a lot to be said for the Ladies' Committees at clubs which have representatives on their committee from the different handicap divisions.

### Meetings

The Meetings should not be too numerous providing the members of this committee know what their brief is. Four meetings a year should be more than sufficient and in the event of a major problem this would constitute calling a special meeting to discuss that particular matter. One meeting would probably decide the proposed budget another would look at any Autumn/Winter programme and the other two would be assessing the current state of the course and work in hand.

## Responsibilities - Main Function

In conjunction with the Head Greenkeeper and Secretary the Green Committee need to:

- ⌘ Agree on the course policy to be followed on a day-to-day basis. The Committee will set out in the Course Policy Document their ideals for what they would wish the course to obtain, but leave the Head Greenkeeper and Secretary who will decide on a day-to-day basis its implementation. Although many clubs have a course policy document it is not the end of the world if you do not but it is important that both the Secretary and Head Greenkeeper keep good records of work carried out and other important items.
- ⌘ Draw up annual budgets for approval by the Finance and Management Committees. Responsible for monitoring the budget and reporting on any deficiencies that arise.
- ⌘ Ensure that all matters to do with Health & Safety and COSHH which involve the course are kept up-to-date and all staff are aware of the implications.
- ⌘ See that the five-year roll on plan for replacement and new machinery is updated annually.

## Staffing

- ⌘ Ensure that the Club employs sufficient staff to carry out the policies of the committee and to bring the matter to the notice of the Management should changes be necessary.
- ⌘ Carry out an annual assessment of all staff and their findings passed onto the Head Greenkeeper who with the Secretary will inform each member of their results of this review.
- ⌘ Annually review all salaries and wages and recommendations passed onto the Finance Committee.

## Agronomy

- ⌘ Engage the services of a qualified Agronomist who will report on the state and condition of the course to the committee. This would normally be an annual visit but extra visits may be required where there are problems with the course.

## Members

- ⌘ Explain regularly to the membership details and reasons for work being done on the course and when necessary hold meetings with the membership to give greater explanations. All members of committee are expected to acquaint themselves with sufficient facts in order to be able to do this.
- ⌘ Encourage the Head Greenkeeper to write reports on the work carried out on the course and other details to give to the membership

## Closure of Course/Trolley, Cart Ban

- ⌘ Set out the guidelines for these issues so that the decision can then be taken by the Head Greenkeeper and the Secretary who will inform the Chairman and provide reasons.

Committee members need to familiarise themselves with any decisions taken so that they can inform the membership of the reasons why.

## Minutes

Circulate to all members of the Green committee and the Management Committee.

## (2) House Committee - Points to consider

This is without doubt one of the most difficult committees to be appointed to at a golf club. In times of staff changes or general clubhouse problems members of this committee can be driven to distraction by the many comments they will get from other members. So never accept appointment to this committee unless you are prepared to put up with aggravation from time to time.

## General

The size and character of this committee is important but it is just as essential to have members who are regulars at the club both in the bar and dining room. How you operate the clubhouse services will be important in determining the size and role of this committee. If you operate with a Bar/Clubhouse Manager looking after the general clubhouse and bar with the catering done by an outside company/individual this will take some pressure off the committee as they will only be responsible for the bar financially and to see that the caterer carries out their duties in line with their service agreement. If the catering is done in-house then the committee will assume greater responsibilities and will need to see that the financial side of the catering is properly controlled.

The general number on a committee of this type should be at least three and no more than five. Many clubs have a representative from the Ladies on this committee but whatever policy you take try to get a good spread of members from different sections of the club. It is important that the staff Heads of Department for bar and catering attend part of the meetings to report on the current situation and answer queries from the members. The Secretary/Manager must be an integral part of this committee.

## Meetings

These should not be held more than every other month and if you can make it five meetings a year so much the better. An extra meeting might have to be held for particular problems that arise.

## Responsibilities - Main Function

Oversee the bar/catering operations. See that it operates within its budgets and that regular monthly accounts are available.

See that:

- a) The bar and catering stocks are checked on a regular basis by an independent stocktaker and that any discrepancies in their report are investigated immediately. (Catering would not be included if you have an outside caterer carrying out this function.)

- b) The bar is operated within the current licensing laws and that all staff employed in the bar and catering are properly trained and fully aware of Health & Safety regulations.
- c) All other staff employed or working within the clubhouse are fully aware of the Health & Safety policies of the club.
- d) Gaming Machines are properly licensed and that adequate controls and safeguards are in place concerning the collection and recording of all cash.
- e) Any public telephones within the clubhouse in which cash is taken have adequate controls in place for the collection of this cash.
- f) The clubhouse area is kept in a clean condition and that the club cleaners carry out their duties according to their contracts or agreements.
- g) The person nominated to close and open the clubhouse at the times agreed by the committee carry out their duties correctly and that all alarm systems are fully operational when the club is closed.
- h) The club fabrics are regularly inspected to see that they are in good order.
- i) If the club has any billiard/snooker tables or other games they are properly looked after and any cash taken is correctly recorded.
- j) The clubhouse car parking arrangements and security are reviewed annually and any measures required put to the Management Committee.

Set the House budget annually with a five-year roll over plan for all equipment and refurbishment reviewed annually.

Inspect the outside of the clubhouse and adjoining buildings, except the greenkeepers, at least on an annual basis.

Recommend to the Management Committee the policy on all dress and other regulations within the clubhouse.

Set the prices for the bar and catering within the guidelines set by the Management Committee. (If the Catering is done by an outside Caterer it is usual for this committee to still be able to negotiate the prices).

Liaise with the Social Committee on all matters relating to the clubhouse and ensure that any necessary licences are obtained for these events. (This assumes there is a separate Social Committee; in some instances however, the House Committee may undertake this function).

## Staffing

Responsible for all the staff but appointments other than Heads of Departments will normally be carried by the Secretary/Manager with the appropriate Head.

Appoint the Heads of Departments of the bar and catering or as instructed by the Management Committee.

Assess all staff on their performance on an annual basis and discuss the results discussed with them through the Secretary/Manager.

Review all staff salaries and wages annually and recommend to the Management Committee any increases etc.

## Members

Regularly explain to the members any decisions taken within the clubhouse and if necessary have informal meetings to do this.

## Insurance

Although the overall responsibility for Insurance is for the Finance/Management Committee to determine it is nevertheless the duty of this committee to say if they consider if any additional insurance is required.

## Minutes

Circulate to all members of the House and Management Committees.

## Additional Committees

Apart from the above two sub-committees the Golf, Social and Membership will invariably be split up as follows:

### 1) Golf

Usually run under the direction of the two Captains and clubs often appoint Competition and Handicap Secretaries who look after the men and ladies golf competitions along with the handicaps. A small competitions committee will be formed for the men whilst the ladies will have their own committee.

### 2) Social

Often run by either the House Committee or a small committee of workers from both the men and ladies sections.

### 3) Membership

Carried out by the Captain and Vice Captain of each section who will interview new members as vacancies occur.

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