



THE CASE FOR A SMALLER COMMITTEE

Brian Stockley, wrote in 2003 as the secretary of Easingwold Golf Club, a planning procedure and implementation during 2002 - 2004

Revised March 2010 (*reviewed July 2012*)

History

During the several years spent on committee as Club Secretary, I heard the comment many times that “our committee is too large, what can be done about it?” and “how can we get the committee to vote for any reduction when they would be voting themselves out of a job”. The matter had been discussed before without any progress, and indeed the biggest hurdle would be to get any proposal through the committees stages with agreement to proceed.

On reading the publication by the R&A entitled “The case for the smaller committee”, it was easy to identify Easingwold Golf Club in its descriptions, but our committee was even larger with 21 members, committee meetings over the past few years have dragged on far too long and degenerated (sometimes) into time wasting discussions – an area where a strong character as Chair would be a distinct advantage. In fact our own governing body (the R&A) have for some time advised golf clubs to travel this route.

Therefore in April 2002 we set up a small working party to consider our committee structure. We are no longer a small golf club, our membership now exceeded 775 with a turnover of £600,000 pa. This demands an effective and efficient management.

Object

- ✎ To reduce the governing body from 21 to a lesser number (proposal 10).

Benefits

- ✎ To form a more streamlined /dynamic /co-ordinated time saving body and to provide a better decision making base.
- ✎ Committee meeting time to be reduced.
- ✎ Improved debate by reduced group of persons.

After much deliberation and discussion of varied committee structures, I believed the new structure proposed would provide this. The new committee with its more independent divisions would be more readily able to respond to, and act on the demands of the modern day golf club, as well as providing the controls needed to ensure that the committee always worked in the best interests of the club.

The most important factor in ensuring effective and efficient management is that the members elect the right people on to the committee and to this end, under the new structure, members seeking election to committee would stand for a specific post or vacancy.

As this proposed change to the structure of the club committee was a major change to the constitution, it would warrant a separate vote, and if approved become effective in April 2004.

Stages of process took the following route:

- ⌘ Group research and study.
- ⌘ General Committee consultation.
- ⌘ Calling of EGM to place before membership for approval / rejection.

Following a series of committee meetings throughout the summer, and prior to any further planning, a special meeting of the General Committee was convened (5 December 2002) in order for any clarification of roles /responsibilities and concerns to be discussed, and to seek approval from that committee to proceed.

The floor was then asked to vote – and were reminded that it was the “Principle” only that we were voting for at this stage.

Statement

“Do you agree with the principles identified” – operative year 2004 Yes or No

PRINCIPLE VOTE YES - 11
NO - 5

PRINCIPLE CARRIED

Planning

Initial suggestions to make up the proposed new committee structure:-

- ⌘ The Captain of the club would have his year made much more enjoyable if a “Chairperson” were elected either by the committee or at the AGM. The chairperson should be someone democratically elected by all members of the committee, who is considered to be the finest lead figure available.
- ⌘ All sub-committee chairmen should be proposed and elected at the AGM. Members could also stand for, and be elected to serve on a particular sub committee.
- ⌘ A sub-committee to be set up to be responsible for the finances and day-to-day running of the club.
- ⌘ This sub-committee to consist of the Captain, Vice Captain Treasurer, Secretary and 3/4 elected members, this sub-committee to function along with current greens, bar and house, and handicaps and competitions sub committees.
- ⌘ If responsibilities were devolved to these sub committees, then the full committee would

only need to meet 2 or 3 times a year (although it could meet more often if any major problem arose).

- Members standing for election to any position on club committees should be allowed to circulate a document setting out their abilities, experience and reasons for standing for a particular position.
- Members should be required to vote for the same number of candidates as there are vacancies as this would prevent tactical voting.

PROPOSED NEW MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Composition of Management Committee

- Captain
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Greens Chairman
- Bar & House Chairman
- Handicaps and Competitions Chairman
- Chairman

Role of The Management Committee

- Full control of all Club business and financial matters
- Approve budgets for the sub-committees
- Approve sub-committee spending outside agreed budget

Other duties to come under the umbrella of this Committee to include:

- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Public and Membership Relations
- Subscriptions/Green Fees and Visiting Parties
- Club development and future planning

Composition of General Committee

- Members of all committees
- Lady Captain
- Chairman of the Management Committee will also Chair the General Committee

Role of the General Committee

To act as a steering group assuring attention is drawn to the Management Committee if it is felt that decisions taken are not in the best interest of the club, or if in their view the club is not moving in the right direction. It also creates an excellent communications channel for financial, course matters and other sub-committee issues. This forum will provide all the information required to answer members' questions on extremely important issues.

In addition it provides a platform for discussion of recommendations deemed necessary to move the club forward.

Meetings should be held not less than 6 times per annum.

It is felt that if General Committee views are not being given due attention, General Committee members have authority to consider a vote of no confidence in the Management Committee, decision to be taken on a majority vote. Management Committee members would not be allowed to vote on this proposal.

Role of Sub Committees

- ⌘ Preparation of annual budgets and prioritise spending
- ⌘ Authority to spend within Capital and Revenue Expenditure Policy
- ⌘ The preparation of a brief for the sub-committee Chairman prior to a Management Committee meeting
- ⌘ Future development of the club within the sub committee's specific section
- ⌘ Day to day running of affairs for which the sub-committee is responsible

Sub committee members will serve for a period of three years, appointments taking place at an AGM.

Ancillary Issues

- ⌘ A General Committee meeting could be called by a request supported by two thirds of Sub Committee members.
- ⌘ Immediate Past captains – although not included would be ex-officio on the General Committee and would be able to stand for any vacancy at the AGM.
- ⌘ Vice Captains would be an ex-officio member of all sub committees. This would enable him/her to gain knowledge of club affairs.
- ⌘ If any member of the Management Committee were to leave, then that vacancy to be filled by a member from the General Committee. This appointment to be short term until the next AGM, when a replacement would be elected.
- ⌘ Cover for leavers at Sub Committee level would be provided from the Management Committee.
- ⌘ The General Committee would have authority to call for a postal ballot if deemed necessary.
- ⌘ Sub Committee members to be allowed to stand for re-election after three years with immediate effect.
- ⌘ Members to be allowed to stand for Management and Sub Committees at the same time.
- ⌘ Discussions to take place with the Ladies Section to determine their role within the overall Committee structure – the Ladies have had full voting rights for many years and equality with payment of annual subscriptions for the past four years.
- ⌘ Attendance of Presidents and Vice Presidents to Management Committee by invitation.

PROCEDURE

Following a number of further meetings, the final proposal for re-organisation of the committee was approved by 14 votes to 2 at the General Committee meeting on 6 January 2003.

Due to lengthy discussion and debates, with many options and proposals re-drafted, and as it was now January 2003 we therefore decided not to call an EGM, but for the following proposals to be presented to Members at the 2003 AGM on 21 March 2003 for implementation with effect from April 1st 2004.

FINAL PROPOSALS

Arrangements to conduct the affairs of this Club to consist of three sections:

1. Management Committee
2. Non Executive Sub Committees
3. General Committee

1. Management Committee

- ⌘ Captain
- ⌘ Vice Captain
- ⌘ Lady Captain
- ⌘ Past Captain
- ⌘ Chairperson
- ⌘ Secretary
- ⌘ Treasurer
- ⌘ Chairman Greens
- ⌘ Chairman Bar & House
- ⌘ Chairman Handicaps & Competitions

This Committee to meet on a monthly basis.

2. Non Executive Sub Committees

- ⌘ Greens: Executive Chairman plus two non-executive members and Working Course Manager.
- ⌘ Bar & House: Executive Chairman plus two non-executive members and Clubhouse Manager.
- ⌘ Handicaps & Competitions: Executive Chairman, Junior Organiser, Competition Secretary plus three non-executive members.

These Committees shall meet on a monthly basis.

3. General Committee

Management Chairperson plus all other executive and non-executive members to meet on a quarterly basis.

IMPLEMENTATION

Complementary Notes

- ⌘ Duties currently carried out by Finance & General Purposes Committee will transfer to Management Committee.

- ⌘ During 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 current Committee arrangements to continue.
- ⌘ Those Members of the existing Committee with service remaining on their four (4) year “contract” to remain on the Management Committee until the four (4) years have expired.
- ⌘ Rules and Constitution proposals forwarded to National Golf Clubs` Advisory Association for ratification.
- ⌘ Latest Rules from English Golf Union also included in Club Constitution.

No rule of the Club shall be repealed or altered and no new rule be made, save by a two-thirds majority of the Members present and voting at a General Meeting.

Alterations to the Club Rules and Constitution proposed by the Committee as indicated on the Order Paper and presented to the AGM on 21 March 2003

Result of Vote	For	94
	Against	<u>30</u>
Total Members Attending		124
Spoilt Papers		3
In Favour		77%

Proposal Carried

For the 1st April 2004 the mechanism was now in place to push the club forward with revitalised vigour under our new management structure.

Although there is still much work to be done, I believe the club has come a long way since a band of far-sighted individuals created a small 9-hole course way back in 1930, was then redesigned and an 18-hole course developed in 1975 to become the very popular and demanding course that it is today.

(Brian Stockley is the former Secretary at Easingwold GC)

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