

Handicap Meeting		
November 2017	2 meetings held – combined minutes	Saltford Golf Club / Burnham & Berrow Golf Club
Meeting chaired by	Janet Fear, Somerset County Handicap Advisor (JF)	
Purpose of meeting	Annual Handicap Secretaries Meeting	
Minute taker	Pam Jarvis, Somerset County Handicap Advisor's Assistant, Worlebury Golf Club	
Attendees		
<p>Bath: Deborah McArdle & Honor Jones, Burnham and Berrow: Ros Gait, Karen Drake, Liz Biddle, Mark Woods, & Mark Biddle, Clevedon: Heather Priestley, Cricket St Thomas: n/a, Enmore: n/a, Farrington Park: Maureen Charlton & June Symonds, Isle of Wedmore: Claire Biggs & Liz Hall, Long Sutton: Gill Edwards, Sandra Basford, Mandy Head, & Carole Paterson, The Mendip: Nola Russell, Mendip Spring: Sheila Claxton & Sarah Nancholas, Minehead: Ros Chidgey, Sandra Atkins, & Kay Ludcett, Oake Manor: Kathy Salway & Nancy Marshall, Orchardleigh: Lorraine Collings & Anne Regler, Saltford: Amanda Mayne, Janice Dall & Jeanette Cook, Stockwood Vale: Alison Powlesland, Martin Edenborough & Jackie Long, Tall Pines: Sue Freeston & Joyce Forrester, Taunton & Pickeridge: Jacky Ford, Wells: Erica Klim & Tina Davies, Weston Super Mare: Mel Rossi & Wendy Homer, Wheathill: Sue Harrop & Judith Rowsell, Worlebury: Sam Hewlett, Woodspring: Joan Kendall.</p>		
Agenda Item and notes, discussions, questions		
Topic	Discussion	
Introduction and Welcome	<p>JF opened the meetings and thanked Saltford and Burnham & Berrow for hosting and everyone for attending the sessions, asking them to introduce themselves and any role they may perform. JF explained that the meeting was designed to be for debate and that she would welcome questions at any time during the meeting.</p>	
Annual Review (AR)	<p>AR - Why. Because some players improve faster and some decline quicker than the handicap system can alter their handicaps using competitions. Handicaps should reflect a players current playing ability.</p> <p>AR - When. This should be done after 1st October and before the year end. It was noted that for this year end clubs could extend that to allow for those players that might need to go above 28/36 in the Annual Review but it was noted that any handicaps changed under Annual Review should be completed ahead of any qualifying competitions in January 18.</p> <p>AR - Who By. A Handicap Committee. This cannot be decided by a single person and must be a minimum of 3 people. The minimum 3 people are not gender or role specific.</p> <p>AR - How Much. Not less than one full stroke – thereafter handicaps may go up or down by fractions. There is no maximum change in either direction.</p> <p>AR - Exceptions. Category 1 players or Category 2 players dropping to Category 1 must be referred to County first. Away players are also excluded from the review.</p> <p>Non-Competition Handicaps. Clubs were reminded that those with less than 3 qualifying cards had to be designated as having non-competition handicaps. They may be able to play in club competitions in order to obtain a handicap but would not be eligible to win. Most opens will only accept entrants with a competition handicap.</p> <p>Non-Qualifying Competition Report. This was new this year for 'opens' and team competitions that historically did not directly affect players handicaps. It was noted that only a few clubs had received notification from another club regarding their members scores. Some clubs had sent off reports or determined that no away players had had notable scores on the day so no report had been sent. Few clubs had seen any individual players voluntarily updating their clubs by submitting the appropriate forms. It was noted that it remains the players responsibility to inform their own club of their performance and that the use of forms for clubs to inform about away players was not mandatory. England Golf have taken action on some players using the reporting and would encourage clubs to send reports in order to gather data on handicaps. It was generally felt that it would be useful if this was made mandatory and this will be raised with England Golf. Any information gathered under this report is to be used as supporting evidence not the only evidence in the annual review process.</p> <p>Annual Review Report. This assesses any player who has more than 3 qualifying cards and flags those who are playing outside of their expected performance for their Category as expectations differ between categories in terms of consistency. It was noted that although medical grounds can be a cause, clubs should make any adjustment carefully as some players can come back very strongly from medical issues.</p> <p>Appendix M. Effective 1st January 2018 to identify those playing better than expected to reduce handicaps and those playing below expected to increase. There was a debate on what constituted a reasonable number of qualifying scores. It was widely agreed that 3 was too few but that clubs should be sensitive to how many qualifying comps were actually available to working players. It was generally agreed that maybe playing more than 10 qualifying comps would make players self-regulating. JF reminded clubs that there should be no knee jerk reactions and that it should be the trend of play above / below handicap that counts. Is the golfer improving / declining in ability? JF also reminded clubs to look carefully at new golfers as the new handicapping system had initiated some low handicaps that players may not be able to play to.</p>	

<p>Continuous Handicap Review</p>	<p>JF advised that clubs could follow the same principals of the Annual Review and clubs should follow the flow chart made available during 2017. There was some debate about players who did not want their handicaps changed and JF reminded clubs that for Categories 1-4 players using the wrong handicap can affect the CSS thereby impacting other players. It was also reiterated that clubs do not have to change handicaps immediately if it is a marginal call but could delay any changes to allow a further month of play to observe the trend. It was also felt that if the decision to change was marginal then clubs should discuss it with the player involved. It was also confirmed that if clubs wished to put in place an internal structure to facilitate communication ahead of any appeal outside the club then they could do so.</p>
<p>New 2018 Handicap Changes</p>	<p>Club Handicaps. Few clubs are using these. It was noted that wef 1Jan18 the new Category 5 for men and Category 6 for women will be compulsory. There was some debate on how this would affect competitions in clubs but as the changes were to encourage inclusion it was generally agreed that this would help encourage golfers to play in competitions. It was noted that clubs can still cap handicaps for Trophy competitions if they wished to do so and that the regular comps could have the field split into divisions so that there is a spread of prizes. It was noted that clubs may have to be more creative in devising competitions that would appeal to golfers of all levels. It is not immediately clear what would happen in mixed competitions and it was noted that if the competitions were popular then a club could cap handicaps and still attract a full field. Clubs were reminded that any cap on handicaps must be shown in writing on the flyer / website / entry form.</p> <p>Supplementary Scores. These will no longer be limited in terms of how many can be submitted or over what time period the cards can be done. They can also be done over 9 holes. Players still need to sign up beforehand. As there is no limit on cards submitted clubs are encouraged to check for manipulation of the system (for example supplementary cards that increase handicaps ahead of competitions). There was a discussion on the potential additional workload of this, clubs were reminded that players had to sign before going out so instructions can be incorporated making it clear it is the players responsibility to ensure that they subsequently play off the correct handicap. It was noted that one club takes an admin charge for supplementary cards. Clubs could also choose to make a club rule that any NR on a supplementary card is counted as withdrawn to avoid an automatic 0.1 increase.</p> <p>Mixed Tee Competitions. When there are two competitions on the same day it has been decided that any change to the standard scratch for the day must be adjusted to the same degree for both competitions. This is because there are sometimes small field competitions which if reviewed alone would result in reduction only scores but the way the course is playing that day has been sufficiently tested by the overall quantum of players. This is not yet mandatory as there have been software glitches that need to be resolved first.</p> <p>Nine Hole Medals and Opens. It is now possible to run both 9 hole opens and 9 hole medals as it is thought that a 9 hole medal may encourage new golfers to build up to an 18 hole medal.</p>
<p>Any Other Questions</p>	<p>Initial Handicap Allotment. It was noted that score adjustments for high scores had been altered. These are now adjusted to a maximum of double par. Hopefully this will mean less of the initial handicaps coming out lower than expected.</p> <p>Alternate Trophy Days. One club sought feedback on whether other clubs offered alternate days for trophy competitions. Some do and some don't but players must choose which one to play in and then not play on the alternate day as well. It was noted that the competition standard scratch adjustment may differ as they are run on different days and maybe in different conditions.</p> <p>England Golf. Carole Paterson has an EG meeting next week and will highlight that the majority of Somerset Ladies Handicap Secretaries would like it to be mandatory for away scores to be sent to home clubs.</p>
<p>Post meeting suggestions</p>	<p>None.</p>