ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Fiftieth Annual General Meeting of the MARCH GOLF CLUB Ltd, held at The Clubhouse, Grange Road, March on Thursday 8th December 2011 at 7.30p.m.

Present: 47 Full Members.

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Fiftieth Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies for absence were received from: Mr John Papworth, Mr Paul Corney, Mr Tony Welland, Mr Peter Jones, Mr Ray Pescud, Mr John Skoulding, Mrs Eileen Clapham, Mrs Pam Wallis and Mrs Viv Snushall. The Chairman said how unusual it was not to see John Papworth at an AGM. Unfortunately due to illness he was unable to attend. The Chairman offered to pass on the members’ best wishes to him.

3. Minutes of the 49th Annual General Meeting held on 9th December 2010 were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.

4. Report of the Management Committee and Statement of Accounts were considered by the meeting. Mr Brian Carroll of the Club’s auditors Whiting and Partners reviewed the accounts. He commented on the £13,000 saving on last year’s figures resulting in a healthy surplus of £6,267 for the year.

Mr C. Jones asked Mr Carroll how, in his opinion, the accounts looked for the year. Mr Carroll answered that he is sure many golf clubs would like to be in a similar financial position.

The accounts were proposed by Jim Coote and seconded by Brian Painter. The meeting accepted the Report and the Statement of Accounts.

4. Chairman’s Report. Mr Norman Topliss gave the following report.

“As President, Mr Captain, Madame Lady Captain, fellow members, as I said in the Director’s Report in the Accounts I give this report as proxy for our former Chairman Graham Lockwood.

As you know, Graham stood down back in September and on your behalf may I thank him for the work he has done during his spell on the Committee.

His position underlines the problems today’s working member has in giving time to do justice to the Committee. Although we have still to elect it formally, the new Committee will have just two members who are in full time employment and in one case, thanks to some divine intervention, I use the term full time guardedly!

Committee members are volunteers – maybe masochistic volunteers – but they are also Club members and forgive me if I repeat Graham’s sentiments last year that they also come here to enjoy the game of golf. They’re not immune from ear bashing, that’s in the job description, but I would again ask that it should take place after the game and not before or during.

Elections at the AGM are becoming quite rare. There is a message there somewhere. I’m not sure what it is but I hope next year’s Committee will look very carefully into its composition and into the Club’s Articles to make sure they meet the ever increasing responsibilities and demands of the 21st century.

Looking back on the last 12 months the Committee really has got through an amazing amount of work. I make no apology for probably repeating some of the copy from the recent newsletter.

Starting with the course, I don’t think I need to say anything that the course hasn’t said for itself. I don’t think we’ve ever had so many compliments from visitors and ever had a course in such fine condition. Last year the Committee started to put £2,500 a year in the budget for course improvements. If we don’t spend it the intention is to roll it over and add it to the next years and so on. Unfortunately the irrigation system is beginning to creak and some of the creaks can be costly. We are in the process of having the system fully checked out to see if there really is a problem.

Competitions are now in four pairs of tender hands. They have been reviewing the local rules and their deliberations will be available shortly.

On the social side, we’ve had a steady stream of events during the year although the absence of a ball due to lack of support was particularly regrettable.

In the Clubhouse we’ve just about finished the refurbishments. I say just about finished because, as is becoming only too clear, we have a problem with our chairs and that will need to be addressed in the near future.
Clubhouse lettings dramatically increased last year. This presents us with a dilemma. We know we have to find other sources of income and we know that there is much more to be made from lettings particularly from wakes but we also know that there are members who are a little uneasy at using the Clubhouse when there is a wake albeit areas are screened off. This, together with the issue of the disabled toilet prompted the development issues set out in the recent newsletter.

That takes us on to the financial side of the Club’s affairs. Our final accounts looked pretty good. But we do need to plan beyond the next 12 months. Apart from the new toilet facilities, our greens equipment doesn’t come cheap and we need to keep it reasonably up to date if we are not to incur huge servicing and maintenance costs. In addition in won’t be long before VAT will cost us over £7,500 a year as prices increase and the de-minimis limit for VAT recovery remains constant.

Current membership figures are:

- 7 day members 220
- 5 day 41

In total that’s one more than reported to you at this time last year.

We also have 6 junior members and 19 social members.

Realistically nowadays membership income on its own won’t meet the demands of the coming years and retain a course in such fine condition. I expect the Committee will want to continue to encourage clubhouse lettings and we hope members will see the real benefit with this approach even though on occasions it may restrict members’ use of their clubhouse.

There are an awful lot of issues around at the moment. What is important is for the Committee to share its views and its proposals when they are fully worked up. To this end I anticipate it will want to call an open meeting in the New Year to discuss all these issues and plot a way forward.

Finally, I repeat it’s been a very busy year and I would like, on your behalf, to place on record our thanks for all the work put in by our staff, the committee members and the band of volunteers who helped in one way or another during the year. Thank you all very much indeed.”

5. Captain’s Report. Mr Phil Softley gave the following report.

“Mr Chairman, Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen. The past year has gone too quickly. I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as Club Captain and I would like to thank Chris Hodson for giving me the opportunity of being his Vice-Captain last year and Captain this year.

Once again the weather took its toll on the Captain’s Boxing Day Drive-in. It had to be cancelled until February. I invited the Ladies’ Captain, Brenda, to join me and make this a Joint Captains’ Drive-in. After this event the golf course’s condition improved and I would like to thank Malcolm, Maurice and Geoff for their hard work and support and for producing a golf course of superb quality.

With regard to men’s friendly matches, we played 13 matches, winning 4, losing 5 and drawing 2. Two matches were cancelled. The mixed matches played were 6 in total. We won 3 and lost 3. The Club enjoyed good runs in the Mail on Sunday and the Jock Stewart Trophy, going out in round 3 in both competitions. I would like to thank all the members who played regularly in both competitions.

I was disappointed to have to cancel my Away Day at Stoke Rochford but I hope I more than made up for cancellation by hosting a fully subscribed Captain’s Day here at our Club and I hope all enjoyed the day.

There are several people I would like to thank; the entire Senior Section for their advice and support. Thanks to Andy Parsonage for looking after the Scratch matches. A special vote of thanks to our Steward, Peter, for all his assistance throughout the year, particularly in home match days and my Captain’s Day. Thanks to our caterers for looking after us, Christine in particular. Thanks to our Club Pro, Alex, for his assistance with home mixed matches and competitions. Last but not least, thanks to our Secretary, Michal, for helping me with all matters concerning admin. Finally a big thank you to my wife, Lynda, for tolerating me when things went wrong and for just being there. Also to my daughter, Becky, my in-house chef and her wonderful cakes.

The Joint Captains’ Charity raised £1,000 for bowel cancer. Lynda and myself would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a healthy new year.”
6. **Election of Officers**
   a. **President.** Mr R. Cannell, on behalf of the Management Committee, proposed Mr M. Wiles as President for another year. He commended Mr Wiles on his commitment to the Club. He said Mr Wiles’ involvement is enormous and he thanked him for all his efforts during the year. Mr Wiles was duly elected. Mr Wiles thanked the members for their support this year and said he looked forward to their continued support next year, especially during the Club’s 50th anniversary celebrations.

   b. **Chairman.** Mr N. Topliss was nominated by the management committee. There were no further nominations and Mr Topliss was duly elected.

   c. **Vice-Chairman.** Mr S. Layton was nominated by the management committee. There were no further nominations and Mr Layton was duly elected.

   d. **Committee.** The Chairman reported that the following nominations for committee had been received: Mr Chris Bateman, Mr Richard Cannell, Mr Lui Graziano, Mr Chris Hodson, Mr Phil Softley, Mr John Farnsworth, Mrs Brenda Softley, Mrs Eileen Clapham, Mrs Teresa Layton and Mrs Penny Gilbert. All were duly elected. The Chairman thanked Mrs Maureen Pope and Mr Charlie Dickson for their help on the committee during the year.

7. **Election Of Captain and Vice-Captain**  The Immediate Past Captain, Mr Phil Softley, asked members to welcome Mr Steven Layton as Club Captain for the year 2012. Mr Layton shook hands with Mr Softley to a warm round of applause, he then addressed the meeting.

   “Mr President, Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.

   Since the meeting began, it’s been a little like waiting for the priest at a wedding to ask whether anyone has any just cause or impediment why this person shouldn’t …” well you know the rest; and the reason is that my thoughts wandered back to a medal earlier this year when yours truly hit a tee shot against the tree on the right of the first fairway only to turn round and see the ball smiling at me on the patio in front of the clubhouse. At least twenty or more members, together with the Pro, gathered to pass their collective judgement on the rules. A free drop was declared legal and the ball was skilfully struck into the willow tree by the tenth tee. In true biblical tradition, I heard a voice from the back of the baying crowd saying “… and he’s going to be Captain next year?”. Well, I couldn’t disappoint, could I!

   This time last year, I spoke about the honour of being asked to be vice-captain of this club and over the last twelve months, which have flown by, I have fully understood the significance of that statement. So, firstly, may I wholeheartedly thank Phil for his trust in me and, despite that memorable tee shot, for you, the membership, the heart and soul of this club, for your confidence in accepting me as your Captain for 2012.

   Before I go any further, may I say a huge thank you to Phil for his year as Captain, for his commitment to this club and for a most memorable Captain’s Day.

   As you know, this club was founded in 1923 at Calvary Barn Farm and in 1927 it moved again to Hatchwood Farm and, 2012 celebrates the 50th anniversary of being established here in Frogs Abbey. So next year is a rather special year in our history and to commemorate the occasion, we are planning several events, with particular emphasis on the long bank holiday weekend of the 1st to 4th of June, when we will holding an anniversary competition culminating in a Ball. So may I encourage you to make a special note in your diaries.

   Because of the Anniversary, and as a variation from the norm, we felt that it would be appropriate to allow the Club itself to benefit from the Joint Captains’ Charity. Next year, money raised will be put towards replacing some of the clubhouse furniture.

   The second part of the “We” in question is the new Lady Captain for 2012 and, without any further ado, may I introduce to you the person who has been unable to utter a single word since last night’s Man Utd. defeat … the quiet, demure and reserved Teresa Layton.

   We are lucky to have a very active Seniors’ Section in this club so may I offer my congratulations to the recently appointed Seniors’ Captain, John Farnsworth and wish both John and Teresa very successful years in their respective captaincies.

   Due to several people being unavailable on Boxing Day, the Joint Captain’s Drive-In will now be held on Sunday the 12th February and will be followed by a nine hole mixed competition. However, for those of you
who, like me, need no excuse to escape the Family Christmas jolly japes, there will be a Boxing Day nine hole competition with mince pies and sherry and the start sheet will be in place shortly.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that I’m able to present to you a man who has been a member of this club for many years. His golfing attributes ferociously blend together a wealth of experience, skill and tenacity and I am delighted that he has accepted an invitation to be my vice-captain …. Mr Cliff Jones.”

Mr Jones then addressed the meeting.

“Thank you to Stephen Layton for asking me to be Vice-Captain. I’m looking forward to 2013. I will be helping and supporting Stephen in 2012 to help make it a superb year.”

8. **Introduction of the Lady Captain**
The Captain introduced to the meeting Mrs Teresa Layton as Lady Captain 2012.

9. **Appointment of Auditors**
It was agreed, following a proposition from the Chairman on behalf of the Committee, that Whiting and Partners be appointed the Club’s auditors up to the AGM of 2012. Seconded by Ken Pope and agreed unanimously.

10. The Immediate Past Captain, assisted by Henry Cave, presented the Club’s trophies and prizes for 2010/11 and handed out hole-in-one awards.

The Chairman reported that there were no authorised issues for discussion under Any Other Business. The meeting closed at 8.15pm.