MINUTES OF GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING
1st June 2026 at 6pm

PRESENT:
President-Ian Phillips
Captain-Peter Bianco
Chair of Committee-John Pennington
Treasurer-Phil Nicholson
Comps & H'Caps Chair/H & S-Eddie I Anson
Property Chair- Carl Middleton
General Committee Member-Scott Phillips
General Committee Member-Steve Pounder
Club Manager- Alex Shaw

1 APOLOGIES -Andy McPartlin, Connor Wilson, Hugh Hamilton Jnr., Lewis Marr, Roy Leonard

2 MINUTES - Minutes 28th April 2026 were approved to be signed

3 MATTERS ARISING –

Over80s Membership Concession

AS and JP outlined the history of the over80s concession, which has existed for over 30 years and provides free or heavily discounted subscription to qualifying members aged 80+ with at least 30 years' continuous membership. JP highlighted that life expectancy has increased from around 72 years in 1970 to over 80 in 2026, and that the club currently has over 50 members aged 80+ (playing and nonplaying), with projections that this may rise towards 80 members over the next 20–30 years, creating a potential significant future loss of subscription income.

A draft discussion paper had been circulated proposing that the qualifying age be gradually increased, so that:

- Current 78–79yearolds would still qualify at 80 if they already have 30 years' unbroken membership.
- Younger cohorts would qualify later (e.g. current 77yearolds at 81, current 76yearolds at 82, etc.), moving the concession age progressively upwards.

JP stressed that any change should not affect existing over80 concession holders, who would retain their current concession and not be asked to pay more.

Alternative ideas discussed included:

- CM suggested Replacing free membership with a fixed monetary reduction (e.g. a £1,000 discount on annual subscription for those with 30 years' membership on reaching 80, with the balance still payable and increasing with future subscription rises).

- PB suggested that Optional/voluntary contributions from existing over80 members. PB also asked whether this would involve linking voting rights to a minimum level of subscription payment (e.g. a reduced subscription with no voting rights versus a higher rate including voting rights).

It was noted that any revised rules must distinguish clearly between age and lengthofmembership criteria, and that the club's membership system could accommodate the necessary rules, albeit with some setup work

Actions:

- The discussion paper on over80 concessions to be circulated to the full committee and considered outside the meeting; members to return comments and suggestions.
- No changes will be made to existing over80 concessions.
- The matter to be brought back to a future meeting for a decision on the preferred approach (age adjustment, fixed discount, or hybrid).

Project Oversight & Budget Management

The Committee discussed the need for clearer processes and controls around capital and major maintenance projects, and that "good practice" be developed in line with principles on project management. PN noted that whilst controls are in place, processes can always be improved.

Using the "Blue Room" project as an example, it was reported that:

- The cost charged to the club to date is £10,628 against an initial indicative budget of £10,000.
- Additional value equivalent to several thousand pounds has been contributed by members (e.g. flooring and electrical work) via deferred or rebated subscription payments, meaning the total project value is higher with this assumed cost.
- There was no clearly agreed total project cost before commencement, leading to uncertainty around the final spend and the perception that member funds are not being tightly controlled.

The Committee discussed that:

- Every project should begin with an agreed scope of works and an estimated total cost, with this cost checked against budget before work starts.
- For memberundertaken projects, an initial quotation or estimate should be obtained (in cash terms), and then the value and method of any membership rebate/deferral agreed in advance (e.g. "X years' full subscription" up to a defined maximum value).
- Decisions on deferring or offsetting payments against subscriptions should sit with General Management Committee, Treasurer and General Manager, but what must be considered id that it is under clear written criteria to ensure consistency and to enable clear explanations to members.

The existing Artisan/subcommittee arrangements were discussed in this context, noting that:

- There is currently no agreed template for valuing member labour or setting caps for rebated membership.
- This leads to difficulties in explaining why some members receive free or discounted membership for work completed while others do not.

Decisions / Actions:

- A simple, standard project process to be drafted, covering agreed scope, preproject cost estimate, budget approval, and signoff on any member rebate/loan mechanism.

- The Artisan / “work in lieu” subcommittee to reconvene and bring back proposals on:
- Standard valuations for member work and an upper limit for rebated membership.
- A consistent explanation that can be given to any member querying why someone has received discounted membership.

- Future projects to follow this process, with clear budgets and reporting of total “value” (club cash plus member contribution).

Budget Structure, Run & Maintain vs Capex

The Treasurer (PN) presented the latest financial position and budget framework. Key points included:

- Green fee income for the current year is approximately £363,000 compared with ~£320,000 last year, exceeding a budget of £340,000 and contributing to improved cash flow.
- The bounceback loan repayments have now ceased (£900 per month), and the longterm loan is due to be repaid around mid2027, improving longerterm headroom.

There was a detailed discussion around budget structure and clarity, particularly:

- Distinguishing “run and maintain” spend (daytoday repairs and maintenance) from capital expenditure (projects).
- The example of a £28,000 spend previously referenced with reference to Property, which included significant capex; last year’s true runandmaintain spend was around £10–11k.
- The differing treatment of fixed costs: all courserelated fixed costs sit in the Greens budget, whereas buildingrelated fixed costs (utilities, cleaning, etc.) are largely central, leaving Property with a smaller, more discretionary “maintenance” pot.

It was proposed that:

- Every area of spend should sit under a clear budget line with an identified budget owner (Greens, Property/ House, Bar, Catering, Administration, etc.), enabling each to monitor runandmaintain against an annual allocation.
- Capex projects should be agreed separately, with their own approval and monitoring, and not simply added into runandmaintain lines.
- Budgets should continue to be based on recent historic spend with allowance for known oneoffs, whilst recognising that unforeseen failures may still require exceptional approval.

Decisions / Actions:

- The draft budgets for the coming financial year (from 1 July) are to be circulated by email to committee members for ratification, with any strong objections to be raised promptly.
- The Finance Committee to review and refine budget presentation so that:
- Runandmaintain and capex are clearly separated.
- Each budget line has a named budget holder.
- A brief summary can be tabled routinely at General Committee.

Greens: Course Condition and Green Fees

JP noted that:

- Despite earlier concerns about course condition and green fees, current performance indicates reductions are not necessary at present.

- The General Manager will continue to liaise informally with relevant parties (e.g. Course Manager, Professional and Greens Chair) for feedback and will act if course condition or visitor feedback suggests a temporary adjustment may be needed.

The Greens report also highlighted:
- A "seeding window" period during which greens carry a paler colour as poa is stressed to favour fescue, but putting performance remains good despite appearance.

Action:
- Alongside finance report, JP requested that monthly comparative greenfee data (this year vs last) by month to be collated and shared (e.g. July vs July, etc.) so the Committee can better see seasonal trends and any midyear dips.

Property: Roofing, Blue Room, Snooker Table

The Property report covered:
- Bar and kitchen roof: A revised quotation has been received, increasing from £2,712 to £3,024, due to material price changes. Materials are expected this week and the work should be completed, and costs incurred, before the financial yearend (30 June).
- Blue Room: Works are nearing completion, with a proposed informal opening at 5 pm on Friday. Drinks will be provided and the Captain & President have agreed to attend.
- Snooker table/room: Questions were raised by IP on the future of the snooker table.CM reiterated that nothing was planned for its removal and consideration is being given to full refurbishment of the snooker room is included as a laterphase capital project and is unlikely to proceed for some years; members are to be advised accordingly.

Actions:
- Property to proceed with bar/kitchen roof works at the revised quotation.
- Club Manager/House to publicise the Blue Room opening to members.
- Property/Communications to respond consistently to member enquiries regarding the snooker table and its longterm status.

Bar and Catering

AS reported:
- Several member complaints have been handled concerning staffing levels and service at specific events (e.g. recent Junior Open), which arose from rota changes based on past usage.
- The team is learning from these incidents and will seek to balance staff costs with service levels more effectively going forward.

JP, PB gave feedback noted that:
- General views on food quality are positive, but there is concern that the main menu has not changed for a long period and appears "unexciting."
- A weekly specials board does exist, but some committee members stated they rarely see it, suggesting it is not being promoted effectively.

Questions were also asked about the consultants, with an understanding that the contract was due to end around May and that a decision on continuation is imminent.

Actions:
- Bar & Catering Subcommittee to:
- Review and refresh the core menu, introducing more seasonal variation while retaining core favourites (e.g. burgers, “posh” fish finger sandwich, pizza).
- Ensure the specials board is clearly displayed and promoted.
- Conclude discussions on the Consultants contract and report back with a recommendation.

Marketing and Events

AS reported that, following on from RL written marketing report, key upcoming activity includes:

- Coverage of charity days and the club’s festival, with external partners invited to provide media/coverage to highlight the history and profile of these events.

Action:
- Marketing to progress planned coverage of the festival and major charity days and to continue regular social and digital promotion of club activities.

Competitions and Handicaps

The Competitions representative advised:
- Work will shortly begin on considering how to construct winter league competition format for next season.
- There is a proposal to expand the current midweek competition into a seasonlong orderofmerit style event, potentially with qualification for an endofseason “Links Trophy” final based on players’ best scores.

- The midweek competition currently attracts around 180-190 players and is one of the most popular events.

An additional suggestion was made to introduce more variety on Sundays, for example:
- Periodic fourball betterball competitions from yellow tees between 10:00 and 14:00, possibly administered as an “open card” comp by the Professional, to encourage participation and clubhouse use.

Actions:
- Competitions Subcommittee to bring back firm proposals for:
- Revised winter league format.
- Midweek competition “finals / trophy” format.
- Trial Sunday team events off yellow tees (possibly via a prorun open card).

Honours Boards

It was reported that work is planned to improve the visibility of honours boards:
- Boards will be resprayed in a darker tone so that lettering stands out more clearly.
- New lettering will be applied via transfers rather than refitted individual letters.

Action:

- Competitions to obtain final arrangements and pricing from the contractor and proceed with respraying and relettering.

Health & Safety and Defibrillator

EIA confirmed:
- A written followup from the most recent health & safety visit is still to be completed and circulated.

The Committee discussed the recent medical emergency in the car park where a visitor collapsed, and where the club's defibrillator and quick staff & member action were instrumental in achieving a positive outcome. Issues raised included:

- The defibrillator access code on some external signage did not match the actual code.
- Awareness among members of the defib location and code is inconsistent.

The Committee agreed that:

- The defib code should be highly visible and routinely communicated.
- The code should appear weekly on the club newsletter, on noticeboards and (for future print runs) on scorecards.

EIA AS also arranging updated emergency firstaid training for staff, including bar, office and green staff, with other interested members potentially able to join sessions.

The Committee noted with thanks that the defibrillator was originally funded through fundraising following the passing of member Gary Thrift, and that the recent incident has underlined the value of that initiative.

Actions:

- EIA/AS to complete and circulate the latest health & safety action list.
- Communications to include the defib code prominently in newsletters and signage.
- Defib code to be added to the next order of scorecards.
- Firstaid training to be scheduled and publicised.

Entertainment and Social

The Entertainment report from PB noted:

- A recent quiz night attracted over 50 attendees and was well received; more such events are planned.
- A request has been received (via Eileen Lacy) for the club to host a charity night (quiz or band) in aid of a young local woman requiring medical treatment in Mexico.
- The mic/PA and cabling now work satisfactorily in the function room.

It was also noted that:

- There was a prior commitment to explore reviving a "Past Champions Dinner" (for male and female club champions, and potentially senior and junior champions), although this has not yet been progressed.

Actions:

- Entertainment Subcommittee (Hugh and team) to:
- Consider and, if appropriate, schedule the requested charity night.

- Bring forward a proposal and date options for a revived “Past Champions Dinner.”

Ladies’ Section

The Ladies’ representative reported that:
- Member Ella Crang has won the Durham County Ladies Championship again; it is her second title, following a previous victory at the club in 2022 at Seaton Carew.
-Member Millie Hixon won the NEWAC Tournament, hosted between Seaton Carew and Goswick Golf Club.

Juniors

As noted, a fantastic week for Seaton’s juniors, with Theo Chapman winning the Junior Salver event and Alex Robertson picking up the Division 2 prize. Even was well supported and AS is working with JLO on how to improve the event further for next year.

Action:
- The club to formally congratulate both (e.g. newsletter, website, noticeboard).

Correspondence

Letter from annual prize draw winner was received regarding the consistent use of the parking spot allotted to him by others, meaning he cannot make use of this spot.

Captains Comments

Course Feedback

- The Captain notes he has received comments earlier in the month from members about “inconsistencies and speeds on the greens.”
- He says he has been defending the greens “quite vociferously,” pointing out that the Greens report already explains there will be some inconsistency while the grass species transition takes place.
- He urges that members with complaints should “put it in writing” so that someone has a fair chance to respond formally.
- He stressed that written feedback is the correct channel and what committee members should be encouraging.

Captain’s Away Day

- The Captain confirms details of his away day: “Captain’s Day trip at Ilkley that’s on July the 24th.
- He says he believes he has already mentioned it to everyone in the room and is encouraged by attendance.

Captain’s Day / Captain’s Charity Day

- The Captain then outlined the Captain’s Day / Captain’s Charity Day.
- There will be a “Competition off the yellow Tees, better ball competition” on Sunday 21 June.
- The day will include a BBQ and a band/entertainment.
- Startsheet will be opened “in due course,” and the Captain hopes for a full field and a busy day at the club.

A.O.B.

Actions Tracking and Subcommittee Progress

Concerns were raised that decisions and actions agreed in previous meetings are not always being tracked or reported back, leading to slippage and loss of momentum
The Committee agreed that:

- A standing "Action Log" should accompany the minutes, with each action owner and due date recorded.
- Action items should then appear as a standing agenda item at subsequent meetings until closed.

- Specific items mentioned for the action log included:
- Reciprocals: ensuring budget/forecasts no longer assume £3,500 of reciprocal costs which have been discontinued.
- Members' loan scheme: progress update from the Manager/Finance on proposed member loan arrangements.
- Artisan membership review: reconvening of the subcommittee and production of clear proposals.
- Past Champions Dinner: Entertainment to progress or close.

There was also discussion of the Artisan subcommittee's pace of work and chairing responsibilities, with an offer from a committee member to chair if the current chair is too busy.

Actions:

- Secretary/Club Manager to create and maintain a formal Action Log, appended to the minutes and reviewed at each meeting.
- Relevant subcommittees to meet and report back on their respective outstanding items.

Competition Entry Fees

In the context of the club's reliance on greenfee income, it was proposed by JP that:
- Club competition entry fees should be reviewed, including the longstanding £4–£5 entry fee level, with consideration given to a modest increase to benefit club income (and/or prize funds).

Action:
- The Competitions Subcommittee to discuss competition entry fees, including the balance between club take and prizes, and to bring a recommendation to a future meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

The next General Committee meeting will be held on 30/6/2026 at 18:00 in the Clubhouse.

That being all, meeting was closed at 19:30.

Signed……………………………………………………………………………. Date…………………………………………….