



HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF SURVEYS

1.0 SURVEY OF GENERAL MANAGERS

In 2021 we carried out a survey among the General Managers of affiliated golf clubs.

The survey was sent to 61 clubs managers and was held open for one month for responses. At the end of February 2021 we had received 23 responses. Although it has to be acknowledged that 37% is in line with typical response rates to surveys, the response rate is disappointing.

The responses were generally supportive of our Championship Programme and our Player Development Programme. Almost everyone thought the schedule of events is about right but some would like to see more handicap events and more support for the average golfer. The perception is that many of our activities are for elite players and not enough for handicap/average players. Some suggested that the events should be better publicised with flyers and posters made available to clubs.

There were some suggestions, for example: live scoring, more mixed events (both social and championship competitions) and greater integration of artisan golf members.

The clubs who replied were generally those who had already engaged and have more interest in County activities and these clubs feel they get good support from Hertfordshire Golf.

At the time of responding to the survey only 11 clubs said that they had been visited by the County Development Officer (CDO).

Generally there was positive feedback on the HG communication. The website was rated highly and the email and face-to-face contact was considered to be excellent. The areas for improvement are to have an increased social media presence and to encourage more clubs to engage through these platforms. Some respondents suggested a digital magazine.

In terms of engagement and education, there were suggestions for more meetings / workshops and face-to-face meetings for managers.

2.0 SURVEY OF CLUB MEMBERS

We distributed a survey for golf club members in February 2022 and left it open for respondents until August 2022.

The survey was sent to clubs and county delegates and we asked them to cascade it to members. It was also sent to those on our direct mail database. 1,263 golfers (out of a possible 23,000) took part in the survey, representing 5.5% of club members. This is a low response but slightly to be expected as it the first time we have carried out a survey of golf members and we were mainly reliant on the survey being cascaded through golf clubs. We acknowledge that a lot of information goes from clubs to members and the survey was fighting for space in a crowded area.

Over 300 respondents had not heard of Hertfordshire Golf before the survey, so clearly there is work for us to do in this area. The majority of those who are aware of Hertfordshire Golf have heard about us through their club manager/club secretary which reinforces the importance of this line of communication.

Although the response rate was low, the quality of the feedback was excellent and has been invaluable in informing our future plans. Here are some of the responses to highlight.

- The majority feel well informed about the World Handicapping System
- The majority say they have a good or very good knowledge of the rules of golf
- 72% feel that Hertfordshire Golf supports their club
- 50% find the website clear and easy to navigate
- 50% are aware of the range of Championships and Competition events that we run
- 79% feel there is a good mix of events (scratch/handicap/men/women/juniors)
- The majority are not aware of the support provided to encourage new players into the game or the support given to existing golfers
- Only 41% are aware of the County teams for juniors and adults and 71% do not know how to get involved with County teams
- Only 36% know about the junior coaching programme
- 71% think that there are sufficient competitions and events for handicap golfers
- While not many respondents know about the programme for developing talented golfers, those who do think that it is very or extremely effective
- 81% are aware of the National Passport/County Card and think it is a worthwhile benefit

While over 50% thought the communication and promotion of Hertfordshire Golf activities was fine and needed no improvement, there was a clear appetite among some for more - more news, more posters and flyers, more updates on the website, more information about the county card offers, weekly tips on golf, rules of golf, WHS.

3.0 HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF RESPONSE

Both survey findings have been closely looked at by the Board Directors and discussed at Board meetings. We have already implemented some actions and activities and plan to take on board some of the suggestions. In no particular order:

- **Competitions and Social Golf:**
We launched a Mixed Foursomes Championship and a Mixed Greensomes Knockout in 2020. 2023 will see the introduction of the following new competitions:
 - a women's Fourball Knockout competition played off handicap, open to all affiliated members
 - a scratch Championship for women aged 19 to 34, run in conjunction with the men's Colts Championship
 - a County Fourball Championship open to all genders, for pairs nominated by their club
- In March 2022 we invited clubs to nominate a **County Competition Liaison Officer (CCLO)**, whose role is to promote county events and help us achieve our goal of increased participation. The role of the CCLO is to support Club Managers by making sure that news and details of our golfing events reach the right people in their club. We currently have 28 CCLOs on our mailing list. This role sits in tandem with the Women's Delegate role which has been in existence since pre-merger days and has proved to be a very successful conduit to members.
- **Digital Newsletter:** We launched a digital newsletter in August 2022 which is delivered by direct mail to 335 people on our database and 1,550 on the County Card database. It was issued fortnightly until October and will be monthly over the winter.

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Early feedback is promising with 69% opening the newsletter and 24% click-through to the website for further information.

- **Face-to-face:** We will review our programme of face-to face events. Currently we have two rules events planned, two WHS update seminars (with a possible virtual 3rd catch-all session once we know the level of attendance) and one annual meeting for the County Delegates and CCLOs. We will look at increasing these if appropriate.
- **Targeted emails:** We will increase these to raise awareness of specific events to increase the number of entries in county events with spare capacity.
- **Email cascade:** We will explicitly encourage recipients to circulate emails among friends and interested parties.
- **Social Media:** We are gradually building our followers on Face Book, Twitter and Instagram. We would like to do more live reporting from events - if you would be interested in helping please let us know.
- **Posters and flyers:** We will email posters and flyers to clubs to promote key events. The CDO will check that these are displayed when he visits clubs.
- **Live scoring** was suggested and we are planning to provide this for the matchplay rounds of the County Championships. We will also trial it for a strokeplay event during the season. In November the Board endorsed the decision to invest in the Golf Genius software which will facilitate live scoring.
- **Rule of the Week** - in response to the survey we have introduced a “Rule of the Week” which appears on the website and in the newsletter.
- **County Development Officer.** The low number of visits to Clubs during 2020 was because of the impact of COVID. This was further impacted in 2021 because the CDO post was vacant for several months. In May 2021 we appointed a new CDO, Matt Crowhurst and club visits restarted. All clubs should have received a visit by the end of February 2023.

The role of the CDO is to:

- Promote golf as a friendly and accessible sport that is inclusive of all people no matter their age, gender, ability or background
- Work with our partners and clubs to provide opportunities for people to try the game
- Support our clubs to achieve SafeGolf accreditation
- Support our existing junior development pathways, Futures Tour and iTour, so that these provide a positive experience for all involved
- Develop initiatives to target new golfers
- Help new golfers with their learning journey and the transition into club membership

The CDO will work closely with clubs to provide a platform to help them to promote what they have to offer to new golfers.

- **County Teams/County Juniors/Coaching/Talent Development Programmes:** We aim to increase the level of news we provide to keep members better keep informed of the progress of the Men's, Boys', Ladies' and Girls' teams in their respective matches. We also aim to improve involvement of new players by encouraging them to enter county competitions and perform well with the reward of inclusion in the relevant team squad.

THANK YOU

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who completed the surveys. We value your comments and your responses will inform our activities. We plan to issue surveys on a regular basis but if you have any feedback in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us.