



Ashbourne Golf Club

Committee of Management Report for year ending 30 September 2023 (incorporating the Financial Report)

Background

Articles 7.1.2 of the Constitution and Rules of the Club provides that the business and affairs of the Joint Club shall be under the jurisdiction and control of a Committee of Management (COM). The article also sets out the composition of COM as follows: The President, the Cathaoirleach, The Captain and Vice Captain of each of the Men's and Ladies' Clubs and four members elected at the AGM.

During the year under review, COM consisted of Martin Farrell (President), Colin Farquharson (Cathaoirleach), Bróna Carton (Honorary Secretary), Michael Bowe (Honorary Treasurer), Simon Flood (Captain), Laura O'Neill (Lady Captain), Ken Walsh (Vice Captain), Angela Walsh (Lady Vice Captain), Ronan Kelly (Course Convenor), Pat Murtagh (Facilities Convenor) and the role of PR and Events Coordinator remained vacant.

The Committee held 11 formal monthly meetings during 2022/2023 in person or by Zoom and numerous ad-hoc meetings. These were required to deal with various issues associated with the operation of the golf Club.

The Committee of Management's main responsibilities are the administration of the financial affairs of the Club, Bar and Catering facilities, Course and Clubhouse and any other matters arising from time to time in the general interest of the members. Much of this work is done through various sub-committees and the main activities of these are detailed hereunder.



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1. 2023 Report of An Cathaoirleach

Handing on the baton

Three years have flown. Hard to believe that it's over and what a great opportunity it was for me to give something back to this great Club. Three years ago, I received my jacket from my daughter, Lauren, at home while we were all in lockdown. Thankfully, while Covid has not gone away, there has been no further periods of restriction although I do appreciate that we all need to be careful and respectful of others as Covid continues to circulate. I hope that during my time in office I managed, with the tremendous assistance of so many, to achieve some measure of progress and helped our Club's development. The one thing that became abundantly clear to me was that there will always be no end of projects, no end of ideas, and no end of competing demands for available limited resources. As was the case five years ago when I was Treasurer; our limiting factor has been and continues to be the availability of funds.

While regular visitors to the Club will appreciate the many changes that have taken place between the course, the Clubhouse, and the bar and catering facilities, this last year has been very much one of taking stock, bedding in services and completing many of the capital projects started in previous years. The most notable of these has been the development of the new putting green, which is expected to be in use by Easter. As part of the works the original plan was to develop drainage from the putting green across the driving range. On review with our Course Team, it was felt that new drainage along the 14th and 17th fairways would be more beneficial given the volume of rain in recent years. As the contractor was already working on the course it made sense to complete this work at the same time and we are already seeing the benefits.

I am delighted to see the increase in food sales and a growing reputation for Boris Beliga and his team outside the Club. While this is positive, further growth is needed and COM will not be shy in doing its bit next year to aid Boris in building up the business. Our bar sales have been less positive in that we have fallen short of our hoped-for target of €250k. Our continued hope is that with the help of Joe Francis and his team we can drive growth in this business and hopefully we will reach our target next year. Considerable thanks must go to you the members who support our catering and bar offerings with food after golf, weekly meals, family occasions and Christmas Parties.

Factors that have certainly challenged us over this past year are mostly outside of our control with increases in the costs of utilities, especially energy, and course materials. The weather played its part in closing our course for 26 days from March to September. We have estimated lost income in this period due to poor weather at €29k. (Competition Fees €9k, Societies €4k, Food €8k and Bar €8k).



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While there have been some signs of price reduction, it has been slow and can easily be impacted by world events. COM continues with our plan of modernisation driving cost reduction. The introduction of fibre broadband into the Club has allowed us to update our telephone system to a digital platform which has reduced our costs. Our next project is to update our alarm system, which is well past its sell by date, and further annual costs savings will follow.

As you will have seen from the motions for this year's AGM, COM will be nominating Michael Bowe as incoming Cathaoirleach. Michael has had a busy year as Honorary Treasurer not to mention learning the intricacies of running a golf club. I wish Michael all the best in his new role. I would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance I have received from Honorary Secretary Brona Carton. This was Brona's first year on COM and has shown herself to be extremely capable coming to terms with club life quickly.

Given that both Michael and Brona are still relative newcomers to COM, and subject to the approval of members, I have agreed to accept the nomination of COM as Honorary Treasurer in order to support both Michael as Cathaoirleach and Brona as Honorary Secretary for another year. I will be standing down next year having completed six years on COM. I urge all members to get behind Michael and Brona and all COM members and give them your support and guidance as they continue the development of our Club.

Your Club Needs You

Earlier this year, COM issued a request to members to get involved in one of the Committees. It is vital that members take an active interest in running our Club and take on the various roles. While there is a hard core of members who work quietly in the background for the three Clubs, we have struggled in recent years to fill positions on COM. Should this trend continue, with fewer members willing to volunteer, our Club may be left with no alternative but to employ a Club Manager which will have an impact on costs.

Membership renewal

COM are very encouraged by the number of new membership application this year many of which are returning former members. Similar to previous years, a special offer membership to December 2024 is available and has been advertised with a local leaflet drop offering both membership and private function room for Christmas parties.

A number of members across all categories did not renew this year. The reasons were varied and included moving to a new home, work demands, along with post-Covid return to work and return to other pre-Covid activities. Inflation, increased interest rates I am sure also had an impact. This has resulted in plenty of playing time for most competitions. This will be



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monitored during the winter months along with the re-introduction of Friday & Saturday competition, which also helps to spread demand over the weekend.

The introduction by COM of an entrance fee last year represents a small contribution paid by new members recognising the historical investment made by existing members in the development of our Club and places a value on the membership we are offering.

Catering & Bar

COM are delighted with the professionalism and hard work undertaken by both Joe Francis and Boris Beliga and their teams throughout the year. They are collectively providing an excellent professional service to members and guests which is evidenced by so much positive, independent feedback.

I wish to publicly thank both Joe and Boris for all their support to all committees and to their openness to developing new services for special functions and events. I also thank all those members who are supporting our bar and catering offering weekly. We have great staff with a constantly changing food offering. Your continued support of both the bar and restaurant is so important. There are many challenges in terms of providing these facilities to members with increases in costs of raw materials along with increased costs of utilities. As noted earlier in my report, we need to strive to reach €250k in bar turnover which will help us make a positive contribution to our Club. This is achievable.

Facilities Management

My sincere thanks to Pat Murtagh for heading up Facilities Management this year. Pat has been a valued member of COM for the past number of years and is looking forward to temporary retirement. Hard to keep a good man down and I would expect Pat will continue working quietly in the background whenever needed.

Pat had a busy year and was delighted to see the installation of our new fibre cable which facilitated the upgrading of our Broadband which in turn allowed us to upgrade our phone system. We have a schedule of capital projects for the year ahead including the replacement of our Alarm System, upgrade of the gate to allow member access by phone app, an overhaul of the heating system, upgrading our lighting in the bar and throughout the facility similar to the LED lighting in the men's locker room. We also have a wish to undertake the upgrading of the Ladies locker room toilets, Hall, Stairs & Landing, which is tired and in need of work. All of these projects are dependent of available funds.



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Finance report

Honorary Treasurer Michael Bowe's report outlines in some detail the financial position of the Club and the many challenges brought about by increased costs, interest rates and inflation. Michael's report provides details around the extraordinary length of time it took to secure a loan with AIB. The application was started by previous Honorary Treasurer Adrian McManus in early 2022 and approval was finally received in September 2023. We have drawn down €140k of the €200k loan with the balance to be retained for future capital projects. We have also received our grant of €54k from Sport Ireland towards the costs of the new putting green.

This year our Club has applied for a Sport Capital Grant of €220k to fund four projects. Two of the projects are around drainage works, the other two projects related to equipment and bunkers. Given that we have been successful over recent years with grants, I would temper your expectations that we will be as successful on this occasion. That said, as we are heading into an election year, I would encourage those with local political contacts not to be shy in encouraging support for the Club. Successful grant applications will be announced next year.

The key messages from Michael's report are that we have limited surplus funds each year and plenty of projects to be completed. His report outlines to members our need to increase revenue, especially in the bar. The challenge posed by the weather this year has had a negative impact on our results across the Club estimated at €29k.

COM actively reviews costs and where possible, drives cost down by efficiency, changed contract and upgrading old systems to more modern versions, such as our phones and alarm. While he points out the level of use of Club Cards, and to all those members who do very much support our bar and food offering, thank you so much. Sadly, we have a considerable number of members who, based on card usage, rarely if ever use our facilities.

I would like to thank Michael for his work throughout the year as Honorary Treasurer and for the amount of support he provided to me as Cathaoirleach. I know Michael will be a very hard working and conscientious Cathaoirleach deserving of all our support.

Life Membership

A motion at our 2019 AGM approved by members provided COM with the ability to raise finance by offering a limited number of Life Memberships. COM has been considering this in recent months as a way of raising between €100k and €200k. All funds raised would be used to reduce Club loans in order to improve our cash flow and drive down our annual financing costs.

It is COM's intention to communicate with members in the months ahead with an outline of how the offer will be structured, the number of memberships to be made available and when it will be launched. To assist COM with its planning, and judge the level of interest, COM is



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seeking expressions of interest from members who may have an interest in such a membership. Initial thinking will be a discounted payment based on current annual subscription amount, taking into account your current age and based on an expected number of playing years.

(Expressions of interest to: Honsec@ashbournegolfclub.ie)

Course and major projects

My sincere thanks to Ronan Kelly who has worked tirelessly with our Course Team throughout the year on many different projects. Ronan has kindly agreed to stay on COM for another year to oversee the completion of various projects including the opening of the new putting green and heading up a group of volunteers who will be working with our Course Team on the removal of all Ash Trees suffering from Ash Die-back.

Major projects overseen by Ronan include the new putting green, drainage on the 14th and 17th, sanding fairways and driving discussion with Ronan Branigan and Alan Mooney, Course Superintendent, around our Sport Capital Grant application. My thanks to Ronan, Mick Reidy and John Finnegan for their help in preparing and submitting the grant application not only for the putting green but also for our recent application. Fingers crossed.

Ronan was ably assisted by many members throughout the year volunteering their time to tackle jobs including hedge cutting, path cleaning, cleaning the driving range, direction signs, recovery of embedded range balls, arranging repairs to the netting and ball equipment and working closely with Alan and the Course Team around the opening of the course during the winter months.

It is great to see the new putting green taking shape and expectation is growing that it will be open for play this Easter.

Complements about our course from members, guests, societies and Golf Ireland have been received throughout the year, and rightly so. The standard and quality of our greens and fairways are there to be seen. My thanks go to Ronan Branigan, Alan Mooney and all the team who have delivered a super course in excellent condition.

Our strategic plan has changed somewhat from last year's report. As I have mentioned on several occasions, there is no end of jobs or projects. The limiting factor has always been available funding. With that in mind we have submitted a Sport Capital Grant application for €226k with four key projects identified:

- Two drainage projects throughout the course
- New equipment – sprayer which is more efficient and more in line with our Green Agenda
- The upgrading and re-constitution of our bunkers



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While our need to upgrade our irrigation system remains as a key project, in consultation with Ronan Branigan and Alan Mooney, it was felt that the above list of projects should take priority over irrigation.

COM's focus for the next number of years will remain our ability not only to meet current immediate needs but also to build up a Capital Reserve Account as much as possible to finance projects.

Societies

As you will see from our Honorary Treasurer's report, society income is down slightly from 2022. Given the poor weather during the summer months we have estimated that we lost circa €4k from societies due to the closure of the course which would bring income up in line with last year.

During the year and following the motion passed by members last year, COM has agreed a detailed protocol with Ciarán Carroll around the booking of societies and reporting to the Club. In addition, COM has been monitoring the availability of playing times, especially during the longer summer days, and believes that there are opportunities to increase the time available for societies while ensuring that members gain more access to prime playing times. It remains a key fundamental for our Club's finance that we protect and where possible grow society and green fee income in order to finance projects while always being sympathetic to members' wishes.

During my time on COM, I have seen a notable change in terms of feedback from societies and groups who come to our Club. While feedback is very complementary about the condition of our course and in particular the standard of our greens, they all make reference to the respect shown to them by our Club. The welcome starts with Ciarán and Sue Carroll in the Pro Shop when they book their golf and again when they arrive at the Club. A member of the **Meet & Greet Group**, which includes Gerry Rooney, President Martin Farrell, John Gorman, Vice Captain Angela Walsh, Brendan Ward, Geraldine Murray and Honorary Secretary Sean Murphy, meet and greet each society and welcome them to the Club. They give them key information about the course and encourage them to come back another day. These members do a super job and this differentiates our Club from so many others. This is one of those actions undertaken by members, which builds on our reputation. This can only be positive in terms of future income growth including our bar and catering offering.

Constitution changes

COM is proposing three changes to our Constitution to include Leave of Absence, Trustee and Honorary Life Membership which will be voted upon at the AGM.



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The proposed changes to Leave of Absence are practical in nature in that members on LOA will be required to confirm their eligibility to COM each year and also pay levies due and an administration charge each year. A letter of explanation on the proposed changes will be issued in advance of the AGM to all those currently on LOA. COM are keen to work with members who need to take some time out on medical grounds, working abroad or for other family circumstances, who all have a desire to return to the Club and resume their membership.

Our Constitution has no time limit for serving as a Trustee to the Club. In accordance with the Charities Act 2009-2016, good corporate governance, guidance from Golf Ireland around the One Club Model, the importance of rotating positions within a club structure and providing members with an opportunity to take on roles, COM is proposing that Trustees will now serve for up to eight years. COM also believe that the eight-year term of office will encourage members to take on the role going forward.

Resulting from concerns raised at last year's AGM around Honorary Life Membership along with representations and feedback from members since, COM are of the view that awarding Honorary Life Membership should be removed from our Constitution for two reasons. The primary one is that COM is of the view that the selection and nomination process has the potential of being divisive among members. The second is the potential financial impact on the Club. COM are happy to retain Honorary Annual Membership as a way of honouring or acknowledging exceptional service to members and others outside the Club. There is a secondary change to allow COM along with the two Clubs to nominate a person for Honorary Annual Membership.

Our Club Lotto

Over the many years our Lotto has been in operation, we have generated significant funds used to complete numerous projects throughout the course and facilities. While it was suspended temporarily because of Covid, prior to that, it was already showing signs of falling interest. Efforts made by the current Lotto Committee of John Finnegan and John Belton to launch our Lotto on a digital platform via our ClubNet App had some success, but it has not returned to the pre-Covid levels. Simply put, we need more members to sign up.

Incoming COM will undertake a detailed review of our Lotto with the Lotto Committee to consider its future. In short, we have currently 234 Lotto members. We need 350 twelve-month members to make it a success.



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Junior Club

I was filled with such pride when I saw pictures of some of our Juniors, looking splendid in their Club Jumpers and later that evening in Jackets and ties, representing both themselves and our Club in St Andrews. Past Junior member Fintan Bonner, PGA and Senior Instructor St Andrews Links Academy, arranged the invitation and I understand Fintan will work with our Club on its future development of Junior Golf. Fintan is a super gentleman and always happy to welcome Ashbourne members should they be in the area visiting St Andrews.

Our Junior Committee, led by Junior Convener Steven Ronan and ably supported by Vice Captains Ken Walsh and Angela Walsh and Committee members, arranged an information evening for Juniors and their parents. The event reinforced the Code of Conduct and what is expected of our Juniors and the Club. It was a super event at which three of our Juniors, Captain Jack Ronan, Mark Muldoon and Jack Minch, shared their experiences and love of golf.

On behalf of the Committee of Management and all members, I sincerely thank the Junior Club Committee and everyone who has given so much of their time to support the development of the Junior Club. There is some incredible talent coming through. Perhaps another Fintan.

My thanks

A massive feature of our Club is the armies of volunteers who do so much around the Club, for the love of it. I fear to name names as I will certainly leave someone out, but all active Club members know who I am talking about. I sincerely thank all the volunteers of the *Clean Up Crew*, the *Water Squad*, the *Tree Huggers* who do so much for the Club. It is nothing less than our own **Men's Shed**. A recent request for volunteers to get involved with a tree survey resulting from issues with *Ash Dieback* has a group of nine already formed. I am so grateful to every member who has responded to my requests for help, guidance and advice during my three years as Cathaoirleach.

Taking part in our **Development Day Event** is one of the ways members can support our Club either by entering a team or by sponsorship. The funds raised benefit our Club and are used to support ongoing projects. This year it was the fairway sanding. There is an enormous amount of work put in by members, giving of their time, to make the day such a success. My sincere thanks to Gerry Rooney, Sean Murphy, Paula Leonard, Terry O'Connor, Liz McKeown and President Martin Farrell. My thanks also to all our sponsors and Ciarán Carroll for Beat the Pro and sale of lines for the Raffle.

My thanks to Sandra Devenney and Ciarán Carroll for driving our Club's engagement with **Club Ash Special Olympics** golf training. From May to the end of August the happy sound of laughter could be heard on Mondays throughout the Club. Brendan Ward, Mary Bannon, Brian Fitzpatrick, Marian Murray, Mary McDonnell, Nuala Somers and Philip Green all deserve our



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thanks for giving freely of their time. I would also like to thank all our members who kindly sponsored gifts for our ten golfers.

My thanks to both Mary Fay and Aoife Driver for all their work during the year and the support they have provided to all members of the Club and COM. Their engagement with and willingness to help members has been positively commented up, and rightly so.

The contribution from our various sponsors is invaluable and represents a significant part of our annual income directly to COM and the two Clubs. Your support makes it possible to run competitions, have successful fund raisers and fund special projects. On behalf of the Membership of our Club I would like to thank all our sponsors most sincerely for their support.

Thank you to the Club's Trustees, Tom Keenan, Pauline Gleeson, Larry Whelan, John Finnegan and Angela Smyth for their continued help and support throughout the year.

COM

Throughout the year President Martin Farrell, Honorary Secretary Brona Carton, Honorary Treasurer Michael Bowe, Captain Simon Flood, Captain Laura O'Neill, Vice Captain Ken Walsh, Vice Captain Angela Walsh, Pat Murtagh - Facilities, and Ronal Kelly - Course have worked tirelessly on your behalf. They do so voluntarily because as a member, they have a genuine interest in the development of our Club. They are not paid, they receive no special preference, and they do not make decisions for any personal gain. They work for all members without preference. With that in mind, I ask all members, who take the trouble to provide feedback, to remember you are writing to members like yourself. While most of the feedback is well received, some of the language used and comments made are unacceptable given we are all volunteers and all members of the same Club. For those members who are outraged with COM decisions or are happy to voice their opinion in public without knowing the facts, you should get involved and join one of the Committees. It has always been the case that it is easier to oversee change from within rather than shouting from outside.

On behalf of the Club, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to those members who experienced the loss of a golfing buddy, family member, friend, neighbour or colleague during the past year. **'Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha'**

Colin Farquharson

Cathaoirleach

6 November 2023



2. President's Report 2023

At the AGM in November last year I said it was an honour and a privilege to be elected as your President and that I was delighted to have been given the opportunity. As I approach the end of my first year I can confirm that it has been a truly great honour and a most enjoyable experience to be your President.

The President is a member of the Committee of Management under the chairmanship of Colin Farquharson, Honorary Secretary, Bróna Carton, Honorary Treasurer, Michael Bowe, and a very committed committee of members who work tirelessly for the continuous development and improvement of our Club. I compliment each member of COM for the amount of work that is carried out at and between the monthly meetings. Thanks also to so many members who do not wish to sit on a committee but make enormous contributions to the running of this great Club in so many ways. If you feel you can give some time, no matter how little I urge you to consider making yourself available to help out.

The President is also a member of the Junior Committee and it has been an education to see all the regulations pertaining to safeguarding and the records that are required to be kept on all matters relating to the Juniors. The Junior coaching days under the stewardship of our Professional Ciarán Carroll and his visiting professionals supported by our Junior Convener, Steven Ronan, are educational, inspiring and entertaining. I am delighted to report that we have a vibrant and active Junior Club.

The Trip to St Andrews with our six top Juniors was an experience of a lifetime for the Juniors and all who travelled. Thanks to our former Junior member Fintan Bonner, now a senior instructor in St Andrews, who came up with the idea and followed it out with meticulous detail culminating in our visit at the end of September. Congratulations to our Junior Captain Jack Ronan, Conor Dwyer, Darragh Dwyer, JJ McManus, Mark Muldoon and Rory O'Boyle who put up a good challenge to the top juniors in St Leonards School at St Andrews. Our Juniors represented the Club to the highest standard both on and off the course and it was indeed an honour for me to represent the Club, speak at the gala dinner and invite St Leonards Juniors to Ashbourne next year for a return match.

During the year I had the pleasure of representing Ashbourne Golf Club at a variety of events outside of the Club. The highlight of these were attending at our interclub team events for Ladies, Men and Juniors. I thank Team Conveners, Mary Carey and Kevin Madden and Frank Bodkin for the juniors, for keeping me informed of the upcoming matches. I witnessed some great golf being played in these matches, which were played in a competitive and courteous manner. It is a source of great pride to see how our members represent the Club on these occasions. Some of our teams progressed to an advanced stage but unfortunately did not get that coveted pennant.



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Our Club is held in high esteem throughout the region and beyond. This was evidenced when we hosted the Leinster Under 16 boys and under 19 girls Golf Ireland competition. We had 87 boys and 39 girls competing in difficult weather conditions. There were nine officials from Golf Ireland in the Club all that day and their praise for the course and the hospitality they received was exemplary.

My President's Prize day was an extraordinary day with upwards of 220 members playing. Thanks to Vice Captain, Ken Walsh and Lady Vice Captain, Angela Walsh for their help with organising the day. Thanks to Competition Secretaries Mark Shortt and Josephine Farrell and their committees for their work in organising the competition and their efficiency in getting the results compiled in time for the prize-giving. In addition, this year we had a prize for the best 5-day members in the Wednesday and Thursday competitions. Thanks to Ciarán and Sue in the pro-shop for their help with the prizes, to Alan Mooney and his course staff for having the course in pristine condition for the day and to Joe, Boris and their staff for the exceptional service throughout the day. A special thanks to my wife Josephine for her support throughout the day and indeed the year. The day was added to greatly by the surprise cake from Alison Byrne, the performance from our young dancer Oisín, the extraordinary singing and music from Christina and Lauren and of course our D.J. Diarmy. Congratulations to Freddie Deignan who played great golf and was a worthy winner. The day and the evening was a great success and I thank everyone who helped out in a variety of ways.

The President's Prize to the Juniors was another highlight with so many Juniors competing at different levels. Congratulations to JJ McManus on winning the overall prize.

I was delighted to be part of a number of other groups and see at first hand the great work being done by a number of members. The Club Development Day committee, headed up by Gerry Rooney, who raised much needed funds, which went towards the sanding of the fairways. The clean-up gang managed by John Gorman, who do so much work at the Clubhouse and surrounds. The meet and greet group co-ordinated by Gerry Rooney, who meet with all societies and give them a welcome chat and information about the course. The re-labelling of the Captains' trees and the labelling of all the donated trees. This project, which is headed up by Michael Reidy, is nearing completion and information will be posted on club news soon. I thank Captain Simon and Lady Captain Laura for their help and support to me during the year and I wish incoming Captain Ken and incoming Lady Captain Angela all the best for the coming year.

I thank Aoife Driver in the office and Mary Fay in accounts for their efficiency in everything they do and their courtesy to me throughout the year.

Sadly, some of our members and close relatives of members died this year. I send my sincere sympathy together with the sympathy of all members to all who have been bereaved. In particular, I want to mention Past Lady Captain, Rita Young, who died in April this year. She was



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a committed member of our Club who served on a number of committees for many years. May She Rest in Peace.

Martin Farrell

President

6 November 2023



3. Financial Report

Introduction

This report is based on the best information available and is subject to completion of the final audited accounts which will be circulated in advance of the Club AGM on Tuesday 28th November 2023.

Summary of main income and expenditure during the year:

Overall Club income increased from €894k to €938k. Reported subscription income increased from €613k to €636k. The annual running costs for the year amounted to €974k (Including depreciation of €76k) as compared to €970k in 2022 (including depreciation of €76K). To counter increasing energy costs, we welcomed the grant received in May 2023 of €7.4k from Golf Ireland through the Government Energy Supports Scheme. We expect to get a further smaller grant by the end of 2023.

Income

- We have deferred €195k (2022 - €169k) of the subscription and machinery levy income into next year, to reflect income from Oct-Dec 2023 and invoiced memberships extending to December 2024.
- Our Driving Range generated €18k (€17k - 2022).
- Contributions from the Men's Club and Ladies Club amounted to €46k and €9k respectively.

Expenditure

- Course maintenance with DBD was €463k (€433k - 2022). The Contract has been reviewed with DBD and the figure agreed for 2024 is €453k. Included in the €463k is €41k for the provision of machinery and €55k VAT which is not recoverable. Similar amounts are included in the 2023 budget.
- Course utility and maintenance costs (excluding depreciation) at end of September 2023 amounted to €55.7k.
- Clubhouse utilities were €49k (€53k - 2022) in the financial year.
- All essential Clubhouse maintenance contracts were reinstated during the year.
- We drew down the pre-approved Capital Grant for the new putting green and undertook additional drainage works on the course. The final cost was €64k (€54k capital grant and €10k from the Club Lotto).

Golf Societies, Visitor Green Fees, Driving range and Fundraising

Visitor green fees and Golf Societies are a critical source of income for the Club. Our income this year is down from 2022 reflecting the bad weather we have experienced, especially the high levels of rainfall.



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	2023	2022	2021	2020
	€	€	€	€
Society Income	49,763	54,110	33,711	19,771
Green Fees	25,391	30,077	28,478	20,977
Driving Range	18,823	17,230	15,403	11,450
Total	93,977	101,417	77,592	52,198

The Club Development Day raised €13k that went towards funding the sanding of the fairways in September 2023. This will be an important Club fundraising event on Friday the 10th of May 2024. Put it in your diary.

Major projects and Associated Costs

Building on the work in 2022 we have continued with upgrade work across the Club, some more obvious than others. Key projects during the year included:

- The new putting green (due to be ready March/April 2024) and drainage works on 14th and 17th fairways - €64K
- Fairways sanded in Sept - €16k
- Repairs to leak in Clubhouse roof - €2k
- New fountain pump installation - €3.1k
- Upgrade works on the CCTV security cameras and new cameras - €2.8k

Capital and Other Costs

Assets purchased during the year were as follows:

- New VOIP Phone system – €1.3k
- New Dishwasher – €4.7k
- New Bar EPOS screen in Bar – €1.5k

Cashflow planning

Overall Club bank debt stands at €636k as of the 30th of Sept 2023. With the significant increases in interest rates this year this adds to our yearly costs of financing these repayments. €25k of historical Club debt to Club members was paid during the year and the balance outstanding is €75k.

Cashflow planning and management is undertaken each month as part of COM meetings. This planning assists in the monitoring, and prudent management of day-to-day expenditure and on capital projects in the coming year. The cash flow position of the Club remains challenging in the last quarter of each year.



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The goal of building a capital reserve has been outlined in the past and continues to form a substantial part of COM plans. Capital projects such as the course drainage, irrigation system replacement, bunker and tee-box improvement programmes are essential to not only maintain the high standard of our course but also to enhance our protection barriers to climate change. That said, we have set aside €85k into a Capital Reserve for 2024 which is available to COM to fund projects. COM's strategic focus is to:

- Continue to build a Capital Fund using the Capital Levy receipts from Subs each year.
- The balance of the new AIB Loan secured of (€200k) to be set aside for capital projects.
- Apply for capital grants to the extent that they are available.
- Utilise any annual surplus as an addition to the Capital Fund
- Continue to pay down historical member debt and bank loans.

I would like to acknowledge the considerable work that was undertaken by John Finnegan and Mick Reidy in preparing and submitting the recent application under the current round of the Governments Sports Capital Grant for €220k. Their outcome will not be known until the Spring of 2024 at the earliest.

Mary Fay continues to be instrumental in closely managing the day-to-day running of the Club's finances. She has supported me across all financial aspects and along with Aoife Driver makes an immeasurable contribution to the financial and overall administration of the Club.

AIB Loan

We met all our commitments in relation to loan repayments in the financial year. To replace working capital used by investing in capital projects in the last 2 years and to plan for the funding of the capital projects in the future, COM successfully applied for a €200k loan from AIB. A drawdown of €142k was finally transferred in September 2023. The balance will only be drawn down against specific capital projects as required by COM.

Driving Bay Development

Our practice bays continue to contribute to our Club income. Following advice received around accounting for VAT on income, we had estimated a rebate on the original development of the practice bays at €11k. This was finally resolved with Revenue in July 2023 and the final rebate received was €14k.

Club Lotto

Thanks again to John Finnegan, John Belton and all the others Club members for their continued work on the Club Lotto. However, it remains very disappointing to see the low numbers of Club members who participate in this – less than 40%, especially as it is so easy to enter and buy your annual ticket online via our Club app. There have been three lucky jackpot winners this year. COM, in discussion with the Lotto Committee will review its future viability and/or alternatives.



Ashbourne Golf Club

Men's & Ladies Club contributions

Contributions from both Clubs came in at €55k (€60k - 2022) which are appreciated contributions. Amendments to our Constitution now see surplus funds in both Clubs transferred to COM at the end of each financial year. This assists COM in financial planning into the future.

Days Lost to Weather

The golf course was closed or partially closed for 26 days this year due to bad weather:

- March 10 days
- April 8 days
- July 4 days
- Aug 2 days
- September 4 days
- Total 26 Days**

The financial impact of this in terms of revenue to the Club is significant in terms of lost income from members, societies, and the bar/restaurant. An estimate of this loss is in the region of €29k for the 26 days broken down as follows:

- Competition fees €9k
- Golf Societies €4k
- Food €8K
- Bar €8k

Bar Trading

Our Club provides a valuable and quality service to our members and visitors. With this comes a cost whereby the running of our Clubhouse Bar requires staff present even during periods when activity is low. In addition, there were cost increases across all suppliers this year. Our targeted turnover is to reach €250,000 per annum and this is a real challenge.

Bar trading account	2023	2022
Total sales	€169k	€179k
Primary Gross Margin	€95k (56%)	€105k (59%)
Staff costs	€106K	€92k
Contribution to Club overheads	-€10k	€13k

The appointment of Joe Francis as Bar Manager in October 2022 has resulted in stability and a high standard in the service to members and visitors. Likewise, since BOBOS Catering (Boris Beliga) took over the catering service in October 2022, the standard and quality of food on offer has been consistent and the quality and experience widely acknowledged. However, this service comes at a cost, and we continue to lose money on bar trading. This is an area that COM



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will have to tightly manage and monitor next year. It is up to **ALL** members to make the effort to make this financially viable. We have to strive to achieve bar turnover of €250,000.

Our downstairs function room is now fully operational and has got busier this year and with word of mouth, local area advertising and new billboards at the entrance we are hoping it will continue to attract new business.

We currently have approx. €12k still unspent on the member bar levy (from Subs 2023) with 115 members who have unspent balances of >€50. There are 143 members who have not used their Bar card at all this year. See table below:

	No of Members	Spend over	Total Spend
		€	€
Total Bar card spend on food and beverages	781		310,584.00
	267	€500	291,370.00
	128	€700	230,620.00
	88	€1,000	197,075.00
	147	<€100	6,017.00
Spend well below €100	147		
No card usage	144		
Total	291	€250	72,750.00

If 291 members spent €250, we would generate €72,750 which would bring us closer to our €250k turnover.

COM focus for 2024

Despite the many challenges the future is very positive for our Club. The joining fee of €1,500 will remain in place but new members can now pay this in instalments over 3 years. Returning members can make a case in their application to have the fee waived if certain criteria are met. COM's focus for 2024 includes the following:

- A drive to Increase membership (already commenced).
- Consider a limited life-time membership offer to raise funds specifically to reduce Club debt.
- Upgrade the Club security system following broadband upgrade to a digital system with lower annual running costs.
- Ash tree survey and removal of diseased trees. This is a significant Club issue and an update will be given at the AGM.
- Course works programme to include (dependant on the success of our Sport Capital Grant Application):
 - Drainage work in key areas of the course.
 - New Course Sprayer.
 - Commencement of bunker upgrades.
 - Tee box upgrades.



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- Smaller scale work identified include:
 - Repair works to potholes in driveways and car parks.
 - Tackling Problems with our Ash trees.
 - Painting lines in the car parks.
- *Club Facilities – See note below
- Continue to expand our bar and catering offering and utilising our downstairs function room.
- Further improve the new e-purse system with upgrades as issues are identified.
- Solidify arrangements in relation to Golf Societies and the important income that they generate for our Club.

***Club Facilities**

As noted in the facilities report upgrades to the Club, although important and needed, remain a financial challenge. COM will endeavour to do whatever is possible within the current financial constraints and as highlighted in the report by the Cathaoirleach.

Looking Ahead

There is no increase in membership Subscriptions / levies for 2023/2024. Income generation remains our biggest challenge each year to counteract rising costs. To reach our target in terms of reserves, we need some positive financial years ahead, where minor projects can be undertaken one by one while increasing our reserves for the long-term projects. Income generation is key to planning all capital projects. Green fees and our practice bays play a vital part in this. Increased costs are directly and indirectly impacting our Club. The impacts are the continuing increases in energy, course materials, staff and general running costs. However, there are signs of some cost reductions but a general reduction in inflation is not expected until later next year. COM will therefore continue to review all potential sources of income, to ensure we maximise all opportunities while at the same time monitor closely and prudently manage all expenditure in order not only to “balance our books” but to plan for the future of our Club.

Our ask of you

Once again COM request all members to:

- Renew annual subscriptions as early as possible to assist cash flow.
- Join the Club Lotto – you will be able to enter online via the Club app or via the Club office.
- Support both Clubs by entering competitions and sponsoring an event.
- Actively participate, as a priority, in Club fundraising days in 2024.
- Join committees or work in the background by helping with voluntary small project course work.
- Bring your Golf Society and friends to the Club – all are welcome.



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- Plan at least one family celebration in your Club each year.

Note of Appreciation

- Thank you to all those members who voluntarily provided their services and workmanship in the Club over the year.
- Many thanks to all members of COM for their assistance during the year.
- Particular thanks to Mary Fay who provided me with endless assistance and answered my many questions. I am most grateful for her work and support throughout the year.

Michael Bowe
Honorary Treasurer
6 November 2023



Ashbourne Golf Club

4. Course Report

2023 is a year that will be remembered for extremes in weather. We had periods of drought, periods of flood and everything in between. This gave rise to its own maintenance issues, an unprecedented number of course closures but the team fielded things as they came their way.

In addition to our routine maintenance we were busy with various development programmes of work. Most notable among these were the new putting green, the additional drainage on the first, fourteenth and seventeenth but also included smaller projects such as tree planting on the 1st, 3rd, 16th and 17th; extensions and redressing of pathways and the work to the 15th greenside bunker. These, along with the recent fairway sanding, will ensure that the Club continues to improve on its on-course facilities and conditions. We did experience issues with some of the greens in early September but our programme to remedy this is working well and the surfaces will once again be running true over the winter months.

Since the return to golf post Covid the course is seeing plenty of play and we once again hosted many visiting golfers, societies, classics and the Leinster U16 boys and U19 girls. Feedback has been very positive from our visiting golfers which is testament to the work that is put in. Unfortunately, we lost our assistant Barry Kavanagh this year as he took up the head position at the Nuremore GC. We would like to thank Barry for his years of service that he gave to Ashbourne.

The program for winter 2023/24 has not been fully agreed upon but it is likely to include the renovation of some greenside bunkers along with the long list of renovation works which include sodding repairs, aeration, rough management, tree planting, pruning etc. This work will result in further refinement of our course that will add to the golfing experience in 2024.

We would like to thank Alan, Shane, Brian, Philip, Daniel and Alex for the continued hard work that they put in to present the course in the manner that we are now accustomed to. There are many early mornings and some late evenings to ensure that all tasks are complete. We have recruited a new member of the team to replace Barry and they will start in January and we are looking forward to including them in our green keeping team.

Finally, we would like to thank the course committee, the volunteers and all the members for the selfless work that they put into the golf course and the courtesy that is extended to our staff at all times.

Good Golfing.

Ronan Branigan
Course Contractor

Ronan Kelly
Course Convenor

6 November 2023



Ashbourne Golf Club

5. Facilities and House

We unfortunately have an old Clubhouse at Ashbourne Golf Club that is now in urgent need of upgrading. It would be easy to spend €100 to €150 thousand and wonder where the money went.

The roof slates and lead flashings all need replacing. John Stewart has made some repairs this year and has indicated that these slates have a life span of 25 years which we have well exceeded at this stage.

The hallway and stairs needs painting, also new stair carpet needed.

The Ladies locker room showers and toilets upstairs and downstairs are out-dated and require more up to date sanitary ware that uses less water, thus protecting the environment and reducing our water charges.

The present situation re all the above requires regular maintenance on an on-going basis with constant calls to the plumber and electrician.

We are indeed lucky to have such a good bar manager in Joe Francis .His many years of experience in the business and his professionalism in training the new staff is evident. He has enhanced the bar layout and his messages on ClubNet has elevated the Club bar to a new level.

Boris Beliga, our catering contractor, is a man with great patience - things break down in the kitchen quite often and repair men sometime take ages to call out. He has also improved our Club with his varied menu and food quality. He deserves our full support through the year. The clean-up group headed up by John Gorman carry out many jobs around the course and Clubhouse through the year and we are indebted to the many members (too many to mention by name) who volunteer when the WhatsApp call goes out.

We have installed a new phone system and fibre network this year and COM has also sanctioned the installing a new alarm system for the Clubhouse and pro shop that should be fitted before the end of November.

Aoife Driver in the office can certainly be called the Girl Friday of the Club as she is so capable of dealing with anything that lands on her desk. She has been a great help to me through the year with emergency maintenance problems as they arise.

My thanks must also go to Tony Higgins who was a great help as back up, always available as cover when I was away on holidays.

As our Cathaoirleach Colin Farquharson steps down from his role this year, I would like to convey my gratitude and admiration for the great work and time that he has given over his



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three year tenure in managing the Club in such a fine manner. Indeed, we should all be proud and supportive of the many members of Ashbourne Golf Club, including COM members, who give up their time freely and selflessly to the successful day-to-day running of the Club.

Pat Murtagh

Facilities

6 November 2023



6. Membership Report

Membership numbers at 30 September 2023 are as show below. As you will see, there has been a drop in member numbers in the full- and under-30 categories. COM set 550 as maximum capacity for members who can play on Saturday/Sunday. It was felt that any additional numbers may cause too much pressure on timesheets during the winter months. However, as we have seen this year, there has been very little pressure on timesheets in 2023.

As a consequence, there is membership availability and we have started a marketing campaign to encourage new members to join, via social media, ads in the Ashbourne News, a leaflet drop in the Ashbourne area and the banner at the Club entrance.

We have 26 people on Leave of Absence. Members on Leave of Absence are required to apply to have their period of absence extended if it goes beyond the original period requested. This is reviewed annually. The Leave of Absence provisions of the Constitution is among the provisions for review by members at this year's AGM with a view to making the process more responsive to members' needs and more transparent.

	2023	2022	(pre-Covid) 2019
Full members	463	509	484
Five-day members	124	120	91
Under 30 members	30	41	15
Country/overseas	3	5	6
Total	620	675	596

Acknowledgement

The Committee of Management would like to thank all committees, sub-committees and volunteers for their significant work throughout 2023. The Club would not function without your selfless contributions.

I would like to thank Ciarán and Sue Carroll and all the staff in the Pro Shop

Thank you to all the members who volunteered to help with special events throughout the year, in particular with the Junior Academy and the Club Ash Special Olympics Coaching Programme during the summer of 2023.

Sincere thanks also go to the members who once again gave financial sponsorship or donated prizes to present to competition winners or participants in our special events.

My thanks to Aoife Driver in the Club Office and Mary Fay in Accounts who carry out their roles in such a professional and friendly manner and provide enormous support to the Committee of Management.



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And finally, my thanks also to An Cathaoirleach, Colin Farquharson, and former Honorary Secretary, Sandra Devenney, whose support and guidance has been invaluable to me in my first year on the Committee of Management,

Brona Carton
Honorary Secretary
6 November 2023