

NEW FOREST

Dear Member

I am sure that your patience is being tested dealing with the current lockdown and continued closure of golf courses in Ireland. I for one cannot wait to start the golfing season and meet you all when we are able to open again. The golf course will be ready and waiting for another busy season. Our greenkeeping staff have continued to maintain the golf course during this third lockdown. The staff and I will continue to comply with government guidelines in order to provide a safe environment for you to enjoy your golf in 2021.

Covid 19 has affected everyone in so many ways, both personally and professionally. The year 2020 will be remembered as a time when we were all told to stay at home for weeks at a time to protect ourselves. For the golf industry there were highs and lows throughout the year. The low points of course closures and continuous restrictions were obviously difficult for us all. However, the resurgence in the participation of golf was a welcome outcome for the sport in Ireland. Golf clubs around the country seen a surge in membership and New Forest was no different. Our growth in membership far exceeded our expectations. New Forest has had a total membership base of 250 – 300 people over the past few years. On October 31st 2020 the total membership was 580. The breakdown was as follows.

Male Members 348

Female Members 81

Student Members 26

Junior Members 125 (52 x Under 10) (49 x Under 14) (24 x Under 18)

The increase in membership numbers came in every category. With such an influx in membership, difficulties arise in managing the timesheet. I hope that we have been able to accommodate all our members. I also hope that you got to play as much golf as you could in 2020.

I was personally delighted to see the golf course so busy for the season. This was the first time I had seen full timesheets day after day in my time in the club. We received so many positive comments from our members throughout the year which was a welcome break from the news of the ongoing pandemic.

Competition entry also exceeded our expectation. Our weekly members and open competitions were supported by all our members in record numbers. The inter club scene, although shortened and reduced was exciting for New Forest. Our teams were very competitive across all competitions. New Forest had impressive wins against local opposition in the Junior Cup, Jimmy Bruen, Pierce Purcell and Barton Cup. The Barton Cup team was cruising to the final when the inter club season came to abrupt stop in October. I hope to see this level of interest and high level of golf continue in 2021.

As is tradition here in New Forest, membership renewal invoices are sent to each member in December ahead of the new year. Given the circumstances that transpired in 2020 we were posed with a task of making our golf membership fair to all our members, in every category. The task had been made quite difficult as some members paid a full year's subscription in 2020 and missed 16 weeks of the year, while new members were given a reduction to join for 7 months membership and missed 6 weeks. Some members missed more time as there were county to county restrictions. There were also some members who decided to sign up to a combined membership to include 2021 also. When putting a plan together for membership all the above scenarios were considered.