



## THE NEW LOOK IN MANAGEMENT AT LANGLEY PARK

This document initially explains the previous organisation, the reasons for the change and then the new organisation and what it hopes to achieve –

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*(revised June 2011)*

### Old Organisation

The Club was managed by a committee comprising of the:

- ⌘ Captain (Chairman)
- ⌘ Honorary Treasurer (all ex officio)
- ⌘ Vice Captain
- ⌘ Lady Captain
- ⌘ 12 elected members

One-third of the elected members retired each year and were not eligible for re-election for at least one year.

The above formed the General Committee which was divided into the following sub-committees. The briefest details of their responsibilities were:

<b>GREEN</b>	Course maintenance. Competitions
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Dances, draws, films. (one lady member co-opted)
<b>HOUSE</b>	House maintenance Bar and Dining Room
<b>FINANCE</b>	Control of expenditure Balance Sheets Membership

The Captain and Vice Captain sat on all sub-committees, and the Finance Committee comprised these and the Chairmen of all the sub-committees. The sub-committees had limited powers, but major decisions, eg. expenditure outside the annually approved budgets or anything likely to be controversial, had to go to the General Committee.

### Reasons for change

The weaknesses of such a system will appear to be apparent to all secretaries, but in deciding to ask the Club members to change the constitution so that the Committee could be replaced by a Council of Management, a letter was sent to all members by way of an explanation.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this stage to point out that the changes were the brainchild of the previous year's Captain, Mr C J Palmer. It was due to his drive that the considerable preliminary

work was done and the draft new Bye-Laws and Articles of Association were produced. He is a great believer in communication and it is worth noting that the letter sent out achieved its object.

150 members attended the Extraordinary General Meeting convened to vote on the changed constitution. This could have been quite controversial, but no questions were asked, and only one member voted against one of the resolutions without explaining his reasons. The business of the meeting was concluded in 12 minutes.

## New Constitution

There are now two bodies:

- The Committee**

Captain (Chairman)	Immediate Past Captain
Vice-Captain	9 elected members

One-third of the elected members must retire each year and are NOT eligible for re-election. The Committee concerns itself with social and golfing matters.

- The Council**  
Six elected members - from whom a Chairman is chosen  
( $\frac{1}{3}$  must retire each year but are eligible for re-election)  
Honorary Treasurer  
Captain

The Council has divided its responsibilities as follows:

1. Chairman - co-ordinator.
2. Member for Finance - works closely with the Treasurer.
3. Member for Course and Green Staff.
4. Member for House Staff and Services.
5. Member for Building Maintenance and Improvements.
6. Member for Membership.
7. The Captain acts as liaison between the Council and the Committee

Each Council member has been making a detailed analysis of the problem in his sphere of responsibility eg:

- ✂ Cost analysis of maintaining bunkers;
- ✂ Cost analysis of keeping the Club open on winter evenings;
- ✂ Detailed survey of the fabric of the Club House.

To expedite the business of the Council meetings, the members circulate papers in advance, setting out the considerations and making recommendations. Thus it is hoped that, armed with all the facts, decisions can be made without the interminable discussions that so many of us are used

to. So that a running check can be made on the Club's financial position, in addition to the usual income and expenditure statements, a monthly balance sheet will be available.

The real success of the scheme no doubt depends primarily on the calibre and qualifications of the members willing to offer themselves for election. The important thing is, that having really got to understand the problems, one-third of them will not have to be thrown off the Council each year.

It is too early to say whether we have found a good answer to our problems, and it may well be inappropriate for me to give a progress report at some later date. However if anyone would like to know how we are getting on or would like to offer advice, I would be delighted to invite them to play a round of golf and discuss the problem.

The following letter was sent to all members prior to the Extraordinary General Meeting:

***Dear Member***

It has become increasingly evident in recent years that the present Constitution of the Club does not provide a basis for the most efficient administration of its affairs. The weaknesses are manifold but they can be broadly identified in the following terms.

The administration of the Club is the responsibility of an elected Committee, one third of whose members are required to retire each year. The Committee is chaired by the Captain who, due to the duration of his term of office, exercises this function for only one year. The day-to-day management of the Club is entrusted to the Secretary/Manager, but generally speaking his powers are very limited. They do, however, vary according to the strength or weakness of the Captain and his Committee and in relation to the Secretary/Manager's own personality and capacity.

The burden of work and responsibility attached to the office of the Captain and to membership of the Committee has increased considerably due to many factors, particularly rising costs, constant changes of staff, the continuing problems of maintaining the premises in good order and the need for careful and detailed consideration of schemes for the improvement of the Course and Club House. So much so that if the officers and members of the Committee are to do their job properly under the present Constitution, vetting every aspect of income, expenditure and policy in a responsible fashion and fostering improvements to the facilities of the Club within very limited financial resources, they must bear what is considered to be a most unreasonable burden. In such a situation, the administration of the affairs of the Club with consistent and continuing efficiency cannot be expected.

The fact that the identity of the Captain and Committee changes at short intervals seriously inhibits the implementation of a progressive policy and sufficient control of revenue and expenditure to ensure that the best possible use is made of the financial resources of the Club. There is no better illustration of the consequences of this lack of continuity than the fact that the club's accounts for some years have indicated a lack of liquidity. This cannot be attributed to any

one Committee for it is without doubt the result of failure to pursue a well-conceived long-term financial policy.

A further disadvantage of lack of continuity in the administration of the Club is evidenced by the frequent changes in rules of procedure and day-to-day policy. Well conceived rules have been amended or rescinded simply because a new Committee has been unaware of the reasons for the introduction of such rules, whilst other rules have been passed without proper appreciation of why they had not been previously adopted.

The conditions governing the election of the Committee are such that it frequently happens that individuals lacking the necessary attributes and experience to perform their duties properly are elected to this important office, either because of their popularity or because other candidates are unpopular even though more able. To continue such an arrangement when the difficulties attaching to the administration of the Club's affairs necessitate the highest possible degree of management skill and experience must inevitably affect adversely the interests of members.

These then are the problems that have given cause for concern to the Past Captains of the Club and to the present Committee. It would be wrong to convey the impression that they are new problems or that they are peculiar to Langley Park Golf Club. On the contrary they have been steadily increasing for a number of years and it is known that the same problems are facing many other Golf Clubs today.

The Past Captains and the present Committee are satisfied that the solution to the problem outlined above lies in a change in the Constitution of the Club; a change designed to achieve the following objectives:

- a) The administration of the affairs of the Club by a Council of Management, the members of which would be democratically elected, not because of their popularity but because of the special qualities they possess for this important office.
- b) Continuity in the management of the Club's affairs and in its financial policies.
- c) An easement in the burden of Captaincy designed to ensure that the Captain is afforded the time and opportunity to secure the pleasure he should rightfully expect to enjoy during his year.
- d) The organisation of the Club golfing events, matches and social functions by an elected Committee, the membership of which would be subject to regular change.
- e) The provision of proper and adequate means of communication between all members, the Council of Management and the Committee.

These changes require the adoption of new Articles of Association and new Bye-Laws which are enclosed.

To assist members in their consideration of this important matter it may prove helpful to provide answers to some of the questions which might be asked. They cannot all be anticipated but the following comments should cover more obvious points with which members will be concerned.

**1. How will members be nominated for election to the Council?**

Nominees must be full members and will require to be proposed and seconded by full members. The following information regarding each nominee will have to be supplied:

- a) Age.
- b) Date of becoming a full member.
- c) Profession, occupation or employment.
- d) Name of firm or company.
- e) Position held.
- f) Degrees and qualifications, if any.
- g) A brief outline of the views he holds regarding the future development of the Club.

The purpose of such detailed information will be to enable members to judge whether or not the candidate's qualifications are adequate and his views sound.

**2. What qualifications should a candidate for election to the Council possess?**

He should be of mature age, have been a full member long enough to have familiarised himself with the procedures and rules of the Club, be a man of character and integrity and it should be evident from his occupation or employment that he possesses sound administrative experience.

**3. Will the Council be dominated by Past Captains?**

The process of democratic election will ensure that the members of the Council are those considered by the majority of the members of the Club to have the necessary ability and experience whether they are Past Captains or not.

**4. How will the proposed Constitution provide continuity of administration?**

Retiring members of the Council will be permitted to offer themselves for re-election and may and probably will be nominated by the Council provided it considers that they still have a valuable contribution to make to the running of the Club.

**5. If the task of the present Committee is too arduous, will members of the Council not have to bear the same burden?**

Initially yes, and members nominated for election to the Council must not accept such nomination unless they are prepared to devote a considerable amount of their time to the affairs of the Club. In the long term, administrative procedures and controls will be established, the workload will be fairly apportioned and much of the detail of administration will be delegated to the Secretary/Manager as he demonstrates his capacity to encompass additional responsibilities. It is emphasised that basic financial controls and systems along business-like lines will be implemented immediately. These,

together with regular reports from the Secretary/Manager, will ensure that the Council is able to take decisions promptly and the need for protracted discussions will be eliminated.

**6. Will there be any overlapping in the responsibilities of the Council and the Committee?**

No. The functions and responsibilities of each body are clearly defined. The Council will deal with all aspects of administration and finance. The Committee will organise all golfing and social activities, deal with handicapping and will exercise such other responsibilities as may be delegated to them by the Council.

**7. How will members' problems, wishes and suggestions be communicated to the Council or Committee?**

By letter or personal representation to the Secretary/Manager, whose duty it will be to report such matters to the appropriate body. The suggestion book would of course be continued. The Ladies Committee will have direct access to the Committee in consequence of the Lady's Captain having automatic membership of the Committee, but communication with the Council will be through the Secretary/Manager.

**8. What influence will members have over the level of subscription?**

It is at present the responsibility of the Committee to recommend variations in the level of subscription when necessary. This responsibility will be exercised by the Council but any recommendation involving an increase in the subscription of full members will still require approval by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in person or by proxy at the General Meeting.

**9. What could members do if they felt that the Council or the Committee were incompetent?**

It would require only 15 members to call an Extraordinary General Meeting and a majority vote of full members on a resolution calling for the resignation of the body in question. In such circumstances of course the necessary nominations for a new Council or Committee would require to be formally approved by the members.