



## PROCEDURAL MANUAL

Keith Lloyd writes about the subject of detailing office procedures.

Secretary At Work: Reviewed November 2011

My first experience at administering a golf club was some 13 years ago. The position was that of Honorary Secretary, and I was elected by way of a ballot of the membership at an AGM. I was informed late that evening that the keys would be handed over the following morning, at 9.00 am sharp. My predecessor, understandably disgruntled at being deposed after 16 years service, was true to his word in passing on said items. Before leaving (at 9.05 am) he simply stated “the staff would expect their wages by midday – good luck!”

When I took up the post of Secretary at Cardiff Golf Club some 18 months later, I was fortunate to have the assistance of a lady that had been at the Club for about 5 years. However, my predecessor had left the Club 3 months previous, and to say the least the Club had not been run particularly well in this interim period.

Since arriving here at Head Office in Weston-super-Mare I have had the benefit of intense training and induction from the existing staff; Ray, Gill and Julie, the benefits of which are obviously much better than my other experiences.

It is with these experiences in mind that I recommend each serving Secretary compiles a procedural manual for their Club, with the emphasis on how matters affect the Club Secretary/Manager. I would further suggest that the style be one of a simple reference document and in a user-friendly format such as an A4 binder, backed up by the contents saved on a floppy disc.

No doubt many secretaries will take the view that this will be a very time consuming exercise, and it would not be justified as a priority item on their ever-growing list of duties. I would however ask them to consider the options here, as this compilation could actually benefit them in many ways:

- ☛ when there are “operational” queries raised at Committee meetings
- ☛ when the new Captain takes office and may only have a sketchy idea how the club runs
- ☛ where there is a change of office assistant(s) either through termination, mid/long term illness or maternity leave
- ☛ it could be of comfort to the conscientious Secretary, who may be off work with a stress-related illness, to know that others at the club are able to carry on as normal in their absence.

As a guide therefore I would recommend the following are included, bearing in mind the list is not by any means exhaustive and could be modified to suit the particular club:

### 1. Legal and Essential Details

Law requires all of the following items, and most are for fixed periods of time. In some cases, there is the requirement to apply for a renewal well in advance of the expiry date, so it is therefore worth listing both the expiry and renewal application dates in a clear and accessible form.

- 📄 Club Registration Certificate
- 📄 Gaming Machine Licence
- 📄 Data Protection Licence
- 📄 Performing Rights/Phonographic Licences
- 📄 TV Licence
- 📄 Tractor/Vehicle Road Tax
- 📄 Petroleum Licence
- 📄 Health & Safety Policy
- 📄 Fire Certificate
- 📄 Insurance Policy
- 📄 Health & Safety Policy Document (*no expiry date but requires regular reviews*)
- 📄 Food & Hygiene Policy Document (*no expiry date but requires regular reviews*)

### 2. Policy Documents

#### 📄 Course Policy Document

This should indicate what role, if any, the Secretary has in the responsibility for closing (and re-opening) the golf course, the use of golf buggies/trolleys etc., and on the suspension of play during abnormal conditions.

Competitions should be covered, again with particular reference to the role and/or involvement of the Secretary in administering entries, processing and publishing of results. It must also be clear if the club has an “instant” or “end of month” up revision of handicaps policy.

#### 📄 Membership Policy Document

This should state the policy on accepting new members (eg sponsor requirements, ceiling figure on number of members, interviewing procedures – by whom and at what point during the application). Any policy on entrance fees should be identified, and whether it is applicable to all categories of membership. The allowance or otherwise of transferral of status of membership should be clarified (eg Full playing to Social may be granted on the grounds of age and/or infirmity only, and may be viewed as a “one way ticket” only). Payment of subscription invoices should also be covered here, particularly in relation to instalment schemes, early/late payment adjustments, and of course the deadline dates by

when payment must be made, to include any particular restriction for entering competitions.

The Club may be fortunate enough to have a demand for membership and consequently a sizeable waiting list. If so, the procedure for processing those on the waiting list requires definition, as a points scheme relating to age category, family connections, handicap status and/or re-location factors may be in operation as opposed to a straight first come first served basis.

There may be certain members who receive Honorary Membership (ie payment of subscription waived) in line with the office they hold, which may or not be included in the Club's Rules. These need to be identified, in addition to any expense account, which may be in operation.

#### **Fire Risk & Evacuation Procedure**

There should be a clear statement as to who is responsible for checking emergency lighting systems, fire drills and evacuation procedures, and also a reference as to when trial runs are to be activated.

#### **First Aid – Training and Operations Procedure**

The Secretary will need to know who is qualified to administer first aid, when each individual's term of qualification expires, and what, if any, arrangements are required to maintain such requirements.

### 3. Nuts & Bolts

This section should include as much information as possible about the seemingly mundane matters such as knowing where the keys to the local rules board are kept! I am in no doubt that there is often a considerable amount of time to be saved by simply knowing where things are or how things work.

#### **Office Equipment**

Most offices have more than one computer terminal these days and very often they are networked. In such situations it is worth remembering that one will be a master and the other(s) slave(s). Depending on how each situation has evolved, disruption can often be caused by not switching them on/off in a particular order. This can also be exacerbated by the link to more than one printer!

#### **Receipts of Cash & Banking**

Although seemingly obvious, a simple reference to how each receipt is recorded, processed through the cash book and how, when and by whom they are taken to the bank is also useful, particularly in cases where a Secretary has for many years "seen to all the banking".

#### **Processing of Wages & Salaries**

It should be clearly specified who gets paid what and when, what and how overtime rates apply, how travelling/food allowances are paid, and what if any periodic bonuses or pension contributions are given. As well as detailing the above, a specific "idiot proof" procedure list of

how to operate the system is always very helpful, particularly for when the assistant secretary is on holidays/absent.

**Passwords**

Notwithstanding the obvious security aspect, a list of passwords must be kept for items such as access to till systems, door entry, online banking, processing of wages & salaries and the alarm system. No doubt there are many others.

**Alarm System**

The Club's alarm system may be linked to a central monitoring office, whereby there are registered key holders to contact when the system is activated. Who are they?

**Keys**

In theory all keys are best secured by safely locking them away in one place. However this can be impractical when individuals are to and fro requiring access to separate areas on a frequent basis. So it is essential to have keys in relatively accessible areas and a list of them should be detailed for reference.

For example: there will be keys for access to the gaming machine, the coffee vending machine and/or other vending machines. There may be keys for a handicap board, local rules board, events board, the box for the return of competition scorecards, the trophy cabinet and the housing unit of the Personal Score Input terminal.

Elsewhere in the clubhouse there may be keys to window locks, patio doors, and the towel changing units. There will probably be keys to access the payphone, both for emptying cash and maintenance, similarly with the billiards room light meter.

The bar areas must be accessible too, as well as the cellar. How else will deliveries be accepted or the stocktaker allowed to do his job if your steward is ill or absent the same time as you?

In the absence of a system where a master key will access all areas, there must be specific reference to the keys for all the above. An alternative way would be to have a duplicate set kept in the club's safe, all clearly labelled and readily available in the case of emergency.

It is also worth noting just who has keys to what, such as those with access to the Office, locked storage areas and other important areas such as boiler rooms – who's going to sort out the problem of the showers running dry in the middle of the annual charity open day if no one knows how to get in there?

**4. Social Activities**

Clubs often have long standing traditions such as the annual dinner dance, where there may be a number of invited guests such as the Captains of the nearby three or four neighbouring clubs. It needs to be clear on such occasions who is normally invited, how their meals are paid for (eg from the petty cash system or by way of absorption from the ticket price of the other attendees),

and approximately what kind of figure is acceptable for the pre-dinner drinks and/or the wine on top table. The same would apply to the provision of bouquets of flowers etc and similarly to activities such as the Children's Christmas Party, Guy Fawkes Night, and so on.

### **5. Visiting Societies**

It needs to be clear what policy exists for the acceptance of visiting golf societies. What days they may be accepted, what applies at weekends, what are the discounted group rates (if any), what are the maximum number per group/day, may they have more than one starting point, how large a group will your dining area be able to cope with, can your caterer cope with coffee and bacon rolls from 7.00 am?

### **6. Essential Contacts**

It is advisable to have a comprehensive list of contact names, telephone numbers and email addresses at hand for key personnel.

These would include the following:

- ☛ Captain, Vice Captain, Treasurer, Hon. Solicitor and Auditor.
- ☛ Greenkeeper (compound and mobiles etc) Pro Shop, Bar, and Kitchen
- ☛ Stocktaker, main suppliers to bars, list of all bar staff
- ☛ All tried and tested tradespersons, in particular electricians, plumbers and cleaners
- ☛ Those members that are willing volunteers to help out when it is most needed, typically those who will assist on Open Day type competitions either to act as starters, cash collectors, or with the checking of cards, presentation of prizes, or processing of results.
- ☛ Those who have the artistic ability to design eye-catching posters to advertise forthcoming social events and the like, or those that will simply lend a hand when there are 800 notices of motion to be sent out by the end of the day and strangely enough everyone else is busy washing their hair.

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