



## June Newsletter

Well, what a rollercoaster the last 3 months have been since I last wrote. It felt like we had the wettest winter in history with almost 6 months of rainfall from September to February, then... 'THE VIRUS'.

I'm not sure I want to give this dreadful thing much time to be honest, and I have no doubt whatsoever that it has affected each and every one of us in more ways than one, but what I would like to say is that we are thankful to hear that all our members are safe.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> March was a sad day when Government and England Golf announced that all Golf Courses must close their doors for the foreseeable. I think we went through every emotion from Oh My G\*d to, Holy Sh\*t and WTF?!!

I don't think anyone could have predicted what was ahead. But...moving on from that and by no means trivialising what was happening around us, it was my intention to try and not dwell on the negative but to carry on as much as we could. We knew there would come a time when we re-open so wanted to be prepared for that day.

The clubhouse had a mini facelift, the 4<sup>th</sup> bridge was painted, tee signs were updated, machinery repaired and the course continued to be maintained by the Greens Team, and all this whilst keeping you in our thoughts and updated every step of the way.

The new season never really got under way from 1<sup>st</sup> April. However, it wasn't all doom and gloom with the good news arriving on 11<sup>th</sup> May to say that Golf Courses in England could re-open from 13<sup>th</sup> May.

We introduced a one-way system in the clubhouse, automatic hand sanitisers and removed benches and bins from the course. Covered ball washers and implemented new local rules based on R&A Guidelines for play. As an addendum: in light of the increased traffic on the course, and thereby litter, I had to make a decision to re-introduce our bins with Local Authority backing. The old bins were destroyed and 18 new bins are currently being made for each tee.

And then BOOM! Who could have predicted what happened next? Not only was Brinkworth Golf Club the first to tee off in Wiltshire thanks to two of our finest soldiers Luke and Iain, we also became famous for a day with our brief interview on BBC Radio Wiltshire's Breakfast Show with Ben Prater. I don't think any of you know this yet, but we have also been invited back on air to feature on Marie Lennon's 'Beat The Boss' game show, w/c 15<sup>th</sup> June! Although we've agreed in principle, the jury is still out as personally, I don't think we have enough bosses!!

And then came the visitors in their droves which none of us could have predicted. With no exaggeration, every single tee time was booked in the first week and then the second week and so on. The phone was ringing off the hook, we couldn't book slots quick enough...records were being made at Brinkworth for sure! This period has also seen an increase in members by approximately 32 at the time of writing (02/06/20) with more still to come, and an increase of four and a half to the ladies section (I am the half!!).

A lot of people returned to work from 1<sup>st</sup> June and we are now just starting to see some gaps in the tee sheet. I hope you have all managed to get the times you required and it hasn't been too much of a struggle to get out and play...I know a lot of you like to just book on a whim, so thank you for your patience if you have experienced any difficulty. About 80% of members are now registered for online booking and if you are able to book online but currently don't have a login, please let me know so I can send you the link. Although we are currently closing at 5pm, I have reserved tee times beyond this time for members to call and book.

We saw the return of our buggies and some of you may have noticed the 'beast' or 'Tonka truck' parked up alongside which is my new toy! This is for use around the course and for catering at the halfway mark in the warmer months.

Sadly, all club competitions were postponed along with the Rotary Club Charity Day which brings in many visitors and guests for a great day's golfing fun and a great cause, as well as the Buthlay matches and Senior's friendlies. We are confident that these will all return in 2021.

In the meantime, Chris Riley has set up a new 'fun comp' called Beat Covid-19, which is a stableford format to run until whenever. I have also purchased a new touchscreen computer for you all to enter your own scores for handicapping. This is ahead of the new Worldwide Handicapping System in November and in light of current guidelines...so hoping to go live with this soon. England Golf has also confirmed that qualifying competitions can resume, and having the screen will also help navigate the current situation in order to allow for some of these to recommence soonest.

The new 2020/2021 bag tag labels are in if you have not collected yours yet and I am awaiting new County Cards.

We are not out of the woods yet, and have only just touched the surface with some semblance of normality. But I want to end with the BIGGEST thank you to ALL of you for sticking with us and for all your support and words of encouragement during these unusual times.

Bloody dust in my eye?!

**New COVID-19 Opening Hours**

Mon-Sun 7:00am - 5pm