

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Lady Captain's Report

When I stood in front of you this time last year it was with a sense of pride but also with some trepidation that I would be able to follow the tough act set by Jan, in 2022.

A year on we may not have had the team victories that we enjoyed last year but I hope I have been able to point the Ladies Section in the right direction and put some actions in place which will see the Ladies Section in a healthy position for the future.

Like most everyone in the country we have had to take a hard look at our finances, as our funds have slowly depleted over the last 2 or 3 years. This has mainly been due to smaller numbers entering stablefords and medals and to the declining number of the Ladies Section in general.

After a year of using the new qualifying requirement of 10 active rounds in the previous 12 months for silverware competitions, it has become evident that this new system has done little to stop those players who are determined to manipulate their handicaps but has definitely had the adverse effect of reducing our income, as it is no longer necessary to take part in stablefords or medals.

It has therefore been decided by all the Sections, that from October 2024, these 10 scores must include 5 qualifying competitions in order to be eligible to win silverware. These qualifying competitions include medals and stablefords and any individual competition such as the Maryland Classic, the Club Championship and Supporters trophy and, for those who qualify, the Senior Ladies Challenge Trophy and the Past Lady Captain's Trophy. We therefore recommend that everyone starts to build up their 5 qualifying competitions during next season in order to be ready for the change at the end of next year.

As you will hear from Sam, we have also made some other changes in order to protect our financial security and to ensure we live within our means in the years to come. The other way we can improve our income is, of course, to increase the number of ladies in the Section. As we are all aware, along with lots of other Golf Clubs, our numbers have declined over the last few years. Despite the excellent work done by our New Members Rep, Sylvia Bates, it seemed that not only were we not attracting new players but we weren't always managing to retain them. Therefore, I wanted us to look at ways in which we could improve this situation. Thankfully we discovered the England Golf initiative – Women on Par, which is designed to help newer golfers develop into active members of a golf club. I'm delighted to say that Sylvia picked up the baton and ran with it like a gold medal winning athlete and I'm sure she'll give us a full report on its success later. This program has also enabled us to apply for funding from Somerset County Ladies and I'm pleased to say we have received a grant for £600 to help us develop the scheme next season. Part of the County criteria is that golf clubs should match any funding given and I am delighted to say that Andrew England has readily agreed to do so and together we plan to put measures in place to not only help retain our new ladies but to also attract a lot more to the club.

Another new development is the Order of Merit Trophy which is awarded to the most successful golfer taking part in the monthly medals and stablefords. Hopefully, this will become a much sought after trophy and will encourage as many ladies as possible to compete for it, once again helping to boost our income.

As you know, sadly, we had to cancel our Ladies Open again this year due to very low entries. We have therefore decided to change the format for next year to a Ladies Pairs Open and combine it with the Invitation Day, which also struggled for numbers. We hope that this format will prove more popular, yet still enable Wheathill ladies to invite friends to join them, as their guests, if they wish to do so but that it will also attract more visitors to the event.

So, a few changes ahead but I hope they are all things that will help strengthen our Ladies Section for the future.

The past year didn't go quite the way I had planned – mainly due to “Walking Netball”!

Luckily (or unluckily) Gin and I had already been knocked out of the Daily Mail Foursomes when I broke my wrist – though we did manage to get to the 5th round and I'm hoping that now she's got her new golf clubs, and I should be fully fit, we'll be able to progress a bit further next year.

Anne organised us a lovely Away Day to Honiton and although very enjoyable, just involved even more walking for me! Thankfully I was just about able to get round The Vale Resort, even though it was only 7 weeks after my break. Despite being reasonably fit for my Lady Captain's Day the only thing I did well was my drive on the Academy Course! I suppose I have to be thankful for small mercies.

My thanks go to Anne and everyone else who helped make all those events fun for us all. Thank you, Anne.

As I said at the beginning, team golf wasn't quite so successful this season and despite a really close finish we find ourselves back in Division 3 for next year. The plus side is we have some nice courses to play and we don't have to trek to Minehead.

What was a great success was the fantastic fundraising effort put in by everyone in the Club, in aid of Prostate Cancer UK. We had huge support from the men and the seniors and with everyone pulling together we raised a fantastic £6,105. This sum includes just over £1,400 which Kate Cleverley and I raised taking on the Big Golf Race, which involved 4 rounds in one day. Again, we had great support on the day and would like to thank all our caddies and everyone who made donations to our Just Giving pages. It was a great experience and one I think we will both remember for a long time. Raising awareness was just as important for me, as raising money, so it was so gratifying to hear so many open conversations about prostate cancer and just confirmed for me, how common it really is, but not always talked about. I'd like to give a special thank you to Sam, I don't know how many trips she had to make to take cash to the bank, but it must have been quite a few! Thank you to everyone who gave raffle prizes, bought tickets, entered competitions and made donations, it's an amazing total, thank you all.

Thank you to everyone at the Club... the Professionals, the bar staff and the green keepers. They all do such a wonderful job to make Wheathill a fantastic place to play golf. In this our 30th Anniversary year it's great to see how well the course has matured and the comments of visitors only go to reinforce that Wheathill is most definitely now on the map. But most of all, it's all of you, the members, who make it the great Club it is, it doesn't matter where you come from, what you do or who you know, you'll always receive a warm welcome at Wheathill.... and long may that continue.

My final thanks must go to all of the wonderful ladies on our Committee. They give up their valuable time to help us all and we certainly couldn't run the section as we do, without their commitment. Jan, as Past Captain, will be leaving the Committee this year and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her leadership, help and guidance. You've been an example to us all, thank you Jan.

The Lady Captain then presented JS with a leaving gift

The other person who is leaving the Committee is Karen. As you know, due to family illness, she is now longer able to take on the role of Vice Captain, for next year but hopefully we'll get her back in the future. I know she plans on helping out with her expertise whenever she can and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank her for all the amazing work she has done as Competitions Secretary over the last 3 years and to wish her and Tim all the very best for the future.

The Lady Captain then presented KF with a leaving gift.

My last duty will be to pass the reins, and the keys, over to Anne. I know she will put into practice all the things she has learned this year and she has lots of new ideas for us all next season. She has a great Committee behind her and a wealth of knowledge, sitting here in this room, to draw on and I hope you will all give her as much support as you have given me this year. Thank you Anne and thank you Ladies.

The Lady Captain then presented AS with a gift.

5. Treasurer's Report

You should all have sight of a copy of the final accounts for the Wheathill Ladies Section for the accounting period of October 2022 - September 2023.

As Jen has already mentioned we have needed to take a deep dive into the ladies' section accounts. This year we made a loss of £865.14, the previous year the loss was £291.17, so to remain solvent we need to make some changes. We did have a few one-off expenses, that did not help the situation, such as buying a Porta Loo, 30th Anniversary glass mementos, locker keys, padlocks for Lavender Cottage and a contribution to the kitchen for the Captains Day carvery. Competition numbers have been down this year with an average on 10.2 entries per comp. The committee have decided that, from now on, we will take 15% instead of 10% from competitions. Based on the same numbers next year, that will generate approximately another £700. With the cost-of-living crisis, it is important that moving forward we try to stay within a budget for expenses, this total budget has been set at the £700 (equal to the additional income we hope to generate from competitions).

We will also use the Reserve account for the monies in and out for the Opens, away weekend and away day. This will allow us to have a truer picture of funds available for spending on a day-to-day basis. I will circulate the bank details to the ladies in due course.

Locker money which will be due by 1st March 2024, please can this now be paid via BACS payment, to make it easier to monitor.

For accounting purposes, the Charity financial year will run the same as the Ladies' Section which is to the 30th September.

Finally, I would like to say, what a fantastic year we have had for the Prostate Cancer Charity, raising £4,689.12 plus the monies that Jen and Kate raised during their marathon 4 rounds of golf. We should all be very proud of this achievement.

If anyone would like to ask any questions, I would be pleased to answer them.

Sue Bamping asked what the competition entry cost is and ST confirmed £4.00.

Treasurer Presents Accounts

Proposed by Ann Gates **Seconded by** Sue Bamping

Accounts signed by Jen Warmington, Lady Captain

6. Competition Secretary's Report

Once again it has been a great year for the Ladies section of Wheathill. For the first time we introduced the rule of having to have 10 cards in the preceding year in order to enter silverware competitions. This did cause a few problems at the beginning of the year while ladies got used to the system. The year as always began in March with the Celee trophy and this year we went back to a knockout competition once again for the All Fools Greensomes. This worked well, although as always it would be nice to have more entries.

We did introduce a new external competition this year, The Australian Spoons, but unfortunately it was not very well supported, and the decision has not yet been made as to whether to continue with it in 2024.

Once again, we held a successful Ladies invitation Day in July when we invited ladies from other clubs to join us. It was a very enjoyable event. The format of this may well be included in the Ladies Open next year as this event was not held this year due to lack of entries.

All the competitions throughout the year were successfully held although it would be good to have more entries for some of them. The Club Championships were once again held at the beginning of July and congratulations must go this year to Kate Cleverley who regained the crown from her sister. Captains Day was once more lots of fun and thanks to Anne Scott and Jill Byrne for the songs and props. Everyone enjoyed the day and the format was certainly different and made us think.

We are now starting our winter season and look forward to receiving lots of entries for the Chicken Run and Senior Ladies Christmas competitions. Good luck to all the ladies in 2024.

7. Handicap Secretary's Report

At the beginning of 2023 I was invited to attend a meeting of the Somerset Branch of England Golf for clarification of the World Handicap System. We were reminded about our need to always act with integrity. One point emphasised was the necessity to submit a score after registering intent. Our ladies are generally very good on this aspect however, it is worth reminding you that should you encounter problems on the course for whatever reason, 10 completed holes out of 18 is an acceptable qualifier.

Another item which was raised at the meeting was the need for a Club Handicap Committee. I therefore met with members of the other sections to set this up. Janet

Fear from the SGU was invited to give us advice and clarification. We are responsible for handicap reviews throughout the year and have had two meetings so far with the Annual Review of handicaps due before the end of the year. We have been given access to different reports on the WHS platform that will allow us to analyse playing records as well as assessing how handicaps have changed over the year. As a result, you will find a list of handicap changes for the year ending 31 October 2023 on the notice board in the changing room. Going forward, we will also be able to easily see if a lady has the requisite 10 scores for competitions. Looking a little into the future, as our Lady Captain has already mentioned, this requirement will change as from the end of October 2024 when you will all need a minimum of 5 competition scores (i.e. medals, stablefords or some individual competitions) as well as 5 general play scores. Importantly, you need to get those 5 qualifiers under your belts next year, should you wish to enter silverware competitions from the beginning of 2025.

Unfortunately, the weather played havoc with our March Stableford and the final Stableford of the year only took place over 4 days due to adverse course conditions. Overall, it has been a disappointing year for these competitions with very depleted numbers. We only had 120 entries in total, 67 of those were medal entries; stableford number were very disappointing. This compares with two years ago when we had 226 entries in total which means that our income from these competitions is dwindling rapidly. Being aware of the change in player numbers led us to create a new competition this year for ladies who enter the Medal and Stableford competitions – The Order of Merit. This was hopefully to encourage more entries into these competitions. For first place, we awarded 5 points, second place was 4 points, etc. The top lady on the leader board at the end of the season wins a trophy. The intention is that the top 3 ladies will play off against winners from the other sections of the club to find an overall club champion. Next year, we plan to award 1 point to every member entering a medal or stableford in the hope that we encourage more of you to compete.

Finally, there will be a revision of the rules of handicapping coming from April next year for us to get our heads around. Already there is a lot of information out there about the content should you wish some light reading on the dull dark days of winter.

Now to award our Medal winners this year:

April	Gin Stewart
May	Jan Street
June and September	Linda Johnson
July and August	Nic Boyd
October	Jill Byrne

8. County Delegate's Report

As my first role on the committee it has been a lovely introduction into how ladies county golf is organised in Somerset. It has been especially nice meeting ladies from other clubs and even playing golf with some of them at Burnham & Berrow. I have attended three meetings over the year but had to give my apologies to the last meeting and the AGM. Wheathill has taken the initiative to apply for funding for developing the ladies section and it was exciting to be the first club to apply and successfully receive county funding.

9. Senior County Delegate's Report

Hi Ladies, sorry not to be with you in person and thank you Bex for stepping in.

This year 76 ladies in total signed up to play in the Somerset Senior Ladies matches. Wheathill was the best represented club with 14 ladies signed up, twice the number from Wells who were the second-best represented club. So well done Wheathill Ladies. We were also well represented in the competitions at Long Sutton and Cricket St. Thomas.

Somerset as a county was not so successful this year, not winning any matches but we came close. However, everyone who played seemed to enjoy playing on different courses and meeting ladies from other counties. We were blessed with good weather mostly - apart from Honiton.

The Captains v Vice Captains match played at Wheathill was very well supported and Ros Chidgey, the Vice Captain, maintained the tradition of beating the Captains team.

Reserves this year were invaluable - can I ask that when the team list goes on the notice board that you **please please** make a note in your diary if you are chosen to play or be a reserve. If you cannot play, please let Ros Chidgey know asap.

Overall, these events are really enjoyable and represent good value for money. Membership leaflets will be issued in the New Year by email.

Next year, two of the shield matches are in Somerset, one at Enmore and one at Minehead. Friendlies are to be at Wells, Minehead and Long Sutton. Competitions are to be held at Worlebury, Mendip Spring and the County Bowmaker at Wheathill in June.

I will be coming to the Chicken Run - not playing - just for the delicious lunch and will collect as many subscriptions as I can on that day. In the meantime, you can place your £5 sub in an envelope marked for me (Greta) in the safe. We had more ladies sign up for membership last year than ever before so let's keep that tradition going.

Looking forward to seeing everyone again soon - Grets x

Sue Bamping thanked the ladies for their support in 2023. She hopes that this continues. Please check your names to see if you are playing and if you cannot play please let Ros Chidgey know as soon as is possible.

10. New Members Report

Nine new Lady Members joined the Wheathill Ladies Section during 2023. In June, Jen (lady Captain), Anne (Vice Captain), Martin (Pro Shop) and I met with Sebastian Forrest from England Golf to discuss the possibility of Wheathill Ladies Section taking an active role in Women on Par. Sebastian is the Club Support Manager for our area and was able to talk us through several options. The main purpose of Women on Par is to integrate new lady members into the Club. We decided to go ahead with the Women on Par get-togethers with the support of Martin. Three events were held during the latter half of 2023 and were well attended by newer members. All found the events helpful and enjoyable.

In September, Jen, on behalf of the Ladies Committee, applied for a grant from Somerset Ladies County Golf Association to fund the Women on Par events. The request was for £1,200. SLGA approved a Grant of £600, providing Wheathill Club

match the amount. Andrew (England) has agreed to match the £600. I understand the money from Andrew will be spent on advertising, to encourage more new lady members to Wheathill.

Going forward, the Women on Par Get-togethers will restart in March 2024.

11. Election of Officers

The following positions on the Committee had become vacant for the coming year:
Competition Secretary, Handicap Secretary and County Delegate.

Nominations were received as follows:-

Competition Secretary:

Judith Rowsell (for a temporary period of one year)
Proposer : Jen Warmington **Seconder** : Anne Scott

Handicap Secretary :

Nic Boyd
Proposer : Anne Scott **Seconder** : Jen Warmington

County Delegate :

Nicky Wisniewski
Proposer : Anne Scott **Seconder** : Jen Warmington

There being no other nominees for those posts, Judith Rowsell, Nic Boyd and Nicky Wisniewski are elected unopposed.

Therefore, the Ladies Committee for 2023 / 2024 will be:-

Lady Captain	Anne Scott
Vice Captain	Fiona Cruse
Past Captain	Jen Warmington
Treasurer	Sam Thorpe
Secretary	Becky Thompson
Handicap Secretary	Nic Boyd
Competitions Secretary (Temporary)	Judith Rowsell
New Members Delegate	Sylvia Bates
County Delegate	Nicky Wisniewski
Plus	
Greta Hillier will continue as Senior Ladies County Delegate	

New Lady Captain's Speech (Anne Scott)

Ladies:

Thank you, it was a great honour to be asked to be Ladies Captain for 2024.

I have had the most diligent and conscientious Captain (Jen) to shadow and hope that I can follow in her footsteps and do her, and the Ladies Section at Wheathill, proud. Her energy and commitment to Wheathill, even when she sprained her wrist, has been tremendous.

I am delighted that Fiona has accepted my appeal to be my Vice Captain in place of Karen who due to personal reasons was unable to take the post.

Thanks very much Fiona.

I would now like to present some gifts to Jen from all the ladies' section, to thank her for all her amazing hard work and commitment to Wheathill Golf Club over the last year.

Also, I should like to Present Fiona with her badge etc.

As Vice Captain, I have organised and arranged the Tri matches between Wheathill, Long Sutton and Cricket St Thomas. We came second this year which was a shame because in 2022 we won. Sadly, it was not to be repeated.

The Friendlies continue to be a good way of playing other courses and getting to know other lady golfers! Our Clubs of Bridport, Sherborne, Isle of Wedmore, and Weymouth have certainly kept us on our toes.

It is a great privilege for me as Lady Captain to be able to choose a charity, which both the Men's and Senior sections will also support, it is a relatively unknown condition which a close friend of mine suffers with.

- Porphyria
- Porphyrias are a group of rare inherited disorders that affect the skin and nervous system.
- There are some leaflets and posters distributed around the room and there will be a presentation on it in the new year.

Finally, I should like to say how much I am looking forward to next year, working with my committee, playing golf and continuing to put Wheathill on the map and promote its friendly and welcoming image.

12. AOB

Ann Gates raised a question regarding the format for the Ladies Club Championship (CC) requesting that this should be changed to a two day event, in order to be more inclusive. JW explained that this had been discussed by the Committee earlier in the year and gave the reasons why they had voted to keep the format to 36 holes in one day. The discussion was opened to the floor and various views were expressed. It was agreed that the Committee would address the proposal in the coming year and all views would be considered.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 19:20.

The AGM for 2024 will be held on Thursday 28th November 2024 at 6.30 pm.

Signed as correct Date 2024

Anne Scott, Lady Captain