



The Vale

Newsletter of Aylesbury Vale Golf Club

www.avgc.co.uk

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Edition 97, February 2023

Comment

We trust that everyone had a safe, enjoyable and relaxing Christmas and New Year.

Members will already know that the Club has welcomed Maria Tulley as a Club Professional, as she has messaged all of us recently. Maria is both a Tour player and PGA Performance Coach; her contact details are on the last page and we start this month by including in The Vale what we hope will be frequent articles from Maria.

This is *your* newsletter and all feedback, comments, letters and suggestions - especially articles - will be more than welcomed by the Editor, for we do wish it to be interesting, informative and helpful. Articles for possible publication can be handwritten, typed or sent by email. Please don't worry about spelling, layout, use of English etc, for the Editor will deal with all of that. The Editor can be contacted at: lanceredler@yahoo.co.uk

News and Updates from the Club Management

A warm welcome back to The Vale after the winter break.

The Course

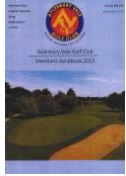
On the plus side, given some of the extreme daily rainfall totals in the rain gauge this winter the course drained much better than usual - we will certainly repeat the spiking and air 2 ground work on the course again this November in preparation for next winter. We would like to thank all those members who have carried their bags during those wet weeks. On the minus side, the frozen weeks have been different! The tales in the bar relate to members hitting the ball further than ever and then taking five more shots to get up and down! Let us hope that February offers a few early indicators of spring.

Winter projects include tree work, turf repairs, fencing and tee work. Tree maintenance involves trimming off lower branches and suckers and removing dead or overcrowded trees completely. This can result in a few piles of branches within copses that are awaiting removal. These are classed as 'Greenkeeper Workings' and relief may be taken under Rule 16.1.

- New turf repairs will take place around bunkers on the 5th and 18th and some other high wear areas.
- There is a new chicken wire fence to protect the laurels near the 2nd tee from deer.

- The top dressing for tees now includes a seed that germinates at low temperatures.
- Repair work has taken place on the 16th tee and the 16th bridge.
- The white OOB markers alongside the ditch on the 16th have been replaced by red stakes.
- The new distance markers will be laid in the fairways for spring and new tee boards are being ordered, with new hole graphics created by Gary Brazier.
- The fairways and rough will be spiked again when ground conditions allow.

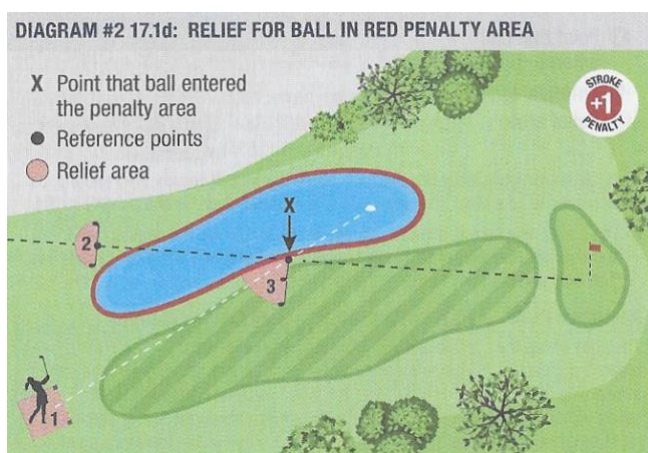
Clubhouse



The new handbooks for 2023 have now been completed and you will be able to download one or pick up a copy from the shop. The next Sunday Roast will be on Sunday 12 February at 1pm, with a signup sheet in the bar.

Chris Wright

Rules of Golf



AVGC – New Red Penalty Area on the 16th

Chris Wright mentions above that the OOB to the left of the 16th has been changed to a red penalty area. This has already been found by a number of players, hence we felt it helpful to remind members what options they now have for taking relief from the penalty area (with a one stroke penalty) should they be unlucky enough to have driven into it.

SmartGolfer

The SmartGolfer membership cards issued by the Club expired on 31 December 2022, so do check if yours is still valid. If not, hand it into the Pro Shop for updating so that you can be ready for another golfing adventure.

Handicap Secretary's Report

Whilst some members may still be in hibernation, the new season is rapidly approaching and it is appropriate to remind members of some of the basic issues around the World Handicap System. Several representatives of AVGC Sections attended a recent presentation by Beds County and England Golf, which highlighted some common issues affecting golfers around the County. Points to note:

1. Hopefully everyone is aware that we have now dropped the use of HowDidiDo as our competition software and switched to Intelligent Golf. If you were not aware and wish to play competitions, please contact the relevant Handicap Secretary, or a Committee member.
2. If you do not wish to play competitions, but would like to have a handicap, you can use the MyEG app. Membership of the Golf Club grants you membership of England Golf and full details can be obtained from the relevant Handicap Secretary for your Section. Once registered, you gain a lifetime membership number which stays with you no matter where you play - even if you have periods where you are not a member of a Club.
3. There is no such thing as a lapsed handicap anymore. If you join a Golf Club, your lifetime membership number will be sought and your former handicap index will be re-instated. As cards are submitted your new level will be established.

4. As has been said on many occasions, to submit a score for handicap purposes, you must sign in before starting on either MyEG, IG or on the screens now located in the changing rooms. The score must be submitted digitally before leaving the course, but one important point that many did not appreciate is, that **the score must be submitted using the same media as the sign** in took place on. In other words, if you sign in on your phone, using IG, then you must submit the score on your phone using IG. It is likely that you will get a penalty score applied if you do not follow this rule. If you have genuine issues that prevent this, please contact your relevant Handicap Secretary and they should be able to correct it.
5. Failure to submit a score after signing in will result in a penalty score.
6. Beds County monitors golfers with excessive numbers of penalty scores and ‘unsatisfied score intents’. They have advised Handicap Committees to monitor this and warn repeat offenders. They also advise that, if after warning there is no change, then disciplinary action should be considered. The options include freezing or suspending a handicap index for a period. In such circumstances the affected golfer cannot play competitions, or may simply be precluded from winning competitions.
7. Within the WHS rules, there is a section entitled ‘Responsibilities of the Golfer’. All golfers should read this, which can be downloaded from <https://www.englandgolf.org/resource-listing>. One thing to point out is that there is an obligation on golfers to achieve the best score possible at every hole. This may seem obvious (and boy do we try to do that), but one of the things it is getting at is that you should not give up scoring after recording a bad hole. Whilst a 12 at a par three may ruin your chances of winning the individual competition, for handicap purposes that is adjusted to a net double bogey. Hence you should continue to enter all scores thereafter, and try to do the best you can at those holes. The overall adjusted score may still be one of your best eight scores on which your handicap is based.
8. General Play scores can be submitted at any time when playing on a course that complies with the Rules of Golf, or any properly constituted local rules. For instance, this means that if preferred lies are permitted outside ‘closely mown areas’ (i.e. in the rough), the course does not comply and General Play scores cannot be submitted. However, if bunkers are classed as GUR from time to time, we have a local rule which permits the course to be used for counting scores.
9. Where conditions are unsuitable, for whatever reason, the Committee has the authority to declare that any competition is ‘non-qualifying’, provided the decision is determined at the outset. This only affects the use of the score for handicap purposes, and the competition can still be played, if that is the decision.
10. If you have feedback on WHS, or specific questions, the process is to ask your Handicap Committee, who can escalate to the County Handicap Advisor, then to the Regional Advisor and finally to the National Advisor. The escalation process is step by step up, and back down with the answers. For this reason, it may not be a quick process.
11. One question that has commonly occurred is “Why is your playing handicap cut to 95% in stroke play events?” This was raised at the presentation, and the answer given was that analysis of competition winners showed that on average, competitions were won by higher handicap players. Hence the percentage was applied, but the value will be reviewed from time to time, in response to data. The 95% allowance does not affect your handicap, but merely the nett score in the individual competition.
12. EG advised that the ‘Slope Rating’ of every course is re-assessed every 10 years, or every time a significant change is carried out. The definition of ‘significant’ is slightly subjective, but determined at County level in response to information provided (e.g. lengthening a hole by 10 yards is not significant, but 300 yards would be).

13. In all situations, if you have a problem, concern or just a general question, please approach the relevant Handicap Secretary.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me: alanconnellAVGC@outlook.com

A Word from PGA Professional Maria Tulley

The members' Introductory Lesson offer is still available to all members who haven't had a lesson with me yet. This will be a saving of £20 (so £30 instead of £50).

Next month I will put out a list of East Region ProAms, for any members who would like to join me in any of those.

As a reminder to anyone who is looking at booking a golf holiday, I get super discounts through Your Golf Travel. So if you are planning a trip as a couple or a group, please let me know and I will do my best to get you the best price possible.

My contact details are: 07701 049908 or mariapro@hotmail.co.uk.

Away Trip for All Club Members, by the Incoming Lady Captain

Please try and join me and other men/lady members, at Minchinhampton GC in the beautiful countryside in the Cotswolds, for my Lady Captain away trip.

We have tee times booked from 1306 on 22 June, to enable you to get there in good time and use the lovely warm-up facilities my old Club, where I learnt to play approximately eight years ago. It offers golf to golfers of all abilities.

They are offering a 2-course meal after our first round in the recently refurbished Clubhouse. On the second day, 23 June, our tee times are from 1106 so that we can play, grab a bite to eat (or not) and get on the road home in good time.

The package costs £100pp, including a round on both courses, a 2-course meal and free tokens for range balls. It's really excellent value.

Everyone who has already confirmed they are coming, have booked their accommodation according to budget and availability. We do already have plenty of players to make it a memorable trip, but if any more would like to join us, please do. The more the merrier!

Please contact me, Jane Roche, at either janeroche62@yahoo.co.uk, or on 07796 325078.

Mixed Match vs Abbey Hill?

Ladies and Gentlemen, I've been approached by Abbey Hill GC to ask if we'd like to host a mixed match at AVGC, followed by them hosting a return at Abbey Hill. I've said yes, after Chris has very kindly agreed to the event.

It will be BB format and the AVGC leg will take place on Sunday 9 July 2023, teeing off from 1230 with a meal afterwards. Full details will follow once I've ascertained numbers interested.

The Abbey Hill Lady Captain will let me know dates for the return match asap, but it will possibly be in September.

Please reply to janeroche62@yahoo.co.uk, or text/call me on 07796 325078 asap, if you'd like to play. In the event that we are oversubscribed compared to Abbey Hill, those interested will be put in a ballot for fairness.

Many thanks...Jane Roche (incoming Lady Captain)

Men

A Word from the Men's Captain...

Dear all,

Firstly, I hope the festive season treated you well and Santa brought you what you wished for. Judging by the number of new drivers and putters I've seen over the last few weeks I'm guessing some did. After writing this section for the last 18 months I am rapidly running out of things to say. Not much longer now and you'll have a decent column to read.

Those of you that play in competitions or maintain your handicap through us will be aware (hopefully) that we have changed software provider from Club Systems (HowDidIDo) to Intelligent Golf (IG) which was launched on 3 January. As you might expect, there have been some minor teething problems for us setting up competitions and you as players, as we get used to the system. I think the installation of touch screens in the changing rooms and the use of a mini printer for the larger competitions are a big improvement and puts us in line with what might be considered the more prestigious Clubs in the area. Ultimately, IG is not HowDidIDo. It does not mirror its features and some of the things you are used to seeing have changed. However, IG has some features that we haven't had previously so it's all a bit of a trade-off.

The weather has come with a vengeance, firstly with rain and more recently with frost. Those that have braved the cold have experienced the delights of hitting the 13th green, only to see it disappear towards the 16th fairway. I've seen a few brave souls deliberately, or not, bounce off the pond with varying degrees of success or dismal failure when the ice wasn't quite thick enough. Unfortunately, the weather put paid to the first midweek competition of the year due to lack of entries, which is a little disappointing but not really a surprise. Both the Turkey Trot and the Beer & String were well supported despite some unfriendly weather and my thanks and appreciation go out to both the participants and organisers.

The next thing that will test our knowledge (or lack of it) of IG will be the March Medal, which has been moved to Saturday 11 March and will be a shotgun start. I'd like to thank Chris and Jason for their support in this. Due to the start format the field might be size limited and it will be an early start. Tee off will be at 0700, so you will need to be ready to walk out onto the course around 0630. **Please do not sign up for the competition unless you are able to meet the time requirements**, for as it is a shotgun start, late arrivals will be unable to play.

Following on from the March Medal we will be holding the Annual General Meeting (AGM) starting at 1.00pm. The meeting papers will be posted on the Men's website prior to the event, and there will also be an opportunity for people to join the committee, as new members are always a welcome surprise. These will be posted on the notice board in the changing room. For those of you that have not attended an AGM previously, it is an opportunity to understand what we have done over the last 12 months and question or suggest improvements. Trust me, it's a barrel of laughs and something that every Captain looks forward to, mainly because it signifies that they are very close to the end of their tenure.

We will also be holding a joint Presentation Afternoon with the Ladies Section on 11 March, commencing at 2.00pm. Please come along to congratulate and support your fellow members. Refreshments will be available but I wouldn't rely on this as your main source of sustenance for the day, as we're not spending that much money. If you are planning to spend the day with us I highly recommend making travel arrangements or leaving your car at the Club. I of course will be abstaining from

drinking beer and rely mainly on vodka to get me through the day. Thankfully Dave does most of the talking and I am very hopeful that I should be able to shake hands and smile at the right time.

I wish you all well and hope to see plenty of you on 11 March!

Neil Meldrum

Competitions

Medal 4 December	Div 1 1 st : Shaun Houghton nett 69 2 nd : Darren Horne nett 69 3 rd : David Spring nett 69 Div 2 1 st : Ian Moodley nett 70 2 nd : Keith McGoverne nett 71 3 rd : Rob Munday nett 71 Div 3 1 st : Tim O'Sullivan nett 69 2 nd : A Waind nett 70 3 rd : James Hutchins nett 71
Turkey Trot (3 clubs+putter) 10 December	1 st : Steve Halsey 33 Pts 2 nd : Tim Hogston 33 Pts
Medal 7 January	Div 1 1 st : John Barker nett 72 2 nd : Martin Higgins nett 73 3 rd : Shaun Houghton nett 74 Div 2 1 st : Ben Stevens nett 73 2 nd : James Poole nett 73 3 rd : Tim O'Sullivan nett 73 Div 3 1 st : Adam Waind nett 75 2 nd : Dwayne Cowans nett 77 3 rd : Des Bill nett 78

Seniors

A Word from the Seniors' Captain...

Hi All,

Welcome back. We are well into 2023 now and the days, believe it or not, are getting longer. It's been good to play some golf.

December gave us a bit of a freeze and, with the preceding snow, meant we couldn't get on the course for a while. January has been good though, with the course open, even though recently we have had another long frozen spell, and the associated difficult course conditions.

We have been running our usual winter programme and since the last edition of The Vale the successful winners were:

5 December - Christmas Stableford Nigel Welling 38pts
 12 December - Winter 8 (5) Cancelled, course closed
 16 January - Winter 8 (6) Adrian Redford 35pts

The Seniors Casual League 1, a five-round competition, was won by Ken Slatter on 23 January with 19 cumulative points.

Well done to all our winners.

We are now running competitions on our new platform – Intelligent Golf – and many have already become acquainted with its operation and facilities. However, should you run into difficulties please contact one of the super users listed next to the PSI screen.

Our Calendar for 2023/24 has now been finalised. For those using a digital calendar, this is now available for download from the Seniors' Website to use on your favourite device. The usual Annual Club handbook has also been circulated. It contains a lot of useful information and I would particularly ask that due attention is given to the passages on 'pace of play' and 'no shows'.

Notices will shortly be posted regarding our AGM, to be held on Wednesday 22 March. This will be coupled with the 2022/23 Prize Presentations. However, to get everything in within an acceptable time frame, the preceding AGM Cup will be a 9-hole competition followed by the AGM/Prizes. More details will follow next month.

See you on the course. Cheers

Keith Loxton

Bill Neal (by Peter Nightingale)

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of William John Charles Neal at Papworth Hospital on 16 December 2022; he was cremated on 4 January at Seven Hills Crematorium, near Ipswich. Known to his friends as Bill, he graced the AVGC course for many years until he moved with his family to Suffolk some years ago. Bill was often to be seen at the crack of dawn (I believe he had his own gate key) playing nine holes prior to going to work.

Early in the 2000s, Hugh Frood, Tom Hobbs and I joined up with him and played as a group every Tuesday morning, teeing off around 8am. As we all got to know each other we formed a foursome and I would pair up with bill in pairs matches, whilst Tom and Hugh paired up. Over the period of time he was at AVGC we won several pairs competitions between us. We also enjoyed our AwayDays with the Club and some of the early Winter League matches, prior to Bill moving to Suffolk where he joined Rushmere GC in Ipswich.

Bill was a gentle giant who will be missed by the three of us and by those that knew him. Rest in peace, Bill.



l-r: Hugh Frood, Peter Nightingale, Tom Hobbs, Bill Neal

Competitions

Christmas Stableford 5 December	1 st : Nigel Welling 38 Pts 2 nd : John Crowson 37 Pts 3 rd : Keith Loxton 36 Pts
Winter 8 (5) 12 December	Course closed by snow
Stableford 4 January	1 st : Adrian Redford 37 Pts 2 nd : Larry Goddard 37 Pts 3 rd : Keith Loxton 34 Pts
Casual League 1 (4) 9 January	1 st : Adrian Redford 36 Pts 2 nd : Nigel Handyside 35 Pts 3 rd : Don Huggett 32 Pts
Winter 8 (6) 16 January	1 st : Adrian Redford 35 Pts 2 nd : Keith Loxton 34 Pts 3 rd : Nigel Welling 33 Pts
Casual League 1 (5) 23 January	1 st : Ian Pullin 41 Pts 2 nd : Ken Slatter 35 Pts 3 rd : Adrian Redford 35 Pts
Casual League 2 (1) 30 January	1 st : Bob Doherty 35 Pts 2 nd : Adrian Redford 34 Pts 3 rd : Richard Braithwaite 32 Pts

Ladies

A Word from the Lady Captain...

I personally don't think winter golf gets any better than it has been in January. 'Ping Pong' golf is great fun but not very predictable! The challenge of staying on the 13th green has been interesting and most players have ended up heading towards the 16th green!! Many thanks go to all those at the Club who have made it possible to play in such chilly conditions.

At the time of writing this, the Ladies Section has still not played a competition in 2023 using the new IG, but there is plenty of time and I promise, the weather will improve!! Me and the committee have helped many of the ladies get the new IG app set up on their phones and shown them how to use the new screen in the changing room. Please contact me if you still need help.

Some dates for your diary:

- Saturday 4 March is the AGM, at 2.30 for 3pm, in the Clubhouse. Please let the Vice Captain, Jane Roche, know if you cannot attend.
- Saturday 11 March at 2pm is a mixed presentation of the trophies from 2022. Please come and celebrate with the other members. Food will be provided.
- Sunday 26 March at 2pm is the Captains' Drive In. Please come and support Jane as she starts her Captaincy Year. Food again will be provided afterwards.

Finally, I hope you have all heard we have a new female Pro at the Club – Maria Tulley. I personally have had some lessons with her and I am hoping my game will improve this year. She is incredibly patient!! Please contact her and book some lessons.

Here's to 2023!

Charlotte Simpson

Ladies Invitation Day – 13 July 2023

In preparation for my forthcoming Captaincy at the end of March, I asked Pat Banister and Mary Marchant if they would kindly consider running the Ladies invitation day again. It was last organised in 2019, when 25 AVGC ladies invited a friend to come and play and have a meal afterwards.

I'm delighted to say that both Pat and Mary are prepared to take it on, with a bit of support from myself. Before they do this in full, it was thought that a good idea would be to gauge interest first; it's scheduled for 13 July 2023. Therefore could you all kindly try and support the enjoyable day and reply to me, letting me know of your interest. Either email me at janeroche62@yahoo.co.uk or text/call me on 07796 325078.

Chris has been very generous with keeping the green fee costs down for your guest and, with a meal, we estimate £50 to include both the member and their guest as the entry fee.

Let's all try and find a lady to invite, rather than let events like this become a thing of the past. You won't need to change afterwards unless you'd like to.

Best wishes everyone for 2023...Jane Roche (incoming Lady Captain).

Competitions

Medal 4 December	1 st : Sue Bellingham nett 76 2 nd : Amy Crowson nett 79 3 rd : Lesley Wright nett 82
Medal 5 December	1 st : Danka Lawson nett 70 2 nd : Junko Baba nett 79 3 rd : Pat Connolly nett 80

Juniors

There is no Juniors' report this month.

and in Conclusion...

...**the last word is...** Happy Valentine's Day!

...**and a touch of humour...** Since bad shots come in groups of three, a fourth bad shot is actually the beginning of the next group of three.

cc: Charities.

Lance Redler

Editor

What's On This Month

(All-Section and Club events are in **bold**)

Men

Sunday 5 February – Medal 0730-1115

Monday 13 to Friday 17 February – Midweek Stableford

Seniors

Wednesday 1 February – competition 0750-0930

Monday 6 February – Casual League 2 (2) 0800-0930

Wednesday 8 February – competition 0800-0930

Monday 13 February – Winter 8 (7) – 0800-0930

Monday 13 to Friday 17 February – Midweek Stableford

Wednesday 15 February – competition 0800-0930

Monday 20 February – Casual League 2 (3) 0800-0930

Wednesday 22 February – competition 0800-0930

Monday 27 February – Casual League 2 (4) 0800-0930

Ladies

Wednesday 1 February – competition 0936

Sunday 5 February – Medal 0730-1115

Monday 6 February – competition 0930-1000

Wednesday 8 February – Medal 0930-1000

Monday 13 February – competition 0930-1000

Monday 13 to Friday 17 February – Midweek Stableford

Wednesday 15 February – competition 0930-1000

Saturday 18 February – Stableford 1000-1030

Monday 20 February – Stableford 0930-1000

Wednesday 22 February – competition 0930-1000

Monday 27 February – competition 0930-1000

Key Contacts

Club Management

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www.avgc.co.uk

Tel: 01525 240196

Memberships/Shop/Tee bookings: Chris Wright, Garry Hutchinson, Jason Thornalley, Dan Lazar
Restaurant/Functions: Jason Thornalley, Chris Wright

Head Chef: Heinz Simon

Head Greenkeeper: Luke Foley

Teaching Professionals: Russell Phillips 07843

692948 or r.phillips@avgc.co.uk

Maria Tulley 07701 049908

or mariapro@hotmail.co.uk

Terry Bunyan 07588 272322

or terrygolf1965@gmail.com

Men

Captain: Neil Meldrum

Vice-Captain: Howard Matthews

Treasurer: Keith Loxton

Competition Secretary: Dave Lea

Assistant Competition Secretary: Mark Mansfield

Admin Secretary: John Barker

Handicap Secretary: Alan Connell

5-Day Representative: Peter Codrai

Members' Reps: Darren Horne, Brian Smith

Seniors

Captain: Keith Loxton

Vice-Captain: Adrian Redford

Treasurer: Mike Boden

Competition Secretary: Adrian King

Admin Secretary: Mike Pelizzoni

Social Secretary: Peter Codrai

Members' Reps: Jim Gales, Steve Waters

Ladies

Captain: Charlotte Simpson

Vice-Captain: Jane Roche

Secretary: Lesley Wright

Treasurer: Clare Garrett

County Representative: Kim Burnage

7-Day Comp Secretary: Sheila Perkins

5-Day Comp Secretaries: Jackie Boden, Jean Hill

Handicap Secretary: Jean Barnett

7-Day Members' Rep: Lorraine Fox

5-Day Members' Rep: Jean Hill

Juniors

Captain: Charlie Gould

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