

Plettenberg Bay

15 May 2020

Dear Members,

I have been delaying my next Newsletter to the members in the hope that our President would do the right thing and announce some relaxations in the lockdown which would enable us to open some of the facilities of your club, including the golf course, tennis courts and bowling greens. Again, we are disappointed!!

I received a WhatsApp yesterday from Brian and Christine Stokes who had just returned from playing 18 holes at their local golf club in the UK. The Stokes got caught in Plett after the lockdown but managed to get one of the last repatriation flights back to the UK. They have already played their first game of golf!

During the Covid-19 lockdown, I have issued two Newsletters (25 March 2020 and 12 April 2020) giving updates and plans for the club during the lockdown. These letters were sent by email and a SMS was also sent to all members advising them to visit the club website and get the latest on the "News" section.

In view of the further extension of the lockdown, I felt it was opportune to send out another letter giving brief updates.

Opening of Sports Facilities

On 22 April 2020, GolfRSA, PGA of South Africa and the Club Managers Association of South Africa made a presentation to the Minister of Sport giving a very comprehensive proposal to allow the opening of golf courses in South Africa. We are advised by GolfRSA that the presentation to the Minister was well received and he confirmed this to the press a couple of days later. Unfortunately, since then, there has been silence whilst the matter is discussed by the NCCC.

Club Staff

Our Club Manager has regular contact with the staff through various WhatsApp groups and it appears that the staff are coping well although, like most of us, are getting a bit bored with the whole thing. Some staff have been coming into the club house to undertake some essential maintenance and cleaning.

Obviously, the functions of the staff will be pretty limited when we get the go-ahead to open. We are discussing these issues with the staff and the staff union and will do our utmost to avoid any retrenchments.

Golf Course

I can assure all golfers that our course is in magnificent condition, and our thanks go to Greg, Dave Porrill and the limited essential staff team who continue to carry out essential upkeep and maintenance on a daily basis. Some of you would have seen the article and photos in the CXpress of Greg and Darell on the mowers!

Unfortunately, we have been requested by GolfRSA to not allow members onto the course for exercise purposes. We are advised that this gives the wrong message to the general public.

Finances

As we have mentioned previously, a period of 2 months (or more) with no income will have a severe impact on our finances – we have fixed costs every month e.g. salaries & wages, essential maintenance, etc. John Lloyd, our Treasurer, has been very busy during the lockdown working on updated cash flows, budgets, etc. for this financial year (ending 30/06/2020) and we would like to thank him most sincerely for his time and efforts.

March and April are traditionally the commencement of the annual budgeting process and the Finance Committee have completed the provisional budget for 2020/21. As our members can imagine, the number of “unknowns” for this process are numerous e.g. when will the bar and catering services resume ?, will we have a “season” at the year-end ?, will the overseas swallows visit Plett ?, etc.

Members will shortly be receiving their annual pro-forma invoices for the club subscriptions which will be due from 1 July 2020. A number of options will be given to encourage members to maintain their club membership.

Caddies

In my previous Newsletters, I have mentioned the plight of the caddies who obviously have zero income if the golf course is closed. Appeals were made for donations to the Caddy Welfare Fund which is administered by the Finance Committee of the club.

As a result of these appeals for donations, we have received in excess of R73,000 for caddy welfare. A full list of the donors has been posted on the club’s website. These funds have been distributed to the caddies in the form of cash and also supermarket vouchers.

Even when we are given the go-ahead for the golf course to open, unfortunately, it would appear as though the demand for caddies by golfers will remain very limited until at least the end of the year. A separate appeal for donations for the Plett Caddies Association (PCA) was made through the Sunday “Beans” golfers and we are advised that in excess of R100k of donations have been made.

As a club, we appreciate the need to assist the caddies during this difficult time and this assistance will be matched with the “Beans” Emergency Lock Down Fund.

For those members who would like to continue supporting the Caddy Welfare Fund, donations can be made via EFT to the club’s account at FNB Plett account number 53374617085 giving your name and Caddy Welfare as a reference.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking our members for their very generous support of the caddies.

In Conclusion

Hopefully, the next Newsletter will set out the conditions and protocols that have to be followed for the opening of our sports facilities – golf, tennis and bowls.

In conclusion, I wish all the members and their families, our staff and their families God speed and health during this very difficult time.

Regards

Howard Garmany, Chairman, PBCC