

Captain's hand over speech – SW Seniors AGM, 15 April 2025

Gentlemen golfers of the Studley Wood Seniors section welcome to the 2025 AGM and thank you for attending. I will shortly be handing over the reins to Jonathan who will Chair the rest of this meeting and also lead us through the rest of the season.

Just a few traditional words of thanks and advice before I go.

First of all, I just want to say what an honour it has been to be Seniors Captain. Despite my occasional gruff demeanour and communications lapses I have really enjoyed the year and, with the help and unstinting support of the committee, have introduced a few changes and new competitions.

In no particular order:

- We slipped in an above inflationary roll-up fee increase. Given the general lack of chuntering, I think the benefit of bigger winnings have more than off-set any negativity around £2 fees. Silverware comps in particular can be quite lucrative now and we introduced 2 NTPs into these, so often have up to 14 people taking home some dosh in these comps – unless you do a Ted Pycke and get nearest the pin on both holes!
- Summer eclectic – this was a popular addition albeit a bit of a nightmare to score and keep track of. Please be assured however the best, most deserving and consistent players ended up on top. We will be running the eclectic again this year but this time there will be no limit on the number of rounds which can contribute. Dates to be announced soon.
- Seniors section champion golfer. As a trial we converted the Annual Challenge to a stableford this year and put a qualifying number of seniors roll-ups in the rules in order to ensure this event recognises the de facto section annual champ. A proposal to continue this this season will be discussed later in this meeting.
- Quarterly newsletter. To highlight winners and results etc I instituted a quarterly newsletter this year which judging by the feedback went down well. One of the good things about this is that we can see who tops the money list each month. I know Jonathan has an idea about extending this which I will leave him to introduce.

In terms of matches we ended up just in credit on the friendlies count, the highlight being a 6-0 away win at Goring & Streatley. We had another successful campaign in the M4 Winter league but unfortunately just lost out on qualification to the KO stages by half a point. Thank you to all of you who have represented the club over this period. Thanks also to the vast majority of players who have acquired grey team shirts. This coming season we are going to go over to fully grey so if you do wish to play, please try to get a Studley shirt like this one. More are coming in stock soon.

Also, a special thanks to **Jonathan, Chris Fill, Richard Ilett and Gerry** for stepping in and covering as day captains in the games I could not play.

We had a very successful charity day – who can forget our card-themed Aces High and, despite not managing to get a round of golf in, a very enjoyable Christmas lunch. In total thanks to everyone's generosity and commitment we raised over £4000 for the Oxford Hospitals Charity.

Before moving on to thank-you's and fond farewells I just want to make a general plea regarding feedback and juggling occasionally conflicting wishes. There are 3 areas in

particular where the committee get lobbied quite a bit – although do please keep lobbying and throwing in suggestions and ideas to the committee – we are here to try to reflect a consensus view and adopt the majority viewpoint, so my plea is not to stop giving us feedback!

The 3 areas where it is hard to strike a balance refer to number of qualifiers, speed of play, and tee selection. Myself and the committee have been trying to answer regular requests for respectively more, faster and shorter. My plea for balance relates to having a little insight that there is always a counter-veiling view. For example, it may surprise many of you that there are quite a few seniors who are happy with the current pace of play, there are some who feel we have *too many* medals and qualifiers and there are those who wish to never, ever play off Cobalt tees! So please have an understanding if we do not always institute *all* the ideas we get. Where possible we respond and change things but sometimes adopting the middle-ground or status quo may appear as inaction or not listening. It is not inaction - it is just that we need to reflect, where possible, all viewpoints. And finally, some flexibility is taken out of our hands by course conditions, club decisions and the vagaries of the ever-worsening winter weather. I think Jonathan is well-aware of the *you can't please all the people all the time* adage but please do be gentle with him and the whole committee on these issues in particular.

One last word on the weather. I wish on behalf of the whole Seniors section to formally minute a “well done and keep up the good work” to Ian H and his team of greenkeepers. In the horrendous weather we have had they have done a sterling job and the speed of recovery of the course is in no small part thanks to careful stewardship throughout the wet winter months

So, I will sign off with the thank-yous. Non-committee members who are closely involved in all things ‘Seniory’ are **Bob Clarke (handicaps), Paul Dore (website) and Fitz (BRS and payments)** and we appreciate your work for our section. Also big thanks to **Alan Boswell** for all his behind-the-scenes support. Special thanks to out-going committee members **Colin Macgregor and Phil Chaundy**. Also special thanks to our officers on the committee - fixture secretary **Richard**, committee secretary **Chris Fill** and out-going Treasurer **Gerry**. Thanks, and well done to **Chris Perks** on awaydays and tours plus incoming committee member and excel whizz **Russel**.

And with that my work here is done. Thanks Jonathan, for being a great Vice Captain and I'm sure you will enjoy this coming year as much as I enjoyed last season!

Tim Mustill
April 2025