



Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club

LINKS GOLF SINCE 1793

NEWSLETTER

#04

SPRING 2024

Welcome

Welcome to the seasonal newsletter for the Spring of 2024 keeping you up to date with the latest news and developments at Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club. As always we welcome your feedback.

For those members who have been to Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club recently, you will see that we have completed the first stage of rock armouring and repair work to protect the



areas around the first and second tees. This work has been carried out in an amazingly short time period and was funded in the main from our own reserves. The overall cost of this initial work/s came to **£163,917.00** (inclusive of VAT).

After many months of meetings and e-mail communications with Scottish Water they finally agreed to assist us with a grant of £43,100.00 and as many of you will already know the Highland Council contributed £6,500.00 but only to re-instate the core path to the left of the 1st tee which they said would have to go in otherwise they would stop any of our works taking place around the 1st tee. It is very unlikely that we will receive any further grants but that is not to say that we won't keep trying!

This soft engineering option is **NOT** going to be a long-term solution between the 1st and 2nd teeing areas so rock armouring will be required along that length (around 140 metres) over time to protect the Links. The Club is definitely not in a position right now to fund the additional works needed to completely protect the left side of the 1st hole with the estimated cost going to be around £200,000.

If you are in a position to support us, the direct link to the 'GO FUND ME' page is <https://www.gofundme.com/f/please-help-us-with-our-coastal-erosion-issues> or scan the QR code to take you straight there.



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THE 15TH OLDEST RECORDED CLUB IN THE WORLD (1793) – IAGTO OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD 2021

NO. 47 – SCOTLAND'S TOP 100 GOLF COURSES – GOLF WORLD. A SCOTTISH GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP VENUE

NO. 30 IN THE TOP 100 FUN GOLF COURSES IN GB & I (OVER 2,000 COURSES IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND)

WINNER AT THE SCOTTISH GOLF TOURISM AWARDS – MARCH 2024 – BEST COURSE/ VENUE





THE CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Firstly, I would like to welcome all of our new members and/or returning members to Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club. On behalf of the committee, we very much hope that you will enjoy the course, the clubhouse facilities, practice facilities and all that we have to offer. If you are looking for playing partners or have any other questions please get in touch with myself or any one of our Council Members and we will be delighted to help you out.

I would also like to welcome our new caterer Linus and his team who form Braid's Restaurant. I am sure you will all agree that the food that has been produced so far, is very good and this is a really attractive place to dine whether that be for breakfast, lunch or dinner. If you have not done so already, please make sure you stop off after golf for a quick bite or come back in the evening when they will also be serving some lovely specials. The great food and friendly welcome you get from our team in the bar makes for a really enjoyable experience so please spread the word!

You will also notice some other small improvements around the place, in particular the new ladies toilets and a new exit from the clubhouse/bar area to take you out onto the terrace but for obvious reasons the focus this winter has been to make every effort possible to repair the damage caused by storm Ciaran and to protect the course going for many generations to come. There is still work to do, so if you haven't done so already please try to look at contributing to the 'Go Fund Me' page – additional details and a link appear on the front page of this newsletter.

It has been great to get back to competition golf again with the course in great shape despite the poor weather we have in the main experienced since the end of October 2023. We are so lucky to have a Links Golf Course that drains so well but more importantly fabulous greens staff who work so hard in all weathers to keep it looking so well maintained throughout the season. As a reminder, please remember to replace our divots, repair pitch marks and rake our bunkers – it is the least we can do.

Our members have had some early success in open competitions this year. Leslie McLeod won the inaugural tournament of the Women's Scottish Amateur Golf Tour and we had pretty much a clean sweep at the recent Gents Black Isle Open Foursomes. Congratulations to all of you and do please let us know of any successes – it encourages the rest of us to keep trying...

You will see from the fixture list that we have a new competition this year and this is called the 'James Braid Challenge'. This is open to ladies and gents as a club competition and will be played in a Stableford format. There are THREE qualifying rounds in total and they will take place on Saturday 1st June 2024, Sunday, 7th July 2024 and Saturday, 17th August 2024. The winner will be declared by the best two scores from the three possible qualifying competitions. There will be a trophy and prizes for the best aggregate scores returned by a Lady and Gent. I believe that this format makes for a great competition and we hope everyone will support and enjoy it. The entry fee is £3.00 per competition and you will be able to book your own tee times online.

My Congratulations goes to all of the team where at the recent Scottish Golf Tourism Awards we were voted as Scotland's Best in our Category. This is judged on all aspects of the Club and is so very well deserved and should generate some great publicity for the Club going forward. Let's keep our fingers crossed for some good weather as everything looks set for another great golfing season. As a member I would like to thank you all for your support.

THE SCOTTISH GOLF TOURISM WEEK & THE SCOTTISH GOLF TOURISM AWARDS

INVERNESS 2024

The Scottish Golf Tourism Week (SGTW) took place in Inverness this year with the event in the main being hosted by the Kingsmills Hotel from the 19-21 March 2024.



The SGTW creates a unique platform for businesses in Scotland to engage with international inbound golf tour operators through face-to-face appointments, familiarisation trips, and nightly networking sessions. Golf tour operators from more than 30 countries travelled to meet with Scottish businesses such as our own at this three-day event.

Over 100 Scottish golf businesses and 90 international tour operators took part, where it is estimated that the tour operators in attendance will bring in approximately 50,000 golf tourists to Scotland.

Prior to the event being hosted at the Kingsmills Hotel, two helicopters flew in to the Links (landing at our practice range/area) carrying eight tour operators on Sunday, 17th March 2024 and again on Monday, 18th March 2024 as part of their familiarisation trips to the Highlands (they also visited clubs including Royal Dornoch, Brora, Golspie, Nairn and Moray amongst others). The tour operators spent an hour at our venue on each of the days which included being shown around the Links, around our Clubhouse and the Pro Shop.

On Wednesday, 20th March 2024 and again on Thursday, 21st March 2024, Mike MacDonald and Colin Fraser represented Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club and carried out face-to-face (15 minute appointments) with over 40 tour operators to promote our unique and historic venue. Bringing in visitors from around the world is vitally important to the Golf Club in terms of generating additional revenue out-with our annual club memberships and when using the Club's facilities which therefore allows us to re-invest the additional income to improve on the facilities we have to offer for our members, guests and the many visitors who come here year after year.

The Club also offered the opportunity for the tour operators who had a free afternoon on Thursday, 21st March 2024 to play 9-holes on the Links prior to the annual gala dinner and awards night. Despite the crazy weather that day with winds gusting at up to 50mph, over 30 played and they had a great time.

Fortrose and Rosemarkie Golf Club was shortlisted as a finalist for an award prior to the Scottish Golf Tourism Week taking place for the best golf course under £100.00. This was presented at the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards night held at the Culloden Battlefield Visitor Centre in a massive marquee on the Thursday evening (with over 500 people in attendance). The awards exist to celebrate the outstanding achievements within the Scottish golf tourism industry by recognising the finest courses, hotels and experiences that have helped shape Scotland's reputation as a world-class golfing destination. An independent panel of judges from within the industry, each chosen for their expertise and insight were tasked with selecting the deserving winners for a number of different categories. We are therefore delighted to announce (if you do not know already) that we won the award which can only help the Club going forward and this was based on the following criteria:

- **Course Design and Layout**
- **Course Condition and Maintenance**
- **Scenic Beauty Golfing Experience and Challenge**
- **Facilities and Amenities**
- **Reputation and Customer Feedback**

A special mention and credit should be given to every staff member who has contributed to Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club winning this Award. Thank You!



THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S AMATEUR TOUR 2024 – ROYAL DORNOCH GOLF CLUB

Congratulations go to Leslie MacLeod who is one of our Lady members at Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club for her recent win as part of the inaugural Scottish Women's Amateur Tour which took place at Royal Dornoch Golf Club (18 Holes on the Championship Course and 18 Holes on the Struie Course) on Wednesday, 17th April 2024 and Thursday, 18th April 2024.

With nett scores of 72 over the Championship Course on the Wednesday and nett 74 over the Struie Course on the Thursday she won by three from her closest challenger. Leslie took home a £200.00 voucher for winning the event and she also received a signed print of Royal Dornoch donated from the Aimee Smith Studios.



BRS ONLINE BOOKING

The current BRS Booking system for members goes 'live' at 07.00 daily which then allows our members to be able to book 14 days in advance. If anyone has any strong feelings that this should be changed from 07.00 please e-mail secretary@fortrosegolfclub.co.uk



TOMATIN HIGHLAND SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY SPONSORSHIP 2024

The Tomatin Distillery has kindly offered to sponsor some of our medals once again this year for both the Ladies and Gents competitions as part of our 2024 fixture list. Where you see the Tomatin Whisky logo as part of the fixture list which can be viewed from the link below, the winner of each competition will win a bottle of 12-Year Old Highland Single Malt Whisky (70cl). For your information, the competition will be as follows:

- **Sunday, 12th May 2024** – The Rees-McIntosh Trophy (Ladies and Gents)*
- **Sunday, 2nd June 2024** – The Gents Williamson Foodservice Rosehaugh Medal
- **Thursday, 13th June 2024** – The Ladies Christina MacLeod Trophy
- **Saturday, 3rd August 2024** – The Gents Colin MacArthur Memorial Trophy
- **The Ladies St. Ann's Quaich Final Winner** – To be confirmed once the finalists are known so that we can get a suitable date/time where everyone can play in the final.

* The overall winner of the Rees-McIntosh Trophy will then have their name put forward for a draw which, if you are lucky enough to be drawn out, will give you the chance to compete in the prestigious Tomatin Highland Golf Links Pro Am Tournament, which takes place from the 30th September 2024 through until 2nd October 2024 at Royal Dornoch, Cabot Highlands and Nairn Golf Club. The Highlands Golf Links Pro Am is limited to just 75 teams from around the world whereby you as possibly one of the lucky drawn winners will have the chance to compete in a team of 4 alongside a PGA professional as part of a team of four.



Don't forget our drone footage!

Our course flyover is live on the club website but members can view the piece of drone footage by [clicking here](#).

The same course flyover will also be playing on the television screen in the bar area for members, guests and visiting golfers to view.



Webcams

You can also view our live webcam's at any time throughout the season by clicking onto the following link - <https://fortrosegolfclub.co.uk/webcam/>

CLUB NEWS

TAX EFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE GOLF CLUB

Many of our members' and supporters have already kindly donated to the appeal for the coastal erosion project which will go on for some time yet, and this is greatly appreciated.

Did you know that as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) we are treated as a charity for tax purposes. This means that donations to the Club by UK taxpayers are eligible for Gift Aid, which can increase the value of the donation (25p for each £1 given) and also allows higher rate UK taxpayers to claim relief through their tax returns.

There is a page on our website (Support Us) which gives more information and there is a link to the gift aid declaration form you will need to make and forward to the office to enable the Club to reclaim the gift aid from the Inland Revenue.

If you have kindly donated through 'GoFundMe', you will be contacted in due course (if you have not already) to confirm whether you are eligible and wish to allow gift aid to be applied to your donation.

Longer term, we are hoping that some of you might consider leaving a gift in your will to the club – who knows what challenges we will face in the future but bequests could help to create a reserve to deal with these. Such bequests can help with inheritance tax planning as well.

Information about will is also on the website or you can contact Mike if you would like to discuss. It is useful to know if you intend to remember the club in your will and of course, any such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Making or changing a will is not difficult, but we recommend you seek professional advice.

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TITLEIST & FOOTJOY MEDAL DAY SPONSORSHIP

Thanks to Rob Douglas in the Pro Shop due to his partnership with both Titleist & Footjoy, we have agreed to get them to sponsor one of our competitions this year. This will take place on Saturday, 1st June 2024 as part of the James Braid Challenge competition (played in a stableford format).

The overall winner of the competition (there can only be one winner who returns the best score on the day) will receive 2 x Dozen Premium Titleist Golf Balls and 3 x Footjoy Gloves.





CLUB NEWS

DRAWN CLUB COMPETITIONS 2024 – A REMINDER FOR ALL MEMBERS (LADIES & GENTS)

For the 2024 season at Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club, we will continue to run our **CLUB COMPETITIONS** for the **LADIES** and **GENTS** as a mixture of **DRAWS** and **BOOK YOUR OWN TIMES**.

FOR DRAWN COMPETITIONS, EVERYTHING WILL NOW NEED TO BE BOOKED ONLINE WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE OR TWO COMPETITIONS WHICH MAY REQUIRE AN ENTRY SHEET TO BE DISPLAYED ON THE RELEVANT NOTICE-BOARD/S.

Please refer to the **FIXTURE LIST LINK BELOW** for the 2024 Club and Open competition fixtures so that you know where there is a **DRAW** taking place and where you can **BOOK YOUR OWN TEE TIMES**.

<https://fortrosegolfclub.co.uk/fixture-book-2024/>

When you book **ONLINE** through BRS for any individual **DRAWN** club competition (which will generally open up for entry purposes one month in advance of the competition date) whether that be a Stroke Play or Stableford competition, you will only be able to add in your own name within a specific time-zone (morning or afternoon). The exact time you book online will **NOT APPLY 100%** (you will be drawn close to the tee time booked online though) as we want to **MIX** the draws up as much as possible so that we have members playing with different people. This process is also encouraging for new members to play in our club competitions especially for the members who may not really know anyone as yet.

If you are unable to book online for any reason please come in to see me in the office and I will add your name for you or you can see the Pro Shop staff at any point and they who will do the same.

Where there is a **Pairs** competition and you need to book this through BRS, then you can enter two people and so on with the same process applying for competitions whereby there are teams of three or teams of four.

As a reminder, the tee time you book online will obviously be taken into account when a draw is made and you will then get a tee time close to the time you have booked online.

Where a **DRAW** is mentioned as per the fixture list, and you are trying to enter after the closing date/time through the BRS system, a **late entry fee** will then apply and you will have to either phone in or go into the PRO SHOP personally to secure that late entry space.

- **LADIES COMPETITIONS PLAYED ON A TUESDAY** – THE ENTRIES WILL **CLOSE AT 09.00** ON THE PRECEDING FRIDAY.
- **LADIES & GENTS COMPETITIONS PLAYED ON A SATURDAY** – THE ENTRIES WILL **CLOSE AT 09.00** ON THE WEDNESDAY OF THAT WEEK.
- **LADIES & GENTS COMPETITIONS PLAYED ON A SUNDAY** – THE ENTRIES WILL **CLOSE AT 09.00** ON THE THURSDAY OF THAT WEEK.

The **ENTRY** fees for 2024 will be **£3.00** per player with all **LATE entries** being set at **£6.00** per player. The entry fees are paid on the day in the Pro Shop when checking-in.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ONCE A CLUB COMPETITION DRAW IS MADE, YOU CANNOT CHANGE YOUR TEE TIME!

The opportunity to play on the Links with your regular playing partners can be done at any time whether this be a bounce game, when putting in 'general play' scores or in the Gents Wednesday Sweep competitions.

We hope all members are aware of the process for drawn competitions. Once drawn, they will be published on the relevant notice-board/s and also on the club website as per the links below which also include a link to our results page:

DRAWS - <https://fortrosegolfclub.co.uk/competitions/club-and-open-competition-draws/>

RESULTS - <https://fortrosegolfclub.co.uk/competitions/club-news-and-results/>

CLUB NEWS

OPEN AMATEUR TOURNAMENTS 2024

LADIES PAIRS BETTER BALL OPEN	Ladies Four Ball Betterball	Saturday 04-May-2024
OPEN MIXED GREENSOMES	Mixed Greensomes Stroke	Sunday 05-May-2024
SENIOR GENTS 50+ STABLEFORD OPEN	Gents Singles Stableford	Thursday 16-May-2024
3-BALL BETTER BALL OPEN	Gents and Ladies 3-Person Team	Saturday 25-May-2024
OPEN TEXAS SCRAMBLE	Gents and Ladies 4-Person Team	Saturday 29-Jun-2024
3-LADY TEAM OPEN	Ladies 3-Person Team	Tuesday 16-Jul-2024
SENIOR GENTS 50+ STABLEFORD OPEN	Gents Singles Stableford	Thursday 18-Jul-2024
GENTS 36-HOLE OPEN	Gents Singles Stroke	Saturday 27-Jul-2024
KINGSMILLS HOTEL PAIRS BETTER BALL OPEN	Gents Four Ball Betterball	Saturday 10-Aug-2024
KELLY OPEN FOURSOMES - 12.30 START	Gents Foursomes Stroke	Sunday 11-Aug-2024
SENIOR LADIES 50+ STABLEFORD OPEN	Ladies Singles Stableford	Tuesday 13-Aug-2024
SENIOR GENTS 50+ STROKE PLAY OPEN	Gents Singles Stroke	Thursday 15-Aug-2024
GENTS 18-HOLE STROKE PLAY OPEN	Gents Singles Stroke	Saturday 07-Sep-2024
LADIES 18-HOLE STROKE PLAY OPEN	Ladies Singles Stroke	Saturday 14-Sep-2024
OPEN TEXAS SCRAMBLE	Gents and Ladies 4-Person Team	Saturday 21-Sep-2024
GENTS 18-HOLE STROKE PLAY OPEN	Gents Singles Stroke	Saturday 05-Oct-2024

To book online for any of our Open Amateur Tournaments for the 2024 playing season, please click onto the link below: https://www.brsgolf.com/fortrose/opens_home.php



World Hickory Open Championship

From Tuesday, 8th October 2024 to Thursday, 10th October 2024



JUNIOR COACHING AT FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE GOLF CLUB 2024

We are delighted to confirm that the junior coaching sessions will start once again from Monday, 27th May 2024 for **FIVE** weeks with 30 minute coaching sessions taking place each week.

The dates agreed for the coaching are as follows:

Monday's - 16.00-16.30
Lower Primary Age Groups

Wednesday's - 16.00-16.30
Upper Primary Age Groups

Friday's - 14.40-15.10
Secondary Age Groups

Are there any kids who are at the stage of possibly gaining a handicap even over 9 holes? If this is the case, please let me know. This is another fantastic opportunity to bring on our own Junior **MEMBERS** at the Club in order to gain more experience through volunteer and professional coaching. We look forward to hearing back from you at the earliest opportunity.

This is only OPEN to our junior members of Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club.

An e-mail will be sent out next week to the membership. If you do not receive this, please e-mail secretary@fortrosegolfclub.co.uk and we will pass on the information you send to the coaches.



News from the Clubhouse

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIPS 2024

Social memberships are available from **£30.00** where you will also receive a membership discount/loyalty card in your members pack which provides you with a **10% discount** on catering purchases* and a **20% discount** on bar purchases made whilst at the Club.

BRAID'S RESTAURANT

If you would like to book a table in advance at any time please contact the Club on **01381 620529** (option 2) or alternatively please e-mail, Braid's Restaurant direct on braidsrestaurant@gmail.com to make a reservation.

* If you are in dining in the restaurant as a member with your wife/husband/partner and/or your children then the discount will also apply.



NEW ACCESS/EXIT POINT TO AND FROM THE BAR AREA

You will see from the image (right) that we have recently put in a new access/exit route which our members, guests and visitors can use when coming off the Links to get into the clubhouse and when you may need to get outside for any reason from the bar area e.g. to sit in the enclosed area. Please try to use this new route where possible instead of walking through the restaurant to get outside or when you are going to the bar or clubhouse to use the facilities from outside.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Quiz Night

Friday, 3rd May 2024

- 7.00pm start
- £40.00 for a Team of Four
- Team Prizes & Raffle
- You can secure your team entry (teams of four) by informing the bar staff direct who will keep a track of all entries coming in.
- Team Entries must be made in advance!



Club Lotto

Don't forget our fortnightly club lotto draws whereby you can currently purchase your tickets from the bar area in the clubhouse. Pick 3 correct numbers from 20 to win!

OPENING TIMES

The Bar

From 1st May 2024, the Bar will be open 7 days a week from 11.00-22.00.

Braid's Restaurant

From 1st May 2024, Braid's Restaurant will be open 7 days a week from 10.00-20.00 (open earlier on Open competition days).

Pro Shop

From 1st May 2024, the Pro Shop will be open from 08.00-17.00 (open until 18.00 on a Wednesday to accommodate entrants playing in the Sweep).

LADIES SECTION

Despite the very inclement weather which isn't encouraging us to get out on the course, we are looking forward to another action-packed golfing season on our wonderful links. As we all know, the winter weather has ravaged elements of the course. It is most encouraging to see the remedial works which have been carried out and we truly hope that this will stem nature's destruction of our beloved course. There is still plenty of time to donate to the costs of this remedial work either through Gift Aid or by donating directly to Club funds. Every bit of monetary help we can give will be hugely appreciated. We need to act now or there will be no course in years to come!

The 2024 competition season was kicked off with our Opening Match and this year we ran three different competitions to cater for all ages and tastes! The match was followed by a lovely lunch from our new caterer, Linas Batavicius, and then a short Q & A session about the season ahead. A further session has been requested on rules / etiquette etc so look out for this being announced in the coming weeks.

As last year, two divisions are in operation, WHIs 0-22 and 22-36, with handicaps limited to 36 in all counting competitions. Throughout the year, we have tried to balance the number of stroke play and stableford competitions although we do recognise that stableford comps are always more popular! We are continuing to hold our monthly weekend 9 and 18-hole competitions to appeal to working members and those who like to be out on the course on Saturdays and Sundays. We very much hope to see increased numbers playing in these comps this season as entries were low in 2023. Some of these weekend fixtures are included in our Order of Meritso you have to be 'in it to win it'! Entry for almost all competitions is via the BRS system this year. Please do remember that the time slot booked may not be the time allocated so always refer to each competition's draw on the Club website. The fixture list also underlines whether you have to enter a comp individually or in pairs etc so please do use our WhatsApp group if ever you are looking for partners.

Our Couch to Nine Holes programme which encouraged so many ladies to take up golf last season has been remodelled [see next page] and we truly hope yet more ladies will come forward to join the Club in 2024. Our thanks go to Aileen and all the other ladies who have committed tons of time to ensuring the success of these programmes. Please do encourage anyone you know who may be thinking of taking up this wonderful sport to get in touch with anyone on the Committee. We will welcome them with open arms!

The final elements of the upgrading to our locker room/toilets are underway with mirrors and lighting due to be fitted in the very near future. Again, a huge thanks to the volunteers from the Ladies' Committee who were involved in this project. It has all taken a deal of time and effort but it is greatly appreciated.

And finally, don't forget to order our Fortrose ladies' 'kit' which is being offered again by Rob at exceptional prices. The ladies who represented the Club in our Friendly Matches last season looked so smart. You don't have to be representing the Club to wear the kit though! They are just great value and great looking garments for wearing at any time! Please request an order form from Susan Belford.

Happy golfing!

LADIES NEWS

We are pleased to announce the Lynne Fraser will be the Captain of the Scottish Vets Ladies Golf Association (SVLGA) for the next two years.

Lynne's role in this position is to arrange an annual match against the Irish equivalent and this took place this year at the beginning of April in PortmarnockGC, Dublin. Next year, this match will be played at Bruntsfield Links GC. There is also a Jamboree which is a 4-day competition held at Trentham GC this year and the same competition will take place at Kilmarnock (Barassie) GC next year. Lynne is also involved in the team selection of the Scottish Vets team as part of a committee and will support the players at these events.

The divisional vets champions final is held at Blairgowrie GC every year and Lynne will be supporting this event over the next 2 years.





LADIES SECTION

Beginners Golf 2023

With one post inserted onto the Black Isle Noticeboard Facebook page, plus some general enquiries through the Pro Shop, we had 39 ladies who showed an interest in wishing to learn to play golf. Wow! What a fabulous position to be in. We didn't think we would get four!!

Initially six ladies were picked to take on the Couch to 9 Holes Programme. A timetable of lessons with Rob Douglas (Club Professional) and practice sessions with members of the Ladies Committee, it wasn't long before they were up and running.

Over the next 12 weeks there was a regular turnout from the beginners with super support from Rob and from the Ladies' Committee. Some of the ladies did make it to the course but we fell short of our plan to have them able to achieve 9 holes in this time. This was very much a learning opportunity for the Committee.

As the Couch to 9 Holes programme was coming to an end, it was time to address the remainder of the ladies who had initially expressed an interest in taking up golf. Two one-hour evening sessions, led by Lynne Fraser and Karen Mackay, resulted in 25 ladies coming along to 'give golf a try'. Several of this group were very keen and had already started having some lessons with Rob. Bringing them into the Ladies Section was then taken up by the Ladies Committee. Instead of a fixed programme this time, the ladies naturally split into smaller groups and managed their lessons and practice between them. This proved very effective and by mid-summer several ladies joined the Club and spent time practicing and getting out onto the Links during quieter times.

In summary, the 2023 new golfers' programmes proved popular and resulted in several of the ladies becoming full members. Many of them are out several times a week and most now have a handicap. It was so good to see some playing in our Fun and Opening competitions at the end of March 2024.

Not everyone chose to take up our offers at this point for many different reasons, although many are still on our list as interested in learning.

What is happening in 2024?

Having reviewed the positive and negative elements of the 2023 programmes, we are now offering a hybrid programme, Couch to Course, which will see smaller groups of ladies learn and practice together. Once again, the Ladies' Committee will be on hand to support and mentor the new players both on and off the course and ultimately to achieve a handicap.

It is hoped that some of those who didn't quite manage to fulfil their expectations in 2023 will return and continue learning this wonderful game.

If the ladies 'Couch to Course' initiative is of interest to you, please contact **Aileen Wilson** by e-mail on aileenw@btinternet.com and she will advise as needed. The intended start date for the ladies coaching will be from the start of June. Aileen will confirm everything with you once you make contact with her.

News from the Greens team

It's been a long, wet and cold Winter and Spring has been no better so far. I don't think I can remember losing the feeling in my fingers from cold weather at the start of April but so much for global warming!! Nevertheless, our greens team have persevered through some pretty miserable weather these past few months and have to be congratulated on their efforts and dedication. Refreshing of around 20 bunker faces completed, a new bunker on the 8th dogleg, re painting of all the on-course furniture, fencing repairs, whin management to name a few.

Work on the greens took place in February when we gave them a solid spike followed by a Graden scarify and a heavy top dressing. This was quite aggressive at the time and happily they settled down fairly quickly after a week or two and much improved after another couple of dressings of sand. Growth has been extremely slow this year so far and we have only just lowered the mowers to 4.5 mm. Our next target is a star spike and a little refinement with the verti cut units, a liquid spray of seaweed/molasses/humic acid and Nitrogen, some more light sand dressings and a Spring feed towards the end of the month. If we can get a wet day without any wind then our first application of wetting agent will go on.

Onto the fairways which have had a good rest from divots through the winter. Many thanks to the members for putting up with using mats as it certainly helps with recovery for the main playing season. We have been patching the fairways regularly since the mats were lifted and it is good to see that many divots are being replaced by golfers. The downside just now are the birds which are turning over divots in their search for Leatherjacket grubs which are emerging from the soils just now. These little blighters eat away at the grass roots and subsequently stunt growth throughout the season and is something we could do without! Although the weather has been relatively poor, we still have a high footfall over the course all Winter and Spring which creates a lot of compaction. Our new Gxi8 spiker was put to good use in December when we got all the fairways spiked thus helping relieve some of this compaction and also loosen the soils a bit to aid in turf vigor. More sand has also been applied to seven of our weaker fairways and this seems to be working well. A pellet fertiliser feed has gone onto 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12 and 13th fairways recently to help strengthen up any newly germinating seed that was sewn last Autumn. Again, if we can get some calmer winds in amongst this wetter weather then all the fairways will be treated with wetting agent to counteract any drier weather forthcoming.

Coastal erosion. Note. Last Autumns high tidal surge coincided with one of the lowest atmospheric pressure readings since 1916. As you are aware plenty work has gone on at the 1st and 2nd holes over the past few weeks. Rock armour has been placed by GF Job at the 1st and 2nd tees to protect these most important areas. In between a short-term fix of sand and Marram which was salvaged or reclaimed from the far end of the course and built up back to the exposed manhole covers and re gaining the core path once again. Two rows of chestnut fencing have been staked in to help protect this sand material and aid in any Marram regrowth. Subsequently and unfortunately last weeks' high tide has taken a fair chunk of the sand away from the beach edge and some of the fencing will have to be moved inwards. Long-term this area can be re charged with sand and backed up with rock armour when enough funds are raised and become available. The core path area is to be soiled and seeded shortly to restore grass onto it and will be roped off meantime. Looking ahead to the season now upon us it would be nice to get some warmer weather and some more consistent grass growth.

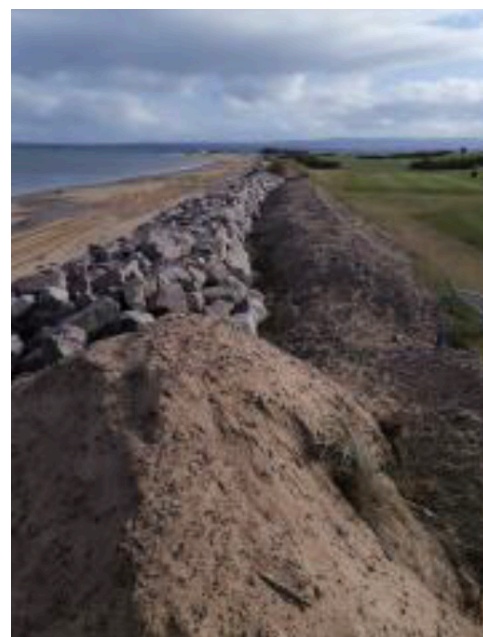
George Paterson
Head Greenkeeper



New Apprentice Kieran getting in his step count



7th greenside bunker



Coastal erosion

THE BLACK ISLE OPEN FOURSOMES CHAMPIONSHIP – FORTROSE & ROSEMARKIE GOLF CLUB**SATURDAY, 20TH APRIL 2024****Scratch Qualifiers – 36 Holes Qualifying**

- 1st – Ross Naismith (Brora) & Craig Black (Kings) – 74/70 – 144
 2nd – Mike MacDonald (F & R) & Chris Gattens (F & R) – 75/71 – 146
 3rd – Allan Cameron (Royal Dornoch) & Ewan Forbes (Inverness) – 73/76 – 149
 4th – George Paterson (F & R) & Andrew Brown (F & R) – 72/78 – 150

Handicap Qualifiers – 36 Holes Qualifying

- 1st – Greg Smith (F & R) & Andrew Howell (F & R) (9) – 73/70 – 143
 2nd – Kevin Fowler (F & R) & Steve Ellis (F & R) (4) – 76/70 – 146
 3rd – Connor Shewan (F & R) & Chris Shewan (Kings) (13.5) – 73.5/72.5 – 146
 4th – Simon Robb (Peterculter) & Colin Munro (Reay) (8) – 74/74 – 148

SUNDAY, 21ST APRIL 2024 – THE MATCH PLAY SEMI-FINALS AND FINALS**SCRATCH SEMI-FINALS**

Ross Naismith (Brora) & Craig Black (Kings) BEAT George Paterson (F & R) & Andrew Brown (F & R) by 1 HOLE
 Mike MacDonald (F & R) & Chris Gattens (F & R) BEAT Allan Cameron (Royal Dornoch) & Ewan Forbes (Inverness) by 2 & 1

FINAL

Mike MacDonald (F & R) & Chris Gattens (F & R) BEAT Ross Naismith (Brora) & Craig Black (Kings) by 4 & 3

HANDICAP SEMI-FINALS

Simon Robb (Peterculter) & Colin Munro (Reay) BEAT Greg Smith (F & R) & Andrew Howell (F & R) by 3 & 2
 Connor Shewan (F & R) & Chris Shewan (Kings) BEAT Kevin Fowler (F & R) & Steve Ellis (F & R) by 1 HOLE

FINAL

Connor Shewan (F & R) & Chris Shewan (Kings) BEAT Simon Robb (Peterculter) & Colin Munro (Reay) by 3 & 1

A REMINDER ABOUT THE GOLF COURSE – PLEASE READ THIS AS A PLAYING MEMBER OF THE CLUB!

It is your course so PLEASE look after it – I am sure the greens staff will really appreciate this too as we go through the 2024 playing season.

- **REPLACE** Divots.
- **REPAIR** Pitchmarks. There seem to be a lot of pitch marks on the greens of late so please take the time to repair your own pitch mark and any others if possible.
- Please use the **GOLF TEE BINS** which are clearly visible on each tee to dispose of broken tees including the bottom end of a tee which may be still in the ground after breaking – other golfers are using the teeing grounds after you in addition to the greens staff who will be cutting the teeing grounds each morning/afternoon.
- **RAKE** Bunkers **PROPERLY** after use as there is going to be someone else in there after you at some point.
- **PACE OF PLAY** – Remember there are others playing behind you so please let them through if you have lost a clear hole on the group in front of you!
- If you are asking the group in front if you can play through (especially if they have lost ground on those ahead), please do so **POLITELY AND COURTEOUSLY**. I am sure that would be **appreciated** by everyone.
- **READY GOLF** – as a Club we have adopted a policy of 'READY GOLF' – it is not a race but please be ready to play when it is your turn!
- In the interest of **SAFETY** if the greens staff are working on the course/greens **PLEASE WAIT** until they wave you to play on.
- If you are booking a tee time online and you are unable to make it, please ensure that you **CANCEL** the time at the earliest opportunity so that other players are able to book.
- When booking online please ensure that **ALL NAMES** are included as part of the booking whether this be a 2, 3 or 4 ball (not just one name).
- **BUGGIES** – The greens staff have requested that members who do use a buggy **DO NOT** drive through the fescue/rough when out on the course.

The Pro Shop

Finally we are seeing some sunshine so it seems that finally the 2024 golf season is here at last!

I hope that it is another great year for everyone associated with Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Club. From a personal perspective, it's a real positive to see the repair and protection work that has been carried out around the 1st and 2nd teeing grounds since the crazy storms at the end of October 2023. Despite the generally poor, cold weather we have experienced during the off-peak season, the course is looking in remarkably good condition. I have continued to be busy during winter but I am really looking forward to getting the waterproofs and hat off for coaching purposes.

Coaching packages of FIVE lessons are currently available for the price of FOUR. These packages can be spread through the entire season and we can concentrate on all aspects of the game that you might be having trouble with for example, putting lessons, bunker play etc. Club fittings are becoming more and more popular and huge changes can be made in a relatively short space of time to your game by having the right equipment. Five lessons cost £136.00. I am still teaching on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday with spaces also available on Saturday morning's. Please enquire within or e-mail me on fargolftd@gmail.com for more information.

We have a **NEW** fully range of Ladies and Gents clothing and shoes available from the Pro Shop. We are now stocking Adidas clothing which gives everyone a new alternative to what we already have for sale. There is still a really good selection of shoes available for our Ladies as part of our sale and also for the Gents so please pop in to see us should you need anything. We also have a full range of electric trolleys in stock and we do offer a trade in for your current trolley against a new trolley. New trolleys start at £499.00. They also have a 2-year warranty on the frame and 5-year warranty on the battery. If you want to find out how much your current trolley is worth then please come in for a chat.

I hope you all have a great year ahead! The Pro Shop team is unchanged with Gavin Taylor (full-time) and we also have Ewan Cuthbert and Jack Mann in part-time positions. If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to come in to see us.

