

GOLF IRELAND AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE FOR CLUBS

An Open Letter from Paul McGinley to Golf Clubs in Ireland

The Golfing Union of Ireland and the Irish Ladies Golf Union have plotted a wonderful course for golf on our island for over 125 years. Both Unions share a rich history, tradition and remain ambitious. Their vision of a single governing body incorporating the GUI and ILGU will be a cornerstone of that ambition. Golf has always been my great sporting love and I am as passionate now as when I was learning the game coming through the ranks at The Grange. Without the dedicated volunteers within golf, I for one could not have enjoyed the career I have had. Golf remains a force for good, for boys and girls, for men and women of all ages. The GUI and ILGU have worked side by side for many years, most notably in recent times through the establishment of the Confederation of Golf in Ireland in 2013. Golf has learned, as in every other walk of life, the value of men and women working together. We accomplish more when we join forces. Now is the right time to build on that strong relationship. Golf Ireland will result in reduced costs, a pooling of resources and an increase in the support services available to clubs. This will enhance the game by building an environment in which golf can grow.

Golf Ireland is also a signal to the public that golf is a more equal, inclusive and family-oriented game. The dynamics of family and working life have changed beyond all recognition since the GUI and ILGU were founded in the 1890s. Golf Ireland is sending a message to the golfing public that it recognises the impact those changes have had. This is golf's way of actively responding to the needs of golfers in modern society. Golf Ireland is a conduit for change at a time when the world feels smaller and moves faster than ever. I believe in Golf Ireland because I believe that golf deserves the best that we can give. Therefore, I am asking your club to support Golf Ireland. It's for the good of the game in our wonderful country.

Yours sincerely,

Paul McGinley

How will Golf Ireland Improve our Sport?

1. Golf Ireland will be better for Ireland's clubs on many fronts: Club support will be a core function of Golf Ireland, including support on governance, business planning, membership growth/retention, marketing, and communications. *Clubs will have the option to retain their current structures or to move to a single club structure for male and female members.* Golf Ireland will advise clubs on good governance models and will ensure the necessary support is provided for clubs that decide to transition to a single club structure for male and female members. Golf Ireland will ensure that clubs have more input on decision making, especially in areas such as development, promotion and the type of support clubs receive from the organisation. We acknowledge that under the current dual-governing structure this has not been the case. Golf Ireland believes that a more inclusive approach to decision making is essential for improving the game of golf in Ireland.

2. It will benefit the development and promotion of golf in Ireland: A single governing body for golf in Ireland will make it significantly easier to promote golf and project a clear and consistent message that golf is contemporary, healthy, challenging and fun, and can be enjoyed by all genders, ages and players of all abilities.

3. A single structure will be better for attracting commercial partners: As single gender organisations, securing sponsorship revenue is becoming an increasingly difficult challenge for the GUI and ILGU. Golf Ireland will be a much more attractive proposition for commercial partners and sponsors. Not only will Golf Ireland give commercial partners greater reach, having one gender neutral governing body for golf in Ireland will also fit better with the aims and values of major global companies.

4. It will make securing capital funding for golf easier: Golf Ireland will be in a better position to lobby on behalf of golf, ensuring our sport receives the vital public funding and support that it deserves.

5. It will help improve equality: Countries with a single governing body for golf generally have a much healthier ratio of female to male members. For example, in Germany women account for approximately 37% of all golfers. In the Scandinavian countries it is 28%. In Ireland we are at 22%. Golf Ireland will be committed to driving an increase in female golfers so that Ireland's participation levels are on par with our European counterparts.

6. It will be more efficient: Golf Ireland will achieve savings of around €250,000 annually by streamlining two governing bodies into one. This money can then be invested in developing the game in Ireland and providing more support for affiliate clubs.

7. It will help improve the image of the game: Golf Ireland will actively and confidently promote the positive aspects of the game and challenge negative stereotyping when it occurs. Promoting a positive image of our game is crucial for ensuring a successful future for golf in Ireland.

What will this mean for my Club?

Membership of Golf Ireland:- All ILGU and GUI affiliated clubs will be welcomed to membership of Golf Ireland without exception. Some minor amendments will be required to club constitutions to provide for membership of Golf Ireland. References to "GUI" and "ILGU", for example, will need to be replaced with "Golf Ireland". Affiliate clubs will not have to make substantive changes to their rules to facilitate membership.

How Golf Ireland Will Work with Clubs

Golf Ireland recognises that the affiliate clubs are individually constituted bodies and is committed to working in partnership with clubs to develop the game of golf. Golf Ireland will work closely with, and support clubs, in a number of ways: -

Support in operational matters: This will include areas such as the development and implementation of handicapping, developing club policies, and support for managing membership, timesheets and competitions.

Training support to improve club governance: This will include developing and expanding existing training inductions for new committee members, vice captains, and secretaries, as well as training that will help improve handicapping and the running of club competitions.

Support in external communications and promotion: For example, support with materials for attracting new club members, and how to develop and implement effective social media strategies. -
General club management support: This will include the development of a governance code, helping

clubs as they transition to the new Golf Ireland organisational and regional structures, and providing clubs with best practice guidance if they decide to move to a new governance model.

How Much is this Going to Cost?

The annual subscription of €24 (£20) per club member will represent a saving for most affiliate clubs. The annual subscription per junior club member will be €5 (£3.50).

Where can I Find Out More?

This guide hopes to provide an overview of the essential information that is of most importance to club members and officials. If you would like to find out more, please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions document in your pack or on www.onegoverningbody.com, where you will find our in-depth vision for Golf Ireland.

The Strategy for Golf Ireland

Golf Ireland will take the following text as its Statement of Strategy for its first five years.

Golf Ireland will successfully establish itself as the National Governing Body for golf on the island of Ireland. It will do this by building on the 125 years of tradition and development of its two predecessors, the GUI and the ILGU – the two oldest golfing unions in the world.

It will administer golf in Ireland so that golf will be played fairly and in keeping with the rules.

It will provide development services to its affiliate clubs to support them in providing the facilities and the sense of belonging that golf provides to its players and supporters.

It will set out a description of the new organisation's desired culture and how it will manifest itself to the golfing community.

It will run attractive championships for golfers of all abilities, with the support of its clubs and volunteers.

It will promote the game so that its attractiveness as a game for life is widely understood. It will support players of all abilities to reach their potential through its relationship with the PGA and through its own development programmes.

It will grow and develop the game to secure its long-term future and standing.

It will be the voice of golf at national and international level, ensuring that Irish golf is resourced and perceived appropriately.

It will do all of this through its skilled and dedicated volunteers and staff, with the resources provided to it by clubs and funding organisations, in a fair and equitable way, as a modern and efficient organisation that golfers deserve.

Delivering the Strategy

To deliver this strategy, Golf Ireland has set out the following goals for its first five years. The successful achievement of these goals will require the support and co-operation of clubs.

1. Establish Golf Ireland, taking over the roles and responsibilities of its predecessors, the ILGU, the GUI and the CGI, smoothly and efficiently, stepping into the role as the unified voice of golf, speaking for all golfers equally.
2. Provide competitive opportunities for golfers of all abilities at regional, national and international level.
3. Support clubs through enhanced and more extensive support programmes, tailored to the needs of different types of clubs, delivered at regional level by dedicated and skilled volunteers and staff.
4. Govern the game so that all golfers can be certain of fairness.
5. Promote the game of golf and attract funding so that the game's fun and health benefits, as well as its competitive position, are seen and attract increasing numbers of participants.
6. Grow and develop the game so that it has more players who are members of clubs, is successful at all levels and is seen as the attractive game for life that is growing, vibrant and respected.

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