

How times have changed. And how quickly they have changed! A health problem somewhere in China after Christmas and now.....all over the world an invisible threat to health, life and livelihood. This has been a rapid and frightening change.

Our golf clubhouse closed first. And now the golf course is closed until April 19thand in all likelihood, this closure will be extended further. It is difficult to understand the change in circumstances for people all over the world in the space of a few short weeks. Our thoughts are with others and also with ourselves. There is a significant threat to our health, to our lives and to our livelihoods. The risks are greater for those of a certain age and those with additional health complications: our thoughts are with you. The risks are greater also for those who work in essential health services: our thoughts are also with you and we commend you for your dedication. We are minded on a daily basis to reduce our risk to ourselves and to others by the requirements to isolate ourselves, keep our distance from others and to practice essential hygiene.

In the day job, we have been working to help people adjust to this new 'normality'. We know that our brains do not like uncertainty and become activated to threats. And Covid 19 is certainly a threat. It is entirely normal to be worried and even to panic at times of threat. Other challenges that people have during this critical time are being more irritable than normal; constantly checking for symptoms in ourselves and others; feeling insecure; difficulties sleeping; constantly checking online for updates on the news; and thinking that our usual aches or pains could be the virus. Not everyone will experience this crisis in the same way. It is important to remember that these feelings and thoughts are all **normal reactions to an abnormal situation**.

It is quite normal to be afraid or to worry. To cope better with such anxiety and threat, **we need to work at staying physically and mentally strong**. We can counteract an unhealthy level of anxiety by using our rational brains. It is important to remember that not everyone will be infected with Covid 19 and many of those infected will have mild symptoms. Older people and those with chronic health conditions like diabetes, heart and respiratory conditions are certainly more at risk from the virus. And unfortunately, a small number of people will get seriously ill and some of these unfortunately will die. Our Government, their advisers and the Health Service generally are doing really well in responding to this crisis.

Things that work for most people in coping with this kind of crisis are:

- Get regular exercise, even if it is within a 2km zone;
- Learn to do something different or new;
- Eating well;
- Stay connected with others (you like!) by phone or online.
- Be kind and patient with yourself
- Take a break from the news....sometimes the News is just too much. We need to be cautious about unhelpful and anonymous sources of information circulating online. It's best to stick with the excellent information from the HSE and available on www2.hse.ie
- And try to **See the Bigger Picture**...there are many, many ways to look at a situation.....our first thoughts aren't always the best ones for us.....and remember that **this time will pass**.

Do the things you can do....and try to forget about what you cannot do. Those things we can do are to practice safe hygiene. Maintaining social distance from others. Stay at home. If you need to cough or sneeze...do so into a tissue or your sleeve. Avoid touching your face with your hands.

Club Response to the Closure of Golf and Club House

We are very thankful and appreciative of all our staff for their cooperation and acceptance of essential changes that were made in light of the closure. Three staff have been made redundant and are expected to return to work when 'normal' resumes. Four staff remain on reduced time and wages to continue essential maintenance of the course.

We have stopped discretionary spending where possible and we will also delay paying out on any invoices, where possible. Essential course maintenance and health & safety measures though have to be continue. We will be getting back to golf and when we do, it is important that essential course maintenance is carried out.

While we are very grateful for recent government subvention, this will not be sufficient to keep the course in a state of readiness for a return to golf. Additional funding will be required and we urge those members who can, to contribute to the fundraising events that will follow. Details of a **Covid 19 Emergency Fund Confined Draw** will follow below.

News from the Course

We are most grateful for the guidance of the course committee under Paddy Roche and the excellent work of Tomas Flynn and his staff. Even before this current Covid 19 outbreak, they have had to deal with exceptional storms including a very wet winter with over three times the normal rainfall during February of this year. The large trees have been thinned by nature and pruned by the staff. Over 800 new trees of varied sizes and species have been planted on the course. Two new shrubberies have been made to augment the Ladies and the Men's first tee boxes. Wild flower seeds are to be sown on the 11th, 16th and 18th tee box areas.

We received 200 tons of top soil (free) which had to be transported from location to the course. The club received €5k from the Joker a/c towards this project (and for the purchase of trees and shrubs). It is unlikely that the club would be able to do these "extras" without the Joker and great credit is due to the members who support the Joker weekly. Unfortunately only 15% of members support this draw and we urge more members to participate. A big thank you to Tom Barry & Joe Whyte who have run this initiative since the start. The Joker regular draws continue and we are looking at the possibility of doing so online.

We have commenced the upgrading of the irrigation system and projected to cost €35 - €40k. The current system is no longer functional and has been in place for the past 40 years. We hope to complete this much needed work over a three year period. A new control panel for the irrigation system has been installed. Repairs have been made to the damaged control boxes on the course. Last week, the well water pump which supplies water to the course retired itself from active duty and also has to be replaced, at a further cost of €1900.

Course machinery also needs an upgrade. We are in the process of purchasing a new 4-wheel drive tractor at a cost of €18,500 to replace the current model which was bought in 1992. Health & Safety concerns require us to purchase a new glass washer for the clubhouse at a cost of €1500.

Practice Nets: We are presently improving the practice area by laying a concrete area for mats and also placing the existing practice frames in a concrete base to prevent movement.

Ladies Locker Room: This year's Ladies committee completed the renovations to their Locker room and a very fine job was done. A big thank you to everybody involved.

Office: We purchased a new Sage office software package. All staff are on reduced hours so if the phone is unattended, just leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Golf news

GUI & ILGUI Inter Club Matches: As of today 31/03/2020 it is still hoped to play these Provincial and National Competitions but on new, rearranged dates. This of course is dependent on safety advice and on progress tackling the Covid-19 outbreak nationally.

When we get back to golf, and we will:

- Motorised trolleys will be ok to use once again; and.
- Please respect the course by using a divot bag and repair pitch marks on the greens.

Juvenile news: All competitions, practice and coaching sessions have been cancelled until further notice. Activity and events for juveniles will resume when safe to do so and when GUI recommend.

Membership Subscriptions 2020

We were on course for a small but welcome increase to membership in early March. Thank you to everybody who has paid their 2020 membership. Some membership monies are outstanding and the club now needs payment more urgently than ever due to the Covid-19. Denis Twomey is in the office most days and can take payment over the phone by contacting 025-31472 – ext: 1 or leave a message and Denis can phone back.

Finally

Income to Fermoy Golf Club has been temporarily stopped. However, many expenses for Fermoy Golf Club continue. There has been fantastic improvements to our course over recent years. Fermoy Golf Club is a vastly improved course. We cannot afford to lose this or to let the course go backwards. We are sending out an appeal to all members to contribute to a confined draw in order to bring in some much need income to assist with cash flow during this emergency period.

Covid 19 Emergency Fund

Confined Draw

Cashflow in Fermoy Golf Club has been badly affected. Income from the Bar and Restaurant has stopped. Currently, no golf is permitted. Therefore there is no income from societies, green fees or member competitions. All expenses including staff costs have been negatively impacted.

Despite this challenge, we need to continue with essential course maintenance so that our course remains in good order when golf returns. We are inviting members to contribute to a **Confined Members Draw** for a one off payment of **€100**. There will be 8 consecutive weekly draws of 3 x €100 weekly prizes. The First Draw to be held on Thursday 9th April. Your support is greatly appreciated. The income from this draw will be used to pay for **Course Maintenance: the Repair & Upgrade of the Sprinkler System**.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting the office by email fermoygolfclub@eircom.net or telephone (025- 31472) or any club officer. Payments can be made by cash or cheque to officers or by Card through the office.

Finally, my very best wishes to each and every member & their family and to all members of staff & their families in these challenging times.

Seamas Feehan , Committee of Management Chairperson