

The Island Golf Club

Dublin, Ireland

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Governance Review Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Governance Review consisted of a review of all the Club's governance related documents, e.g. Bye Laws, Rules of the Club, and interviews with the General Manager, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. This report also incorporates the results of the recent member survey and input provided by the 'past officers' focus group.

The report contains observations on the Club's current governance structure, policies and practices with a list of recommendations to improve the Club's governance.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The Island Golf Club has many solid governance traditions that have been in place for some time and support the status quo. Changes to the governance structure, documents and procedures will take a commitment from both volunteers and management. The effective communication of governance changes is critical regardless of whether the changes require a member vote to enact.
2. Building and maintaining member trust is crucial to sound club governance. The member survey indicates that current trust in the Council and Council performance ratings are below the industry benchmark. Members are especially concerned with transparency and responsiveness. Younger members tended to rate their trust lower compared to older members.
3. The review indicated that many of the club's policies and practices have not been documented or maintained in an orderly fashion. Reliance on the institutional memory of volunteer members can lead to inconsistency. The Council's main function is to govern effectively which requires a need for documented policies specific to governing. GGA recommends the development and maintenance of a Council Policy Manual (CPM). GGA also recommends a document repository as part of a CPM.
4. The Club will need to consider the impact on its governance structure as a result of the impending vote (January 19, 2019) to amalgamate The Irish Ladies Golf Union and the Golfing Union of Ireland into one governing body, and the likely consequence to remove the requirement for a men's and ladies club.



RECOMMENDATIONS THAT REQUIRE A CHANGE TO THE RULES OF THE CLUB:

GGA recommends that the Club undertake the following three (3) initiatives in 2018/19 in conjunction with the Island Golf Club Strategic Plan and the impending establishment of one governing body.

While the Council and General Manager are committed to pursuit of excellence in Club governance, this commitment is best channelled through a Governance Task Force with a focus solely on governance matters.

1. Utilise the Rules Committee as a Governance Task Force. The Honorary Officers, Council and Management are all occupied with other matters. The Council may delegate specific governance related interpretations to the Rules Committee as per Club Rule 1.1 with assigned timelines. Preferably, this is a small group of members (ideally 5) with both an interest and expertise in club governance. GGA can provide sample Governance Task Force terms of reference.
2. Prepare and communicate a governance plan in advance of the 'One Governing Body' vote. The first priority for the Rules Committee/Governance Task Force is to develop a plan to communicate changes to the Club's governance structure as a result of the GUI/ILGU vote to establish one governing body and current member support for amalgamation at the Club level.

Regardless of the GUI/ILGU vote, nearly three quarters of respondents to the Club survey are in favour of amalgamating the Island Men's and Ladies Clubs and operate as one Club with the golf program managed by the Captains' Committee under the ultimate authority of the Management Council.

3. Prepare and communicate a governance plan to reduce the number of Honorary Officers and the size of the Council. Regardless of the amalgamation vote and the amalgamation at the Club level, GGA recommends that the size of the Council and the number of Honorary Officers be reduced. Forty percent of survey respondents feel that the current Council is too large with eighty-four percent of this group suggesting a Council of nine (9) or less. This aligns with a current club industry trend and best practice of smaller boards.



RECOMMENDATIONS THAT ARE ACTIONABLE BY COUNCIL AND MANAGEMENT:

1. Revise the organisational chart so the General Manager reports directly to the Council. (87% of survey respondents support this change)
2. Develop, approve and follow a Council Policy Manual (CPM).
3. Develop policies and procedures for the GM's goals, monitoring and performance in the CPM.
4. Develop, approve and follow protocols for each Club committee consistent with the CPM. Protocols to include specific terms of reference describing the committee's mandate, structure and authority, e.g. the Greens Sub-committee Operating Procedures. These should be reviewed annually.
5. Introduce and utilise electronic notice of meetings and voting.
6. Collect, organise and set up club governance document repository.
7. Formalise and document an onboarding/orientation program for Council.
8. Use a Skills Matrix for nominating Council members.
9. Management should present at Compliance Statement at each Council meeting.
10. The Council should evaluate its performance each meeting and annually.
11. Introduce a document that proscribes a commitment to serve, confidentiality and conflict of interest statement signed by Council members annually.

CLOSING

The Club has a significant opportunity to benefit from undertaking governance improvements at this time. The combination of member support as reflected in the survey results and the establishment of one governing body provide a mandate. The above recommendations allow for activity at the member approval and Council approval levels concurrently. GGA can provide counsel and resource material in support of the above recommendations.



RESOURCE MATERIAL

1. Protocol/Terms of Reference for a Governance Task Force
2. Sample skills matrix for nominations
3. Council meeting and annual evaluation forms
4. Commitment to serve form for Council members

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GGA reserves the right (but will be under no obligation) to review all calculations included or referred to in this report and, if we consider it necessary, to revise our conclusions in light of any information which becomes known to GGA after the date of this report.

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