



One Governing Body



Irish Ladies Golf Union (ILGU) & Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI)

Summary of Meetings on One Governing Body for Golf in Ireland

Discussions Group (DG)

Frank Bowen (FB) – Golfing Union of Ireland
Teresa Byrne (TB) – Irish Ladies Golf Union
Pat Finn (PF) – Golfing Union of Ireland
Sinead Heraty (SH) – Irish Ladies Golf Union
Brege McCarrick (BMcC) – Irish Ladies Golf Union
Iggy O’Muircheartaigh (IOM) – Golfing Union of Ireland
Ethel Ruddock (ER) – Irish Ladies Golf Union
Kevin Stevens (KS) – Golfing Union of Ireland

Facilitator

Jane Williams (JW) – Sia Partners

Project Manager

Sarah Crowe (SC)

Members from the GUI and ILGU met for the first time in November 2015 to initiate discussions on the development of a new national governing body for golf in Ireland. The Discussions Group was established with representatives from each organisation and meetings have taken place on a regular basis, normally at four week intervals. The meetings have been facilitated by Jane Williams, Sia Partners who has knowledge of the workings of each organisation. The initial meetings were held to encourage openness, inclusiveness and as a way to build trust among the group. There was a certain amount of repetition throughout the initial meetings but some of the building blocks were agreed, which will allow the group to progress the discussions further.

1st Meeting – 23 November 2015

The group agreed that they were meeting to discuss the development of One Governing Body for Golf in Ireland. At this initial stage the ethos, governance structure, communications, culture processes and timeframe were some areas which were addressed. Both organisations have a lot of common ground and some aspects that are handled differently. Other areas which were briefly touched on included:

- Financing/Budgeting
- Club Support and Services
- Gender Balance
- Structure – Provincial/District
- Organisational set up/differences

The group were pleased with the initial discussions.

2nd Meeting – 14 December 2015

This was the second meeting of the Discussions Group and the team shared information around the following topics:



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- Role of the Discussions Group
- Process/Speed of discussions and information sharing
- Club Consultation
- Identifying good practice examples of other NGBs
- Communications

The key points of the meeting were focused on addressing the organisational identities and what is expected of the new OGB. Agreement was reached on:

- Developing a Terms of Reference for the Group
- Development and mapping of a Project Plan

The facilitator did not identify any significant differences between the two organisations and noted that the focus had shifted to be more positive and towards creating the new entity.

Next steps and focus points for the meeting in January 2016 were agreed as follows:

- Deepening discussion around the concept of OGB and the elements that will need decisions
- Discussing the potential for OGB with input from external parties
- Communications, as a vital part of the governance model for the OGB

3rd Meeting – 18 January 2016

The third meeting of the Discussions Group was held on 18 January to discuss the progress of OGB for Golf in Ireland. A conversation developed around some of the more pressing issues, such as:

- Developing the Terms of Reference for the group
- Developing a gender free, family orientated, all-inclusive organisation
- Identifying the core identity of the new OGB
- Consultation process and identifying key stakeholders
- Cultural identities of the OGB i.e. Equality and openness
- Creating a concrete communications plan

Securing input from external parties was identified as one of the most important outcomes of the meeting. Both the GUI and ILGU agreed to gather input from Golf England and Wales on how they formed One Governing Body from two single gender organisations. The group also agreed that the focus on the next meeting should be on scoping the culture and rules they want associated with the new OGB. The next meeting was set for 11 February where the group would work on producing a framework for OGB, receive inputs from the Scottish experience and shape what the critical elements of OGB might look like.

4th Meeting – 11 February 2016

This meeting of the group centred on a full day discussion, where they began by sharing thoughts on what the ideal OGB would look, feel and be structured like. The group then had a call with a representative from the Scottish Golf Union (SGU), which proved to be very useful in gaining an insight into the amalgamation of the SGU and Scottish Ladies Golf Association (SLGA). Ideas on what the key elements and framework for the initial structure would be were presented; ranging from Championships and Competitions to Development and Rules.



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The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Consultation process for the group were reviewed. It was decided that the TOR was there as a guide for the group, relating to its role, communication and design structure.

The consultation process is also one of the key elements of the project becoming a success and it was noted that starting this stage as early as possible will benefit all parties. Both organisations acknowledged that market research is an imperative part of this and a discussion ensued about the need to investigate what research has already been published in this area.

A brief discussion followed about the communication process and the group agreed to design a Project Process Plan in this area to map out the areas to be covered throughout 2016 and into 2017.

5th Meeting – 11 March 2016

The DG opened the meeting by touching on topics such as external funding opportunities and streams, ranging from Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland, Sponsorship and contacting external contacts/interested parties.

The group revisited the need to define and finalise the Terms of Reference for the group, to be altered and circulated to the respective ILGU and GUI Board members. Having briefly discussed the Consultation Process in the previous meeting, the DG had a more in depth conversation about how and when the group would consult with club members, union officials and staff.

Populating a draft proposal structure document was addressed and the group conversed about a budget, focusing on a number of different areas including facilitation, market research, meeting admin, to name but a few. The need for a broadly scoped communications plan was agreed and should include areas such as Consultation Vision, Governance, and Communications etc.

It was acknowledged that significant progress had been made to date and the critical element moving forward was the consultation stage.

6th Meeting – 6 May 2016

Two consultation meetings, one with club members and one with officials had taken place and the DG members who had attended updated the rest of the group on how the initial meeting had been conducted and received. They then moved to discuss consultation phase two, and suggestions were shared on what approach to take after phase one. These included:

- Formation of additional working groups in a number of different areas
- Tasking the working groups to research and report back on findings
- Targeting a wider range of people/members via an online survey and "town hall" consultation sessions

The group expressed the need and want for a project plan timeline, to ensure key areas of the plan were documented and estimate timings outlined. The document would be subject to change, dependent on the workload and progress of the different phases.



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Resourcing for certain areas of the project was discussed and this led on to a conversation about the wider communications plan of the group. Agreement was reached that consistent messaging and active communication to GUI and ILGU members was essential. A more detailed communications plan was required at this stage, to ensure an effective outcome was achieved from the project.

7th Meeting – 2 June 2016

All fifteen consultation meetings had taken place between the end of April and May and JW, having facilitated all meetings provided the DG with a verbal update on the process. There were approximately 16-25 club representatives and union officials at each meeting and 35 staff attended a separate consultation meeting. She highlighted some stand out issues emerging from the initial consultations, including;

- Attitude to OGB
- Expectations of OGB
- Role of the OGB
- Structures in OGB
- Principles
- Tradition
- Progression
- Championships and Tournaments
- Finance
- Representation in OGB
- Pace of Change to OGB
- Communications
- Increased participation and access
- Reduce elitism
- Golf Clubs are the key to success
- Appointing people to positions in the OGB
- Balance of club direction and support
- Strengthening Clubs
- Membership structures
- Retaining volunteers
- Guidance from other countries and sports

The group moved to discuss the importance of Clubs in the establishment of a new OGB for Golf in Ireland and how they are an integral part of the new OGB becoming a success for all involved.

Concern was raised about how the group communicates effectively with clubs and members throughout this process, as the feedback points to a lack of efficient communication from the respective unions.

They revisited the establishment of some of the Working Groups and identified Communications, Finance, Organisational Structure and Future Club Formation as the most pertinent at that time.



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8th Meeting – 23 June 2016

Two new members to the DG were named at this meeting, Ethel Ruddock, who is heavily involved in the Ulster District of the ILGU and Chairman of the GUI Board, Iggy O 'Muircheartaigh. Ethel was welcomed and Iggy could not attend the first meeting.

Group members had allocated a substantial amount of time to talk about formation of the working groups and the progress being made. They agreed that there was a requirement to advertise for positions on to the Future Club Formation Working Group and that this would be done through the Golfnet website, respective union social media channels and sent to all affiliated golf clubs.

The group agreed that the work on the Finance, Communications and Organisational Structure Working Groups could be conducted internally for the time and would be reviewed as the discussions progress.

JW provided the DG with an update on the in depth report, which she completed following the first round of consultation. She clarified a number of points relating to comments which were made throughout the 14 consultation meetings. These ranged from volunteerism to equality.

The DG reflected on the most topical points raised within the staff consultation report also, including points made around:

- Elite Players
- Current HR structures
- Historical and traditional image associated with Golf
- Communications throughout both organisations

9th Meeting – 3 August 2016

Iggy O 'Muircheartaigh was welcomed to the DG and he expressed the need to communicate efficiently with all stakeholders as it is central to the project.

The group discussed the project plan timeline again and it was confirmed that it would be used as a communications and monitoring tool. The details of the timeline were discussed and it was agreed that due to the level of feedback already collected during the first round of consultation that a skeleton framework would need to be drafted before surveying club members and officials again.

It was also felt that the other working groups should begin to be formed within the coming months and that would begin after the next meeting.

An update on all Working Groups was provided;

- Communications - It was decided that a joint statement was needed on the progress of the DG to date. This would be publicised through Social Media, Golfnet and press contacts.
- Finance – The Working Group members were confirmed and it was noted that Deloitte offered assistance to review the consolidated finances, free of charge, when available.
- Future Club Formation - The scope of this group was defined and was to include discussion surrounding the following;



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- Models for Small/Medium/Large clubs, Differing Club Models, Issues around one committee within golf clubs, Identification of committees needed within future clubs to match the structure of the organisation, Membership structures and ideas, Growing the game by changing the model and attracting future members and Competition days.
- Organisational Structure - It was decided that the core working group will begin to analyse the organisational structure, and in time decide if a consultant would be needed to provide further assistance.

The DG acknowledged the need to progress the additional seven Working Groups, in the areas of Club Services, Game Development, Championships, Rules, High Performance, Handicapping/Course Rating and Volunteerism. The Terms of Reference for the remaining groups was reviewed by Group members before inviting external expressions of interest to become involved.

10th Meeting – 26 September 2016

The meeting opened with group members touching on the different strands of communication being used and a conversation ensued around decision making in terms of communication. A list of recommendations were to be tabled by the Communications Working Group for the next meeting, in relation to how the communications process would be handled as the discussions progress.

The DG spent the remainder of the meeting discussing two vital points on the agenda; the Terms of Reference (TOR) and some of the 'Big Ticket' items in the formation of OGB for Golf in Ireland. Some suggested changes were noted for the TOR and the Discussions Group were to work under the agreed changes moving forward.

The DG reviewed a list of some of the crucial items in the formation of OGB for Golf in Ireland, which included Future Structure, Finance and Development of the Game, to name but a few.

An emphasis was placed on progressing the remaining Working Groups and it was agreed that notifications would be circulated to ILGU and GUI elected and non-elected volunteers regarding the establishment of the remaining groups.

The DG identified the need to host a two day meeting in November due to the number of action items to be progressed.

11th Meeting – 1-2 November 2016

Kevin Stevens, Ulster GUI Secretary was welcomed to the Discussions Group as a new member and along with the other group members, they met for a two day meeting, to discuss the progress made on OGB for Golf in Ireland.

There were several objectives to the two day meeting, which included completing the induction of three new members to the DG; Iggy O'Muirheartaigh, Ethel Ruddock and Kevin Stevens, to re-evaluate how the group operates, especially within its mandate, relating to the TOR set by the group, to look at key aspects surrounding the development of a proposal for OGB, to review the progress made by the Working Groups and to agree on the model components of the OGB and discuss resources available.



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The DG recognised the importance of an induction for the new members and were committed to ensuring all members fully understood the operational nature of the group and all topics at hand.

During the induction, the DG covered topics, such as:

- The Terms of Reference for the Group
- Membership of the Group
- Meetings & attendance
- Ambition of the Group
- Future Club and Organisational Structure
- Communication process and need for change
- Clear working mandate for the Group
- Up to date Project Plan
- Selection of and appointment to Working Groups
- OGB awareness and feeling in Golf Clubs

The DG acknowledged the way it operates, its mandate and its timeframe and revisited the values of the group and their importance in allowing the meetings to run smoothly. The level of trust and openness in the group was recognised and that every member is trying to ensure the best outcome for the game of golf.

The group had a brief discussion around some of the 'Big Ticket' or critical items in the formation of OGB for Golf in Ireland and equality was highlighted as one of significant importance. There was a spread of views on equality evident in the consultations. Many early speakers at the sessions (male), started by making firm statements on the importance of equality to the health of the game. Most women spoke about the essential nature of equality to the new OGB.

DG members charged with responsibility of reporting on different Working Groups presented their updates to the Group, in the areas of;

- Finance
- Future Club Formation
- Organisational Structure
- Communications

Model Components for OGB were addressed again and the DG detailed an extensive list. The DG spoke about the importance of changing the perceived image of the game, to reflect the welcoming nature of the sport and the clubs affiliated to it.

Dates and venues of next meetings

- Tuesday 13th December 9am – GUI Offices, Carton House
- Thursday 12th January 10am – 3pm – Mullingar Golf Club
- Tuesday 21st February 10am – 3pm – Milltown Golf Club
- Friday 24th March 9am– 3pm - GUI Offices, Carton House
- Thursday 20th April 10am – 3pm – Malone Golf Club
- Tuesday 23rd May 9am – all day – GUI Offices, Carton House
- Thursday 22nd June 10am – 3pm – Galway Golf Club