

# “GIMME 5” POLL APRIL 2020

## CLUB MANAGEMENT DURING LOCKDOWN



### CCL Poll – Club Management During Lockdown

Published 20th April 2020

It is a week since we launched a poll to gather insights from clubs on how they are handling the lockdown, and we are delighted to say that we have had 148 responses from fellow industry professionals.

These results give us a flavour of how clubs have responded to some business decisions being made because of the lockdown and the key management issues that those working in the industry have been tackling. We hope these results give you, and your fellow leaders of the club, further food-for-thought as you navigate these unprecedented challenges we face in clubs.

#### Are club General Managers / Secretaries still working at this time?

More than three-quarters of club managers (81%) are still working at this time with a further 4% working reduced hours.

- Continuing work . . . . . **81%**
- Working reduced hours . . . . . **4%**
- Furloughed at 80% of pay . . . . . **8%**
- Furloughed at 80% plus club contributing 20% . . . . . **6%**
- Made Redundant . . . . . **1%**

It is reassuring that, at times like these, most clubs see the value of the manager as a leader to guide and make key management decisions.

#### Are other administrative staff still working?

37% of clubs are retaining their additional administrative staff at this time.

- Continuing work . . . . . **38%**
- Working reduced hours . . . . . **6%**
- Furloughed at 80% of pay . . . . . **29%**
- Furloughed at 80% plus club contributing remaining 20% . . . . . **27%**

Feedback received anecdotally is that it is generally larger clubs retaining the administration staff to handle the significant current workload such as cancelling and rescheduling visitor and event bookings.

## In-House Food Operations

Unsurprisingly very few clubs noted their in-house food operating as still operating.

- Continuing work . . . . . **8%**
- Furloughed at 80% of pay . . . . . **53%**
- Furloughed at 80% plus club contributing remaining 20% . . . . . **39%**

In the UK it is pleasing to hear of some F&B professionals contributing to local volunteer programmes whilst furloughed using their skills for community benefit.

## Franchise Food Operators in Clubs

We know from the CCL Barometer Survey of over 100 golf clubs that more than half of the clubs in the UK outsource their food operation, but only 22 respondents to this survey pay their franchisee. The response from those clubs is as follows.

- Agreed to continue payment of franchise fee . . . . . **41%**
- Agreed to pay portion of fee . . . . . **14%**
- Agreed not to pay fee . . . . . **45%**

## In-House Golf Shop Operations

There is clearly little need for an in-house golf shop operation at present.

- Continuing work . . . . . **12%**
- Furloughed at 80% of pay . . . . . **64%**
- Furloughed at 80% plus club contributing remaining 20% . . . . . **24%**

Again, we have heard some stories of golf operations staff playing a creative role in connecting with club members – but only if they are not currently furloughed.

## Franchised Golf Shop or Professional on a Retainer

Clubs have approached the payment of the retainer as follows -

- Agreed to continue payment of retainer . . . . . **68%**
- Agreed to pay a portion of retainer . . . . . **18%**
- Agreed not to pay retainer . . . . . **14%**

Some anecdotal feedback has suggested other methods of supporting their PGA professional including clubs and members bulk-purchasing golf lessons, or advance purchase of goods in anticipation of the lockdown ending.



## Golf Course Maintenance Operations

At the time of the survey golf courses are fortunate to hold the option to undertake essential maintenance and it seems most are taking up this option.

- Reduced or essential course maintenance . . . . . **98%**
- All course maintenance temporarily suspended . . . . . **2%**

Whilst undertaking essential maintenance there has been a significant reduction in the staffing requirements of golf courses.

- All continuing work . . . . . **21%**
- Reduced staffing with others furloughed at 80% . . . . . **40%**
- Reduced staffing with others furloughed at 80% plus 20% **35%**
- All staff furloughed at 80% . . . . . **2%**
- All staff furloughed at 80% plus 20% . . . . . **1%**

There was a wide range of responses on the number of staff currently maintaining 18-holes ranging from 1 greenkeeper to 14 greenstaff. **Average number of working greenstaff per 18 holes is 3.3**

BIGGA is an excellent source of current industry guidance and support for greenkeepers.

---

## Membership Subscription payments during Lockdown

One of the common concerns at this time are members querying or reflecting on the value they receive from the club at a time when they have no way to directly access facilities.

There are mixed messages coming from the survey results around membership subscription payments. Whilst some clubs have seen as many as **30%** of their membership query their subscription, the average number of payment queries at clubs is **10%** of the membership. In response, the survey provides a clear statement of how clubs are currently handling these requests:

- No alteration to existing payment policies . . . . . **67%**
- Additional credit or vouchers for members . . . . . **7%**
- Extending membership year . . . . . **16%**
- A percentage of membership fee refunded . . . . . **10%**
- Option for a full refund of membership . . . . . **0%**

We know from the **CCL Barometer Report** that the average resignation rate at clubs in the UK typically runs at **6%** per year. At this present time the average estimate from Club Managers responding to this survey is **9%** but the statistical feedback from those Club Managers varies significantly. Only one third of clubs completing the survey estimate a higher figure for resignations than the national average of 6%, but those who do so, are predicting a more significant drop in membership numbers this year.

**FURTHER INDUSTRY INSIGHT CAN BE OBTAINED  
BY COMPLETING THIS NEW CCL POLL  
(CLICK HERE)**



## A message to you from me –

Right now it feels like we are driving in fog, not 100% sure of the road ahead.

Nobody knows how long this will last, but the likely outcome is that in the long-term we will recover from this crisis. We are still only in the first phase of this challenging period, but as we enter May it will become clearer how long the lock down will last, how much our members loyalty to the club will stretch and how much impact the crisis is having on the economy generally.

Sadly, it is likely that for some, this crisis may take some clubs under, but those were the clubs where the brushwood was already incredibly dry. For others, we may see a recognition from our members that as a club, we are providing far more than the local gym.

**Our Members are not just customers of our clubs, they are shareholders, owners of the business and custodians of their club.**

**If members want their community, their town and their children to have the same benefits they have enjoyed at the club they must do whatever it takes to see us through this period in the club's history.**

At the very time when we are geographically separated from our extended families, the local communities that golf clubs provide are now also out of bounds. When we cast our minds back to the early stages of this outbreak our tee sheets were full, and our member's behaviours were showing us how passionate they are about the game and our golf clubs. I firmly believe that this absence will make the heart grow fonder, and the best CLUBS will thrive on that appetite for belonging.

As we gradually come to terms with the challenges we are facing, it is soon going to be time for you to step forward and lead the club perhaps more than you ever thought necessary or possible. We have discussed the analogy of the three legged stool, where you must carefully balance the pressures associated with satisfying the members, the staff and of course, the bottom line profit.

We have also discussed the two available seats on a tandem, and the importance of you providing insight and clarity of thinking to steer the club forward in to the next five to ten year of its history. You must keep the club's governors focussed on strategy not operations, making sure that they are planning for the long term future of the club. They are custodians of continuity and progress, and your job as Managers is to provide them with the insight and data with which they can make informed decisions, not emotional ones.



To ensure clubs come through this period, you will need to create a plan to trade your way beyond phase two of this crisis.

As we have learned over the last ten years together, we are here to help each other, so now more than ever, lean on fellow managers and contacts, and of course, keep safe.

Kevin Fish CCM  
(20th April 2020)

