



EGC Newsletter December 2025



Capt. Mark Pearson

Hi Everyone

Welcome to the December 2025 EGC Newsletter – my first!

I have summarised what's been happening round the club over the last month, from competitions, to news from the Complex, plus all the usual stuff. Apologies if I miss anything, as any Captain will tell you, the first few weeks are a whirlwind!

Since the AGM at the end of November we have already squeezed in a couple of Ray Winter Leagues and the Turkey Trot!

Next competition (weather permitting) is the *New Years Day Stagger*. Hope to see you there.

Hope you have a fantastic holiday break! Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

See you all in 2026

Mark

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Prize Giving & AGM

A big thank you to all who attended the Prize Giving and AGM in November.

Many thanks to Ian and Kevin for their great work as Joint Captains in the 50th Anniversary year, and please welcome Martyn Osment as my Vice Captain for 2026.

2026 Committee and Officials

President – Ali Smith **Captains** – Mark Pearson **Vice Captain** – Martyn Osment
Club Secretary – Nigel Nutsford, **Competitions Secretary** – Dean Pullen,
Membership Secretary – Stephen Eddy, **Treasurer** – Steve Cross, **Communications** – Chris Corbett,
Welfare Officer – Michael Mortensen, **Media Secretary** – Neil Davies, **Handicaps Secretary** – Ketan Bharania, **Away Weekends** – Dean Pullen, **Social Organiser** – Graham Dibley, **Externals Organiser** – Ian Holder, **Seniors Organiser** – Alisdair Beckingham, **Knockouts Organiser** – Kevin Lee **Complaints & Discipline** – George Friedman, **Away Days** – Ian Goodall

Congratulations to all the trophy winners (pictured below in no particular order)





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Turkey Trot

The annual Turkey Trot competition was run on December 13th, and something odd happened ...we had blue skies and sun all day!

It was a bit nippy first thing, but 71 players turned up, dressed in their finest Christmas jumpers and fancy dress, determined to have some fun...which is what this day is all about.

Thanks to all those who bought raffle tickets to support our chosen charity this year, Sport-in-Mind.

CONGRATULATIONS to all winners:

Overall Winner - Mark Norris

Div 1:

- 1st 🥇 Sean Wheatley
- 2nd 🥈 Simon Stephens
- 3rd 🥉 Harjinder Chana

Div 2:

- 1st 🥇 Chris Corbett
- 2nd 🥈 Andy Lowe
- 3rd 🥉 Neil Davies

Div 3:

- 1st 🥇 Nick McConnachie
- 2nd 🥈 Graham Griffin
- 3rd 🥉 Simon Harrison

Nearest The Pin Hole #3 – Chris Corbett
Nearest The Pin Hole #7 – Les Smith
Nearest The Pin Hole #14 – Ed Lyons
Nearest The Pin Hole #17 – Lee Woods

Best Dressed – Mary & Joseph

Booby Prize – Richard Gater



Congratulations to **Mark Norris**, Turkey Trot winner



The 50th Anniversary Christmas Party followed the TT, and it was great to kickback and have a chat, drink and dance after the long day.

Ian Holder demonstrating the dance skills he has honed to perfection over the 50th Anniversary year!

Note: For those fortunate enough to win a Hamper, could you return the basket to the club by the end of January.



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Competitions Report

Update from Dean Pullen

Competitions Report – December 2025

No issues with regards to competitions in November, although the weather is now playing a major part in the Handicap Qualifying nature of competitions. The course condition is not great and various issues have been raised with the Complex to see if matters can be improved. The Mixed Tee experiment seems to be going well, although not many players are choosing to play off the Winter Back Tees.

Competition Winners:

6/11/25 Seniors Midweek Stableford – Tony Newson 33 points

9/11/25 Ray Winter League 1 – Sean Wheatley 36 points

13/11/25 Midweek Stableford – Nigel Nutsford 32 points

20/11/25 Midweek Stableford – Tony Newson 32 points

22/11/25 Ray Winter League 2 – Joe Saunders 36 points

27/11/25 Midweek Stableford – Iain Wilson 36 points

Away Weekend 2026: 33 currently signed up for The Cotswolds. Thorpeness Booked for 2027.

Away Days 2026: Wycombe Heights booked for 23rd February. Hurtmore GC booked for the Captains Away Day on the 25th June, and Woldingham GC booked for the 23rd October.

Treasurer

Update from Steve Cross

Treasury Notes

Please keep an eye on your purse balance. Points to note:

- ⊕ Your balance is easily available from MasterScoreboard along with a listing of all your recent purse transactions.
- ⊕ Please remember that it can take up to 3 working days to reach the club's account.
- ⊕ I endeavour to update your purse twice a week but sometimes life gets in the way. Rest assured however that I always check to identify any unposted credits should you have a negative balance before your score is removed from a competition.
- ⊕ The 'TOP UP PURSE' button on MasterScoreboard is not operational as it will cost in excess of £1k per annum to use, just pay in to the club's bank account.
- ⊕ Further information on how the purse works can be found on our website. See 'Competition Rules, then 'Entry Fees' to learn more.

Steve Cross, Hon Treasurer, 4th December



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Membership

Update from Stephen Eddy

We have one new member this month

Welcome to –

James Treweek

Knockouts

Update from Kevin Lee

Winter Singles Knockouts are underway at the quarter final stage with one match remaining to be played

Please read the Knockout Rules and play your matches before the cut-off dates.

Webmaster

Chris Corbett's tip of the month

Tip of the Month

Tip 50: Following our AGM on the 20th November, minutes were distributed by email. You can also find them on the 'Newsletters and Minutes' page on the website. In addition to the minutes, the Committee page has been updated with our new volunteer members, including of course our new Captain. On that note, a reminder that the Club's day-to-day functions are totally reliant on members volunteering for our committee roles, so please consider whether you would like to contribute in future years. Talk to any committee member for more information.



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Seniors Section

Update from Alisdhair Beckingham

Seniors report December 2025

M4 winter league

Results so far -

Studley Wood	Away	Won 3-1
Tylney Park	Home	Drew 2-2
Hadden Hill	Home	Won 4-0
Tylney Park	Away	Lost 1-3
Studley Wood	Home	Won 4-0
West Berks	Away	Lost 0.5-3.5

We are currently joint second in the table.

Team	Played	Home Win	Home Loss	Away Win	Away Loss	Home Draw	Away Draw	TOTAL POINTS
TYLNEY PARK	7	4			1		2	11
EASTHAMPSTEAD	6	2		1	2	1		8
WEST BERKS	6	2		1	2	1		8
HADDEN HILL	5	2			3			4
STUDLEY WOOD	8	2	2		4			4

Our final two group matches are :

West Berks Home Tuesday 24th February 2026
Hadden Hill Away Thursday 5th March 2026

Alisdhair Beckingham 3/12/25



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Juniors Section

Update from Richard Lansley



Captains Amilie (2026) and Maxime (2025)

New Captain

The Junior Captain for 2026 will be Amilie Clarkin – we all wish her well for the next year.

And well done to Captain Maxime Chan for a very successful 2025.

Major Junior Winners this 2025

Congratulations to all the Junior Major Winners this year 🤝

Competition	Winner
Easter Bunny	Jack Collins
Scratch KO	Katy Lansley
Singles KO	Oliver Wery
Pairs KO	Amilie Clarkin & Maxime Chan
Club Champs	Maxime Chan
Captain v Vice	Vice-Captain Amilie Clarkin
Jeffs Challenge Cup	Oliver Wery
Turkey Trott (Nett)	Oliver Wery
Turkey Trott (Gross)	Katy Lansley
Most Improved	Jack Collins
Player of the Year	Maxime Chan
Eclectic	Oscar Brown
Junior Champions	Elinor/Oli M & Huxley





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England Golf Regional Squads for the 2025/26 season.

England Golf announced its regional squads for the 2025/2026 season. Big shout out to **Katy Lansley** who was selected for the Thames Valley Region squad

THAMES VALLEY REGION

BOYS

JAMIE MCGEOCH (THE BERKSHIRE, BERKSHIRE)
THOMAS KIRCHNER (BEACONSFIELD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE)
MARCUS KARIM (EAST HERTS, HERTFORDSHIRE)
MARCUS SMITH (CASTLE ROYLE, BERKSHIRE)
OLIVER O'DELL (THE SPRINGS, OXFORDSHIRE)
JOSHUA WALDEGRAVE (BEACONSFIELD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE)
FINLAY RENNIE (CENTURION CLUB, HERTFORDSHIRE)
LOUIE BLOXHAM (WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE)
ALFIE BURT (BEACONSFIELD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE)

GIRLS

TESS SAMUELS (EAST HERTS, HERTFORDSHIRE)
AVA GADSBY (EAST HERTS, HERTFORDSHIRE)
SOMMER CHAN (WOBURN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE)
AMELIA PARKER (LETCHWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE)
AMELIE STEWART (BROCKET HALL, HERTFORDSHIRE)
LARA MURPHY (FRIELFORD HEATH, OXFORDSHIRE)
KATY LANSLEY (EASTHAMPTON, BERKSHIRE)
THILANYA RAJAPAKSHA (BEACONSFIELD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE)
ALECIA IBEKWE (SANDY LODGE, HERTFORDSHIRE)





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COMPLEX Q&A

Summary of my monthly meeting held with Downshire Complex

Date 01 December 2025

Q&A between Mark (EGC Capt) and Simon (Downshire GM)

It is perceived that EA are not investing in the course, that money is going to other parts of the EA business, can you comment

It's true that Downshire is part of a bigger wheel, but we get our fair share of investment. It's only 18 months ago that EA invested £300k on the driving range to protect revenue and offer a better experience, more drainage works have been carried out in the past 48 months than over the past 12 years. But there is a misconception that running a golf course is a license to print money. Generally, there are times in the year that the course runs at a loss i.e. between about November and February inclusive, then this is hopefully made back through the main golf season.

Before EA took over, Downshire and other leisure sites ran at a loss for several years. This is why BFC entered into partnership with EA to make Bracknell's leisure facilities more sustainable and profitable and keep them better maintained. I'd love for every penny to be able to be spent on the course, but this just isn't viable. In the past 24 months new boilers were needed for the clubhouse, all the old draughty doors were replaced, the external paintwork required doing and lights including the carpark were upgraded, as you can imagine these works ran comfortably into six figures.

Budgets and CAPEX are completed not only for next year, but we also look ahead on a 5 year long term rolling investment taking sustainability into account.

With regards to the maintenance of the course, who does what? where does the responsibility lie?

The property & machinery are owned by the council (still). EA is responsible for reactive maintenance and upkeep (annual service of equipment alone cost £18-20K). If assets need replacing e.g. green keeping equip, or a tree needs felling, etc then this is generally the responsibility of the council.

Health and safety / duty of care to the public (& members) lies with EA, for example: sometimes due to condition of the course buggies/ride-ons need to be prohibited. Not that they damage the grass - it is more to do with safety around the course in adverse conditions - over bridges and around ditches etc.

The bridges are clearly slippery at this time of year, what is being done to keep them as safe as possible?

We are regular clearing them, but it is an endless task at the moment. Anti slip strips have been purchased and are ready to be added to the bridges asap. Arched bridge over ditch near 11th tees will likely be roped off now as this is particularly hazardous when wet.

[MP: watch your footing out there - it's slippery when wet!]

I am regularly hearing that the mats and rubber tees are not in good condition. What is being done?

The mats were recently power hosed to clean them up but agree they need to be regularly checked. I had asked the rangers to do this but will reinforce the message to check all mats daily and ensure rubber tees are functioning (replaced if damaged or clean out broken tees as necessary)

[MP: Simon sent this instruction out while I was there]



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How is the new drainage work progressing? How is it holding up in the rain?

Firstly, we need to complete the drainage work. The primary drainage has been completed on 13 and 16.

The 13th upper fairway is now going to be "**gravel banded**". This injects slits with a 30cm column of pea shingle into the fairway at approx. 1m gaps, rows are perpendicular to the primary drainage. This allows water to flow easier through the (compact) soil to the drains.

The gravel banding work is to be done in January. The cost of doing this just on the top end of the 13th is about £4500 and is a cost-effective investment for the Proof of Concept to allow the surface 3 inches to drain more quickly. If successful it will also be extended to the 16th fairway (to support the new drainage that has just been completed) hopefully in February.

Overall - this year is already drier than last year (although may not feel like it). In 2024 the course had already been closed 5 times by end of November due to the wet conditions. This year it has not closed once yet and buggies were out until the first week of November, personal ride-ons were still allowed up to the writing of this report.

[MP: *With the new drainage and a hopefully less wet climate this winter, I hope we get to play more golf this winter 😊*]

Apart from leaves, worm casts are our favourite subject at this time of year. Given that the “worm killer potions” are banned, is there anything that you can do that might improve the situation?

[MP: *The main chemical product used on golf courses to deter worms, Carbendazim, was banned for use in the UK and EU around 2017. After about two years any left in the soil would have deteriorated. The worms have therefore been “unchecked” for probably about 5+ years now – making it worse for us. Currently with no approved replacement, only a few options are available – primarily improve drainage & use soil conditioners (e.g. sulphur-based products) to lower soil PH*]

The fairways have been tested for the acidity level - worms don't like acidic soil. The soil has been shown to be PH neutral, or slightly alkaline. To combat this and make it slightly acidic, which won't affect the grass - (it will just look dark and lush for a while) - we are putting down iron sulphate solution. This is a reasonably cheap and environmentally friendly option.

This is going to be tested on the 4th fairway.

[MP: *The hope is that the worms will pack their bags and leave the area!*]

We will also monitor the 13th with the gravel banding to see if that helps reduces worm casts by lowering the water saturation in the soil in that area. I am also requesting another “winter” robot demo for cutting of the fairways which will also hopefully reduce the smearing of casts on the fairways. If positive we will be looking at this investment in April.

We would like to see the approaches and surrounds of the greens improved - getting bad lies when just missing the green seems unfair.

This is not being helped by the wormcasts either – All mowers have front rollers which smears the worm casts. Hoping if we can get the wormcasts under control this will improve. Also working with John [head greenkeeper] to address the “shrinking green” issues as we move into the spring.

[MP: *we can all help by not taking ride-ons & trolleys near the greens*]



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Footnote:

A few months ago, most golfers were praising the course and its condition with numerous people making the effort to speak to the Greenkeeping team to thank them, then something happened... Autumn and Winter.

They're the same team that delivered the prolonged playing season this year in very difficult drought conditions and are still working hard through all weathers daily to try and maintain the course. There are no affordable miracles to the wet surfaces or to stop leaves falling from trees, we just have to do our best, continue with our drainage endeavours and sometimes prioritise one job over another.

We do however listen when people approach us in a professional manner, we try to get the things done that are important to you, like the new bridge on 13, reducing the lip on the 14th bunker, purchasing a power brush to try and reduce the mud from paths and bridges and redefining the out of bounds on 13.

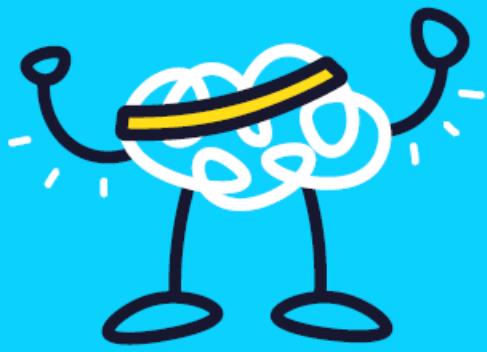
Please remember that not all money spent will be visual on the course but will always be for the betterment of the complex. Some things are however outside of our control, but I'll always listen to suggestions and answer where I can.



Capt. Mark Pearson

Captains Charity

Mental Health Support... Through Sport



Sport in Mind is a multi-award-winning charity that delivers fun, weekly sport and physical activity sessions to improve the lives of children, young people and adults experiencing mental health challenges.

"Sport in Mind's sessions have played a key role in helping me overcome anxiety and depression."

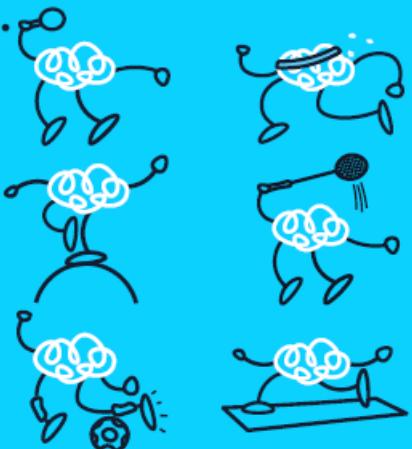
Kelly, 25



Sport In Mind
Registered charity no. 1161323

Sport in Mind offers a range of weekly sport and physical activity sessions for children, young people and adults to promote mental well-being. All abilities and fitness levels welcome.

Activities include: Badminton, Yoga, Football, Table Tennis, Tennis, Walking and many more.



Benefits of regular exercise include:

- Reduced symptoms of depression
- Improved feelings of mental well-being
- Reduced levels of stress and anxiety
- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Improved sleeping patterns and concentration
- Enhanced physical health

If you would like to attend our sessions, volunteer or are keen to know more about us please get in touch:

Text or Call: 0118 9479762
Email: info@sportinmind.org
Vist: www.sportinmind.org
f **t** **g** **o**
Fundraising: justgiving.com/sportinmind

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I thank you for showing your support for this excellent charity