



re:imagine People's Panel Meeting Minutes

Meeting 3: 2 June 2018, 8:30am – 10:30am

Gold Creek Country Club

Attendees

Amanda Whitley (Chair)

Allycia Knox
Amanda Kiley
Anne Emms
Brett Adam
Liz Jaques
David Thorne
David George
Ed Killesteyn
Jeffrey Harmer
John Baker

John Miller
Lisa Thorburn
Mark De Bortoli
Mark Pickering
Mark Wilkins
Rhonda Daniell
Ross Stevens
Sandra Elliot
Chris Thomas
Tim Napper

Apologies

Damian Tunney
Joanne Brown
Kent Donally
Karen Reid
Helen Wilks

Helen Leayr (The Communication Link)

Ellen Samuels (Secretariat)

Papers distributed prior to meeting

- Agenda meeting #2
- Draft minutes – Meeting #2
- Further Information Workshop Outcomes

1. Welcome

The Chair, Amanda Whitley, welcomed the members of the Peoples Panel to the meeting.

Welcome to new member John Miller, representing Cockington Green.

Apologies were noted.

2. Review of Draft Minutes from Meeting 2

The previous Meeting Minutes were discussed. Concerns were raised about the use of the word 'compromise' in the dot points from the previous minutes. Concerns were raised that

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this was not reflective of the discussion held in that it implied the People's Panel was interested in pursuing a compromise proposal. Ms Leayr noted that the word had been recorded on the butcher's paper used during the workshop.

It was felt that it was overweighted in the Minutes as drafted and Ms Leayr took on the action to amend the minutes and redistribute for approval.

The member recorded in the minutes as unofficially representing her body corporate advised that the position was an official one, and the Minutes will be adjusted accordingly.

3. Actions from previous minutes

- a. Workshop questions
- b. ACTPLA presentation
- c. KGroup presentation

Ms Leayr advised that an additional question has been added to the workshop questions as sent to ACTPLA, this question was regarding the objective factors considered for decision making in lease variations, Territory Plan variations etc.

Ms Leayr advised that the ACTPLA meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 13th June at 4.30pm although the venue was still being determined. The majority of members indicated they would be able to attend and others asked if it was possible to phone in. Ms Leayr advised this should be achievable.

A member representing CNRG reserved the right to put an additional set of questions to the K Group presentation and advised that the questions had been distributed to the People's Panel group independently. Copies of CNRG proposed questions were distributed to the meeting.

It was agreed that these questions would be included as an attachment to the list of questions prepared by the People's Panel. They would be distinguished as being distributed through the Panel, not by the Panel.

Ms Leayr advised that the KGroup presentation is scheduled for the next People's Panel meeting on Saturday 16th June. She also advised the intention was to provide written answers to the questions and provide the presentation on the website.

4. Presentation: Stephane Talbot, General Manager Gold Creek Country Club

A presentation was given by Stephane Talbot. The presentation introduced Troon, the golf club management company that Mr Talbot represents.

Discussion included local, national and international golfing trends, lack of data around previous operations at the club, financial viability. A copy of the presentation is available on the re:imagine website.

Mr Talbot responded to many questions in addition to those in the presentation, these included:



Q. What aspect of the golf course do you manage?

A. The whole operation including the clubhouse and restaurant.

Q. Are there plans for a membership drive?

A. There are many different models that can be used depending on what the strategic vision is.

Q. Have you ever managed a club where there is no clubhouse or pro-shop?

A. There are many courses that do not have a proper clubhouse and that are meant to be just a 'golfing' experience.

Q. Is beefing up the clubhouse or pro-shop part of your remit?

A. When you compare to places like Federal, their fees are nearly double. Is it worth doubling membership costs to get amenities here? *(A question was raised about the financial viability of Mollymook Golf Club)* Mollymook golf operations are almost certainly losing money. There is more than one solution, it is not black and white.

Q. It sounds like in 5-10 years' time no-one will be able to play 18 holes, would it be better to create a point of differentiation in the market to accommodate 6, 12, 9, 2x9, 18 etc holes?

A. Possibly but that is outside of the Troon remit. There are lots of possibilities including scheduling, pricing, marketing etc.

Q. We would like to see where the \$400k loss comes from?

A. It is broken down in to sector but I don't have that on me. At one point this year we only had 217 fully paid members for this financial year.

(A member noted that the last membership numbers stated there were actually 335 paying members. Stephane stated that up to recently only 217 of these were PAID members)

Q. What about golf tourism?

A. It is non-existent unfortunately. We are pushing online bookings with online deals but that brings the fees down to remain competitive. Since yesterday we have an online booking portal.

Q. What about a deal with Singapore Airlines to bring people from overseas?

A. That is something that all the clubs would need to get together to make happen and be sure they have a great product and destination. Canberra is not in a position currently to compete on the international stage for golf tourism.

Q. What about sponsorship? If I found hole sponsors would that work to make up that \$400k loss?

A. We would need to look at a whole course approach. I would not want an inconsistent hole-by-hole approach or look and feel. But would love to discuss opportunities with local businesses.

Q. Is your contract 1 year plus? Is it unusual to have this type of term?

A. I don't have the detail of the contract but no it is not unusual. We would prefer longer but these days most owners want to see outcomes before committing longer.

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Q. What were your performance targets?

A. I think it was to break even.

Q. What does it mean that their needs to be agreement on scheduling of tournaments?

A. In our agreement the Golf Club receives access to the course and its facilities at such times as may be agreed with the Country Club

Q. Is there a marketing budget or does it come out of operations?

A. A budget is being prepared by Troon as part of its management of the course. The budget has been increased but it is an incremental increase not a huge one. Marketing must be done with clear measurables.

Q. What could the neighbourhood do to improve the Club's situation?

A. 40% of the Country Club's total revenue is from the restaurant, so community can continue to support that or increase support. The Club is not fully booked, we can still fill some of the void from members with social bookings.

Q. The intro video you played focused on getting Millenials into the sport, do you know the ages of golfers at this club? Also, younger people who enjoy playing 18 holes now will retire they will want to play 18 holes then too. Are you focused on removing 18 holes?

A. The average age of this club is 50. Which is younger than average. Golf loses players every year, some don't make it to retirement. The focus on younger players would never overtake so much that it would make the game unappealing to others.

Q. Corporate days should be ramped back up again at the club.

A. This needs to improve *(A member noted that this needs to be supported by the public service to ensure it is embraced and not seen as a potential conflict).*

Q. A member commented that the restaurant needs to improve. The dinner menu needs to change and substitutions on menu items should be allowed.

A. Mr Talbot noted that he would like to add additional staff to the restaurant but is unable to make it work in the current budget but confirmed that the menu will be changed significantly soon.

Q. I would attend more member competitions if they were held, but are you saying that these will not increase income to the club and you should focus on picking up more social bookings instead?

A. We are always looking for different format of competitions. Yes 9 holes competitions are a nice option. Some should also be for socials to attract them even more. They need to be inclusive. We could fit them in if there is weekend demand but members who bring a guest are already able to play in comps.

Q. If we had more competitions, more people would turn up but they would be current members.

A. 3 days out of 7 we have competitions. I would like to see more special competitions, with dinners, entertainers or events.

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Q. All of this stuff is fascinating and crystallises the challenges ahead but it seems to me you can design from a blank sheet to be profitable but we have a fixed asset, how do you transition an asset that already has so much value to the community?

A. It is a very difficult situation. If it became 9 holes, the other 9 holes would need to be completely redone in my opinion to make it spectacular.

Q. I'm worried about the 1 year agreement, have you forecasted 3yrs ahead?

A. We haven't been asked to do so but we would normally do this in our Pro Forma.

Q. I am concerned that the membership is declining while the population in Gungahlin has exploded and continues to rise. Why is there a decline in Gold Creek Golf Club membership from 2015 (533) to (352) in 2017 of -34% when the population base in Gungahlin has more than doubled. At the same time Mollymook Golf Club, which is also managed by Troon, had increased membership of 35%. Why is that?

A. I can't answer that because I don't have the detailed past data to draw on. I would assume that as more than 50% of all courses lose money. Most club owners are very happy when we just reduce the loss; to break even is very difficult.

Q. Members need to chip in. Why couldn't we go through that? \$400k is not a lot of money.

A. The Chair noted that there wasn't time to go into the detail of that discussion. A Member noted that fixing the Golf Club was not part of the Charter of the People's Panel.

Q. Do you believe you could make money here in 2-3 years' time?

A. Yes it could (meaning by the end of the 3rd year we could have a profit)

All expressed thanks to Mr Talbot for his presentation.

5. Community consultation update and next steps

Ms Leayr provided an update on consultation activities and advised that The Communication Link was starting to think about the Consultation Report that they would be producing, which will include the deliberations and outcomes of the People's Panel process.

Discussion was held around where to next. Agreement was reached that due to time constraints this discussion would be held off for future consideration. Ms Leayr took the action that she would produce a listening report to be presented to the People's Panel as part of their deliberations.

6. Other matters

Due to time constraints, this item was not covered.

7. Confirm actions and next steps

The Panel agreed that the next meeting to follow the meeting with the KGroup on 16 June would be on the 23 June.

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A member suggested extending the time allotted for the next meeting with the KGroup.

Ms Leayr also took an action to confirm the venue for the ACTPLA presentation.

8. Draft Communique

Ms Leayr outlined the proposed content of the communique with the panel members.

9. Meeting Close

Ms Whitley closed the meeting.

The next People's Panel meeting will be held on Saturday 16 June, commencing at 8:30am.

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