

We have run 2018 without a junior organiser which has been a bit of a challenge but I like to think that we have managed. However I make this plea once again as I do at almost all of Delegates' meetings - if anybody knows of anybody who would like to get involved with the juniors, not necessary running the whole thing but just playing a part, please get in contact with Lorna. We have got an amazing group of young golfers in the county, and they are great fun to be with.

The first main event of the Junior year was their County Championship. This was held at the Drift Golf Club. It poured with rain all day; there were rumbles of thunder and dark clouds around but the 24 girls played 36 holes that day and we have a worthy junior champion in Jess Adams from Burhill; joint Junior and County Champion. Lottie Woad from Farnham was the under 15 champion and Ava Bates from Camberley Heath the under 13 champion.

Junior county match week was held at Bush Hill Park in Middlesex in the middle of August. Surrey was represented by nine girls from 7 different clubs and captained by Canice Screene from Croham Hurst. The team beat Middlesex and Hampshire on the first two days they then lost 3-4 to Sussex. They needed a strong finish in the last match against Kent as Sussex was similarly placed to Surrey having lost to Hampshire. Our girls did not disappoint, They rose to the challenge in style on the final day beating Kent 7 – 0 to win the trophy. To top the day Gabby Shacklady had a hole-in-one and Rafiah Banday continued her recent successes by winning all four of her games. The girls also won the Stableford competition that runs alongside the main matchplay event. I would like to thank Ann Gems for once again managing our team for this event.

This success meant that both our teams won their respective county match weeks - this is the first time this has been achieved, and along with winning the Stovold trophy too, caps a fantastic year for our Surrey teams.

The girls play in an inter-county handicap event , the Alresford Cup – a team of 6 girls of mixed handicaps, playing against 7 other counties. Surrey had won this Cup in 2017, and I was delighted that our team retained the Cup this year.

This month I travelled to France with the mixed junior team for the friendship trophy. A great event played between teams from France, Spain and Surrey. It is an opportunity to expose young golfers to players from other countries; camaraderie and interesting methods of communication abound.

We have 5 girls involved with England Golf; Martha Lewis (St George's Hill) has represented England in the girls events this year, and is now studying at the University of Washington . Rafiah Banday from Royal Mid-Surrey is in the main England under 16 squad, and has represented England in Switzerland, Ireland and Spain. Ella Hammond-Baveystock, Wentworth, Lottie Woad Farnham, Alex Phelps, Sarah Mardani and Ellen Yates Windlesham have all been selected for England Regional training this winter.

This year we have tried to develop more coaching and encouragement to get more girls involved in playing. This was a “project” area we identified which we wanted to put some of our funds into. We have not been able to do as much as I would have liked, not least in part to have very limited volunteer resource to help with our Junior programme.

However,

We continue to run a comprehensive coaching and development programme for the girls – all girls at all levels from Surrey Clubs are invited to join the programme of up to 12 days coaching and playing. We had over 40 girls involved this year – it gives them an opportunity to play with girls from other Clubs, as well as receive some coaching. If you have girls at your Clubs please do encourage them to get involved with this programme next year.

All girls under 14 are encouraged to play in the Rookie Tour events. Again, they do need to belong to a Club and have a handicap to play. Those without such, and under 13 years, can and should play in the Yigs tour.

This year we have supported an England Golf initiative called Girls Golf Rocks. This is a program involving 4 centres in Surrey and tries to get girls who have never played golf before to learn a little about the game. It is being very successful with over 80 girls giving it a go, and almost 40 going on to have lessons at Clubs. Next year the intention is to increase our involvement to 6 centres.

Finally I would like to comment on a topic sensitive to some. We are aware that not all ladies like or are comfortable when having to play against a Junior in one of our Knock Out events. We have considered this in some depth, but do believe it is right to continue to allow the girls to enter our Knockouts if they wish. However, we will be ensuring that girls who do enter are fully aware of our rules regarding dates and availability, and etiquette both on and off the course, and hope that this will avoid any future issues so that golfers of all ages will continue to enjoy these events.

Thank you