St Stephen's Golf Society
CANTERBURY

Open correspondence to: Simon Fowler, Chairman St Stephen's Golf Society
Date: 18th October 2026
Subject: **Retirement/handover/resignation**

Dear Mr Chairmen
Firstly, can I apologies for the recent deluge of messages. It was not fair to bath bomb all the outstanding issues into your world with 'Mr Chair this, Mr Chair that', we are all volunteers after all.

I recently Google Ai'd **"chairman of a sports club"** and surprised myself how many of the chairman's responsibilities I was completing as secretary, not your fault. This is an historical process that goes back nearly 15 years when brother Andy and I took over the running of St Stephen's Golf Society. However, I can now see my departure could cause a vacuum which I hope doesn't impact on the committee's remit of delivering – a great day's golf. I hope the following helps.

My research concluded…*A sports club chairman acts as the primary leader, figurehead, and final decisionmaker for the management committee, steering the club's long-term vision and daily operations*.

Key Responsibilities

1. ***Strategic Planning**: Sets the medium-to-long-term direction and development goals for the club.*
2. ***Meeting Leadership**: Chairs general meetings, committee meetings, and Annual General Meetings (AGMs) sets the agenda, guides debates, and drives consensus, ensures minutes are taken and then published.*
3. ***Governance and Compliance**: Upholds the club's constitution, codes of conduct, and statutory obligations.*
4. ***Financial and Administrative Oversight**: Works closely with the club treasurer and secretary to monitor budgets, review accounts, and sign off on major decisions.*
5. ***External Representation**: Acts as the main ambassador and spokesperson when interacting with sponsors, governing bodies, other clubs, and the media.*
6. ***Team Building**: Helps recruit and support volunteers and committee members to ensure all operational roles are filled.*

Up until today I was directly involved as secretary with all the above and using that experience, I would like to take this opportunity to make some suggestions and disclose some observations that I hope will assist your tenure.

Committee

With the impending AGM the timing could not be better, **I give you notice that as from the date of this correspondence I will be standing down as secretary** to give the leadership team time to prepare and coerce for the AGM Fri 27th Nov 2026 @ Canterbury GC.

I hope the following helps the committee in the future…

- **Chairman**: Simon, as above and apologies for not foreseeing all responsibilities I will be transferring to you. You will need help and as a friend I am always there for a chat in confidence if needs be.
- **Treasurer**: Kev has and still is doing a fantastic job. It is well known that 'The Treasurer' has the worst job on the committee with heavy responsibilities to react and deliver whilst juggling the clubs' finances. We are lucky that he has not only done this without error and with great enthusiasm for many years but also does so in partnership with the skipper and other event organisers like myself.

  My only reservations as a bystander are:
  - Kev appears to be the only signatory on the Starling bank account? Perhaps for the societies future wellbeing, access to the account should be available to another committee member like yourself? Starling Bank does not support "dual authorisation" on personal accounts so suggest that the access details are shared.
  - Kev's charity money (members donations) have cleared through the society account. I've recently had an 'advisory' myself about charity payments from my business financial guys – it's a bit of a no-no so if there are charity moneys in or passing through, the treasurers annual report should clearly show when/where/who and the practice is discontinued keeping the society account club business only for a future possible audit.
  - Should the accounts be audited? In my 15 years as sec, the accounts have never been audited and in view of the previous incumbent (who kept no records) should this be scheduled into the calendar for the near future?
- **2026 Skipper**: Pat was clear from the start (2026 season) that he wasn't going to conform to the norm and has shaken up the way the society plays its golf. Hats off, he has done a magnificent job that reflects in the positive comments I am seeing in the soon to be published survey and chat pages. The change of play day from a Friday has worked and I am glad to see that the 2027 fixtures continue to embrace that change, it's just a shame my life can't fit around those days at this moment in time. But as I said to Pat when we discussed this change at the end of 2025, one member can not enforce their restrictions on the membership. Should a Saturday event also be included?
- **Handicap Sec**: Paul has in the past stepped up many times to help on the day or behind the scenes. We have been lucky to have someone so adaptable and enthusiastic within our ranks. Handicaps will always be a bone of contention with in society. Working with the England Golf app, society points adjustments and with full score card adjudication I think it is the best solution we have ever used. Could Paul's skills be better utilised as secretary as I am sure the 2027 skipper can handle the handicaps?
- **Committee members without portfolio**: I would recommend at least 2 experienced golfers join the committee (4) to represent the members. With at least 2 years membership behind them and if possible some experience on committees, the new committee members will bolster the leadership team.
- **2027 Skipper**: as I write I do have an idea who that could be. No spoilers but whoever it is, get them involved early and make sure they are fully prepared for the first event. The skipper is the event day leader and needs all the help they can get. I still have the "the skippers guide" if required?
- **Secretary**: you need an able replacement – **urgent!**

Other comments

- **Website**: as you already know, one of my biggest problems was time management and keeping up with the website updates especially when I am not involved with the event. There have been several 2026 events not fully covered and data remains missing. Also, we no longer have sponsors, one of the core reasons for the website. Therefore, I decided to discontinue supporting the web presence (and informed you August 26). I am glad to see you are making good progress with a replacement but encourage you to transfer all important data before 27th November 2026 when the web name (and email) is due to expire.
- **Charity support**: It has been an honour to be involved with several St Stephen's Golf Society charity fund raisers especially the Hope for Ethan charity, helping to raise £1k's for Ethan is something I remember with pride. I was however very disappointed that in May 2026 the charity event replaced the society day leaving only 10 'scoring' society events for the year. I know Pat and several other members were disappointed, perhaps this can be addresses at the AGM – along with **The Chocolate Orange donations**. I can assure you I am not alone on this one! If we are going to raise money on an event day for a worthy cause, should we not consider targeting a local charity that directly benefits locals (not a multi-national confectioner)? We have spoken in the past about this and agreed at the time that this is starting to 'grate' with some members. Another one for the AGM agender? Should the presiding skipper choose the charity?
- **Affiliations**: I was slightly unsettled by the recent comments 2 committee members made about an affiliation with another golf society. We have strong 'members' connection with many other golf clubs and societies but a 'sharing' program is not something the committee has discussed and definitely has not authorised. I know you are not in favour, and I can confirm that a quick and recent straw poll I conducted was also not favourable. Long term if this does get approval, the risk is amalgamation, members leaving and in turn a loss of identity/termination. I would strongly advise that you keep the ship sailing under its own steam in the direction we decide to navigate.
- **Weekend golf break**: I was glad to see that the 2025 AGM decision to overturn the 'members only' rule was passed by a committee majority opening the door to our long-term friends to join us at no additional costs. I can assure you that decision has been gratefully accepted. However, I am very saddened to see that the event has not been finalised – can this be resolved as a matter of urgency please? I am hearing that some factions are now looking at organising their own event which will be a great loss to the St Stephen's Golf Society calendar after over 10 years of events around Southern England

Many thanks for reading thus far and please take all comments as constructive and well meaning. I will now move on in life with my personal, family and other commitments. My thanks to the present committee and past committee members (especially past skippers) for all their support over the years and I wish you well for the future.

Nigel Stevenson (retired)