

What Do Our Affiliation Fees To England Golf And County Organisations Pay For?

In short England Golf and the County Unions and Associations deal with the following:

Club Support, Golf Development, Handicaps, Junior Golf & Safeguarding Support, SafeGolf, Development Structure, County Card, Golf Rules, Rating for Course Rating and Slope, Championships – both Scratch and Handicap, National and County Teams, County Annual Dinner.

All of these items are more fully described later in this document.

Current Affiliation Fees :

England Golf - £9.50

SHUGC - £9.60 (Including Junior Player Pathway levy of 10p per club member)

SLCGA - £7.00 (including Junior Playing Pathway levy of 10p per club member)

Affiliation fees are paid by playing members of affiliated clubs, collected by those clubs and passed on to EG, SHUGC and SLCGA. With effect from 2017 collection of affiliation fees has been aligned with each individual club's financial year.

The Responsibilities of Club Voting Members/Delegates

In recognising the responsibilities that the County organisations have in delivering services to clubs and their members, it is important that clubs understand the role of their appointed Voting Member/Delegate attending Executive meetings. In simple terms the Executive Voting Members/Delegates operate as the "board" of the county organisation and are responsible for communicating clubs' needs to the county; voting on proposals identified by the clubs and/or county committee and communication of news, plans, expectation of actions by the clubs and decisions taken, back to the member clubs. It is expected that after each County Executive Meeting and after the AGM, each club's Executive Voting Member/Delegate will immediately communicate relevant details to his/her club. The County is run by the County Administrative Committee based on requirements laid down by the Executive Voting Members/Delegates and EG. If you do not feel that your club is being properly represented at County level, you may want to discuss the role and responsibilities with your Executive Voting Member/Delegate.

England Golf is the National Governing Body (NGB) for all golf within England.

England Golf is 'owned' by all of the County Unions and Associations. EG holds two General Meetings per year and an AGM which is held annually in April. Each County Union and Association sends a Voting Member to these three meetings. The Voting Members vote upon any proposals put to the Counties, including the amount of affiliation fees which must be paid by all playing members of golf clubs within England. The Voting Members vote on elections for the Board of Directors and all matters pertaining to the administration of golf at national level. The Chairman of the Board is appointed as an independent officer in accordance with governing procedure established through Sport England on behalf of Government. The Directors are appointed by the Voting Members at the AGM and are of expertise with relevant specialisations, including administration of golf at all levels.

The administration of EG is headed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is appointed by the Board. The CEO is a full time paid official and supported by a number of full time Departmental Directors, Managers and Staff. The Head Office of EG is at Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire – The Home of England Golf. In addition there are full time paid Club Support Officers (CSO) who operate throughout England giving support to member clubs on all types of relevant golfing and business matters. The CSOs are county based and work in conjunction with the County Development Groups (CDG). The CDGs themselves are local County Committees including members from the County Unions, Associations and PGA which assist clubs and County bodies in developing the game of golf at County level.

In addition to the EG full time staff there are many volunteers involved at all levels of EG supporting all aspects including the Board Members, Team Managers, Rules Officials, Regional Course Rating checkers and many more. Like all sports it is the committed volunteers at all levels who make the difference.

Roles & Services of England Golf.

The full details of the roles and services of EG can be found on the EG website and are in short:

- **Participation, Club Support & Development of Golf** at National and County Level. Including assistance to clubs on all matters pertaining to administration of golf and governance, recruitment and retention of member and compliance.
- **Website.** Provide details of services, information and points of contact for EG, SHUGC and SLCGA.
- **Handicap Administration** at national level. EG is a member of the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU). (Members England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales). CONGU is the governing body for handicap rules and administration in GB&I and deals with handicapping matters under the Worldwide Handicapping Scheme (WHS). including licensing of software products used by members clubs. The only golfers allowed to have a WHS approved handicap are members of EG and the relevant County Union or Association, having paid their affiliation fee as a member of an affiliated golf club. Or an independent golfer registered with EG under the Independent Golfer Scheme.
The worldwide handicap scheme WHS) was introduced in 2020 under the control of R&A and USGA.
- **SafeGolf.** Included amongst the many facets of the EG Club Services Department is 'Safeguarding' to ensure that those who deal with young and vulnerable golfers act responsibly at all times, follow correct procedures, and if and when problems do occur these are handled by experienced officers at national level.
- **Rules of Golf.** EG has a Tournament Panel of Qualified Rules Officials who officiate at EG, Regional and National County Championships and act as tutors at EG Rules Schools. In addition the EG Championships Department are available to answer Golf Rules questions from clubs.
- **Course Rating.** EG acts as the national body in England for the rating of courses for Course Rating and Slope purposes under the USGA Course Rating Scheme. The USGA rating scheme has now been adopted by every golfing country in the world. Ratings of all courses under USGA guidelines are undertaken on a 10 year rolling basis and the worldwide handicap scheme was introduced in 2020. The work for course rating is being undertaken by teams at County level, and the final rating approved by EG.
- **National Championships** - provision at scratch and handicap level for Seniors (55+ Men and 50+ Women), Men, Women, Juniors (Boys and Girls).
- **National Golf Teams** at scratch level – Seniors (55+ Men and Women +50), Men, Women, Juniors (Boys and Girls), including coaching at all levels except Seniors. Many of the English Men in the World's top 50 players were all part of EG coaching schemes, and played as an amateur for England teams. Virtually all English players on the European Tour benefitted from EG coaching and championships.

SHUGC & SLCGA are the governing bodies for golf at County level within Shropshire & Herefordshire for men and Shropshire only for women. These two bodies are 'owned' by the member clubs and each hold general 'Executive' meetings each year together with an AGM. Member clubs send Voting Members/Delegates to the Executive meetings and vote upon any proposals put to meetings, including the level of affiliation fees which must be paid by all playing members of clubs within the Counties. Each club has one vote. The Officers of SHUGC and SLCGA are appointed at the relevant AGM by the voting members/delegates.

Management of SHUGC and SLCGA is in the hands of Administrative Committees who deal with day to day matters in accordance with the relevant Constitutions as approved by the clubs at the General Meeting. All Officers and members of the Admin Committees are volunteers, although an Honorarium is provided to key officers of SHUGC to recognise the time and expense they incur in undertaking their duties. Reasonable out of pocket expenses are paid to volunteers.

Roles and Services of County Golf Unions & Associations. -

The role of the County Unions and Associations mirror the work undertaken by EG, but at a local level.

- **Participation, Club Support and Development of Golf** at County level has been handled by the County Development Group (CDG) (formerly the County Golf Partnership) since 2008. During that period substantial effort was put into recruitment and retention of members with the valuable help of County Development Officers Mark Taylor and Judith Thornell. From 2017 a different approach was necessitated and full time County Support Officers introduced, directly employed by EG, with their emphasis being in club support in business management as well as recruitment and retention. The support given to individual clubs being more bespoke as identified by each club's needs. The CSO for S&H is currently Ciara Kelly, supported by Regional Manager Mark Romasiuk.
- **Website.** Provide details or services, information and points of contact for EG, SHUGC & SLCGA.
- **Handicap** advice is provided by the County Handicap Advisors, and they deal with local queries from clubs and agree any extension of Winter Rules when appropriate.
- **Safegolf** is pivotal and forms part of the CSO remit. The County Bodies, SHUGC and SLCGA have to be SafeGolf accredited and that is achieved on a joint basis.
- **County Player Pathway.** Funding for Junior coaching from Sport England/EG began in 2008 under the remit of the CGP with S&H PGA Professionals undertaking the coaching assisted in many cases by Level 1 Coaches from clubs. Initially in order to obtain central funding, matching was required locally. Juniors selected for the scheme (or more particularly their parents) make a contribution and a 10p per member annual levy was agreed by SHUGC and SLCGA. Over the years there have been changes within the scheme as funding from Sport England reduced, but EG took up the baton and supports the coaching under the Player Pathway Scheme from within the EG Special Projects Fund. The Player Pathway Scheme has proved worthwhile and virtually all County Junior Team players, and most of the younger full County Team members, have been the beneficiaries.
- **County Card.** A County Card scheme has been operated by SHUGC for many years and all clubs must be members of the scheme. All male members are entitled to a County Card. Women do have the opportunity to use the card scheme and some clubs' women participate. The card can be used in over 1,300 clubs throughout England and a virtually national arrangement to honour County Cards. A player can use the card to obtain a discounted green fee at all participating clubs, and clubs benefit from County Card income throughout the year.
- **Rules of Golf.** S&H has two EG Tournament Panel Rules Officials and five other County/Regional Qualified Rules Officials who officiate at relevant events during the season. All volunteers. The Rules Officials are also available to assist clubs with any Rules of Golf queries.
- **Course Rating.** The USGA Course Rating Scheme is managed by a Course Rating Co-ordinator and there are four other Team Leaders who are joined by Assistant Raters, all are volunteers. Course Rating is a time-consuming business, both on and off course, and all S&H courses were rated before the Worldwide Handicapping Scheme came in to force in 2020. Ratings will continue as part of an ongoing ten-year programme to ensure that each club's Course Rating and Slope ratings remain accurate. Clubs do need to advise the County Rating Co-ordinator if any notable difference are to be made to their course.

- **County Championships** at scratch and handicap level are held by both SHUGC and SLCGA for Seniors (55+ Men & 50+ Women), Men, Women, and Juniors (Boys & Girls). Many of the Club Team events are firm favourites and include such as the Cognac Trophy, Shropshire Star, Chronicle Cup (County Handicap Championship), Texas Scramble, President's Invitation plus Junior events at U12, U14, U16, U18 and Youth levels. At the youngest of age groups S&H have the splendid Pee Wee Tour where the youngest of Juniors can play in a series of fun competitions throughout the main school holidays. All County events are managed by volunteers.
- **County Inter Club Team Competitions.** Both SHUGC and SLCGA run Club Team competitions for both Scratch and Handicap players. SHUGC operate the Hargrove Winter Foursomes knock-out on a home and away basis. All first-round losers go into a Plate Competition, again on a home and away basis, with the finals taking place usually around the end of March – depending upon the severity of the Winter. SLCGA operates the Shrimpton and Hargrove Trophy during the winter months for 1st and 2nd Team players, with the winner being decided over three rounds played on different courses. In summer there are Scratch and Handicap Club Team Leagues played on a home and away basis, with League Winners progressing onto knock-out semi final and finals, culminating in a grand final at one venue.
SLCGA operates Scratch and Handicap Team competitions in a draw with winners progressing to the next round with the final played on a neutral course.
Juniors within S&H are provided for with a Junior Handicap League in line with the Men's and Women's Club Handicap Leagues, although Junior Club Teams can include both boys and girls. The team which wins the County Finals goes through to the national finals administered by EG. The 2017 national winners were Burghill Valley, and were followed by Horsehay Village in 2018. Bridgnorth also won this prestigious competition in 2012.
- **County Teams** enter Midlands Regional Leagues with Seniors, Men, Women and Juniors taking part. All teams are managed by volunteers.
SHUGC's Senior Men's, Men's and Junior Boys Six Player Teams all take part in the Midlands 36 Hole Qualifying Rounds for the relevant EG Men's County Finals. The winner of the Midlands event join those from the North, South and South West for a Four Team National Round Robin morning Foursomes Match Play followed by Singles Match Play. This pinnacle of County events takes place towards the end of the Season.
SLCGA Women's Team take part in a 3 day match play competition between the County Women's Teams from the Midlands North Region of EG, and the winners from that event go forward to the National Finals.
- **Annual Dinner.** SHUGC holds an Annual Dinner in October when all SHUGC members are invited to attend. Each club pays a Dinner Levy of £75 which entitles the Men's Captain to a free dinner and the Club President and Captain of each club are invited to a pre-dinner drinks reception. The Dinner Levy also goes towards meeting the meal costs of the speakers and any visiting County Presidents in office at the time of the dinner. Nine Presidents are invited from other Counties and the S&H President in Office is invited to those Counties' own Dinners whilst in office himself. It is pleasing to say that many Past Presidents from other Counties continue to attend the Annual Dinner as guests of our own Past Presidents at no cost to SHUGC.

The above summarises what EG, SHUGC and SLCGA do for clubs and club members and, for which all members pay an affiliation fee. If you have any queries or would like to be one of the army of volunteers, please contact the County Secretaries of SHUGC and SLCGA who will be delighted to help. Contact can be via the website or by telephone numbers shown on the relevant websites.

Enjoy your golf.

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