

Unpublished article prepared by journalist Steve Acteson of the Kentish Gazette

Helen Johnson (Sidcup GC) marked the first time in 31 years that women had been invited to take part in an Association of Kent Veteran Golfers event by winning the Captain's Prize at Canterbury last Tuesday with 41 Stableford points

The day was hosted by this year's AKVG Captain, Canterbury's Carlo Nuvoletta, and attracted 116 golfers from 35 clubs across Kent.

It was the first AKVG event of the year and the only one where the players compete for two trophies.

John Marshall (West Malling GC) scored 41 points to win the Desmond Parker Spring Trophy and Canterbury's Catherine Hinds was second in Division 1 with 39.

Helen emailed the AKVG committee to say: "I would like to say a big thank you for today at Canterbury. It was so well organised and lots of thought had gone into making the ladies feel welcome within the association.

"Obviously I'm super chuffed to be the first lady on the trophy and what a lovely thoughtful gesture to buy flowers and a bottle of fizz to ensure a lady had something to take home. "I'm looking forward to more events and hopefully in time I will get some more Sidcup members to join the AKVG."

Canterbury's event contributed around £1,200 towards this year's AKVG charity target after £3500 was raised last year and Carlo is hoping this year, they can surpass £4,000.

He said: "The event was an extraordinary success. All our club staff went the extra mile to make the day pleasant for the guests and players. From the pro-shop to the restaurant staff and including management and green keepers, they all contributed greatly to the success of the day. Our Chairman Peter Cheney and the new General Manager Alan Holcroft welcomed the players very warmly and I am very proud to be a Canterbury member and the 2026 AKVG Captain."

The AKVG'S purpose is to promote greater friendship amongst golfers from Kent clubs and to support worthy county causes.

Donations are made annually to the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance and to the annual captain's chosen charity; The Children Trust, the UK's leading charity for children with brain injuries.

Members of the AKVG must be aged 60 or over and belong to a golf club affiliated to the Kent Golf Union.

Currently there are over 590 members belonging to 33 Kent golf clubs and Canterbury has 14 members.

Between April and October each year AKVG members compete for eight trophies, including the Player of the Year shield.