



Seaford Town Council

To the Members of the Golf Committee

A meeting of the **Golf Committee** will be held at **The View, Southdown Road, Seaford, BN25 4JS** on **Tuesday 8 December 2015** at **7.00pm** which you are summoned to attend.



James Corrigan
Town Clerk
2 December 2015

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Disclosure of Interests

To deal with any disclosure by Members of any discloseable pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests, as defined under the Seaford Town Council Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, in relation to matters on the agenda.

3. Public Participation

To deal with any questions, or brief representations, from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 3 and Seaford Town Council Policy.

4. Golf Professionals Report

To consider report 118/15 presenting the Golf Professionals Report (pages 2 to 5).

5. Head Greenkeepers Report

To consider report 117/15 presenting the Head Greenkeepers Report (pages 6 to 8).

6. Golf Budget; Golf Course and The View at Seaford Head

To consider report 119/15 presenting the draft projected outturn for the current financial year and the Committee Budget for the 2016/17 Financial Year, and to make recommendations to Full Council (report to follow).

7. Town Clerks Report

To consider report 120/15 providing an update for the Committee on the operations at The View (report to follow).

For further information about items appearing on this Agenda please contact:

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Circulation

Committee: Councillor S Adeniji (Chair), R Chambers (Vice Chair), M Brown, C Campbell, L Freeman, O Honeyman, A Latham, A McLean, D Silvey-Adam and L Worcester.

For information: Councillors D Argent, B Burfield, P Boorman, D Burchett, R Hayder, R Honeyman, M Lambert, P Lower, I Murray and L Wallraven.



Agenda Item No: 4

Committee: Golf

Date: 8 December 2015

Title: Golf Professionals Report

By: Fraser Morley, Golf Professional

Purpose of Report: To provide update on Golf Course related matters.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

- 1. To approve limiting the membership to 400 members (not including junior members).**
- 2. To agree on the membership fees for existing and new members.**

1. Income and Membership

- 1.1 We have seen a very busy August, September and October seeing income nearly double compared to the same period last year. The introduction of buggies over this period has been a hugely positive feature. This should see a great return next year when we'll have a full season. The course and improved facility has been a success with societies and green fee payers alike. The members' survey had a great response and we will be looking at getting that information gathered for the New Year.
- 1.2 Membership has been steady, we are currently at 373 members for this year, this is 22 more than the whole of last year. There is also 13 x 5 day winter ticket holders we gained from Welshurst GC, this does not include membership and is just golf but brought in nearly £3,000 extra income. I would recommend either holding the last year's new figures for all existing members from this year (shown as 'existing' in the table below). Alternatively to gradually increase existing members fees by 5% to make the increase more gradual. This should generate an additional £5,000 net profit. Also a 10% increase for new members with the 15 months for the price of 12 offer again (shown as 'new' in the table below).

Category	Existing	5% Increase	New
7 Day	£683.00	£717.15	£750.00
5 Day	£532.00	£558.60	£585.00
Senior (+60)	£473.00	£496.65	£520.00
Intermediate 2 (26-29)	£456.00	£478.80	£500.00
Intermediate 1 (22-25)	£324.00	£340.20	£356.00
Youth	£185.00	£194.25	£193.00
Junior (12-17)	£63.00	£66.15	£69.00

As we can see from the Membership Comparison spreadsheet (at Appendix A) we are 4th cheapest in the league table of other courses. Even with a 10% increase we are still only joint 6th in the table out of 23 other clubs, and the 5% increase would mean we remained at 4th in the table.

This puts us still on a reasonable level and the increases in costs are for the upkeep of the course and replacement of machinery, which is extremely important to keep the course up to the standard we are used to. Someone playing twice a week is paying just over £7 a round as a 7 day member. This is actually a few pence more than it cost to play crazy golf on Brighton seafront. This shows what great value our course is. This increase in fees would bring in an extra £10k on the same renewal amount and new members as last year.

An idea I have discussed with the Town Clerk is to limit the membership to 400 (not including juniors). This would give us a perfect number to balance members, green fees and society golfers. This would also be a great marketing tool and give us a figure to work to and try and achieve this year. This could see us beat budget by some £12k depending on types of membership sold. Added to this the club membership would be increased and competitions and functions better supported and supplemented. Over all this would be a positive for the course from a marketing and financial point of view.

- 1.3 We now have 24 junior members at the course; 17 under 11 and 7 over 11. This is growing and we will continue the free junior membership for 11 and under for the foreseeable future. We need to continue with encouraging youngsters to the game. The junior tees have arrived and we will be making a short course for the under 11's in the New Year.
- 1.4 Green Fee income has been very positive over the last few months. As we can see from the top of the cost comparison spreadsheet we are well placed competitively in the market and I would recommend either retaining or implementing the 5% increase on the pricing structure for next year. It enables us to market ourselves without having to slash the prices and give other companies money to promote our tee times. The twilight structure also works and we have found a good increase in afternoon golf. Something that had tailed off in previous years. This may be down to us, hopefully, coming out of recession and people having some extra time or disposable income. Projections see us finishing £24k over budget for this financial year.
- 1.5 Societies have been strong this year. Income has been steady and numbers increasing. We have found our packages have been well received and the price point makes us very competitive in the market. Feedback from societies has been excellent and many positive comments received about the politeness of staff, condition of the course and quality of the food. The introduction of buggies has helped also and we envisage a busy time next season. We have over 40 booked already for next year and calls most days with regards to more bookings. The advertising with Golf News has worked well and we are looking for improved terms and exposure next year within the publication. Projections see us £8k over budget for this financial year.
- 1.6 **Budgets** for the 2016/17 Financial Year are included elsewhere on the agenda. We have to be careful not to be overly high with the income figures. If we can beat budget year on year we will be doing well. Overly inflating budgets has seen us struggle in the past and a spell of bad weather at any time of the year can scupper these high figures.

If we make these budgets it should give us a surplus of £64k next year and £54k the following year. This includes added expenditure of £12k and £33k over the next 2 year for course machine purchase.

Membership shows as a small increase in income but not numbers as we have seen a larger natural drop off in membership due to the demographic of our local area.

Also the current market shows most courses have a downturn in membership due to more people enjoying a nomadic golfing life rather than sticking to one course. This we gain in attracting these people to have daily green fees and boost income that way.

We have a good membership, visitor balance at the moment and there is still scope to fill some quieter parts of the week.

I have gone conservatively on buggy income as again weather can greatly hinder our efforts. However, I see us way surpassing these figures.

2. Other items

- 2.1 The new tee signs and clubhouse signs are nearly all in place. We have 2 cliff edge signs that will advertise The View to the general public who walk around our course. These signs have been produced at no cost to the course and also with in the deal comes a bespoke smartphone app for the course which will be live shortly. This will enable us to notify users of the free app about special offers and course information straight to their phone rather than waiting for them to check the website or social media. The rounds the sponsors get for supporting the signs bring in more golfers to the course and we benefit from extra residual income across the bar, buggy hire etc.
- 2.2 In progress at the moment is a cost free scheme I had found to possible install solar panels on the roof of the new clubhouse. This would effectively half our electric costs over the next 25 years. After that time the solar panels become our property and the saving is nearly 100%. Luckily we were able to get involved before the government cut the funding on this in the New Year. The survey on the property and the connection to the grid should be carried out very soon.

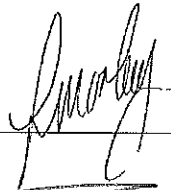
3. Financial Appraisal


The projected income levels for membership would be either £172,445 or £177,103 depending on existing members fees chosen.

4. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Fraser Morley, Golf Professional/Manager

Golf Professional/Manager





Town Clerk

Appendix A

29/10/2015	Golf Club Green Fees	M/week Green Fee	M/week	Conc/Seniors	WK/End Green Fee	WK/End	Conc/Senior	M/week Day Ticket	WK/End Day Ticket	Guest Rate M/week	Jms M/week	Jms WK/End	Twilight M/week	Twilight WK/End	Twilight Late M/W	Twilight Late W/F
1	Peachevent (9 holes)	£10 (9 holes) £14 (18 holes)	£8 (9 holes) £12 (18 holes)	£10 (9 holes) £14 (18 holes)	£8 (9 holes) £12 (18 holes)	£19.00					5%	5%				
2	Waterhall	£17.00	£17.00	£19.00							£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£12.00		
3	Eastbourne Golfing Park (9 hole)	£17.00	£17.00	£19.00							£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£12.00		
4	Hollingbury	£17.00	£17.00	£19.00							£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£12.00		
5	Hobby (9hole)	£18.00	£18.00	£20.00							£7.00	£7.00	£12.00	£12.00		
6	Tilgate Forest	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00							£8.50	£8.50	£12.00	£12.00		
7	Seaford Head (winter in brackets)	£20 (£19)	£20 (£19)	£25 (£19)	£30.00	£19 (£16)		£35.00		£16 (£14)	£10.00	£12.00	£14.00	£17.00	£10.00	£14.00
8	Hassocks	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00							£10.00	£12.50	£12.50	£15.00		
9	Wellshurst	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00							£17.00	£23.00	£17.00	£20.00		
10	Hill Barn	£24.00	£24.00	£30.00							£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
11	Brighton and Hove (9 hole)	£24.00	£24.00	£30.00							£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
12	Eastbourne Downs	£30.00	£30.00	£35.00							£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
13	Willington	£30.00	£30.00	£40.00							£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
14	Lewes	£20-£30	£20	£30	£46.00					£20 (£25 w/e)	£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
15	Mid Sussex	£20 (£20) Win	£20.00	£35.00							£15.00	£15.00	£18.00	£22.00		
16	West Hove	£20.00	£20.00	£25.00							£12.50	£15.00	£12.00	£15.00		
17	Piltdown	£30.00	£30.00	£35.00				45		£20.00	£10.00	£10.00	£12.00	£15.00		
18	Seaford Blackington	£30-£40	£30	£40	£40-£45						£10.00	£10.00	£12.00	£15.00		
19	The Dyke	£35.00	£35.00	£40.00							£7.00	£7.00	£8.00	£8.00		
20	Precombe	£36 (£31 w/h)	£32 after jpm only	£40.00							£18.00	£18.00	£25.00	£25.00		
21	East Brighton	£35-£38	£27.50 - £35	£50.00							£12.50	£12.50	£16.00	£26.00		
22	Highwoods	£40.00	£40.00	£50.00							£26.00	£26.00	£26.00	£26.00		
23	Royal Eastbourne	£48.00	£10 recip east b downs & Willington midweek	£50.00							£26.00	£26.00	£26.00	£26.00		
Golf Club Memberships																
		7 day	5 Day	Senior	Intermediate	Youth (18-21)	Junior	Winter	Student	Joining Fee	Other					
1	Peachevent (9hole)	£295.00	£295.00	£490 (7day) £371 (5 day)	£295 (18-21)	£160 (18-21)	£99.00		£149.00				£15 Handicap fee (jnr under 12) £65			
2	Waterhall	£40.00	£40.00	£480 (7day) £371 (5 day)	£295 (18-21)	£160 (18-21)	£99.00		£149.00				£15 Handicap fee (jnr under 12) £65			
3	Eastbourne Golfing Park (9 hole)	£560 (£500jpm)	£475 (£500jpm)	£475 (£500jpm)	£524 (25-29) £455 (26-29)	£185.00	£63 (free under 12)	£317.00					(jnr Free Under 12)			
4	Seaford Head	£683.00	£592.00	£475 (£500jpm)	£524 (25-29) £455 (26-29)	£185.00	£63 (free under 12)	£317.00					(jnr Free Under 12) £65			
5	Hollingbury	£735.60	£577.20	£445 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
6	Hobby (9hole)	£750 (£395 - 451 year)	£750.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
7	Wellshurst	£790.00	£790.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
8	Hassocks	£795.00	£795.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
9	Brighton and Hove (9 hole)	£834.00	£834.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
10	Tilgate Forest	£864.00	£864.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
11	Royal Eastbourne	£900.00	£900.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
12	Eastbourne Downs	£910 (£680 51 year)	£910.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
13	Hill Barn	£1095 - £1195	£995.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
14	West Hove	£1005.50	£976.50	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
15	East Brighton	£886.00	£886.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
16	Lewes	£1,015.00	£986.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
17	Willington	£1,035.00	£993.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
18	Seaford Blackington	£1,076.00	£1,025.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
19	The Dyke	£1,130.00	£980.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
20	Precombe	£1,140.00	£985.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
21	Highwoods	£1,200.00	£1,100.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
22	Mid Sussex	£1,230.00	£990.00	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			
23	Piltdown	£1,355.00	£999 (26-29)	£455 (over 80)	£350 (25-28)	£270 (18-25)	£95.00		£235.00				(jnr under 12) £50			



Agenda Item No: 5
Committee: Golf
Date: 8 December 2015
Title: Head Greenkeeper Report
By: Nick Stephens, Head Greenkeeper
Purpose of Report: To inform of Golf Course maintenance.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

1. To note contents of this report.
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1. Information

Listed below are works carried out over the past three months in addition to normal mowing and maintenance regimes.

Weather for the past three months, especially through the latter part of October and most of November has been exceptionally mild, with grass growing stronger than at any other time during the year. With increased rainfall and lower light levels, the ground does not dry very quickly and with many of our machines being of considerable weight, the decision is made sometimes to miss cutting areas if the damage caused on soft surfaces will outweigh the benefits to presentation or playability.

September

With the prestigious Pro-Am tournament making a return to the Course after a three year gap, we were keen to make a good impression with the organisers of the event. Greens were brushed, verti-cut twice and cut at 4mm in the two days prior to the event, with a double cut at 4mm and turf iron (ride on roller) the morning of the competition. Feedback was very positive, with trueness and consistency of green speed the main comments from the competitors as well as the overall presentation and improvements to the course. The organisers have already requested a return for next year, but this time earlier in the calendar to attract more entries.

Work began on our autumn renovations with the 4th 5th and 6th greens being earmarked for hollow coring. These greens were deep scarified (-5mm) with 6 passes of the machine to remove the build-up of organic matter (thatch) in the upper profile. This was followed by the hollow coring machine removing plugs of soil appx.12mm in diameter at 45mm centres. The greens were then treated with a recovery fertiliser and overseeded with Bentgrass and finally top-dressed with an average 3tonnes of sand per green to fill in the holes. This process improves the drainage and health of the green creating conditions that encourage the finer grasses to dominate the putting surface.

Temporary Greens for winter use were mown out and new holes cut, as well as receiving a small amount of granular fertiliser to improve the grass cover.

Remaining greens were solid tined to a depth of 6 inches with 10mm tines at 45mm spacing to aerate and decompact the soil. This encourages gaseous exchange to promote plant health and disease resistance.

With a couple of the greens at the top of the course having a fair amount of undesirable coarse grass, it was decided to trial a product on half of the 17th Green that will kill selected species, but leave fine grasses unharmed although possibly a little yellowed. After 2 weeks it had certainly 'done what it says on the tin' and killed the undesirables but had left the green quite weak in areas. The treated area was lightly scarified, fed, overseeded and top-dressed to aid recovery. Results were slow initially, but now look more promising. Unfortunately rabbits have targeted the weakened areas and keep digging holes in the green, even after we repair them. In hindsight any future greens we treat will be done much earlier in the year to aid faster recovery, but we will wait to see the outcome of this initial trial before committing to any more treatments.

October

Remaining Greens scarified (-5mm) 6 passes and solid tined to 5 inches. Deep aeration Verti-draining was carried out on all greens with added 'heave' to improve deep soil structure and relieve compaction. This operation is essential to the performance and health of the Green, but unfortunately quite expensive as we have to hire in a contractor twice a year, for a week at a time to carry this out. With the need to book him well in advance, it is always a bit of a gamble that ground conditions will be suitable when he arrives. Many clubs now have their own equipment to carry out this operation more often and when conditions are favourable. Serious consideration should be given to adding this vital bit of kit to our fleet in the future.

Greens that were not treated previously, after hollow coring, were fed with a granular low Nitrogen, high Potassium autumn fertiliser, overseeded and top-dressed to restore levels after renovations.

Slight outbreak of disease was treated with a contact fungicide with a residual effect to hopefully see us through the cooler months. Disease pressure has been very high this year with the unseasonable temperatures encouraging a weak, soft growth of the sward when the plant should be shutting down for the winter. Many courses have already had three or four outbreaks this season, so we are ever vigilant to any signs of trouble. That said, we are taking every cultural step to prevent an attack by dew removal, aeration and application of acidifying iron compounds and potassium to give the grass the best chance of resisting.

November

As mentioned at the beginning of the report the grass has been growing at an incredible rate for the time of year, so most of this month has been about just keeping on top of mowing programmes. We have found ourselves cutting Fairways and Tees twice weekly, Greens daily and strimming banks and surrounds on a weekly basis. This is the sort of workload we would expect during spring/early summer months and given that staff try to take some of their annual leave around this period, trying to find time to begin our winter programme of course improvements has been impossible. We have also had to concrete in the bases for the new Tee signs but I am happy to report this is nearly complete, with all the bottom holes (1 thru 12) and clubhouse signs installed. The remaining 6 should be in by Christmas.

Greens pro-cored (tined) twice this month with regular sarel rolling (lightweight spiking) carried out. Treated with liquid iron sulphate to acidify and harden the turf which has the added benefit of discouraging worm activity, rabbit grazing and disease.

Machinery servicing as required during spells of inclement weather.

Staff

Nathan Sutliff has joined us on the apprenticeship scheme and will be attending Plumpton College from January. I am pleased to report he has settled in well and is looking forward to learning more about the Greenkeeping profession from his time here and college course.

I am sad to report that after 15 years at Seaford Head Golf Course, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Simon Lambert is leaving for pastures new to take over as Head Greenkeeper at Hassocks Golf Club. I am sure the Council will join me in congratulating Simon on his appointment, wish him every success for the future and show our gratitude to him for his loyal efforts since joining the staff here as an apprentice many years ago. On a personal level, I would sincerely like to thank him for his help over the past 3 years since my appointment as Head Greenkeeper, acknowledge the professional way he has handled himself, and commend his excellent greenkeeping and mechanical skills. Good Luck Simon – you will be missed.

Budgets 2015/16

The current budgets for Ground maintenance non contract, Vehicle & equipment maintenance, Staff protective clothing and Staff training are workable if additions are made to account for inflation.

Equipment purchase budget is another matter. After having the budget for this year reduced to Zero we are in danger of facing a large bill in the coming years, to replace a number of machines that were purchased in a lease agreement 6 to 7 years ago. Some of these machines are due for replacement now and a request was made last year, to establish a budget going forward of approximately £33,000 per year to replace the machinery on a rotational basis to avoid any large outgoings. We cannot stop investing in the Course and its equipment just as we begin to take standards to the next level, particularly, as I understand the Golf Course is on target to perform well against budget this year.

We must be able to compete on a level playing field with other clubs regarding equipment, let alone staffing levels, which were reduced from 5 (4 full time 1 apprentice) to the current 4 (3 full time 1 apprentice) before my appointment.

Following an electrical report stating that some of the electrical wiring in the greenkeeping facility needs replacement/updating as there are safety issues and that the machinery shed is in an unsafe condition, can I urge committee members to make the planned replacement of this building a matter of utmost importance. I was under the impression this would be done during the build of the new clubhouse 18 months ago and that funds were allocated in the build costs for this. This cannot be ignored any longer. A number of quotes for all stages of the demolition and rebuild have been obtained and supplied to the council offices.

2. Financial Appraisal

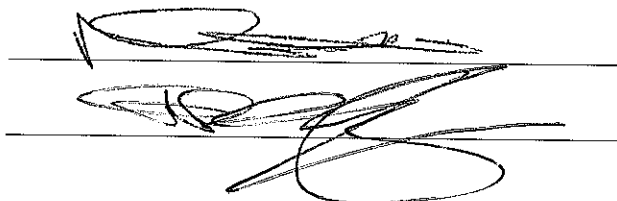
There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

3. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Nick Stephens, Head Greenkeeper.

Head Greenkeeper

Town Clerk

Two handwritten signatures are written on two horizontal lines. The top signature is a cursive name, likely Nick Stephens, and the bottom signature is another cursive name, likely the Town Clerk.