




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 15th March 2016 at 7.00pm** which you are summoned to attend.


James Corrigan
Town Clerk
9th March 2016

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 Professional's Report

To consider report 156/15 presenting the Golf Professional's Report (pages 2 to 4).

5. Head Greenkeeper's Report

To consider report 155/15 presenting the Head Greenkeeper's Report (pages 5 to 7).

6. The View at Seaford Head:

6a. Restaurant & Bar Manager's Report

To consider report 157/15 providing an update report from the Restaurant & Bar Manager at The View at Seaford Head (pages 8 to 10).

6b. Events & Marketing Update at The View

To consider report 151/15 providing an update on events and marketing at The View at Seaford Head (pages 11 to 12).

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:	15th March 2016
Title:	Golf Professional's Report
By:	Fraser Morley, Golf Professional
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update on Golf Course related matters.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

- 1. To note the information in the report.**
 - 2. To consider a response to the request from a member to have membership fees credited against next year's subscription.**
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1. Income and Membership

- 1.1 Well it's been a rather damp winter to say the least. The wettest December and January on record have seen the course more saturated than I have ever seen in my time here. Courses around the county have been closed for long periods of time. We have been able to take advantage of this with quite a few visitors coming to us while their courses have been shut. This has seen us nearly £3k up on the same period last year, which for the weather is excellent. However, the course is showing signs of wear and we are looking forward to the temperatures rising to enable the regrowth to start. We ask all golfers to be patient while this takes place over the spring period.
- 1.2 The membership renewals have gone out to all existing members this month. We have had 5 new members join already although the weather has not been our friend in this period. Membership numbers at most golf courses are in decline. We increased our membership last year and hope to again this year. If we do better than break even on numbers we are still bucking the national trend.
- 1.3 We are continuing the free junior membership and hope to see the reintroduction of a junior organiser to help with competitions and encourage the growth in junior membership and participation. We hope to reintroduce the junior competitions and trophies once the numbers are at a sufficient level.
- 1.4 We have agreed to continue with the reciprocal deals with Mid Sussex GC and Hollingbury for £10 a round (mid-week) This has been very well supported both ways and gives another benefit to being a member at our course.
- 1.5 Membership cards have been ordered and Wave has continued their sponsorship with an advert on them. This halves the cost of the cards to us and adds yet another benefit of being a member.
- 1.6 With the reducing in membership numbers locally, we have seen an increase in Green Fee numbers over this year. Overall we should see £26k over budget in this financial year and up some £33k on last year. This shows our green fee prices are competitive and our reputation among nomadic golfers in increasing all the time.

This is the most competitive part of the golfing market and we will continue to encourage growth in the less used times of the day to maximize income.

- 1.7 Societies have started to flood in for this year with booking coming in most days now. We have some great set packages and we are putting together a society questionnaire for their feedback as to how we are doing in every part of their day. We have 100 Societies for this calendar year which includes 79 for the next financial year. Last year we ended up with 186 for the whole calendar year with an average of 17 people per society.
- 1.8 Buggies have helped a large amount of people use the course that couldn't before. Sadly the weather has put pay to a lot of winter activity and income with them but we hope to see them well used throughout the season. Simon and I will be looking at improving the pathways around course to enable longer and safer use of the buggies in the future.
- 1.9 Advertising will continue with Golf News throughout the year to target as many societies as possible. We have also been given some free editorial over the coming months due to our continued business with them. We are able to promote The View as well as our course now through this medium and the responses we had from the societies we had last year has been positive.
- 1.10 Our social media coverage and use of our newsletter from the Pro Shop has seen communication improve to all golfers, members and visitors alike. We try and update twitter each day with course information which more and more people are "tuning" into for information. This automatically updates the Facebook page and website.
- 1.11 The golf course app is up and running and includes flyover videos of each hole and information for the course and The View. This can be updated as we need to and could become a powerful tool in the future with notifications for people who have the app on their phone.
- 1.12 The strong winds have caused some damage to a couple of the course signs. We have been liaising with the company to improve the strength of them in certain areas. The practice nets also took a battering and are in the process of being improved to make them withstand the weather a little better in the future.

2. Other Items

- 2.1 The golfing team are glad to see Simon Lambert back and in charge of the greenkeeping. As you will see from Simon's presentation, he has some great ideas for the future. We have already been around the course and earmarked works for the coming years ahead. With his heart in the course, we are confident that the course will go from strength to strength and there will be great visual improvements going forwards. We have a course steeped in history and natural beauty and it'll be great to see the course utilise these to encourage golfers and walkers alike to enjoy the areas in and on the outskirts of the course. With a settled golfing team now, we are extremely excited for the future and look forward to all working together. There was a period of time over the New Year when we were down to only one greenkeeper. I would like to extend my thanks to Chris Walsh who did brilliantly keeping the course open and running through a very tricky time. Chris is off to start his own business and we wish him well and he'll be sadly missed by the team. We'd like to welcome Adam to the team, he has a wealth of experience, especially in course construction and has fitted into working environment very quickly.
- 2.2 We also welcome Robert Macdonald to The View. We look forward to working with him and the team and ever improving the relationship and communication between the two areas of Seaford Head Golf Course. We have seen great improvements already with Robert and Sarah steadying the ship and we foresee a great success upstairs in the future.

2.3 We are very proud of the Pro Shop as it's grown over its first year. Chris and I have worked hard on getting the right stock and layout for everyone's golfing needs. The GC2 indoor simulator has been beneficial in getting players the right clubs and balls suited to their game. We have also enjoyed some fun par 3 competitions for the societies as an "add on" to their day. We look forward to a successful year ahead and hope everyone enjoys their time and experience in the Pro Shop.

2.4 A member has asked for credit on their membership for next year due to a serious illness that has seen them not be able to play golf for a six month period from late August 2015 to late February 2016.

This request is from a senior member whose annual subscription is therefore £449.00. The Committee would ordinarily in such circumstances give a credit equivalent to the number of months lost in next year's membership, so in this instance £224.50.

Council Officers have been given copies of all medical letters and records evidencing the injury and are satisfied that the member has been unable to play for reasons out of their control.

3. Financial Appraisal

There potential financial impact of this report depends on the Committee's decision regarding the request for credit of membership payments against next year's subscription costs at a total of £224.50.

4. Contact Officer

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

Golf Professional/Manager



Town Clerk





Agenda Item No: 5
Committee: Golf
Date: 15 March 2016
Title: Head Greenkeeper's Report
By: Simon Lambert, Head Greenkeeper
Purpose of Report: To inform the committee of Golf Course maintenance.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

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

Weather over the winter months has been exceptionally wet, a number of courses have suffered with water logging and flooding causing them to close for long periods of time. Seaford Head, although having a number of days of closure, has managed to stay open offering golf to visitors unable to play at their local clubs. This has been noticeable in the level of play on the course.

The weather along with the constantly high level of play for the winter months has lead to heavy wear in high traffic areas such as around tees and approaches.

The greens have been performing well. They have been protected during times when they have become waterlogged or frozen with the use of temporary greens. This has aided in keeping the course open during these times.

Since I started back at the Head at the beginning of February the first priority was to offer extra protection to high traffic areas. This was done by the use of white lines marking where golf trolleys are not permitted and post and ropes to guide golfers away from damaged areas. This has worked well and a number of previously worn areas that are in the line of play are recovering well.

There were a number of areas that required extra help in order to prevent excessive wear and also to promote better growth. These were areas alongside the 6th and 13th tees in particular. The hedge and tree lines had over time encroached and overhung the areas. This prevented light and air getting to the surfaces for most of the winter when the sun is low. It was decided to clear back these areas, the 6th tees area was opened up by about 5 metres. The shrubs and trees were cleared and removed. Any larger logs and branches were stacked in openings of the hedge line to offer habitats for insects and birds. The area now offers a new route for traffic away from the tee and also opens up the light and air flow to the grass. It has dried out considerably already. The 13th tee was cleared along the right hand side offering more light and air circulates the grass tee area.

Once the conditions were suitable and the water logging had reduced we started a program of aeration on all fine turf areas. The Greens were sorrel rolled weekly and solid tined to a depth of 125mm. After aerating an application of iron and potassium was sprayed on the greens. This hardens the plant while also offering natural and cultural resistance to disease. Another benefit to this is the added colour given to the plant visually improving the greens. The tees and approaches were solid tined with the tractor trailed aerator. This offers not only vertical spiking but also movement under the surface as the tines are sprung loaded. We were fortunate enough to be offered the use of a new and impressive aeration machine to demo. It replaces the need for verti-draining which produces a large amount of disruption to the playing surface. The machine injects three 300mm long tines into the green before shooting two blasts of compressed air at two depths shattering the root zone releasing compaction. This machine performed well and we will look to introduce this process into our autumn and spring renovations for the future.

Another project now completed is the cutting and collecting of large areas of rough that has been left uncut for three years. This was identified during the survey of golfers as an area of concern. When these areas were previously mown once a year the grasses were kept thinner and wisper, as well as relatively weed free. This offers the definition a golf hole should have while offering golfers a better chance of finding their ball yet still punishing a misdirected shot with the challenge of getting the ball out of the rough and back onto fairway. A tractor and flail collector was hired for a week, this offered us the time to not only cut the areas of rough in play but also clear large areas of bracken that have previously produced a large show of bluebells in spring. Early signs are that the bluebells are still present and starting to grow now the light can get to them.

Moving forward we are currently turfing areas of animal damage and preparing tees for the spring. This repair work will then move onto the edging and repairing of bunkers as well as replenishing the sand levels prior to spring when the temperatures increased and the growing and mowing season begins.

Seaford Head Golf Course has been registered with the Golf Environment Organisation. This is an international non profit making organisation dedicated entirely to providing a credible and accessible system of sustainability standards, support programs, recognition, and capacity. Their and my belief is that Golf can be a leader in sustainable sport and business, universally known for positive environmental and social value. We have joined the 'on course' program which provides information and a way of tracking our performance and standards focusing on 6 key points. Nature, Water, Energy, Supply Chain, Pollution control and Community.

This is a long term program that when we reach a point where we are performing well in all areas of the program we can apply to become GEO Certified.

Staff

Nathan Sutliff has completed his 6 month probation period and is performing and learning well. He has started his college training and is so far keeping up to date with assignments. I will continue to monitor this and set targets for both his onsite practical training and building his college portfolio.

I am sad to report that after 11 years working with myself on the golf course, Assistant Chris Walsh is leaving us at the end of March to start his own business. I wish him well for his future, the whole team will be sad to lose him.

As mentioned in the last Head Greenkeeper's report, planning and action needs to be taken in the replacement program for the greenkeeping machinery moving forward. The condition of our modern machinery is an investment that enables our relatively small greenkeeping team to work efficiently and effectively to produce a quality and competitive product. This must be kept up to date and in good condition to ensure it is safe, efficient and trustworthy. A well designed replacement program will help spread the replacement costs over a period of time rather than having one large replacement bill in the near future.

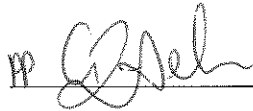
2. Financial Appraisal

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

3. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Simon Lambert, Head Greenkeeper.

Head Greenkeeper



Town Clerk





Agenda Item No:	6a
Committee:	Golf
Date:	15th March 2016
Title:	Restaurant & Bar Manager's Report
By:	Robert Macdonald, Restaurant & Bar Manager – The View
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with an update on the restaurant and bar aspect of business at The View.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

- 1. To note the information in the report.**
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1. Information

Costings:

Since my appointment in February I have reviewed the purchase prices we have in place for the products we sell in the bar. As a result of this review, I held a meeting with HT White, who supply our beer, wine, spirits and soft drinks, to try and obtain a reduction in our costs. I am pleased to advise that as a direct result of the meeting I have been able to secure some substantial savings.

We have also secured smaller reductions in the cost price of our spirits and soft drinks. I am in the process of compiling a new wine list and am confident that we will be able to ensure that we have the best prices available.

In addition, I had a meeting with Longman brewery and set up a deal which includes, the occasional free barrel of beer. This is equivalent of a 10% saving across their entire range.

I have also reviewed and amended the way in which we clean our beer lines. I have been able to significantly reduce our costs and wastage by restricting the number of beer lines we use on a daily basis and the way in which we clean the lines in use. These simple changes will have a positive effect in our managing of waste and profit margins.

At the time of writing I am, in conjunction with the Head Chef, reviewing the kitchen costs and suppliers and hope to reduce the costs and wastage. We are looking at the existing menus for golf societies, functions and Christmas ensuring that they are all costed appropriately. We will be offering two separate menus for Christmas at two separate price points which we hope will increase our appeal. We hope to implement a new menu for April 1st, when we extend our hours of operation. We are also going to launch afternoon teas at The View in the next two to four weeks in the hope that we will attract new customers.

We have also engaged a new stock taker in order that we can more readily identify any issues regarding stock, pricing, wastage and sales to allow us to address them in a more timely fashion. I would also add that the new stock taker is considerably cheaper.

In summary, I am pleased with the progress that we are making in reducing our costs and thereby increasing our potential for profit. In view of the considerable savings we have achieved so far, I have actually reduced the price of Harveys best bitter from £3.90 a pint to £3.70 and the price of a pint of Kronenbourg from £4.20 to £4.00 thus bringing them more into

line with the industry average for this area, and it is expected we will see an increase in sales as a direct result of this. There is still a fair amount of work to be done and I am optimistic that we can generate improved sales and profit margins in both the bar and the kitchen.

Staff:

The staff are performing well and most are improving and learning new skills as we move along. I am looking at arranging the required training courses for fire awareness, first aid and health and safety.

We do need a part time Administrative Assistant to assist myself and Sarah Pearce in order that we can streamline our booking processes, our financial reporting and the general day to day admin requirements, this is already in hand and I believe we are looking to appoint somebody imminently. In addition, we also require an Assistant Manager to provide better continuity for the levels of service and particularly at functions and weddings. It may also be that an additional Chef is required as trade and bookings increase. I fully appreciate the impact that the additional appointments will have on wage costs; however, I am of the view that the increase in trade will justify the costs.

Cleaning & Maintenance:

The current cleaning contractors have revised their existing contract and submitted a request for a substantial price increase. This has led to the contract being put out for tender. We have currently had two companies in to survey The View with tenders to be submitted by 14th March. I am currently waiting for a third company to carry out their survey. All companies are basing their tenders upon the specification provided by the existing contractors.

I personally, am very pleased with the current standard of cleanliness at The View and am yet to receive any negative comments from the customers or staff, I do, however, appreciate that the revised price is very expensive and find it difficult to justify.

There are one or two minor issues regarding maintenance, including the interior and exterior tables losing their "feet" which is in hand. We have also identified an issue with a leaking cistern in the gentlemen's lavatory, this also is in hand.

We are due a fire risk assessment on March 24th and I have arranged for Rob Kirton from Cheesmur, who is our appointed aftersales manager, to be present when the fire risk assessment takes place in order that he is in a position to address any of the issues raised that Cheesmur may be responsible for, thereby allowing us to have them remedied quickly.

We are aware of several comments regarding the interior decor of The View on social media and via feedback from surveys. We are hoping to change this by introducing a more sympathetic lighting system and possible interior design changes.

Functions and Marketing:

In the short time I have been in post I am pleased at the steady stream of bookings that Sarah is securing and the volume of bookings for golf societies generated from Fraser and Chris in the Pro Shop.

I do foresee minor issues regarding some of the larger bookings, particularly weddings, with regard to other users of the building and the limited availability of seating and menus on the day, rest assured I am working hard to reconfigure seating and to ensure that we are able to run limited menus for the other users.

We currently have two residential events, Splash Point Jazz on the first Sunday of every month and Seaford Comedy Club every fourth Friday evening. Both are growing in numbers and attracting new visitors to The View; we are looking at ways to increase the customer spend during the performances.

Going forward into the Spring and Summer we hope to increase live music, arrange a quiz night, a 'meet the brewer' night (Longman brewery), some themed menu nights (Tapas, Italian, Curry night) in addition to providing a more varied menu for the comedy nights.

We are also placing an advert in Inside Sussex, which Sarah arranged at a discounted rate, to showcase what we can do and to increase footfall.

Sarah is also working hard on updating the website and our social media presence in general, as well as producing a brochure for future bookings.

General:

I am feeling very positive about the short term and we have all been working hard to lay the foundations for the future at The View, with our reduced costs and improved service and menus, in addition to an increase in events, we are going to be in a great position to maximize our Spring and Summer trade which will hopefully carry on into the Winter months.

2. Financial Appraisal

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

3. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Robert Macdonald, Restaurant & Bar Manager.

Restaurant & Bar Manager



Town Clerk





Agenda Item No: 6b
Committee: Golf
Date: 15th March 2016
Title: Events & Marketing Update at The View
By: Sarah Pearce, Events & Marketing Manager
Purpose of Report: To update the Committee on the events and marketing at The View at Seaford Head.

Recommendations

You are recommended:

1. To note the contents of the report.

1. Update

1.1 Functions:

In the past five months we have seen an increase in function bookings with 57 in total in addition to golf society bookings.

October 2015 – 4
November 2015 – 9
December 2015 – 18
January 2016 – 14
February 2016 – 12

1.2 Post Event Surveys:

All bookings since November 2015 have been receiving a post event survey to enable us to proactively gather feedback in order to improve and refine our service offer.

- 75% of clients rated their overall experience as either Very Good or Excellent
- 77% of clients are likely to extremely likely to recommend The View
- 100% of clients rated staff as Very Good or Excellent
- 82% of clients felt it was easy to contact and book The View
- 83% of clients felt it was a suitable venue for their event
- 77% of clients felt the food and drink was of a suitable quality

1.3 Future Bookings:

For the remainder of the calendar year we currently have 19 large events booked along with 3 regular dates every month in addition to golf society bookings.

Jazz every month for 2016
Comedy night every month for 2016
Seaford Chamber of Commerce Breakfasts every month for 2016
6 weddings and receptions
Birthday & Celebrations – 10
Christmas 2016 – 3

We also have two bookings for 2017 and one firm enquiry for 2018.

1.4 Marketing Activity

We have registered www.the-view.co.uk as a domain name for the venue website and have commenced work on building the website.

We have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/theviewatseaforhead/> and a Twitter feed at <https://twitter.com/@ViewSeaford>, both of which continue to grow in their respective number of likes and follows.

We regularly post to both for events such as Burger Night, Comedy and Jazz. Our recent posting for Mother's Day saw us go from one or two bookings to being fully booked in the space of a week. We continue to regularly post and interact via social media to grow and develop our wider audience and beyond.

We are also engaging with the wider community both online and offline via traditional advertising methods such as Seaford Scene, insideSUSSEX, the South Coast Leader and the Seaford Town Council newsletter.


2. Financial Appraisal

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

3. Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Sarah Pearce, Events & Marketing Manager.

Events & Marketing Manager



Town Clerk

