



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This article looks at the many avenues that need to be followed to establish a Golf Club Development Plan and give the Secretary some idea of setting out the objectives required.

Secretary At Work: Reviewed June 2011

Firstly you need to review the achievements of the club over the past 20 years or so, then to define the major priorities and what objectives are needed for the club for the future and finally having decided on these objectives how the club can set out to meet them. You will then need to set out the major issues that are to be addressed.

These could include all or some of the following:

- ☛ The Golf Course.
- ☛ The Clubhouse including areas such as car parks.
- ☛ Membership.
- ☛ Visitors.
- ☛ Practice Facilities.
- ☛ Surplus Land owned by the Club.
- ☛ Community benefit and the relevance to the area.

You may well have other issues which need to be looked at which may be peculiar to your Club.

Major Achievements over the past 10/20 years

You should set out in detail the major achievements that have taken place on the Golf Course and within the Clubhouse.

Golf Course

These could include some of the following:

- ☛ Installation of Automatic Watering and Water Storage.
- ☛ Major renovation of tees and greens or even constructing new ones.
- ☛ Tree Planting.
- ☛ Workshops and storage facilities and accommodation for staff.
- ☛ Landscaping of areas of the course including the area immediately around the clubhouse.
- ☛ Construction of water hazards or cleaning out ponds, lakes or ditches.
- ☛ Renovation and construction of course bunkers.

- ☒ Conservation of areas of gorse or heather.
- ☒ Construction of paths and walkways.
- ☒ Improvements to drainage on the course.
- ☒ Provision of practice facilities.

Clubhouse

These could include any of the following:

- ☒ Extensions to clubhouse.
- ☒ Refurbishment of locker rooms and other areas within the clubhouse.
- ☒ Refurbishment of kitchen and dining room.
- ☒ Professional's shop.
- ☒ Car Park and outbuildings within the clubhouse area.
- ☒ Reception and office accommodation.
- ☒ Any additional accommodation the Club may have such as accommodation for staff or even Dormy Houses or rented property.

The list will vary between Clubs but it is important to spend some time listing the achievements that have taken place in the past so that everyone is aware of them. This will also help to spotlight areas which need attention more than others. It will also give you a clear indication of previous policies and which areas have better attention than others.

Having reviewed all the above you will then need to set out what you consider will be the major priorities over the next say 10 years or so.

These could consist of any of the following:

- ☒ Purchase of the Golf Club.
- ☒ Building a new clubhouse.
- ☒ Constructing new greens and tees or even holes within the existing course. If the course is less than 18 holes, then can the land be found to extend.
- ☒ Building new accommodation and storage facilities for the course.
- ☒ Building an additional 9 or 18 holes.

Having set out the major priorities, if any, you will need to determine the policy to carry them out. Has the club been inclined to invest more money on the course than in the clubhouse? If you have major items to carry out then you need to set out the strategy for trying to accomplish them.

This will include the following:

- ☒ Raising sufficient finance to carry them out.
- ☒ Obtaining the views of the membership in setting out the priorities. It is important to carry this out before embarking on major spending on professional fees.

- ☛ Study the policy on membership, could you increase the numbers without causing major problems.
- ☛ You must also be aware that if you increase the course from 9 to 18 holes or 18 to 27 or 36 you may need to increase facilities within the clubhouse and extra car parking.

If you decide that there are no major priorities then you will need to assess the different areas of the club to determine the policy to follow.

Future Objectives & Major Priorities

Golf Course

- ☛ You may decide to add additional yards to the course, this could include constructing new tees, fairways and in some cases new greens.
- ☛ Overhaul and extension to the automatic watering system, adding this to the tees and parts of the fairways.
- ☛ Providing additional water storage by means of sinking a borehole or building a reservoir.
- ☛ Improvements to the accommodation and provision of suitable storage facilities.
- ☛ Additional drainage around the course.
- ☛ Additional paths and walk off areas.
- ☛ Providing practice facilities including a driving range, practice greens and bunkers.
- ☛ A major tree planting programme.
- ☛ A major investment programme for replacement and additional course machinery.
- ☛ Providing 'on course' toilets or perhaps a half way house.

Clubhouse

As with the above list this could be endless but you must decide the order of priorities and areas that you should investigate.

It could include the following:

- ☛ Lounge or extra bar areas, also the bar itself and storage facilities.
- ☛ Dining room and kitchen areas also the storage facilities.
- ☛ Entrance and reception areas.
- ☛ Administration offices including storage.
- ☛ The refurbishment or provision of a snooker or TV lounge.
- ☛ Refurbishment of men's and ladies locker rooms.
- ☛ Store of the handyman including provision for storing items such as surplus chairs and tables.
- ☛ If the club has a series of flat roofs then a plan to replace these with a conventional roof would be well worth considering.
- ☛ Extension and renovation to the car park and club road ways.

Once a plan has been agreed by the committee then it is necessary to look at how it will be implemented and costed. At this stage it is important to consult the membership and obtain its approval for the wholesale development plan. Costings at this stage should be estimated but avoid spending vast sums on professional fees until you have got membership approval. It should be possible to obtain a rough estimate of likely costs and be able to draft a plan into how the club will pay for it over a number of years.

GCMA 1998

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The below was written by Bill Murray, EGU, 1997 (now known as England Golf)

Existing Clubs

Who may have the opportunity to purchase their course from their landlord come in a different class but again I would urge the use of a management consultant.

Funds for purchase can come in a variety of ways:

1. Possible loan interest free from the R&A. This is generally to be repaid over a 10 year term, but each case will be dealt with on its merits.
2. The Sports Council have the ability to again give a grant plus low interest loan. There are certain conditions and these need to be studied most carefully before acceptance.
3. The Tourist Board may also make a grant available.
4. Some local authorities keen to retain a facility in their area may have funds available.
5. Loans from members interest free or low interest, details of repayment again need to be studied very carefully.
6. Low interest loans from breweries depending on barrelage. Nowadays they generally subsidise the interest charged on your loan from another source.
7. Banks, Building Societies, Insurance and other similar bodies.
8. A levy on all members although this is rarely practical and depends on cost and area.

Again I would urge the consideration of using a financial broker who would help steer in the right direction and would be able to give an entirely objective detached view.

But in any case the opportunity to purchase should not be missed and do not forget leases have a nasty habit of running out and rent reviews always end up going upwards.

In conclusion can I say caveat emptor "*Let the buyer beware*" and hope that these few remarks will be of assistance to you when it comes to the time of making a final decision.

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