



## MEASURES FOR CLUBHOUSE AND COURSE

Stewart King suggests how security may be tightened and sets out guidelines for good practice.

Secretary At Work: Reviewed October 2011

For many years golf clubs have attracted unwelcome attention from intruders intent on damaging their property or stealing property / money. Securing the buildings and land presents constant problems for management. There is also a need to put in place and supervise "in house" security to prevent security incidents involving members of staff and members.

I have worked for the last five years in golf club management at two very different establishments where considerable security measures were installed to address the problems. This paper sets out to illustrate how each club approached its problem, and also assesses the relative successes or failures. It also in conclusion suggests ways in which security might have been tightened, and sets out some guidelines, which should be helpful as general principles.

### INTRODUCTION

The two clubs illustrated here were in residential areas of large cities in the North West. They were bounded by housing estates ranging from executive detached property to local authority housing occupied by problem families. Main commuter roads skirted both courses and they were each fairly rigorously fenced by palisade fencing, hedges or walls. The vast majority of incidents involved damage to or theft from or of cars parked at the clubhouse. Sneak theft of unattended golf clubs, and unpleasant confrontation between golfers and trespassers, staff pilfering and unauthorised entry of the clubhouse were also an issue.

### CLUB 1

The clubhouse was a rambling building, which had originally been the local manor house. Since becoming the clubhouse some hundred years ago, it had undergone many structural changes internally and externally and was not easy to secure as there were several points of entry by door and numerous windows to the ground floor.

A front drive of about 200 yards, dimly lit and wooded, gave excellent cover and isolated the building from the main road. A rear drive passing through business premises gave an alternative access or escape route. Gates or barriers controlled neither entrance. Additional access could be gained to the course and thence to the buildings by a stile to a Public Right of Way that crossed two fairways, and a trolley and buggy path provided for players to reach a section of the course on the other side of the main road.

The clubhouse was not occupied as living quarters so the setting of the alarm system was contracted out to a security firm. The Secretary / Manager was the keyholder called out by the security firm in the event of an alarm activation. The Professional shop was detached from the clubhouse but was fairly secure at night being of stout construction and without windows. It was however vulnerable during opening hours and staff were issued with personal attack alarms. The Greenkeepers compound was rebuilt recently in brick and was reasonably secure to entry from ground level. It was surrounded by a 2.4m palisade fence, which presented a barrier to removing large items of machinery. However this was not invulnerable and suffered attack via the roof!

The incidents experienced at this club over a period of four years were:

- ☹ Breaks in and thefts from cars by people on foot or in cars.
- ☹ Theft of clubs left unattended around the clubhouse.
- ☹ Burglaries of the clubhouse effected through windows.
- ☹ Thieves removing security grilles to gain access.
- ☹ Theft of drink from the club stores during opening hours.
- ☹ Incidents of ball stealing and abuse on the golf course.
- ☹ Trespass on the course with intruders playing golf without paying.

Although not in my time, there had been an attack on a member of staff who was taking money to the bank alone and by car. I always varied the times of visits to the bank but the worry that this was not a sensible way of banking was always there.

## SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN (CLUBHOUSE)

Card Key Lock Systems were introduced at the two clubhouse access points and any non member was required to ring a bell for attention. These cards also gave access to the members' locker rooms for additional safety. The same cards were used by members for purchasing items at the bar. This had the benefit of cutting down opportunities where errors might occur in the handling of cash, and also gave a record of who was in the clubhouse at a given time. The card locks were also fitted with a numeric keypad and a code was allocated on a daily basis so those genuine visitors could gain access to the clubhouse and to their own visitor's locker room.

All windows to the side and rear of the clubhouse were either bricked up or fitted with security grilles.

## PHYSICAL SECURITY

Uniformed security staff were employed to patrol the car park and immediate surroundings during functions and golf events. Following serious incidents of vandalism, an Artisan section was formed to deal with trespass on the course. Members had on occasions been threatened and it was not unusual to find interlopers playing golf even during club competitions. Artisans patrolled the course during ladies day and in the evening from 5pm till dusk. As a result of this action, vandalism and incidents of intrusion dropped significantly and members no longer felt intimidated.

## INTRUDER ALARM SYSTEMS

Three alarm systems were fitted, one in the clubhouse, one in the Professional shop and one in the Greenkeepers compound. They were fitted by an approved contractor (NACOSS/NACB) and connected to a response centre by Red Care. The first point of contact after an alarm activation was the security company, which secured the building at night. Only if there had been an incident that could not be dealt with by them was a member of staff contacted.

Personal attack alarms were made available to bar and secretarial staff.

## CLUB 2

The clubhouse is purpose built of very recent construction and access to the car park is from one of Manchester's busiest roads. The House Manager lives on the premises. Barriers operated either by card or code secure the car park and all members are issued with a key card, which activates the car park barrier and gives access to the clubhouse via two main entrances. The code is changed regularly and societies or groups of visitors are given the code ahead of their visit. The Professional shop is part of the clubhouse and has additional security in terms of roller shutter doors. The Greenkeepers' compound is situated in the centre of the course and is brick built with no windows. The main entrance to the compound is a roller shutter door with the addition of a steel girder to prevent ram raiding.

The main breaches of security here were :

- ☹ An armed robbery in the clubhouse.
- ☹ Minor incidents involving cars parked on the car park.
- ☹ Vandalism on the course.
- ☹ Local residents stoning and shooting at golfers.

## SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN (CLUBHOUSE)

No access via ground floor windows.

All access to the clubhouse requires either a card key or code number. Once inside a further level of security allows members only to gain access to other areas of the clubhouse.

Night cleaners are employed to provide a physical presence in the clubhouse until 04.00 each morning.

All bankings are collected by Securicor - the cost £121 per month.

## COURSE SECURITY

There have been a number of incidents of serious vandalism and threatening behaviour towards golfers. During the spring and summer, it is necessary to have security guards patrolling the course from time to time to deter interlopers. This seems to be effective on the whole.

## CCTV

Considerable expenditure has been made on CCTV, with 12 cameras covering the outside and inside of the clubhouse. A monitor at the bar is clearly visible to members and staff and provides pictures of the car park and entrances. There is to all intents and purposes constant surveillance of these areas whilst the bar is open. Cameras also cover other parts of the clubhouse, mainly the bar and kitchens from where there had been some incidents of pilfering. These are monitored and recorded in the General Manager's office.

## INTRUDER ALARMS

The club has two separate alarm systems, one in the clubhouse and one for the Greenkeeper's compound. The clubhouse system is divided into four subsystems:

- ☹ Bar
- ☹ Professional Shop
- ☹ House Managers Flat
- ☹ Remainder of the Clubhouse.

The systems were installed by an approved contractor and are connected via Red Care to a central monitoring station. The first point of call after activation is to a keyholding company who will attend. Under no circumstance is the House Manager to respond to alarm activation. Personal attack alarms are provided for secretarial and bar staff.

This level of security is proving effective in reducing incidents and breaches of security although it is a constant concern that intruders may be unwittingly allowed into the club by members and staff who are at times too trusting. An ongoing staff training programme includes security and members are given gentle reminders through newsletters.

Security at Club 2 is very effective around the clubhouse but less so out on the course. It could be that an Artisan presence might improve things here.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All access to car parks and main buildings must be controlled by barrier, ramp, security guard, card key or numeric pad.
2. Make use of surveillance cameras with a recording facility.
3. Use Securicor or similar to collect money for banking.
4. Always have cash/change delivered.
5. Use the minimum number of entrances.
6. Lock doors as soon as possible after dusk.
7. Never leave a member of staff to work alone at night.
8. Establish a working relationship with the local police.
9. Establish a good rapport with any residents associations or local schools.

10. Connect the alarm system to a response centre.
11. Use a security/keyholding company as first point of call for alarm activation.
12. Include clubhouse and personal safety in the staff training programme.

It is possible with vigilance and forethought to provide a safe and secure environment for staff, visitors and members. However, unless you have security personnel on every door, you will at some time find unauthorised persons wandering in the clubhouse and on the course. Members and staff have to be educated to be watchful and to challenge anyone they do not recognise, being careful not to compromise their own safety. If they are unwilling to approach people then they should feel happy to report such matters to the Secretary / Manager.

**Although golf club buildings may vary in age, size and position, the problems of making them secure are much the same. The difficulty is to provide premises and grounds, which are safe for those who use them legitimately without turning them into forbidding fortress. Contrary to common belief, golf clubs are after all places for leisure and pleasure.**

*Stewart King 2001*

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