



## **2025 Club Manager's Report**

As we approach the end of 2025, I would like to take a moment and reflect upon the past year as well as looking forward to 2026. This season at Seaton Carew has been busy, challenging, and ultimately rewarding. While each year brings its own unique challenges, 2025 has seen a year of steady progress moving into the New Year.

A club like ours is always a balance between tradition and progress. We are the custodians of a 150-year-old legacy, and that history brings with it a responsibility to protect what makes Seaton Carew special. Whilst being cognizant of this, there is also a duty to continue progressing, to make sure the club is equipped for the modern-era and remains somewhere we can all be proud of. That balance has been at the heart of everything your General Management Committee has done this year.

### **The Course and Playing Experience**

The golf course remains the beating heart of Seaton Carew, and 2025 has been another year of progress. The weather tested us all season; from cool, wet spells in spring to long, dry periods and sharp downpours in summer, but the course stood up to everything thrown at it. The species transition programme will pay dividends in 2026, with finer grasses establishing more strongly across the greens. This year has been the start of a significant move toward surfaces which will mature into firmer, more resilient green sites which are better suited to a links environment.

2026 is shaping up to be another stellar year for our course at Seaton Carew Golf Club.

We have also pushed ahead with key improvements across the site. Targeted irrigation improvements and walkway renovations should have a positive impact on player experience and course presentation. Bunker work, tee levelling, and winter renovation projects are now underway, including major works on the 15th bunkers and upgrades to tees on course. These are not cosmetic changes; they are investments in the quality and longevity of the course.

My thanks go to Tom Coulson and his small but outstanding team. Their skill, hard work and attention to detail are the reason our course continues to earn its place among the top 100 in Great Britain and Ireland.

## Membership

Membership remains in a very strong position. All categories are full, and demand shows no signs of slowing down. As of the end of October, we had more than 57 full (A1) applicants and nearly 35 juniors (D1) on our waiting list. That is a healthy and encouraging sign for Seaton and how much demand there is to be part of the no.1 course in the North East.

The ladies' and junior sections remain a particular focus going into 2026, with plans for structured group sessions and coaching designed to grow participation. The more diverse and welcoming we can make this club, the stronger it will be for the future.

## Financial Performance

Financially, 2025 has been a year of stability and steady growth despite ongoing pressures and demands created by the larger economic climate.

Measured green fee income remains one of our important revenue streams. Visitor demand grew throughout the season, supported by better marketing, established reputation for course presentation and a pricing structure that accurately reflects the nature of our course. From March to October, we generated over £280,000 in green fees, with a record high of £65,165 in August alone during the Festival of Golf. Whilst not reaching forecast (due to a quiet start to the year) we should be encouraged by the trajectory of the green fee revenue. Member opportunity to play should always be a priority to and whilst there is still much work to do, we also need to see how we better sell our low demand times. The model of dynamic pricing has been in place for two years now, and whilst there is still much work to do in looking at how we better sell our low demand times, I think it has proved effective in ensuring that price is not a barrier to visiting or returning to Seaton Carew for the non-member. Looking ahead, 2025/2026 already exceeds £240,000, which should give us confidence ending 2025.

The range has remained busy throughout the year, and we are actively exploring ways to extend opening hours and improve the facilities to create a more flexible and higher-quality practice environment. These are small but important steps that will add significant value to the member experience.

Bar and catering operations have continued to improve since being brought in-house. Themed social events, competition-linked promotions, and busy calendar highlights, particularly the Festival of Golf and Ryder Cup weekends, have all driven trading figures. Our focus remains on creating a service that members can be proud of whilst being sustainable economically, and there is more to come in 2026 with new menus, improved presentation and expanded event offerings.

## Competitions and Events

Our competition calendar remains at the centre of club life. This season we have seen fantastic participation across the board, from the traditional majors like the Thomson, Gray and Lytham Trophies to our Mid-Week Stableford and the newly formed Pro's Sweep, with a total number of 6986 entries across the calendar!

The Club Championships once again provided the season's focal point, and my congratulations go to a worthy winner of the Division 1 Men's Championship in Brian McEwan. Brian embodies everything which a Club Champion should be. Enjoy your year as Champ Bri, it is thoroughly deserved, although I am sure there are a few of us working to ensure it is not repeated in 2026!

Further congratulations to now 7 times Ladies Club Champion, Barbara Conley, to Division 2 Champion Matthew Neill, Division 3 Champion Jack Dolman and to the evergreen Division 4 Champion, Mally Monkhouse. A mention as well to junior Club Champion Oli Hudson. Congratulations to all.

Following the events, a sit down with competitors from all divisions generated useful discussion about how we can evolve to make it even better next year. These are our most important events in the member competition calendars, and I hope the further refinements to next year's will cement that.

At this point, I must also mention this year's Salver Winner, our own Dominic Moon. Dom's scores of 70 69-139 were enough to see off a stellar field of competitors from across the country. Congratulations Dom, it is great to see the trophy stay in the hands of a Seatonian!

The Seaton Salver is the premier event in County Durham and the only event on the Durham and Yorkshire Counties Order of Merits. This event has grown well over the years, and is something which is the envy of all the Clubs around us!

The Festival of Golf is also always a highlight of our external events. The Festival is a celebration of everything that makes Seaton Carew special: our course, our clubhouse, our welcome. Events like this continue to reinforce Seaton Carew's position in golf in the North of England. Looking forward, the 2026 event is already 80% booked, with bookings from across the country.

With regards to events, I feel it only right that acknowledgment and significant gratitude are due to our Club President, Ian Phillips, whose charity day has celebrated an amazing 36 years of philanthropy this year. This event has provided essential support to local services that truly need it. Ian has chosen to hand over the responsibility for organising and managing this day to John Pennington, who I am confident will uphold its legacy, with full support from the Club. Thank you, Ian for everything you have done.

## **Marketing, Visibility and Member Experience**

One of the biggest shifts in recent years has been how we promote Seaton Carew beyond our gates, and 2025 saw that work step up again. Our social media channels now regularly reach tens of thousands of golfers, with over 120,000 impressions in August alone and engagement rates approaching the industry's best. The launch of our new external monthly email newsletter, with nearly 3,000 subscribers, will be a game changer in driving visitor bookings and membership enquiries.

Our digital presence now plays a key role in positioning Seaton Carew as one of the UK's best. It is the most powerful tool for communicating with the wider world, and we are noticing the influence of the improvements we have made to this year on year.

## Looking Ahead

Looking to 2026, my focus will be on assisting the General Management Committee continue to progress. This season's winter renovation programme will be completed in the early part of the New Year, with further investment in bunkers, tees, walkways and improving presentation. Early 2026, I hope to work alongside the new Competitions Committee to further refine competition structures, continue to enhance Bar and Catering service, and look seriously at improving the Clubhouse space. We will keep pushing on marketing, on member and visitor experience, and on growing the membership in a way that strengthens the club for the long term.

There is still work to do, and plenty of challenges to face. But Seaton Carew is positioned to deal with them ably over the coming years.

## Final Thoughts

I want to finish by saying a sincere thank you. Thank you to every member who continues to support, thank you to those who marshal at events, who help pick range balls, and who make visitors feel welcome. You are the foundation of this club, and nothing the Club achieves would be possible without you.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the General Management Committee members for their unwavering dedication to Seaton Carew Golf Club. Your voluntary commitment of time and energy is invaluable in ensuring our club's continued success and progress.

Life as a committee member can be a journey of smooth sailing, filled with rewarding accomplishments, but it can also encounter tumultuous waters. Yet, through all the ups and downs, your resilience and commitment to the club's mission is inspiring. Thank you to all those who have served and continue to serve in the name of Seaton Carew Golf Club. Your contributions help maintain the legacy and future of this esteemed institution.

I would also like at this point to thank Roy Leonard, our Honorary Secretary, who continues to give up his time selflessly. Thank you, Roy, for all that you have done and continue to do.

Thank you to our outgoing Club Captain, Hugh Hamilton Jnr, who has dedicated much time and effort in his year of Captaincy, attending events, shaking hands, and kissing babies! The year of Captaincy is a frantic one, and I am sure Hugh will be looking forward to a well-earned rest. Congratulations Hugh, the accolade of Captaincy was more than deserved.

## Looking Forward to 2026

As we look forward to 2026, I am excited to work alongside the newly formed committee. Together, we will continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead, always striving to ensure Seaton Carew remains a club we can all be proud of. Thank you for your service, and here is to another successful and fulfilling year!

Looking ahead personally, it will be a real honour to serve as Vice-Captain alongside incoming Captain Peter Bianco next year. Peter is an absolute gentleman, Seaton Carew

through and through and I am looking forward to supporting him in every way I can and to further represent this club with the dedication and reverence it deserves. Good Luck Pete!

Above all else, my commitment to you as members remains unchanged. I am here to serve; to serve you, to serve this club, and to serve the traditions that make Seaton Carew such a special place. My priority is, and always will be, to ensure that this club looks after you, its members, and continues to look forwards; ensuring Seaton Carew Golf Club is here for generations to come.

Thank you once again for your support and trust. I look forward to another successful year.

Alexander Shaw

Club Manager