SEATON CAREW GOLF CLUB

Founded 1874

Funding the New Course

No borrowing. Not funded through subscriptions. Built from the Club's own resources.

The starting point

Members have already seen the full cost of the works. Set out in *Phasing & Costings of the Works*, the cost will be spread across three phases over two to three years rather than one cheque. We are in a unique position, as the majority of materials are already ours and on site, meaning they simply need to be moved. This helps protect us from potential cost increases.

What this document adds is the how. The answer is already inside the Club's own budgets. Today, a share of our greenkeeping time, machinery and materials goes into maintaining four holes that sit unused for long stretches of the year. Move to one 18-hole course and those funds are released and redirected into building the new one.

> **The plan at a glance:** vote for the proposal, move to an 18-hole layout in the interim, and the money currently absorbed by the extra holes, together with the other measures below, steadily builds the fund that delivers the M&E Proposed course. Our own money, working for the course members actually play.

How the fund is built

The Finance Committee has identified the following measures. Together, over the next three to five years, they are projected to generate the cash required from the Club's own revenues:

- **Funds released from the unused holes.** Moving to 18 holes in the interim frees the greenkeeping time, machinery and materials currently spread across four holes that sit out of play and points them at the new course instead.
- **Winter work that counts twice.** The money the Club already spends on autumn and winter course improvements is pointed at the final design, so every season's work becomes a down payment on the finished course rather than maintenance of holes that may change.
- **Sensible timing on machinery renewals.** Holding off on new hire purchase agreements while the fund is built, so machinery is replaced when the Club chooses to.
- **A short-term greenkeeping saving.** With a member of the greenkeeping team leaving after serving his notice, recruitment of the replacement position is paused until the New Year, and the wages are put toward the project instead.
- **Our own showcase events.** A small number of nationally advertised open competitions, run by the Club, generating significant new income. The Chairman of Greens explains the thinking:

> *I play open competitions all over the country, and it gives you a clear view of what other clubs are doing, and what we could be doing better.*
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> *Some of the best run links clubs in the country now host nationally advertised open events that generate very significant income, the kind of money that funds real improvements year after year. There is no reason Seaton Carew cannot do the same. We have a course people travel to play. What we have never had is the settled, single layout that lets us build a calendar of showcase events around it.*
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> *The thinking here is a shift in approach, not just an add on. Rather than relying on green fee income from externally organised events, we may look to reduce the number of outside events on our tee sheet, and in their place hold a small number of our own nationally advertised links events. Special occasions, run by the Club, for the Club, in the way our Festival already shows we can. That way the income is ours. We set the events, we set the standard, and every penny raised goes back into the course our members play.*
>
> **Lewis Marr**
> Chairman of Greens

And the foundation for it is already proven. Since the Club focused on a single main summer course, visitor green fee income has risen significantly. A clearer course earns more and one permanent course, presented at its best, will earn most of all.

A word from the Treasurer

> *My job is to make sure the Club's money is managed carefully, and that nothing we commit to puts the Club's finances at risk. That is exactly the test this plan has been built to pass.*
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> *The approach is deliberately conservative. No borrowing, and no subscription increase linked to this project. Let me be clear on that point. This project has no impact whatsoever on the annual subscription review carried out by the Treasurer and the Finance Committee. That review looks only at the ordinary running costs of the Club, it happens every year regardless, and nothing in this plan changes it in any way. The fund is built steadily from the Club's own generated cash over a number of years, with the works beginning only when the money is in place. These plans have been robustly reviewed, and we have also sought independent verification from members with professional financial backgrounds.*
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> *Members should also know that the course project sits within the Club's wider financial planning, not instead of it. The detail of the Club's finances is reported where it always has been, in the accounts presented at the AGM. What members are being asked to consider here is straightforward. This is the cost, and this is how the Club can afford it.*
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> **Phil Nicholson**
> Treasurer

What this protects

- **Subscriptions.** This project adds nothing to subscriptions and has no impact whatsoever on the annual review carried out by the Treasurer and Finance Committee. That review covers the ordinary running of the Club, happens every year regardless, and is completely separate from this plan.
- **No borrowing.** The Club takes on no new debt for this project.
- **Property plans continue.** The Club's wider property investment sits alongside this project, not behind it. More on this below.
- **The Club sets the pace.** Because the fund is built from our own cash, the works begin when the Club is comfortably ready, not to an outside deadline and not on borrowed money's terms.

Investing in more than the course

The golf course is not the only thing on the Club's list. There are larger property related projects the Club needs to address. The lounge refurbishment is among them, but it is by no means the only one, and this plan is deliberately built to make funds available for those works too.

Moving to 18 holes helps here directly. It frees up funds in the interim to increase the property budgets, for capital works and investment in the clubhouse and member amenities, while the course fund is built alongside.

That is part of why the phased approach has been chosen. It means the Club can keep investing in its clubhouse and facilities alongside the course, rather than choosing one at the expense of the other.

The 18-hole agreement helps on both fronts, because a streamlined course operation puts the Club's finances in better shape for everything it wants to do, on the course and off it.

A note on the forecast

This is how the Club can afford the project. As with any plan of this kind, it is a forecast, and in the unlikely event of significant unexpected costs or a serious fall in income, the timing would simply be reviewed and adjusted.

The approach has been built to handle exactly that, which is why the works only begin once the money is in place.

Where this takes us

By moving forward now, the Club can plan exactly how the streamlined greenkeeping operation works through the interim years, with every budget, every winter programme and every hour of the team's time pulling toward one agreed goal of funding and building the new course.

And once the works are complete, those budgets go into maintaining and presenting one 18-hole course to the highest standard the Club can sustain. That is the aim of this plan: a course funded from within our own means, and a better course for all who play it every week.