



## IMPROVEMENTS IN CLUBHOUSE FACILITIES

Ray Burniston outlines the process for upgrading and improving facilities to keep up with considerable changes over the last 10 years.

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During the past ten years or so there has been a considerable upgrading and improvement at many clubs in the facilities they provide within the clubhouse. The VAT refunds received during the early part of the 1990's gave an unexpected boost in finance to private members clubs. But there is little doubt that the influx of new golf clubs during the same period with often first class facilities increased the demand on members clubs to improve their facilities.

Areas such as the locker room, dining and bar areas have vastly improved. Even on occasions the secretary's office has been upgraded.

As so much has been done over the past years any club undertaking improvements has much information and many clubs to look at before they take the final step. If you set up a small sub-committee to investigate this make sure they have a look at a number of clubs that have carried out improvements or built a new clubhouse so that they can assess these changes at first hand.

It is important to talk to the secretary and officials in other clubs so that at least your club will not make the same mistakes that they made. You also need to survey your members to make sure that you provide what is generally required and not what a few on the committee decide they want.

Good planning in advance which may well take a year or more can set the seal for the right decisions to be taken. Make sure you explore every option because in some cases clubs have built costly extensions, which have not solved the problems and for very little more money could have built a new clubhouse.

You need to carefully study areas such as the washing and toilet areas in the locker rooms to see that you have sufficient for the needs of members and visitors. One club recently added a health club and found that the substantial numbers of additional persons using these facilities created serious problems in the washing and toilet areas, which had be designed for golfers only. It is essential to include adequate facilities for the disabled in any new projects.

Of course any major project needs to be financed and careful budgeting will be needed to see that the club does not exceed its budgets. Most major projects, whether a new clubhouse or a

large extension invariably exceed the budget. Prudence suggests that you include a figure to meet any contingencies that might occur.

You need to have firm quotes for any professional fees involved and it is important to have a person who is the Clerk of Works. That person is responsible for working with the Architect and the Builder and they should only take their instructions from him. In many cases the Secretary/Manager will fulfil this role but often it is better to get a member to do it - preferably one who has experience in these matters. Remember that in many cases using a member who is an architect may not be the best solution especially if he has little or no experience of designing golf clubhouses.

Whatever you do work out exactly what you require having done the necessary research beforehand. Always be careful in going for a cheap option. In the long run it may well turn out more expensive than the dearer option that was turned down.

*Ray Burniston 2001*

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