



THE GOLF CLUB

ISSUE 74 | MARCH 2024

MANAGER

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE GOLF CLUB MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

SPECIAL FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

GOLF GENIUS EXPLAIN HOW
THEY HAVE BECOME THE
WORLD'S LEADING SUPPLIER
OF GOLF SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS



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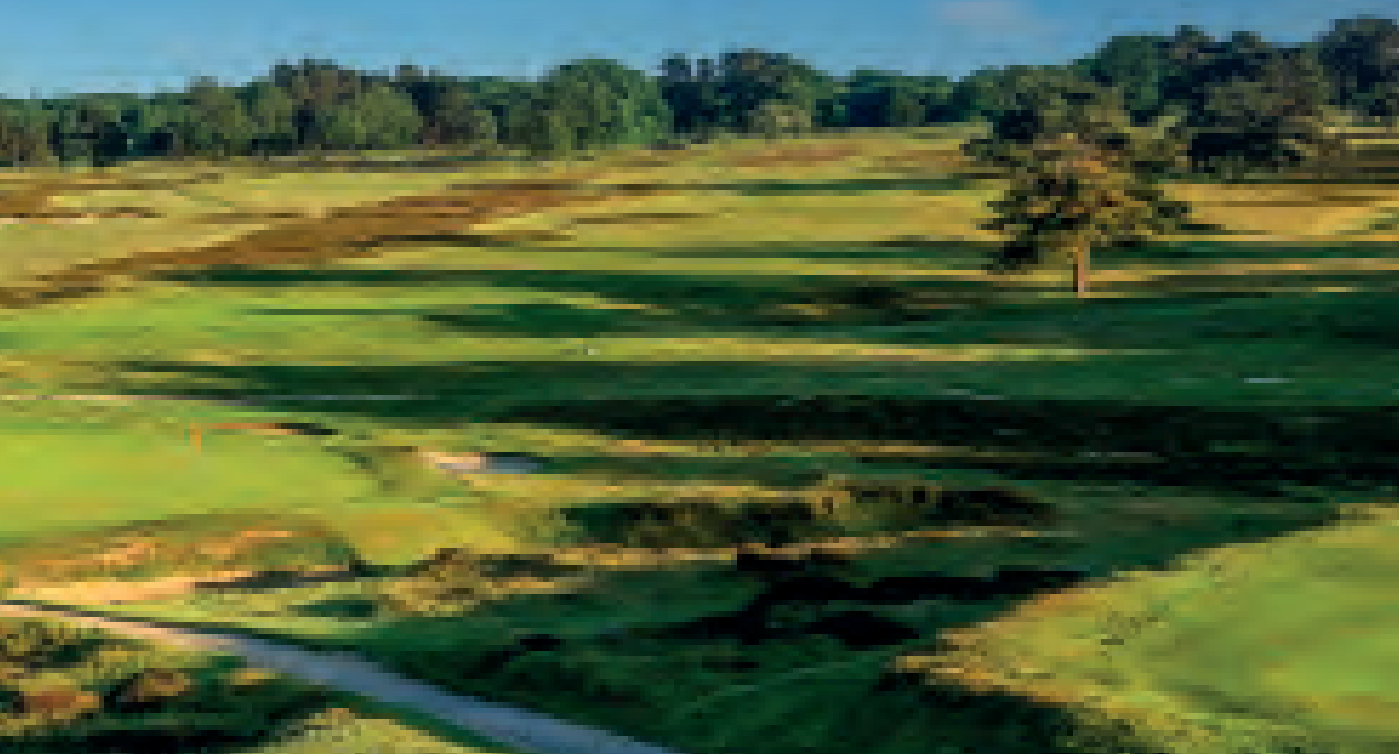
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The GCMA's Partner Network supports the association's work to professionalise the industry and promote a culture of excellence in golf club management. Thank you to all our partners who continue to support the association.



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MANAGER
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ON THE COVER:
Technology special

WELCOME

ISSUE 74 | MARCH 2024

In 2024, our association is placing a renewed focus on supporting personal development and wellbeing. We understand that success in the workplace goes

hand in hand with nurturing our overall wellbeing and we are committed to providing resources and benefits that empower you both personally and professionally.

Last year, we trained and deployed Mental Health First Aiders across the association to ensure members' wellbeing could be better supported and we have recently partnered with MCB Financial to provide personal financial support and advice.

We are thrilled to announce a fantastic new benefit thanks to our partners at Howdens and ARAG offering personal use support services and legal cover to ensure your safety and peace of mind at work. In the unfortunate event of any legal issues, this policy will cover potential costs. Additionally, the package includes a free legal helpline, tax helpline, and access to telephone counselling assistance for you and your immediate family members. We have also included a suite of legal documents, including access to a free will.

Furthermore, following feedback from our member survey, we have upgraded the much-valued online information library to further aid your growth. As well as improvements to the visual presentation, we have developed its structure based on the key subject areas identified by

members which require continued and up-to-date support.

Natalie McColl
Membership Services Manager

We have also created a number of new resources signposted to specialist GCMA partners and industry experts to ensure you are receiving the very best advice and information.

Within that trusted partnership network is a number of technology companies. In this magazine, we showcase their market-leading solutions and industry insights that can help any golf club provide a best-in-class experience for members and visitors alike – along with saving time and improving office efficiency.

The services featured include: running successful tournaments and open competitions through Golf Genius software; gaining state-of-the-art irrigation control through Rain Bird; managing golf course projects and topographical surveys through Clere Golf's GolfHub; and addressing the fundamental need to manage core activities like membership, tills and communications through Intelligent Golf.

Our partners have a wealth of experience to share through our channels to inform, educate and inspire our members. We know they can help you to run your clubs even better.

Darren Wood
Partnerships Manager



Invest to Improve

What is your club doing to **improve** it's offering to members and visitors?

What **investment** is your club undertaking to advance your product?

What are the key areas that will take your Golf Club to the **next level**?

Are you **purchasing** new course machinery?

Are you **building** an indoor swing studio or driving range?

Are you considering **modernising** the irrigation system?

Are you **planning** to carry out work on the clubhouse?

Are you **looking** to invest in a new buggy fleet?

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Here at Fairway Credit, we're very happy to talk to any new golf clubs who would like to learn more about using our financing facilities. We have a great team ready to discuss how we could offer our financing solution to your club.



For further information about how Fairway Credit can benefit you and your members, simply; call, email or visit our website.

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PCL-SL-CB004 03.10.2022

GCMA INSPIRE

- Peer-to-peer learning
 - Advice and information on careers
 - Develop your management skills
-

Members are encouraged to take part in the GCMA's Accreditation programme to ensure they are demonstrating their true value.

GCMA Accreditation recognises skills, achievements and professional development and offers the chance to be rewarded through a series of accreditation levels.

The programme is open to any GCMA member who is in an active golf club management role, providing a clear development pathway for people at any stage of their career.

"It's a tool through which golf club managers can record their experience, skills, knowledge and achievements, along with their ongoing commitment to personal and professional development, in one place," said GCMA CEO Tom Brooke.

"It enables them to accurately represent the value that they bring to the industry and to their golf club as a highly qualified, knowledgeable, valuable golf club manager.

"GCMA Accreditation can benefit anyone — from



highly experienced industry professionals to those just starting out.

"It's a great career pathway tool for new and up-and-coming golf club managers to start mapping out their professional journey

and identifying opportunities to expand their skills and knowledge, and how we as an association can help guide them on that journey."

A straightforward, but detailed, online form captures all the

Key dates for 2024

This year's submission window opens on May 1 and closes on June 30, but that is not the only time that members can or should engage with the Accreditation platform, as Brooke explained.

"It's important to stress that, while there's a two-month window for people to submit their accreditation for review, the platform itself is open 365 days a year for them to go and use it; the only requirement in that 60-day window is to hit submit — all of the other work, including updating of CPD records, skills, knowledge, achievements etcetera, can be done all year round."

Those who are already GCMA Accredited will need to renew within the submission window by updating their CPD record with an additional 40 Accreditation points earned over the previous 12 months.

GCMA CEO Tom Brooke



the industry.

and educated professionals

Golf Club Management

can apply for one of four levels of accreditation.

GCMA Accreditation does not discriminate on where your qualifications and professional development were obtained or how you have chosen to develop yourself professionally.

Any relatable industry qualification or certificate, plus degrees and higher education courses, will all be recognised through a comprehensive points matrix.

Learning of a more informal nature can also be captured within the programme, whether that be attendance at GCMA regional meetings, industry conferences, webinars, online learning or any number of other learning and development experiences.

"The programme is flexible and it's inclusive," added Brooke.

"We all come from hugely different backgrounds and found our routes into golf club management, and it has evolved considerably as a career over the past 20 years in particular.

"Up until the launch of this programme in 2022, there had been no one way of capturing that and of accurately informing the employer and the industry of

what that individual is capable of and what they've achieved."

An annual review process encourages accredited managers to build their skills and keep them up to date with their own professional and personal development as well as industry best practices.

"I'd like to think our programme is unique," said Brooke.

"There are some fantastic accreditation programmes already out there.

"Our point of difference is that we are looking to capture that full range of skills, knowledge and experiences and offer a full accreditation pathway.

"But, equally, with the way the CPD points matrix works, there's a way of capturing not just GCMA-led education and professional development but anything you do that can relate to one of the five professional practice standards categories that we've included as part of the accreditation framework.

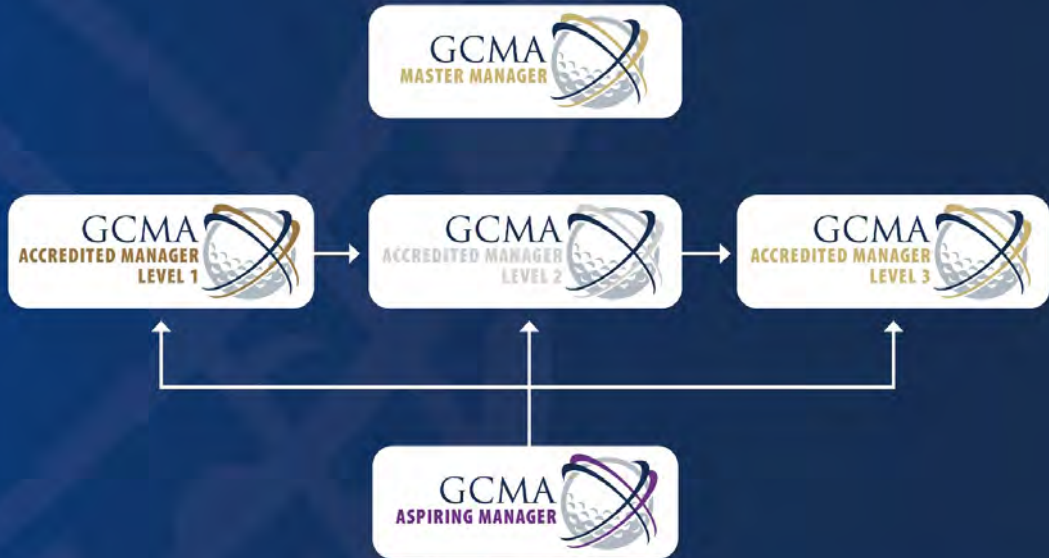
"Anything around those business skill sets that you can relate to your role in golf club management we will look to capture within that CPD matrix and that will all help towards your accreditation." ✉

necessary information and, by providing a complete career history and a summary of roles undertaken in the golf industry, along with an up-to-date record of qualifications, professional development and learning, you

Five reasons you should become GCMA Accredited

- When applying for a job, it will differentiate you from other candidates
- It demonstrates that you keep your knowledge and skills up to date through continuous learning and development
- It highlights an eagerness to learn which indicates future potential
- It will help to boost career progression and salary prospects
- It provides recognition of your skills, knowledge and achievements by your peers and the golf industry

ACCREDITATION LEVELS



WHAT THE ACCREDITATION LEVELS MEAN

GCMA Aspiring Manager

Suitable for those new to the profession, or currently in a position as a Department Head or Assistant Manager and keen to develop their careers

GCMA Accredited Manager (Level 1)

Aimed at those with a minimum of three years' experience in a golf club management position and typically at a small to medium-sized club

GCMA Accredited Manager (Level 2)

Suitable for those managers at medium to larger-sized clubs with five or more years' industry experience

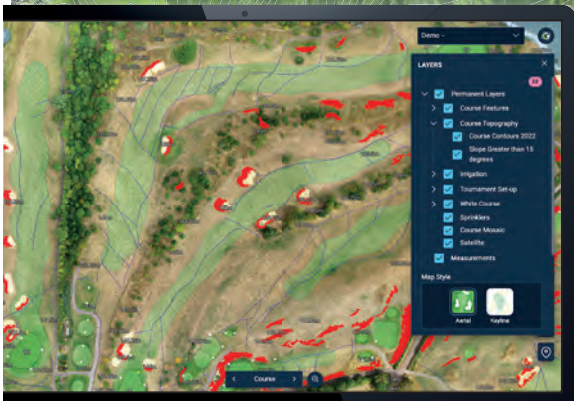
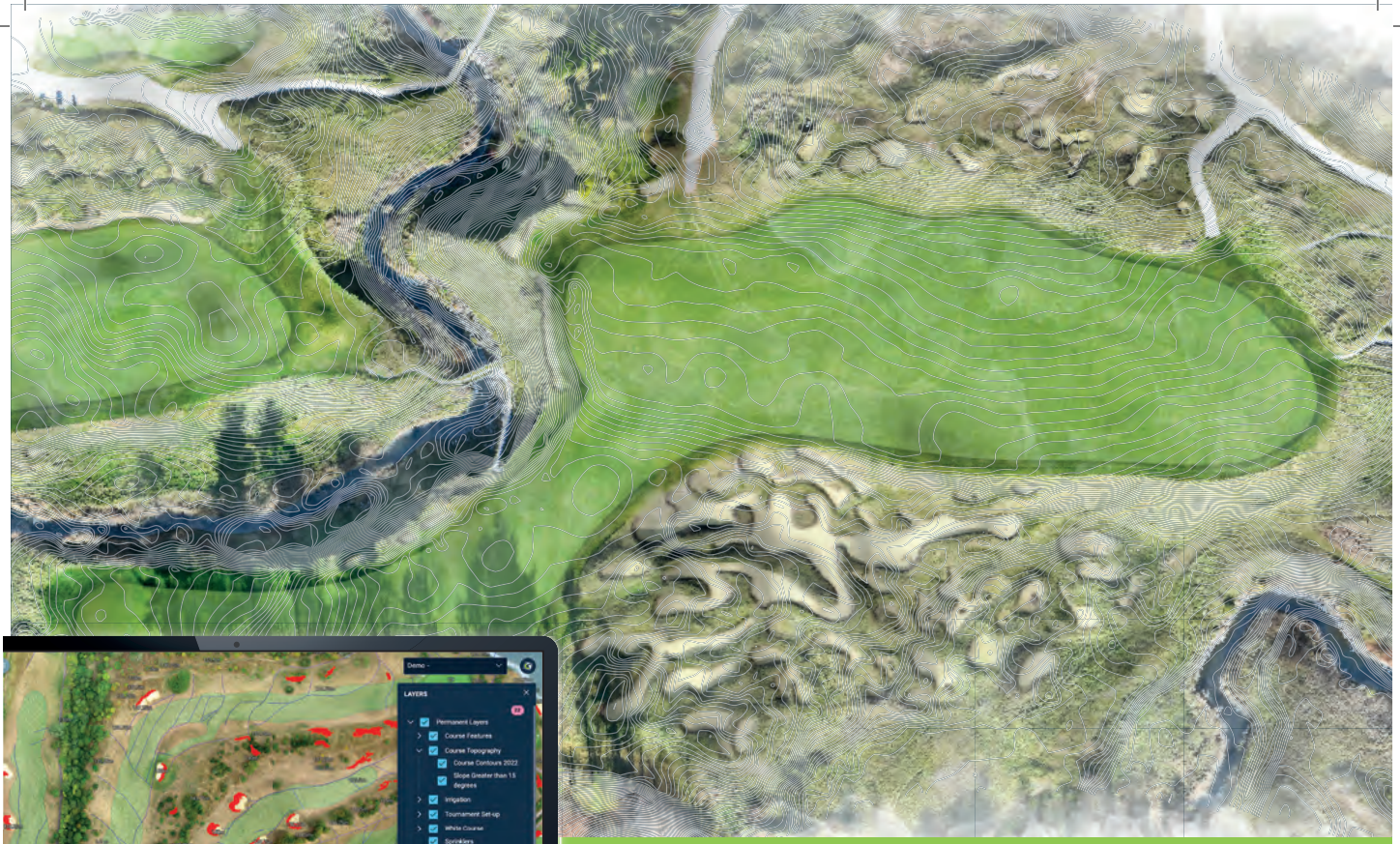
GCMA Accredited Manager (Level 3)

Recognises highly experienced and accomplished managers who have been in the role for 10 years or more

- A further level, GCMA Senior Leader/Master Manager, will open for applications from 2025

Access support

GCMA Members can book a 1-2-1 session for help on their Accreditation by emailing: accreditation@gcma.org.uk



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GCMA AGM 2024

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VENUE

North Hants Golf Club
Minley Road, Fleet
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DATE

Wednesday April 17

COST

£50

Includes tea/coffee, three-course lunch and 18 holes of golf

£40

Includes tea/coffee and three-course lunch only

£5

Includes tea/coffee and AGM attendance only

ITINERARY

09:30 – Arrival, tea and coffee

10:30 – AGM

12:00 – Three-course lunch

14:00 – 18 holes of golf, playing for the Captains Cup

20:00 – Prize presentation

North Hants



Strategic partners:



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RAIN BIRD

Future-proofing the GAME OF GOLF



The R&A's **Head of Agronomy Alistair Beggs** on the steps that are being taken to ensure golf continues to **thrive** despite the **challenges** facing our game



What will golf look like 50 years from now? With the challenges facing the

industry, it would be easy to forecast a negative outlook, but The R&A's Sustainable Agronomy Service is taking steps to future-proof the game and ensure it is thriving for decades to come.

As recently as 2021, The R&A was not significantly involved in the delivering of agronomy services beyond supporting its championship venues, but late that year it was decided a change was needed.

Alistair Beggs, R&A Head of Sustainable Agronomy, and Paul Woodham, R&A Head of Sustainable Agronomy Europe, now lead an initiative that will help secure the future of the game and invest in areas of research for turf management, greenkeeper development and education.

In a recent GCMA Insights podcast, Beggs explained why sustainability is at the top of the organisation's priorities and how golf clubs can benefit from the service.

"We felt that this [Sustainable Agronomy Service] was something that The R&A should do in order to protect and promote the game of golf and to ensure that the game is thriving in 50 years' time," he said.

"Protecting the game and promoting the game is really important to us, and the golf course is a really important part of the game. Without golf courses, we haven't got a game, and without greenkeepers to look after golf courses, we haven't got a game.

"So we felt it was important that we could provide support to the industry, to greenkeepers and to golf clubs, and we branched out of just looking after our commercial and our championship venues and launched the service to support the game as a whole."

Despite starting with "zero revenue and zero clients", Beggs now leads a team of R&A agronomy experts – alongside Woodham, Gordon Howard, and Simon Watson – who are providing support to golf clubs and greenkeepers around the UK, with plans to extend that support

"We work well with clubs when we have a good knowledge of them, and we work well with people when we have a good knowledge of them"

across Europe.

The service is designed to help golf clubs future-proof themselves amid a growing tide of change, with a number of threats and challenges facing the industry, from climate to legislation.

Beggs believes the game of golf will look noticeably different in 15 to 20 years' time, and that, while industry professionals are increasingly aware of that and are adapting accordingly, there is a pressing need to educate golfers on what it might mean for them.

"We feel as though we've been quite good over the years getting messages out to greenkeepers or getting messages out to technical professionals," he said.

"What we've got to get a lot better at is getting the message out to golfers, because they have a certain expectation of their

courses these days and they expect the highest of standards. They see great, well-conditioned golf courses on the television week in week out, and they expect theirs to be the same.

"The job of greenkeepers is to optimise the conditioning and performance of golf courses as best they can, and we're here to help in that quest."

The ways in which The R&A are able to assist golf clubs in delivering on that goal are wide-ranging, and Beggs stressed the importance of developing relationships with people on the ground and getting the know

each club and each course on a case-by-case basis.

"This job is all about relationships," he said. "We work well with clubs when we have a good knowledge of them, and we work well with people when we have a good knowledge of them.

"The start of it is about getting to know the site and getting to know the key protagonists at individual clubs. Obviously, the club manager is a really important person in that whole journey, and it's important for us to develop relationships with that person, and it's important for us to develop relationships with the greenkeeping team.

"We can then start to provide advice that is suitable to that club, because we're going to all types of clubs, from the grassroots to championship

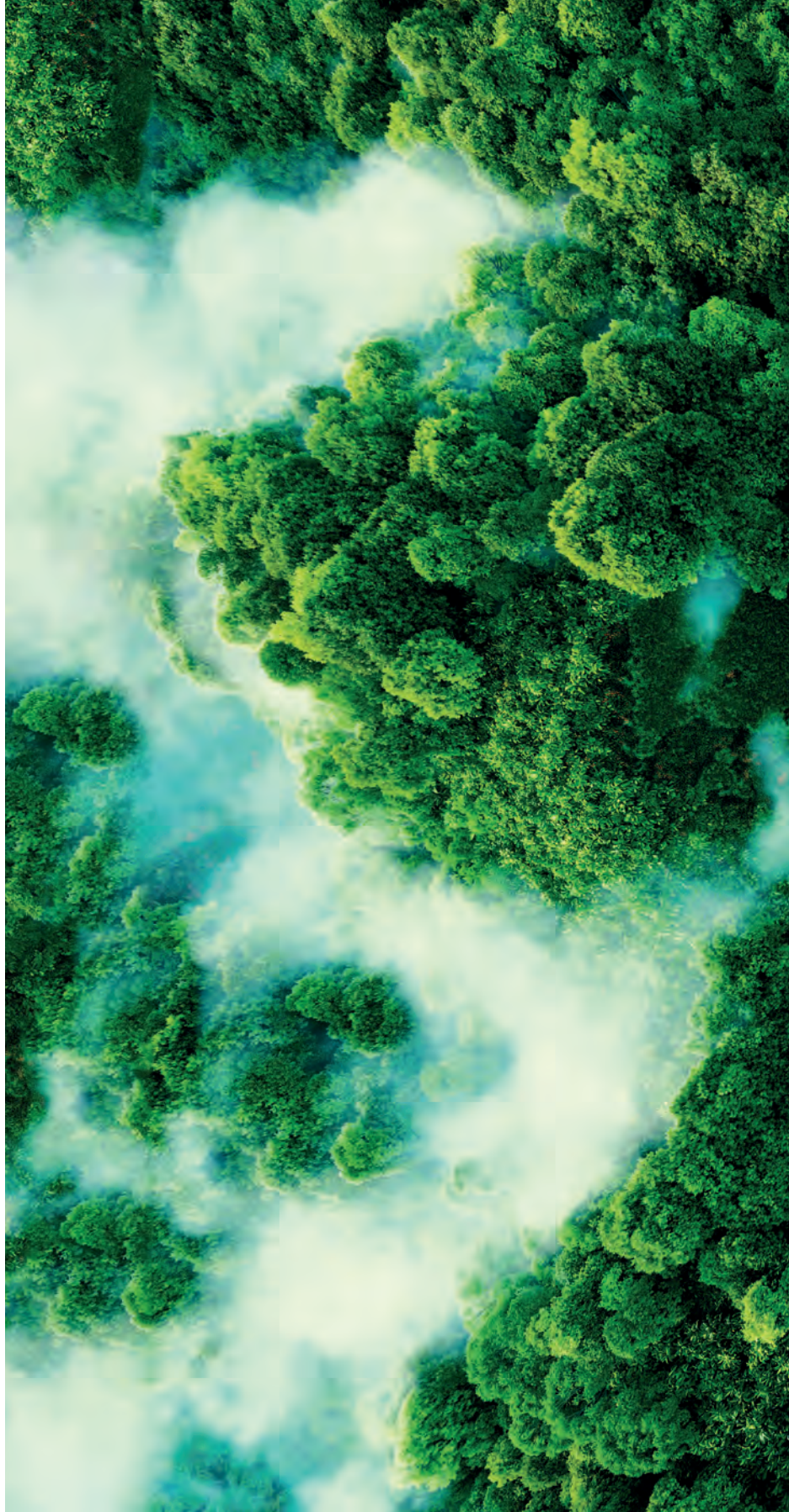
venues and everything in between, so the advice is not the same at every club.”

The cultivation of that understanding between all parties happens over the duration of many visits and consultations, with presentations to members part of the process to ensure everyone is on the same page.

With legislative changes afoot, some of which are taking effect already and others that will come into play further down the line, Beggs underlined the need for clubs to plan ahead, with his team’s expertise extending beyond playing surfaces and into the realms of long-term strategic thinking.

The scope of the service and the level of expertise on offer makes it something The R&A are proud to provide, and Beggs closed by positing another compelling reason why golf clubs should consider making use of it.

“The revenue that we generate from this is fed back into the game,” he said. “It’s fed back into turfgrass research, it’s fed back into greenkeeper education. It’s important for people to realise that if they do feel as if they’re subscribing and contributing to the agronomy service, then the monies that they are contributing are going back into the game. That’s an important message for everybody. There’s a feel-good factor about that for a lot of folks.”







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Golf club managers can access **more information and support** than ever before. We speak to **seven GCMA Partners** to understand the help that is available for our members

MEET THE PARTNERS

Golf Genius

Golf Genius are the world's leading supplier of golf software solutions

Clere Golf

Clere Golf allow all course-related data to be stored, shared, edited and reviewed

PlayMoreGolf

PlayMoreGolf offer a points-based membership solution for golf clubs

Rain Bird

Rain Bird's irrigation technology can help shape the way your future grows

Obbi Golf

Obbi provide a club-specific, best-in-class safety and compliance software system

Intelligent Golf

Intelligent Golf supply golf management software to UK clubs

CourseMate

CourseMate enhances communications and elevates member satisfaction



Jake Rhodes is UK Head of Sales for Golf Genius, the leading supplier of golf software solutions globally. In Jake's role, he works with general managers – many of whom are GCMA members – to help them deliver elevated golfer experiences through tailored solutions, expertise and support.

Describe what Golf Genius does

Through market-leading golf tournament, shop, leagues and coaching software, combined with outstanding support, Golf Genius helps 11,000+ clubs and organisations in 60+ countries save time, generate revenue and deliver exceptional golfer experiences. This includes many GCMA member-represented facilities such as Hillside, Moortown, Hallamshire, Hollinwell, Enville, Foxhills, The Berkshire, Moor Park, Burnham Beeches and many more.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

Golf is a sport embodied by tradition and nuance, so clubs and facilities have historically been resistant to change in various ways. However, more recent times and learnings have demonstrated a rapid shift in attitudes towards technology and the adoption of it, with many general managers now reliant on such systems in order to drive golfer enjoyment and participation. Technology plays a huge part in our daily lives and golf is no longer immune to that fact, as golfers seek exceptional experiences that have been enhanced by technology.

These solutions are there to simplify processes and improve efficiencies for club managers and their teams, while enhancing the experience for golfers. Therefore, it is important to have good and sensible conversations as an industry about how golf clubs can embrace technology in a meaningful way, while protecting their traditions and individual cultures.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

From my experience and by listening to hundreds of general managers across the country, there are a range of issues and challenges they face in this

regard: –

- A lingering lack of desire from club members to change with the times – ‘we have always done it this way’.
- The level of software standards across the market is fairly low, with few local suppliers properly investing in their solutions.
- Limited competition across the market has led to a lack of choice and, inevitably, low levels of innovation in the solutions provided.
- Many suppliers lack investment and resource to sufficiently provide their customers with the right levels of service and up-to-date products.
- Education and awareness around the adoption and use of technology is key, otherwise club managers will choose to shy away from it.
- The impact of change management influences a lack of investment and innovation at club-level, caused by high levels of resistance by club memberships to new solutions and services.

What are the biggest opportunities/growth areas?

The market is rapidly changing and there is a growing acceptance that technology has

to play a role in club life – from both manager and member – and we are seeing numerous positive trends in the market that reflect this notion:

Proactive, forward-thinking general managers and club secretaries are choosing education over stagnation, with a view to becoming more technologically astute for the benefit of their club or facility.

Member associations, such as the GCMA and SGCMA, are providing unprecedented levels of support to their members with resources and education that inform them on the use of technology.

A positive shift in member and golfer behaviour towards technology has influenced

internal change and adoption, with clubs keen to satisfy their need for better service, convenience and technological solutions.


The 2019 COVID pandemic supercharged the shift towards digitalisation. Even if clubs didn't want technology at that stage, they had no other choice but to in order to remain open and survive.

The introduction of the World Handicapping System (WHS) has increased the levels of standardisation across markets and regions, and has increased levels of competition and choice

“Technology providers and club managers have a collective responsibility to collaborate and deploy solutions that enhance the golfing experience”

for clubs in the software they have at their disposal. New global and more responsible suppliers have entered the market, which has led to greater levels of innovation, collaboration and ultimately, better solutions for club managers to choose from.

How can Golf Genius help GCMA members?

In my time at Golf Genius, I have worked with many GCMA members and their represented golf facilities to provide them with tailored solutions and support to drive revenue, improve their operational efficiencies and elevate member and visiting golfer experiences. We, like all suppliers, have the responsibility to make it easy for the customer by providing support and innovation. Technology providers and club managers have a collective responsibility to collaborate and deploy solutions that enhance the golfing experience for all, to help secure the future of the sport. 

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TO LEARN
MORE

BRS Golf offers technology to help clubs **grow membership and revenue,** while safely enabling members to **book their rounds any time, anywhere, from any device.**

Last year our tee time platform generated **£10.5 million in green fee revenue** for course partners.

1,140 courses sold rounds through GolfNow in 2022, and the average tee time booking value was £54.93. Plus you can **boost incremental revenue through** **buggies and food & beverage.**

Our **dedicated account management** team will help you dynamically price your tee times while **protecting member play.**

Golf clubs looking to boost revenue can **find the help they need with GolfNow.**



Steve Richardson is the Managing Director of Clere Golf. Steve's approach is hands-on, from the teams he manages to the clients he takes day-to-day responsibility for. He has been with Clere Golf since the business was formed 18 years ago under the Clere Group, which has been around for over 35 years.

Describe what Clere Golf does

Traditionally we have supported both golf clubs/resorts and the professional golf market through the development and production of printed products such as yardage books, scorecards and so forth. From St Andrews to The Belfry and The R&A to the DPWT, our yardage books are used worldwide spanning over 1500 customers.

In more recent times we have developed software products underpinned by the survey data we collect to help golf facilities and tours manage their prized asset effectively by allowing all course-related data to be stored, shared, edited and reviewed spatially in a single location from

anywhere in the world.

I'm proud to say that our golfHUB is now used by clients such as The Ryder Cup, DPWT, LIV Golf and The R&A to manage the staging of their events. golfHUB has many modules including the most advanced pin location system available (PinZone) used by both golf tours and clubs across Europe.

We have a team of five full-time software developers plus four golf course surveyors who travel the globe using GPS, laser and drone technology to collect data which underpins our software and forms the backbone of the products we produce. We are fast becoming a specialist survey and software provider.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

We have found that governing bodies and tours who deliver a

product to the public and drive golf to the masses are very good at embracing technology as they strive for better engagement with customers and a desire to deliver the best possible experience to their stakeholders. The DPWT, The R&A and St Andrews would be great examples, always open to seeing what is possible. I also believe that they understand the importance of their roles in the game to pioneer and lead the way.

The story within golf clubs, however, can vary greatly. The difficulty we find is that every club has a membership (and board/committee) made up of not only tech enthusiasts and sceptics but everything in between too! While the general manager of a given club may be an early adopter of technology, his/her membership may not be and can often slow down progress unless the board or committee are also behind the move.

In recent years, particularly since Covid, there has certainly been a feeling that clubs are more open than ever, maybe the era of Zoom and video calling has helped overcome the inertia of the older generation who would be less likely to embrace change (I don't like to generalise as every club seems to have its own way and nuances).

With technology these days leading the way in how we are fitted for new clubs or shot



“If you have good data you can make better decisions and support the decisions you make with evidence”

business. Stakeholders can store data spatially supported by photographic evidence for review in months and years to come.

Our surveys and subsequent golfHUB set-up includes the delivery of topographic surveys, something every club needs if it plans to modify its course but doesn't always know where to find one or who to speak to. We see the opportunity to provide this level of data to clubs and present it in a system which allows the club to interact with the data as a huge growth area.

tracking used on TV coverage, I do believe all age groups are much more aware and open to technology.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

Age has to be a factor. We know the demographic of golf club membership and while not every golfer over 60 thinks the same, many will opt not to use a digital app (delicate screens, small fonts etc..) but as those who have grown up with technology become the older generation, it's becoming much less of a barrier.

The gatekeepers will either embrace the latest technology or create a barrier, but I have to say the modern club manager educates him/herself better than ever and are generally open to evaluating what is best for their members. After all, a great product will reflect well on the management and enhance the


experience of all stakeholders.

The final barrier is the product itself! Our golfHUB is a great example. Course managers and club managers have carried out their roles perfectly well without the product for years, so why buy it? It's my role to present the solution to a problem which maybe the club hadn't realised was even an issue, to evoke thought and stimulate demand. If we can do that well then adoption will be faster and easier.

What are the biggest opportunities/growth areas?

Data provision. The value in quality data is hugely important, if you have good data you can make better decisions and support the decisions you make with evidence. Our golfHUB takes highly accurate survey data of a course and places it in the hands of clubs' stakeholders in a variety of ways that enables them to add value across their

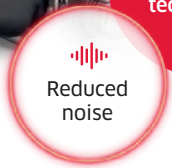
How can Clere Golf help GCMA members?

By delivering a software product that can store and share all course-related data spatially. A huge issue we have found is so much vital information is stored in a variety of locations (cabinets, PowerPoint, excel sheets, printed plans, note pads, staff memory banks and so on). In the event of damage, employees moving on, loss or theft, what happens to the data? golfHUB overcomes all of those issues and in doing so enables teams to collaborate, access data and manage projects with a system underpinned by a present-day survey. 

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Brad Chard's role as Chief Operating Officer is to oversee the current partner club network across the United Kingdom. He manages a team of three club support

managers, whose aim is to work with partner clubs in supporting them with their membership objectives. Brad also oversees the business development team, whose aim is to attract new clubs into PlayMoreGolf's network both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Brad has been in the role since August 2021, having previously spent 16 years as a golf club general manager.



Describe what your company does
PlayMoreGolf offers a points-based membership solution for golf clubs who are looking to introduce a new category of membership that appeals to the infrequent golfer. This is a golfer who does not play regularly enough to justify being a full member but plays more than a pay-and-play green fee visitor. This solution provides golf clubs with all the tools to attract the infrequent golfer. We undertake the marketing to attract new golfers, we provide the platform to join these new members, we manage member queries on behalf of the club, and we help to retain the members. This end-to-end solution enables golf club operators to focus on the day-to-day running of their

golf club while we work behind the scenes to generate additional income for them.

In addition to this, we have developed our software to deliver a bespoke white label solution for clubs and resorts. Our white label features offer a greater level of functionality that can be applied to more than just golf membership. This solution can also be used by clubs and resorts that have spa & leisure facilities too. Like our PlayMoreGolf products, it is designed to attract commitment from the infrequent customer. The key difference being that this product can now look and feel more like the club's own following their club brand guidelines. Perfect for corporate membership, membership waiting lists, spa and leisure, or linking golf, spa, & leisure under one umbrella.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

Having been a golf club general manager myself I speak from experience. Pre-Covid, running a private members' golf club I would say that vast improvements had been made in the use of technology, even if we were still behind the curve

“This end-to-end solution enables golf club operators to focus on the day-to-day running of their golf club while we work behind the scenes to generate additional income for them”

of many other industries. Tee booking systems were a prime example of this as I worked at two clubs that did not operate a tee booking system. Many admin duties were manual processes too. Going through the Covid pandemic did see an acceleration of change as clubs had to adopt and use technology more and more, be it with tee sheet management implementation, or food and beverage ordering, etc. This process has enabled golf clubs to see that embracing certain technology, while appearing daunting and challenging to implement (customers do not always like change), the result is that clubs can save time using technology, which can be time re-invested into the many different areas of club operations. In addition to this the use of technology can improve the member and customer experience too.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

Not everyone likes change. 'We have always done it this way

so why would we change' is a sentence I have heard in my previous role of many occasions.

Perceived cost of new technology and not truly understanding the 'return on investment' can also contribute to this. While some new technology can show this clearly others need to demonstrate time saving, which is time that can be

invested in other areas of the golf club, be it growing other revenue streams or focussing on the member/customer experience.

I also think we – and I only speak on behalf of PlayMoreGolf – can get better at showing the value that can be achieved. My focus is about providing the industry with all the information that operators would like to know either through published articles or website content. The aim of this is so that general managers, board/committee members and or owners can draw their own conclusions as to whether a platform such as ours could support them and their club.

What are the biggest opportunities/growth areas?

We know that golf clubs experienced unprecedented demand post-Covid and many clubs now have a membership waiting list in operation. The key opportunity is building on this success to ensure the industry continues to thrive and continues to attract newcomers to the wonderful game.


We speak with many golf

club operators who can see opportunities to grow revenue as the utilisation of their golf courses does reduce in the afternoon. Growing revenue during the quieter periods can not only support membership revenue but perhaps also takes some pressure off the level subscription being applied annually.

Retention of existing members is equally as important as growth; some would say more important. Understanding the needs of members is key to this and aligning the membership offering to meet this need is critical. That may or may not include new categories of membership being required to meet this need.

Keeping waiting lists engaged and attached to clubs is also key as this will deliver future membership revenues. Could the use of technology help with this and monetise this too?

How can PlayMoreGolf help GCMA members?

Our goal is to help educate GCMA members with a points-based membership solution. The benefits a club could gain, the pitfalls and things to watch out for when looking to implement a new category of membership. Publishing articles on a regular basis will help with this education process and encouraging operators to delve into our website and do their own homework will also support the education process. . . 

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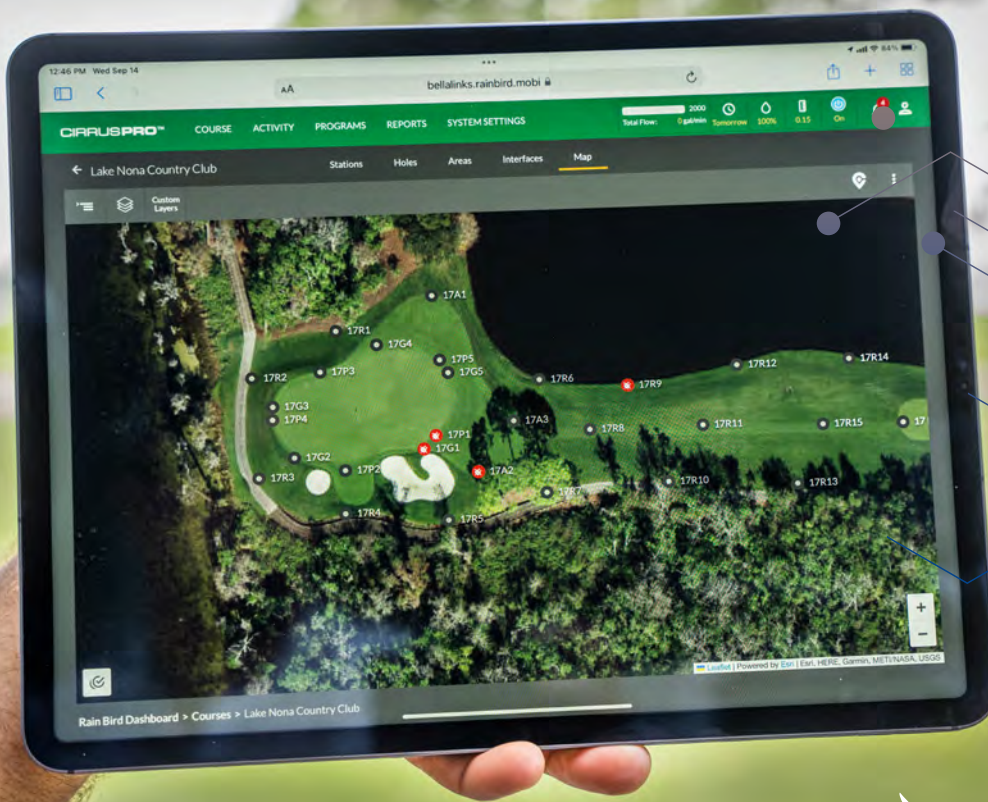
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RAIN BIRD®



Shaun Anderson, Area Sales Manager for the UK, Ireland and Iceland, has worked with contractors, consultants, distributors and end users, ensuring every customer has the right irrigation solution. He is also involved in education for all stakeholders, helping them understand the benefits of efficient irrigation.

Describe what Rain Bird does
 Rain Bird creates irrigation technology that helps shape the way your future grows. Founded in 1933 during California's agricultural boom, our 4,000+ products sustain life's essentials and support green spaces, guided by a commitment to the intelligent use of water.

We draw on nearly a century of expertise to serve a wide variety of industries, blending natural design and human ingenuity to make water work for everyone. Headquartered in Azusa, California, from the beginning, Rain Bird has produced and offered the industry's broadest range of irrigation products for farms, golf courses, sports arenas, commercial developments,

and homes in more than 130 countries around the world.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

Golf has moved forward significantly in 20 years and today, is much more data-led. Robust data allows courses to make informed agronomic and business decisions, working

“Robust data allows courses to make informed agronomic and business decisions, working within environmental best practice”

place for the season, medium and longer term. Being proactive means solving problems before they become major issues, causing costs to spiral. With an irrigation system that's designed, managed and maintained well, it's possible to make a significant reduction in usage as the water is applied accurately and only when necessary. Clubs don't have to follow every initiative that's out there, but each one that takes a new step or makes a change will improve its sustainability and positively contributes to the industry's efforts as a whole.

How can Rain Bird help GCMA members?

If you are a full UK member you can request an evaluation of one of your club's most important assets from Rain Bird.

Water is the lifeblood of your golf course, especially during the playing season, but is your irrigation system helping, or hindering, playability, performance and public relations? Do you know what your irrigation system is really costing your club? A complementary site visit and comprehensive report compiled by an experienced irrigation professional will help you: –

- Understand your irrigation infrastructure and how well your system is set up.
- Identify risks and factors affecting efficiency and performance.
- Consider future resource requirements, changing legislation, and benefits of new technologies.
- Plan system optimisation, upgrading, extension, or replacement. 🔄

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within environmental best practice, being more sustainable on the course, in the clubhouse and across the entire estate.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

Cost can be a limiting factor but so too is fear of the unknown. There are so many resources available to golf clubs, it can

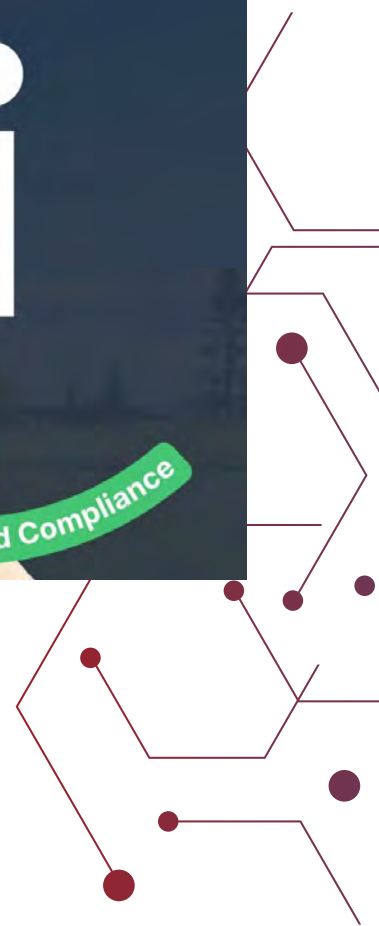
be a challenge working out exactly what's most suitable for your particular course. If it's daunting, do remember that manufacturers, professional irrigation consultants and contractors are there to help you.

What are the biggest opportunities/growth areas?

Every golf course should have a water management plan in



Ryan Bell is a Senior Sales Manager at Obbi Golf. He has been with Obbi Golf since its inception just over two years ago, with a focus on taking the product to market across the UK & Ireland during that time.



Describe what Obbi Golf does
 Obbi Golf provides a club-specific, best-in-class safety and compliance software system which enables clubs to manage health and safety efficiently across all departments while mitigating risk. The functionality within Obbi allows staff to complete all training, checklists, and safety checks in their department. For example, greenkeepers completing pre-use checks on machinery, or kitchen staff completing fridge temperature checks. The system is innovative, intuitive

and provides general managers, committees and heads of department with the information they need at the click of a button.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

There have been huge strides made within the golf industry in relation to technology over the past 10 to 15 years with the adoption of systems such as digital tee sheets, EPOS systems and stock management platforms. However, in general the golf industry can often lag behind other industries.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

There has often been a resistance to change within the golf industry, with cost often taking priority over efficiency and the ability to drive the club forward digitally. In the UK and Ireland, many venues are private members' clubs, and as a result there can often be a complicated decision-making process in place when it comes to boards and committees. This is often a hurdle that technology companies struggle to get past when it comes to getting a system approved and implemented at

“The system is innovative, intuitive and provides general managers, committees and heads of department with the information they need at the click of a button”

a club and can often hold a club back from progressing digitally.

What are the biggest opportunities and growth areas?

We live in a world that is dictated by data. As a result, clubs need to embrace the ability to use this data to improve the day-to-day running of not only the venue, but also the staff base and the end user experience. Whether it be safety and compliance, food and beverage or a golfer's experience on the course, there are world-class technologies available that will help venues grow both in terms of service

levels and financial returns. The key in any business is to build on your strengths and improve on your weaknesses, and technology/data will be the key to helping golf clubs and the industry as a whole grow in the next 10-15 years.

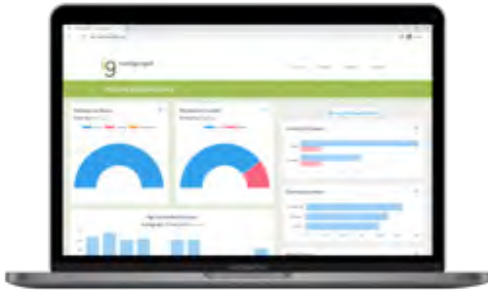
How can Obbi Golf help GCMA members?

If you ask any general manager, they will tell you that safety and compliance is an area that they often worry about. They are unsure of what is expected in this sector and how to keep on track of both staff safety and general safety around the clubhouse and

on the course. Obbi Golf provides a technology that can ensure you have visibility and traceability around safety and compliance while empowering your heads of department to take ownership of the staff working under them. Obbi Golf is not just a tick-box software, it changes the culture of safety and compliance within a club. 📄

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intelligentgolf®



Vanessa Machin is the head of the leisure division for ClearCourse, a software and payments business that supports more than 20,000 UK-based customers. The company's premium brand is intelligentgolf, which supplies golf management software to UK golf clubs.

Can you describe what your company does? intelligentgolf began by offering a software tool to make club-level golf competitions simpler to operate and more rewarding to play. As clubs began to adopt the system, they requested additional features and over time, it has evolved into the country's leading solution for total club management.

Our software still helps to manage competitions, provides tee time booking that integrates with third party brokers and secure online payment systems. It acts as the central hub for club membership with flexibility for all kinds of direct debit and standing order subscriptions, and this management capability extends to events. From simple room hire to a complete wedding booking, all aspects of availability, communication, pricing and profit reporting are

included. Our payments system also extends to electronic point-of-sale (EPOS) functionality with real-time database integration and analytics. Finally, linking all of these elements together, we design and build entire websites for some of the country's most prestigious golf clubs. Our sites are easy to self-manage after launch and integrate all our innovative product features together with the best digital marketing tools.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?

Many people might imagine golf clubs as traditional and perhaps even old-fashioned institutions. In my experience, that's not at all the case. These are complex, modern businesses that have a great number of moving parts and multiple revenue streams. The club managers we speak with are extremely keen to use

any technology that can simplify administration and provide better value to their members. A good example of this is our intelligentgolfPay system that is powered by ClearAccept, one of our ClearCourse partners. This integrated payments product enables cashless tills at club bars, restaurants and pro shops, and provides a fully featured mobile app. Here, members can make easy online payments, set up direct debits, renew subscriptions and use digital services such as ApplePay to place orders.

This system is at the very sharp edge of e-commerce technology, but we've seen a tremendous take-up across all our customers.

What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

Many of the barriers to technology in our sector are common with many industries. Adoption requires time and

How can intelligentgolf help GCMA members?

intelligentgolf can help golf club managers in two ways.

For those clubs that are not already clients, migrating to our software and systems can radically streamline their administration workload.

By driving as much business through one of our fully featured websites as possible, they can avoid third-party intermediaries and make every aspect of membership, tee booking, event management and online payment simpler.

Our EPOS solutions can bring the same exceptional online member experience to every in-person club transaction.

There are more than 500 golf venues across the country already realising these benefits today.

And so, if you're already an intelligentgolf client, the second way that we help is by offering a multitude of training seminars and workshops to ensure you get the most from your system.

These events often begin with a round-up of new developments, product releases and industry trends before moving on to a more technical tuition session. Here our support teams share examples of common issues to avoid and often even setup a number of real workstations in the room for clients to receive hands-on support.

Many of these are also hybrid events, allowing those that can't attend the venue to also benefit.

In each case, our system experts walk through all the main product modules to explain the quickest way of obtaining the best results. 🏌️

“It’s a golf-specific product that’s purpose-built for clubs and that integrates perfectly into their operations”

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investment of course, but also having the right company culture to thrive from the changes is important. Finding the right technology partner is crucial, as is properly understanding the challenges you need to solve before deciding on a solution.

One specific hurdle for golf clubs however might be due to the complexity of our sector. We have a quite specific mix of requirements for club management software that can be challenging to meet if we apply more generic technology solutions. Using an off-the-shelf membership app for example, will only deliver the optimal benefits if it's extensively customised to suit a golf club's specific needs. This adds cost, time and most importantly, risk to the project. If there is resistance to technology adoption in our sector, much of it might come from negative experiences with these types of implementations.

What are the biggest opportunities and growth areas?

The largest opportunity for club managers today is to capitalise on the tremendous enthusiasm for the sport. Operational efficiency should continue to be a key objective. With more people thinking about booking a tee, reserving facilities and visiting the club, the challenge to promptly and efficiently service their needs is far higher. As a result, choosing the right systems and tools to achieve this could provide a better than usual ROI.

The decreasing average age of golf club members also provides opportunities. Many of these new members will expect the same online service from their golf clubs as from their banks, stores and hotels. Clubs that can offer this have more opportunity to convert the occasional player into a full member.

Have you thought about diversifying your Club?

If so, you may well need some planning permission. Most forms of development on golf courses need planning permission so it is best to check. **Diversification could look like:**

- Replacement clubhouse
- Extension to a clubhouse
- Swing Studio
- Driving Range
- Short game area
- Irrigation ponds
- Or anything else...

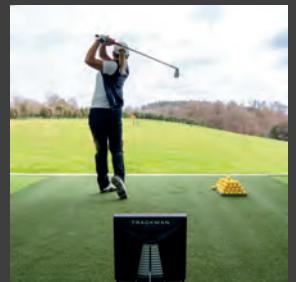
Quantum Golf is here to support you through the planning application process. We offer advice and will check whether planning permission is required.

Mike Lake

Mike Lake, Managing Director

"Mike and his team came in and helped secure the major planning permissions required to support a club of this calibre. The facilities at Centurion are world-class and have resulted in the Club hosting two European Tour Super Six and the first ever LIV event."

Centurion Golf Club



Watch our interview with GCMA
Chief Executive, Tom Brooke



QuantumGolf

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www.quantumgolf.net

Let's talk it through **01908 991415**

CourseMate



Adam Harris is the founder of Advanced Digital Solutions, a dynamic app development company. CourseMate has gone from strength to strength since its inception in 2015, empowering golf clubs to boost engagement, enhance their communication strategies and elevate member satisfaction.

Describe what **CourseMate does**
 The CourseMate team are passionately dedicated to delivering golfer engagement solutions that transcend conventional boundaries. Rooted in a profound commitment to the sport, CourseMate recognises the pivotal role of golf club managers in fostering vibrant communities and unforgettable experiences for golfers. Our mission is to empower these managers with cutting-edge technology that facilitates seamless connection and engagement with their members. We recognise that each

golf club has its own distinct character and challenges. Our approach is tailored to provide customisable tools and strategies that align with their goals. We're constantly exploring new avenues to elevate the golfing experience and make technology truly indispensable. Whether it's through intuitive features, personalised experiences, or strategic partnerships, CourseMate pushes the boundaries of what's possible in golfer engagement. Golf club managers can unlock the full potential of technology to nurture thriving communities, foster meaningful connections and create unforgettable moments on and off the course.

How good is golf as an industry at embracing technology?
 There is room for improvement in embracing technology to enhance golfer engagement. While some investments have been made, there's a notable gap in adopting innovative solutions that truly prioritise the needs of golfers and clubs. Often, the technology utilised can be stagnant and fail to evolve with the changing landscape. At CourseMate, we're committed to bridging this gap by actively listening to golf club managers and providing them with cutting-edge tools designed to foster meaningful connections and engagement among golfers.

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What are the barriers preventing greater adoption of technology?

The main barrier lies within the clubs themselves, often rooted in reluctance to depart from traditional practices. Despite the widespread use of smartphones among golfers, clubs hesitate to embrace technology, fearing complexity or disruption to their established methods. However, integrating modern technology can complement traditional approaches, enhancing efficiency and engagement. Clubs must overcome this apprehension and recognise the necessity of leveraging technology to thrive in today's digital age.

What are the biggest opportunities/growth areas?

The biggest opportunities lie in both member retention and attracting new players. While retaining existing club members is crucial for stability

and community, attracting new members and engaging casual golfers are equally vital for growth. Leveraging technology, like CourseMate's app, can enhance member retention by fostering stronger connections and providing convenient access to club amenities.

“CourseMate recognises the pivotal role of golf club managers in fostering vibrant communities and unforgettable experiences for golfers”

Simultaneously, innovative marketing strategies, inclusive programming, and accessible facilities can attract new members and drive growth.

How can CourseMate help GCMA members?

CourseMate offers a comprehensive solution to assist golf clubs in various key areas. By facilitating seamless communication between clubs and their members, CourseMate

ensures the timely dissemination of important information, such as announcements, event invitations and course updates. Additionally, the app's features, including interfacing to your tee booking, event management, and membership administration, contribute to enhanced member engagement and satisfaction, leading to higher retention rates.

Moreover, CourseMate serves as a valuable marketing tool, showcasing the

club's amenities and community features to attract new members seeking an engaging golfing experience. By streamlining operational processes such as tee bookings and event planning, CourseMate will help your club operate more efficiently. Overall, CourseMate acts as a catalyst for clubs' success, empowering them to improve communication, boost member engagement, attract new members and streamline operations. 📱

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YOUR CLUB'S POTENTIAL

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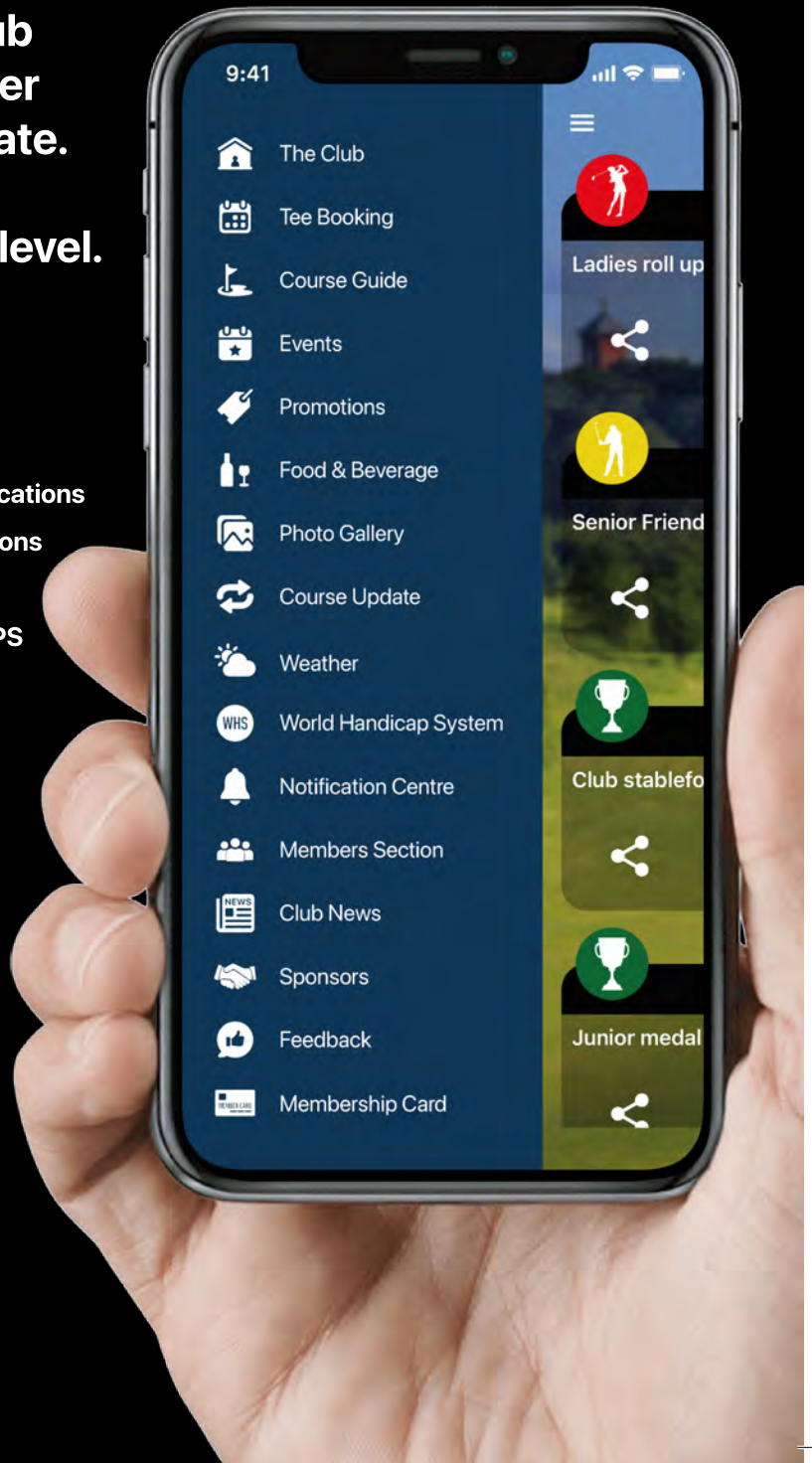
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- Links to your preferred booking systems
- Real-time course updates with push notifications
- Events calendar with multiple contact options
- Promotions with detailed sub-sections
- Course guide with flyover videos, tips & GPS
- Scorecard with handicap calculator
- Bespoke additional sections
- Branded to your club
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- Regularly updated



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GCMA services to support **YOUR WELLBEING**

The wellbeing of our members is a top priority and we are incredibly proud of the benefits and initiatives we have introduced over the last 24 months. Here are a selection of the services GCMA members can access to help bolster their mental and emotional wellbeing, from legal advice to counselling.

1 Regional Wellbeing Initiative
Our Regional Wellbeing Initiative makes the mental health and wellbeing of GCMA members nationwide a top priority.

Golf club managers often face immense pressure and isolation in their roles and this initiative demonstrates our commitment to supporting our members, not only professionally but also personally.

Each region across England and Wales has mental health first aiders on hand, who play a crucial role in promoting a culture of wellbeing and good mental health within their respective areas.

2 Free counselling helpline
Thanks to our partnership with Howden and ARAG, members can access

a multitude of benefits, including a free counselling helpline. Qualified counsellors will provide free confidential support and advice by phone to you or your family members who are suffering from emotional upset or feeling worried and anxious about a personal or work-related problem.

3 Legal and tax advice
If you have a legal or tax problem, you can call Howden and ARAG's confidential legal and tax advice helpline. They can offer advice about personal legal matters within UK, Isle of Man, Channel Islands and EU law, and personal tax matters within the UK. Your query will be dealt with by a qualified specialist who is experienced.

4 Identity theft resolution
Another service provided by our partners at Howden and ARAG gives you the peace of mind of knowing your personal identity is secure. Where identity theft is suspected, specialist caseworkers can help you to restore your credit rating and correspond with your card issuer, bank or other parties.

5 Personal finance and mortgage advice
Through our partners at MCB Financial, members have access to free personal finance and mortgage advice from a directly authorised, whole-of-market service. The company boasts a team of six who are specifically assigned to the GCMA partnership and have an in-depth understanding of our members' needs. 

In 2024, we are more focused than ever
on **supporting our members** holistically



MEET THE MEMBERSHIP SERVICES TEAM



Natalie McColl
Membership Services Manager
nataliemccoll@gcma.org.uk

"We truly care about our members and try to place members' needs and feedback at the heart of everything that we do."



Chris Tyrrell
Membership Services Co-ordinator
christyrrrell@gcma.org.uk

"I really empathise with the situation that some managers are in and want to let them know that I am always here on the end of the phone if they want to talk."



Kerry Spring-Rice
Membership Services
kerryspringrice@gcma.org.uk

"We are very aware how busy our golf club managers are just doing their day jobs, but we are here for each and every one of them."

If you need information, advice, guidance or support, please don't hesitate to reach out to our dedicated Membership Services team.

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Charles Molony, Assistant Secretary
 ROYAL CINQUE PORTS GOLF CLUB



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 - Upcoming CPD opportunities
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-

Governance workshops show clubs how to **IMPLEMENT CHANGE**



The importance of strong governance and a positive culture were at the forefront of a series of workshops held across the

country in January and February.

England Golf joined forces with the GCMA to put on a roadshow across six dates, with venues around the country welcoming hundreds of attendees.

The educational and interactive workshops put strategic governance and modern

leadership under the spotlight, offering advice on how to create a successful, sustainable future at your golf club.

Expert speakers including the GCMA's own Tom Brooke, along with representatives from England Golf and other industry professionals, provided their insights to packed-out rooms and prompted healthy discussion with and between those in attendance.

The free-to attend sessions, which spanned February and

started at Yorkshire's Sandburn Hall before concluding at Surrey's Kingswood, gave everyone present clear takeaways on how to implement best practices at their club.

Brough Golf Club's General Manager Richard Jagger, who attended the Sandburn workshop, underlined the value of the experience.

"It was a fascinating day at the governance workshop at Sandburn," he said. "It represented a great opportunity to learn

The road show conducted by the GCMA and England Golf showed what modern leadership at golf clubs looks like and how it can lead to future success



more about good governance and share ideas with other club managers and volunteers.

“The speakers provided valuable insights into the main topics and I think everyone there was able to take something away from it that they could implement at their club.”

The workshops helped key personnel understand the impact of a facility’s leadership and governance on member satisfaction and loyalty, stressing the importance of building from

an agreed vision and identity for their club.

Underpinning that must be a positive culture that welcomes

all interested parties into the discussion in order that they may be part of the process to bring about positive change. ✉

The speakers

- England Golf – Matt Draper (Club, County & Membership Director), Matt Bloor (Volunteer & Workforce Manager), Gavin Anderson (Club, County & Membership Operations Manager)
- GCMA – Tom Brooke (CEO)
- Players 1st – Amelia Lewis (Regional Manager UK)
- BIGGA – Jim Croxton (CEO)
- Kanda Golf – Jerry Kilby (Principal)

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“The salary calculator is a highly valuable tool for our members **AND THEIR EMPLOYERS**”



GCMA CEO Tom Brooke explains how the **Committee for Golf Club Salaries** operates to offer a tool that can help employers and other industry stakeholders understand market trends

Salaries can be a tricky subject. Trying to put a figure on the value of an employee's service is rarely a simple process.

It is difficult to arrive at a final number that fairly reflects all the factors that should be taken into account, and that can mean the end result is not always to the satisfaction of all parties.

But thanks to the diligent efforts of the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS), there is a tool that can help simplify this process — a salary calculator designed specifically for use within golf clubs.

Drawing on a broad range of data from across the industry, the calculator can be used to

work out salary guidelines for a number of positions within golf clubs.

Here, GCMA CEO Tom Brooke explains the background and benefits of the salary calculator and the role members of the Association have had in honing the tool.

What is the background and function of the CGCS?

“It's a collaboration of a number of bodies and associations with the shared goal of representing the interests of golf clubs across the UK. It considers salary and welfare matters with a view to promoting a healthy golf industry, in particular for club staff and officials.

“Through the committee,

“We’re not trying to tell anyone how much they should be paying, but simply providing benchmarks and guidelines”

there is an annual review and that forms the basis of the salary guidelines which are provided to golf club employers, proprietors, board directors and others. One of the key things the CGCS provides is the salary calculator.”

What is the salary calculator?

“The salary calculator is a highly valuable tool for our members and their employers. It’s open to anyone, free to use, and it can help you work out salary guidelines for golf club managers, course managers, deputy course managers, and assistant greenkeepers.

“In the case of the salary calculator for golf club managers, it allows you to filter by various criteria, including region, the size of the golf club, the individual’s level of responsibility across different areas, and their qualifications. From that information, it provides a guideline on the salary that the golf club manager should expect.

“All this is drawn from a wide range of data that we collected through a thorough review of the service in 2023, which included a survey of our members to ascertain current salary levels within the market. The calculator

also accounts for factors such as CPI and RPI, so it’s reflective of the wider economic and societal influences at play.

“What the salary calculator is not intended for is to provide recommendations; we’re not trying to tell anyone how much they should be paying, but simply providing benchmarks and guidelines so they are armed with as much relevant information as possible when making those decisions.

“It is important to recognise that salary levels throughout the industry are of course hugely varied and do not just depend upon the size, stature or location of the golf club, but also what the golf club is looking for from their manager. Some look for more of an operational-level manager, while increasingly so, clubs are now looking for their manager to become the strategic lead for the business.”

What is the trend for golf club manager salaries?

“The last time we conducted a full survey of golf club manager salaries was 2019 and we’re very pleased to report that in the four-years since, there has been an average increase in

salaries of over 20%. This is a positive sign that the value of an experienced and knowledgeable golf club manager is becoming increasingly well recognised by golf clubs. Moving forward, we intend to conduct a salary survey every two years to ensure the calculator remains up to date.”

What would you say to anyone who has not previously used the salary calculator?

“It’s a tool that is there to help you make informed decisions based on data drawn straight from our members. It’s as accurate a tool as you could hope for in regards to discerning market trends and salary expectations.

Put simply, it is certainly the best tool that someone could use to understand salaries in the golf club management sector.”✉

Learn more

[Click here](#) to visit the CGCS website

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