



THE GOLF CLUB

ISSUE 75 | MAY 2024

MANAGER

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE GOLF CLUB MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

SEASON'S GREETINGS

GCMA MEMBERS AND PARTNERS SHARE TIPS AND ADVICE FOR A SUCCESSFUL SPRING AND SUMMER AT YOUR CLUB

ALSO INSIDE: NEW RULES YOUR MEMBERS WON'T KNOW ABOUT
● BRILLIANT F&B TIPS FROM AN AWARD-WINNING GOLF CLUB
● WHAT YOUR CLUB CAN LEARN FROM GOLF IT!

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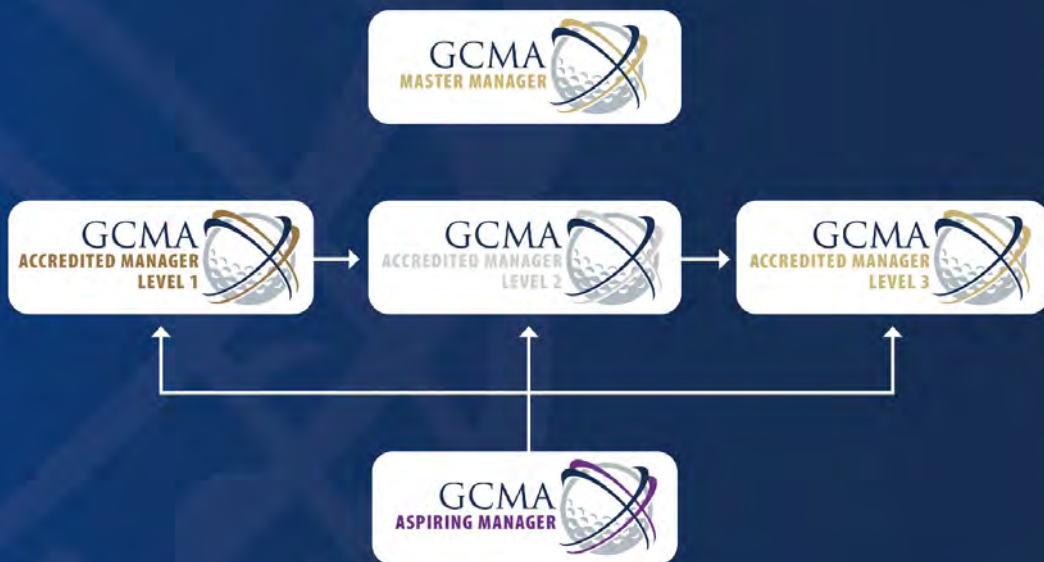
GCMA INSPIRE

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

GCMA Accreditation IS OPEN

The GCMA Accreditation submission window is now open for members to **document their skills and experience**

ACCREDITATION LEVELS



Your key dates for 2024

This year's submission window closes on June 30, but that is not the only time that members can or should engage with the Accreditation platform, as GCMA CEO Tom 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.



Five reasons to become GCMA Accredited

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

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 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 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. ✉



First Green initiative is turning golf courses INTO CLASSROOMS

Golf clubs across the UK are being invited by BIGGA to participate in First Green — a one-of-a-kind learning, environmental science and career exploration field trip to the living laboratory of the golf course, where nature and technology thrive in harmony.

Founded in 1997, First Green is the only STEM education and environmental outreach programme using golf courses as learning labs.

As part of the multi-year agreement, GCSAA will provide branding, training, insight and curriculum advice to assist BIGGA with establishing First Green in

the UK. The two associations will share best practices and updates to ensure students will be part of programmes offering the best possible experience and learning.

Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO, said: “First Green is a brilliant tool with all the assets, lesson plans and resources that any golf course needs to host an event. We’re thankful to the GCSAA for the incredible work they have done to develop the programme and also for enabling us to bring it to the UK, where I am confident it will be a huge success.”

The First Green curriculum helps students apply their classroom knowledge in an outdoor setting. Using STEM concepts connected to golf course management and

conservation, students find new inspiration in their schoolwork and learn about the possibility of a career in golf or a STEM-related field. Since its inception, First Green has reached students in the United States and Canada through learning labs that bring the classroom to life on the golf course. First Green also gives students a first-hand look at the important role greenkeepers (or superintendents as they are known in the US) play in their communities.

Rhett Evans, GCSAA CEO, said: “STEM education opens the door to a wide variety of career paths including golf-related careers. While our number one goal for First Green is to



LEARN MORE
Get involved with
First Green by
clicking [HERE](#).

support the educational growth of students, we also contribute to golf's sustainability by showcasing golf facilities' focus on preserving the environment and creating interest in a golf-related career.

"Over the years we have collaborated on many initiatives with BIGGA and created a strong working relationship. This long-term and successful relationship enabled our two associations to seamlessly bring the GCSSA's First Green programme to the UK."✉



#PLAYINMAY

How you can support the Golf Foundation's
Unleash Your Drive in Schools initiative



Golfers across the UK are being invited to support Unleash Your Drive in Schools, a Golf Foundation initiative aimed at improving the mental wellbeing of young people through golf.

All golfers need to do to help is sign up and get ready to #PlayInMay, entering any score in May along with a £5 minimum donation to the Golf Foundation.

Entrants can win one of 40 places at the Unleash Your Drive Final at Wentworth in August and the winning three scores on the

day will earn a place in the BMW PGA Championship Pro-Am in September.

The #PlayInMay donations will boost the Golf Foundation's bid to extend the reach of Unleash Your Drive to every school in the UK.

Five years in the making, this mental wellbeing initiative which launched in September 2023, has 500 schools signed up already.

Golf Foundation President Nick Dougherty launched the #PlayInMay campaign at the House of Commons in March and espoused the benefits of the organisation's Unleash Your Drive

in Schools initiative.

"Mental toughness is important because research tells us that mentally tough youngsters do better academically, career wise and perhaps most importantly in terms of their overall happiness and resilience," he said.

"We believe all golfers who have themselves benefited from golf would be happy to help us to increase the confidence and resilience of our youngsters. That is why we are asking them to #PlayInMay and make a small donation to create a massive national benefit for young people and the wider sport." 📧



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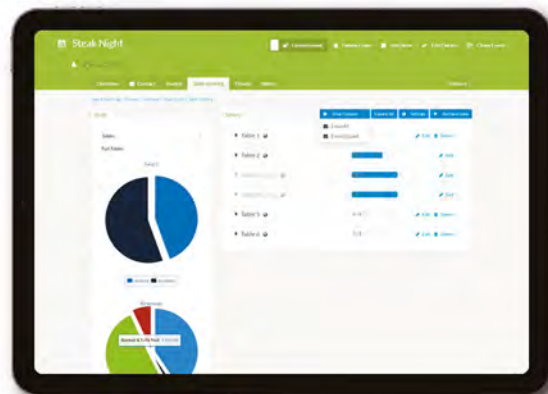
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Get set for the **SUMMER**

Take advantage of some **top tips** from an **expert trio of golf club managers** and two **GCMA partners**

With spring here and hopes rising that a miserable winter will finally recede into the rearview mirror, many clubs are playing catch-up to get things in order for the new season.

The weather may be beyond our control, but there are plenty of other things that golf club managers can do to make sure their facility is prepped and ready.

Here, three experts share the insight on how clubs can best prepare as things start to ramp up again. ☺



“Provide new committee members with a comprehensive and informative induction, bringing them up to speed with where the committee is on various aspects of the club”





EXPERT

Jon Dry
General Manager at Broadstone



1) REFLECT AND REVIEW THE PREVIOUS YEAR

Take some time to look back at the previous year and review what went well. Have an open mindset about how you can always look to improve. Engage with your teams to come up with ways you can build on what's working well and develop a plan for how you can be even better for the year ahead. Involve your team in these discussions so they have ownership of the new ideas.

2) COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE

Ensure your entire team are aware of your values. It is crucial that all members of the team are well-versed in these as we too often fall into the trap of our managerial staff knowing, but not filtering it through to the staff who are looking after our membership on a daily basis.

3) INDUCT NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

You often find yourself entering the season with new members of the committee, which can result in people trying to make their mark in the committee room. Provide new committee members with a comprehensive and informative induction, bringing them up to speed with where the committee is on various aspects of the club. Don't wait for them to find out in the committee room.

4) TRAIN YOUR TEAM

Invest in yourself and your team to enter the new season stronger and better equipped than you have ever been. Investing in your staff will also make your staff feel valued and focused for the year ahead.

5) BE UP TO DATE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY

Anyone who has worked in the golf industry will appreciate how busy your days can get in the heat of the season. Make sure you have everything in place regarding health and safety ahead of the season so you can focus on delivering a great experience at the club.



EXPERT

Andrew Minty
Director of Golf at Langland Bay

1) WALK THE CUSTOMERS' JOURNEY

Walk the journey that customers will undertake around your facility, to ensure that all signage, cleanliness etc is exactly what you would want to see when arriving at a golf club. Do this numerous times to make sure everything is as it should be.

2) BRIEF THE STAFF

Ensure all staff are briefed and fully up to speed with all sales techniques, the highest level of customer service possible, and are singing off the same hymn sheet as the rest of your staff.

3) LOOK AFTER YOUR MACHINERY

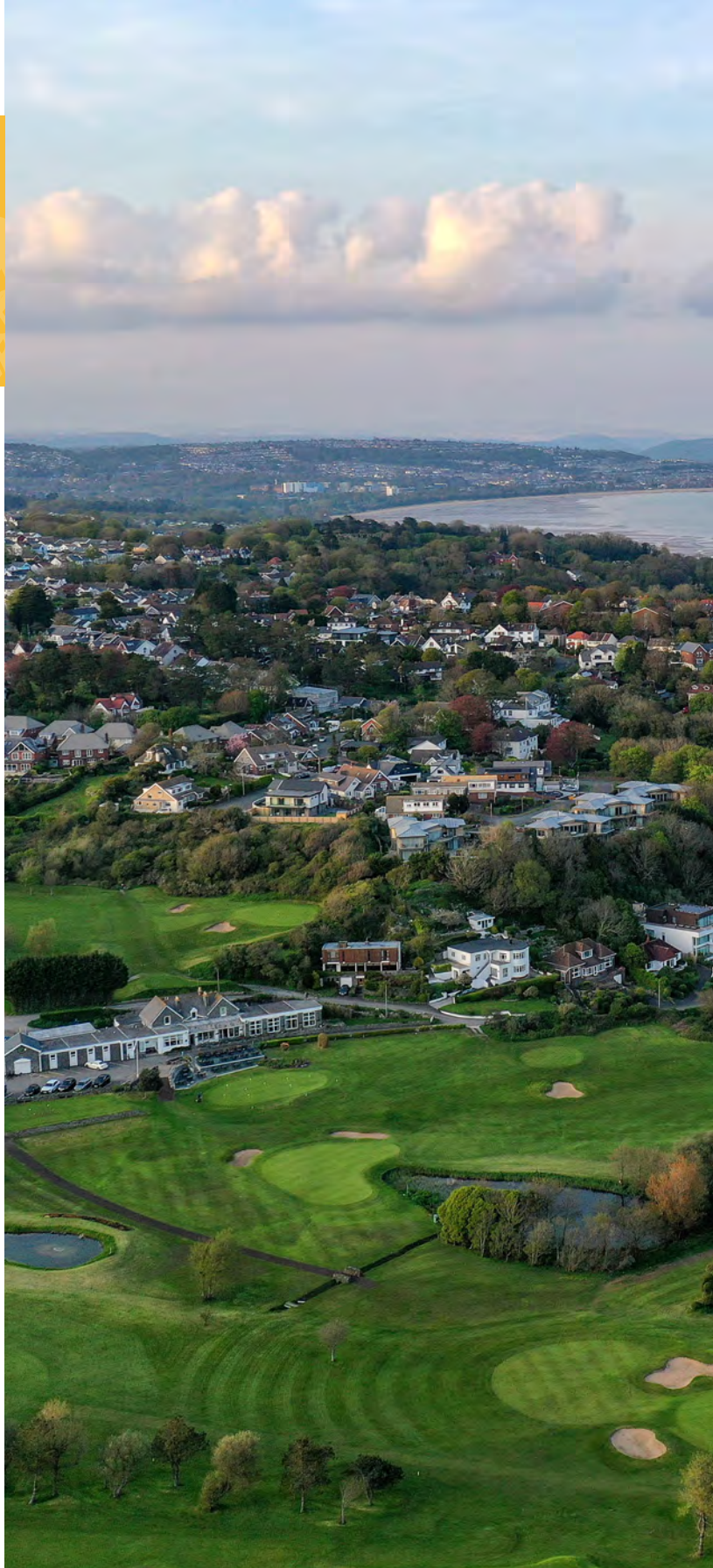
Check all machinery is serviced and ready, all maintenance logs and training records are completed and systems and standard operating procedures are in place to ensure that all the kit is cleaned and greased every time it's used.


4) COMMUNICATE WITH ALL PARTIES

It's important to ensure maintenance weeks and anything that can be pre-booked on the tee booking system in advance is communicated to all members and guests.

5) CHECK YOUR COURSE FURNITURE

Check all flags, cups, tee markers, course furniture etc is cleaned or replenished and ready for the new season ahead.



An aerial photograph capturing a coastal town and a golf course during the golden hour of sunset. The foreground is dominated by a lush green golf course with several fairways and greens. In the middle ground, a large, multi-story building with a prominent tower, likely a hotel or clubhouse, sits on a hillside overlooking a sandy beach. The beach curves along the coast, meeting the sea where gentle waves are visible. The background shows a dense residential area with numerous houses and buildings, extending to a large body of water. In the far distance, a city skyline is visible across the water, and mountains rise on the horizon under a sky filled with soft, glowing clouds.

“Walk the journey that customers will undertake around your facility, to ensure that all signage, cleanliness etc is exactly what you would want to see when arriving at a golf club”

**“Remind the whole team of
the mission — and make sure
they understand their part in
delivering that vision”**





EXPERT

Paul Adams
General Manager at Sheringham

1) SCHEDULE AN ALL-TEAM MEETING

Get all the staff together including the concessions and get them to know each other! This is vital to ensure you have the right team spirit for success.

2) FIRE DRILL

Do a full fire drill for the whole team — safety has to be a top priority.

3) RISK ASSESSMENTS

In keeping with the above regarding the importance of safety, make sure all risk assessments are up to date.

4) COMMUNICATE WITH ALL PARTIES

Ensure all communication boards and the website are up to date with the latest information so members and guests are kept fully up to speed.

5) REMEMBER THE MISSION

Remind the whole team of the mission — your standards, objectives etc — and make sure they understand their part in delivering that vision. 📧



PARTNER

Dave Nicholls
Golf Car UK Workshop Manager



1) VISUAL CHECK

First impressions matter and you want your vehicles to look good, so starting with a thorough visual inspection is always a good idea. Look out for things like cracks and scratches on the windscreen, chipped wheel trims and other aesthetic details that will be noticed by golfers if you don't catch them first.

2) TYRE PRESSURE

This is often overlooked and it really should be a routine check because tyre pressure has a big impact on efficiency and performance. The lower the tyre pressure, the more resistance, meaning the quicker the battery will drain.

3) LEAD-ACID BATTERY MAINTENANCE

Where facilities have older vehicles utilising lead-acid batteries as opposed to lithium, there is some maintenance that can be carried out by appropriately skilled staff. The wires corrode when the battery charges so they need to be cleaned, which you can learn more about [here](#).

4) LITHIUM BATTERY MAINTENANCE

The newer lithium batteries are virtually maintenance-free as they don't corrode like the lead-acid ones, but you can still wipe down the battery compartment with a wet cloth to keep it clean. With both battery types, you should of course check everything is charging properly.

5) ROAD TEST

Ultimately you want these vehicles to be driven so you need to check for yourself that they're fit for purpose. Take them out on the course, pay attention to how it feels not just to drive, but also the comfort of the whole experience. Be aware of any issues that might cause injury or discomfort to someone, such as sharp edges – anything you may have missed from the visual inspection.

6) GET A SERVICE

Of course, you also have the option of getting a reputable company, such as Golf Car UK, to come and service your vehicles and make sure everything is in full working order.





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According to the Met Office, this winter was the eighth wettest on record for the UK overall, with a staggering 29 per cent more rainfall than the average. However, water availability and usage continue to be a sharp focus for golf. The outlook for global temperatures is that 2024 will be another record-breaker, hotter than 2023, the warmest on record.


As temperatures climb and the growing season gets underway, make sure your irrigation system and practices are as ready as they can be.

This is the ideal time to take a long hard look at your irrigation system. Once it's up and running, it's worth making sure you're prepared to respond to what's ahead this summer – hot, dry conditions and changeable summer weather.

Can you identify what's actually happening on your course?

- 1) How is your irrigation system performing?
- 2) Are there any agronomic issues with specific areas of your course?
- 3) Is the system hardware and central control set up correctly?
- 4) Are all your rotors well-maintained for peak performance?
- 5) Has a health check on your irrigation control system's electrics and grounding been completed recently?

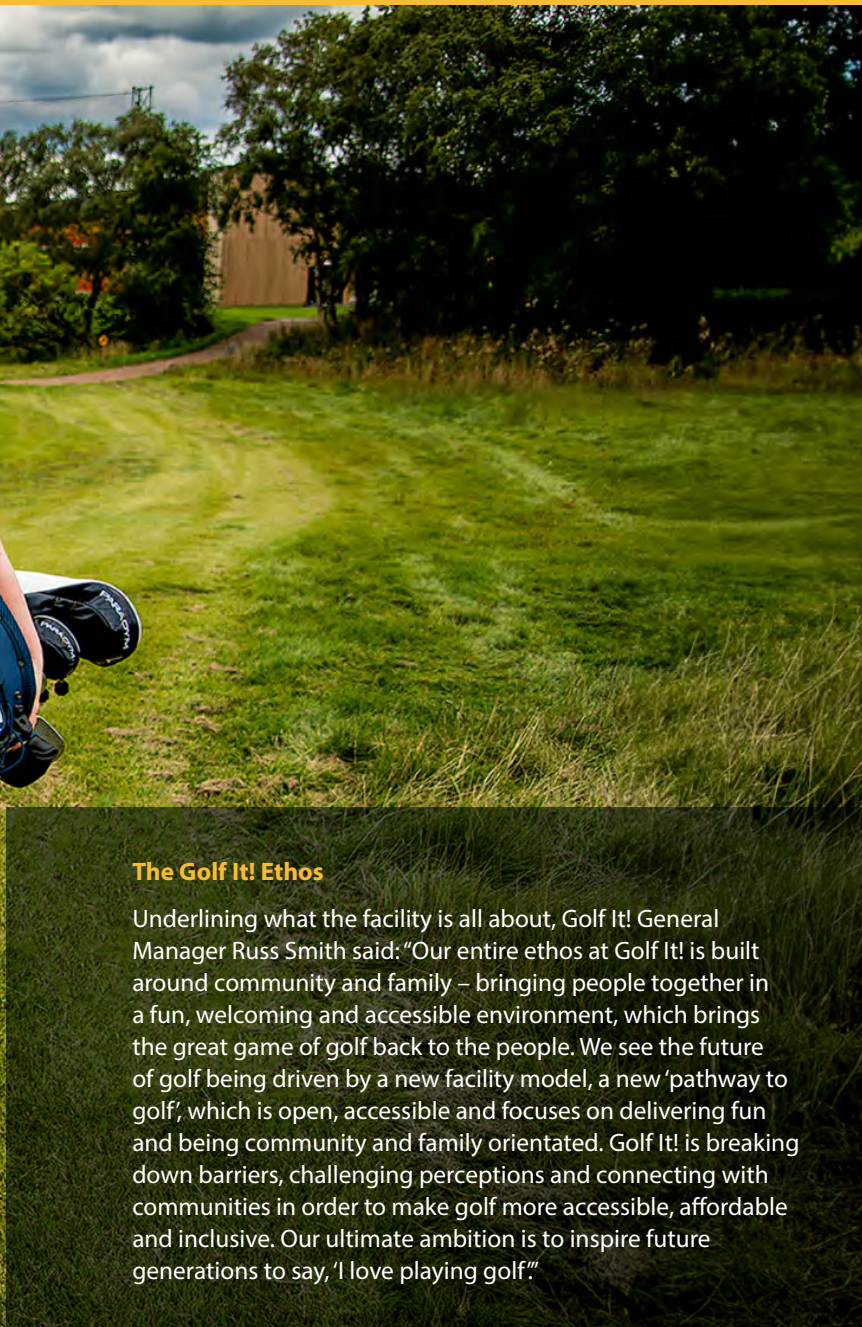
Consider the risks and what your greenkeeping team would need to do if your system broke down in the middle of a heatwave. Your irrigation system might be out of sight, but don't let it be out of mind. Small changes often make a real difference so find out if enhancements are needed, in what order and how to phase these to spread the cost. New technologies can easily be integrated with older systems and deliver cost savings to fund future upgrades.

• **RAIN BIRD** provide helpful insights and advice for club and course managers through GCMA channels, UK distributor Origin Amenity Solutions, and their 360 newsletter. [Subscribe](#) to receive a full-circle view of the latest products, news and golf case studies. 

5 things Golf It! gets right — **AND YOUR CLUB CAN TOO**



The **R&A's flagship facility** on the outskirts of Glasgow puts theory into practice – here we explore how **your club could emulate** at least some of the strategies they are deploying



The Golf It! Ethos

Underlining what the facility is all about, Golf It! General Manager Russ Smith said: “Our entire ethos at Golf It! is built around community and family – bringing people together in a fun, welcoming and accessible environment, which brings the great game of golf back to the people. We see the future of golf being driven by a new facility model, a new ‘pathway to golf’, which is open, accessible and focuses on delivering fun and being community and family orientated. Golf It! is breaking down barriers, challenging perceptions and connecting with communities in order to make golf more accessible, affordable and inclusive. Our ultimate ambition is to inspire future generations to say, ‘I love playing golf’”

Since launching in August 2023, Golf It! has been delivering on The R&A's vision to provide a destination for golf that is accessible, appealing and inclusive.

With a site that includes everything from adventure golf to a 9-hole course and a two-tier TopTracer driving range, the Glasgow-based facility positions itself as a community hub, with a nursery and nature trails also on offer alongside the increasingly popular racket sport known as padel.

Here are five areas where Golf It! has really nailed it.

1) Inclusivity

The demographic at Golf It! is as broad as you could hope to find anywhere, and that is no accident. The facility is designed to be welcoming to all, with no restrictions on age, no dress codes and no need to call ahead and book. The open-door policy allows anyone to turn up and take a look around, with helpful and informative staff on hand to point out what is on offer to visitors.

The whole ethos of Golf It! is to encourage participation and bring golf to the widest possible audience. On a typical

day you will see everything from family groups taking on one of three fun-filled adventure golf courses to solo players working on their swing on the driving range, and women enjoying the Ladies Learn Golf programme. The relaxed atmosphere and broad range of activities ensure everyone is catered for, with the 9-hole course offering five sets of tees so mixed-ability groups can play together.

2) Fun

While Golf It! has the facilities and on-site coaching expertise to help golfers develop their game, there is a clear emphasis on fun — and it is not just limited to the adventure golf courses. The look and sound of the place immediately tells you it is different from many golf venues, with vibrant colours and music always on the go; there is a casual vibe that reminds you that golf, at its best, is a form of entertainment.

To that end, Golf It! regularly hosts events with live music and an array of street food vendors, while visitors are spoilt for choice on the food and beverage front whatever day they visit.

While the TopTracer driving range is the perfect place for seasoned players to show off their skills, the technology also provides the chance to play a number of games where the playing field is made level.

3) No barriers

With a keen focus on eliminating barriers to entry, Golf It! has implemented a pricing structure to keep things affordable, but it is not just about how much you have to pay for a bay or a quick nine holes, there is equipment available free of charge, and



'Golf It! embodies the true spirit of golf'

Natalie McColl, the GCMA's Membership Services Manager, took a family trip to Golf It! and was blown away by the experience.

"Our visit to Golf It! on Easter Sunday was truly unforgettable. The facility buzzed with families, and the friendly team welcomed us warmly as we booked a 60-minute team bay on the 'top deck'. With our eight-year-old son in tow, we expected a few hiccups, but they only resulted in smiles and laughter as he improved his skills. His highlight was hitting his 3-wood an impressive 77 yards.

"We played the fun game of Go Fish and enjoyed the company of a diverse group of people, from young friends on our left to a large family on our right. The inclusion of baby swings in the bays was a fantastic idea.

"Next, we embarked on an exciting 18-hole round of mini golf. We particularly enjoyed the sustainability-themed nine holes, which added a quirky twist and a valuable educational opportunity for kids.

"Our morning ended with a delicious pizza from one of the food stands, savoured as we admired the lake views and surrounding scenery.

"Golf It! embodies the true spirit of golf, with a focus on families, fun and a thriving local community. It is a vibrant golfing experience that offers a wonderful introduction to the sport for new golfers."



instead of getting 50 or 100 balls to hit, you get an unlimited number within your allotted time on the driving range.

4) Community

Golf It! feels very much part of the community, with many of its employees coming from the area. The facility works with numerous organisations to broaden its impact and welcome people to the site who may not otherwise have paid a visit. Local schoolchildren helped to design the adventure golf holes, while a long-term education programme across Glasgow has the aim of providing in-curriculum golf experiences to 42,000 children

across the city.

5) A clear pathway

Golf exists in many forms and several of them are on offer at Golf It!, from the adventure golf to the 9-hole course, as well as park golf and a family putting green. This variety of formats affords people of all abilities a suitable entry point and provides a pathway if they should wish to improve their skills. The five sets of tees on the 9-hole course make it enjoyable to play for anyone from first timers up to experienced players, while those who love their data can get their fix from the TopTracer range and simulators. 📊



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5 rules your members are **BOUND TO GET WRONG**

If you can stop golfers at your club making these mistakes in competitions, **your life will be a whole lot easier**, writes qualified referee **Steve Carroll**



Some golfers believe the Rules of Golf to be really complicated. Too complicated. It's true that any sport played over a 100-acre patch of land has its quirks.

There are dozens of subsections and clarifications to the main 25 playing rules in the big book.

But they're largely not the ones that are catching members out in competitions. No, the ones that cause the real grief – and are the

most unwittingly broken rules – are very straight-forward.

So let's look into the five Rules your members are getting wrong. If they get them right you'll find administrating your events a much calmer experience.

1 **Lifting a ball to identify it without marking first**

Easily the No 1 one rule I see broken on a golf course – and by players who have been competing at a high enough level to know better.

Players are allowed to identify their ball to check it is theirs. They don't have to tell their playing partners they are doing this.

What they do have to do, however, is mark the ball first before they lift or rotate it. If they just bowl in there and pick it up without marking it first, they're going to pick up a one-shot penalty.

Players can't clean their ball any more than necessary to be able to identify it. And they must replace the ball on its original spot.

2 **Deciding what is known or virtually certain in penalty areas**

To take penalty area relief, players have to know – or be virtually certain – their ball is in that penalty area. That means they've seen the ball enter it, saw a splash, or their playing partners, or other golfers on the course, saw that ball enter the penalty area.

Virtually certain means that it's at least 95 per cent likely the event in question happened. If their ball could be lost in long grass, or trees, or anything outside of the penalty area then it isn't virtually certain and they can't simply wander up and take lateral relief if it's a red penalty area.

If they haven't already played a provisional – which they can do because their ball MIGHT only be lost in a penalty area – then stroke and distance relief (going back to where they originally played) is their only option.

3 **Taking a drop accurately**

Hey, we're back on penalty areas again. That's because they cause members lots of problems. If they've hit the ball into a pond, for example, and they decide they're going to take back-on-the-line relief, they can't just drop it wherever they like in front of that pond.

How many times have you seen a golfer smack it in a stream and then just wander down and drop a ball right in front?

They must use the last estimated point where the ball crossed the penalty area and then go back keeping that spot in line with the flagstick.

Depending on the pin position, that can be a long way away from just chucking one down and leaving a flop over the water.

4 **Deciding on the rules between themselves**

You'll all have heard this one. A group got themselves in a quandary on the course and rather than check the rules (you can do this on your phone with the R&A Rules app), they clubbed together and decided what the rules probably say.



The problem with that approach in a strokeplay competition is that those rules specifically forbid them doing that.

While players are encouraged to help each other when applying rules, they've got no right to decide a rules issue by agreement.

Worse than that for them, it's not binding. Players don't have to agree to it, and neither do your competition committee. They should always raise any issues with that committee before returning their scorecard. And if they are genuinely stuck in strokeplay, play a second ball.

5 Only allowing three minutes to find a golf ball


That's three minutes. Not five – that hasn't been the case since the start of 2019 – and it's certainly not whatever time that suits your players until they find the ball.

But this is just part of the dispute. How do you sort it out if one player accuses another of taking too long to search for a ball?

They may be convinced the sands of time had run out, but if they're unable to prove it how can you make a judgement?

You can't. What you can do, though, is advise competitors to start a stopwatch, or a timer on their phone, when a search begins. Then, everyone is clear on when time has run out and you've got evidence to lean on if someone makes a complaint. 🕒





F&B award-winner reveals the secrets of his **SUCCESS**

After picking up a **59club award for a fifth successive year**, Long Ashton's **Glenn McNaughton** shares some **priceless tips** for GCMA members

Long Ashton Golf Club's Glenn McNaughton has won the 59club UK's Food and Beverage Manager of the Year Award five times in a row.

Here, the manager of the Bristol club shares some insight on how he and his team have managed such a remarkable feat — and sheds light on how other clubs may follow suit.

“As a manager within the club that has earned numerous 59club awards, it has been my privilege to be part of such a successful team. While managers may step up to collect these accolades, it's crucial to acknowledge that without an amazing team

backing you, such awards would not be attainable.

“It has been a privilege to contribute to assembling an exceptional team dedicated to delivering exceptional service. Many of our staff members have joined us from a young age, allowing us to train them according to our service standards. This dedication has been evident since the beginning of our partnership with 59club, despite the jests about their need for training when they first joined us!


“In all seriousness, Will Hewitt has consistently supported us, and we have built a great rapport with 59club. Their secret visits highlight areas where we may

“We host several events each year, such as quiz nights and wine-tasting events, not for profit but to provide our members with enjoyable experiences”



occasionally falter in our service. “While we have achieved success with our awards, we never become complacent and continually strive to do more. This year, we have already updated our menu, maintaining our commitment to serving what I call good, honest pub grub, which our members and visitors thoroughly enjoy. Additionally, we are offering our members the opportunity to purchase fresh meat from our butchers at a fair price. “We have also hosted several events this year, such as quiz nights and wine-tasting events, not for profit but to provide

our members with enjoyable experiences. Furthermore, we have initiated a monthly meat raffle, with 20 per cent of the proceeds benefiting the captain’s chosen charity, the Jessie May Trust. We continue to offer our takeaway frozen meals and cakes, which generate significant revenue from items we already produce daily. “The GM shared a light-hearted moment with me a few months ago during a team get-together. Standing together on a veranda, overlooking our staff, I couldn’t help but wear a wide, cheesy grin. He approached me, enquiring about the reason for

my grin, and I gestured for him to look at the staff below. There were clubhouse staff, office staff, pro-shop employees and green staff all enjoying themselves. “Though it might sound like a cliché, the truth is that we genuinely operate as a unified team. Countless times, our green staff have lent a hand with repairs or graciously stepped in to assist with front-of-house duties. Likewise, staff from every department have rallied together during course maintenance weeks or when collecting balls from the range. These instances fill me with an overwhelming sense of pride as a manager.” 



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What happens to courses that are exposed to intensive and **PERSISTENT RAIN?**

The R&A's Sustainable Agronomy team consider the challenges faced by our courses following the unprecedented rainfall over the past nine months





Golfers need to understand the current challenge posed by the persistent and intensive rainfall which has dominated the UK climate over the winter. The monthly rainfall averages have been well above normal volumes since July 2023. These conditions have numerous impacts on the golf course and greenkeeping operations.

The volume of rain has commonly overwhelmed the natural drainage potential of soils and drainage systems, especially aging designs which were never designed to calculate maximum flow rates. In addition, surface infiltration and calculating the percolation rate will be made difficult by traffic, especially where the grass cover has thinned and with silt/clay capping profiles. A prolonged period of worm casting creates other problems in terms of silt/clay contamination at the surface. Parkland courses

with clay-based soils have been particularly vulnerable even where there is drainage, but also sandy heathland, chalk downland and links courses have all been subjected to the impact of intensive rain.

What happens when a course succumbs to flooding?

Dealing with contamination issues such as litter and debris are the immediate concerns. A vital first step is ensuring a risk assessment is in place to tackle the clean-up operation. Visible debris may include stone washed from paths or adjacent roads. Any buried stone left in the turf base could be damaging to mowing equipment and golf clubs.

Such levels of serious contamination are rare and can normally be dealt with by shovelling and brushing by hand.

Irrigation control boxes are unfortunately ready-made water traps. It is important to clean out any soils which have migrated into the boxes and have buried the valves and electrics such as

wires and solenoids. Check the function of the electrics at an early stage in the season.

What happens to the bunkers?

Beyond the visible issues of litter and loss of grass cover, the physical contamination left from flooding may include silt deposits. These can be damaging to the longer-term surface drainage of turf and bunkers.

The sand may need to be stripped out and replaced in the worst cases of flooding. Many courses are investing in redesigning with contouring which diverts water away from the bunker and renewing the construction profiles of bunkers to include a permeable membrane which will protect the bunker from contamination of the sand from below, thereby improving drainage and overall maintenance and playability.

What happens to the turf?

Silt deposits can also damage the soil texture and structure. Fortunately, most deposits will be





compatible with the native soils. The deposits can be problematic if capping drainage profiles or when contaminating previously sand dressed areas. Some form of removal (scarification, coring) or penetration (aeration) may need to be applied in advance of redressing to dilute the contamination.

Flood damage can adjust the soil chemistry, often not visible until there is evidence of turf decline in areas previously affected by saltwater (coastal storms or high tide flooding). Those affected by coastal flooding may need to check the physical and chemical status of soils to avoid long-term damage to plant health and soil structure before implementing aeration and soil amendments such as Gypsum, or investing in overseeding only to see less salt-tolerant grass species fail.

How does the recovery process get underway?

The last point to consider is how to apply recovery aeration, top dressing and managing traffic on damaged areas. There is little point in aerating saturated soils even if water is perching in the upper profile. The added weight of aeration equipment or allowing soft ground to be pulverised by play could be counterproductive.

Apply corrective aeration when the soils are receptive to treatment. Sand dressing can be applied to help dilute silt contaminated turf base conditions but wait until conditions are conducive to achieving the desired result.

“The volume of rain has commonly overwhelmed the natural drainage potential of soils and drainage systems, especially aging designs which were never designed to calculate maximum flow rates”

Correct the damage and then consider what measures, such as design changes, can be applied to prevent repeat damage. Be patient and manage your expectations.

What is the impact on greenkeeping operations?

Greenkeeping teams will see the impact of the conditions even more than the golfer. Maintenance schedules will be severely disrupted. Regular

aeration schedules have been interrupted as ground and soil conditions have been unreceptive to the treatments usually applied. There is a risk of doing more harm than good with ill-timed aeration, smearing the soil profile or damaging the turf. We would often see operations such as coring or deep solid tine aeration, performed on wet soils, cause additional surface softening at a time when growth and recovery is very limited.

Winter project work such as construction is likely to have been delayed because of the conditions. Wet ground conditions have restricted the usage of heavy plant such as excavators, along with the ability to transport materials such as aggregate and turf across the course without damage to the haulage routes. Greenkeepers will often resort to heavy lifting and detailed hand work just to make progress, but delays are inevitable.

Other more routine operations have been affected, such as the inability to maintain a schedule for spraying. This may interfere with the planned applications which are an important part of Integrated Disease Management strategies. Golfers are therefore likely to see this impact through increased scarring or weakened turf. 🌀

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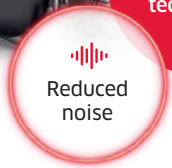
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Tell us about Energy Direct Group

We are an independent utility management consultancy servicing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Industrial and Commercial (I&C) clients across the UK and Ireland, in all industry sectors and in all aspects of utilities. We provide a range of products and services, from energy procurement to renewables, however, other services that we provide include waste management, payment solutions, metering and site works, automated bill validation,

power purchase agreements (PPAs) and carbon reporting.

As a company, we have invested heavily in technology in order to deliver top-tier energy solutions to reduce energy costs and remove carbon. We also have in place a nationwide network of trusted partners to assist us in delivering tailored solutions to our clients to meet their business goals and objectives.

What do you hope to achieve from this relationship with the GCMA?

We are dedicated to a sustainable future and are here to help GCMA members achieve carbon

neutrality. By working closely with the GCMA, our aim is to assist its members on their journey to self-sustainability. We will first look to understand the clubs' individual business needs before we formulate a strategy to meet their specific goals.

We are passionate about sustainability, and we seek to guide GCMA members every step of the way, from initial assessments to the implementation of renewable solutions as well as ongoing support.

By members implementing energy storage solutions, such as solar panels, alongside on-

Empowering golf clubs on their journey to carbon **NET ZERO**

Meet new GCMA partners **Energy Direct Group** as Co-Founder **Barry Ersoz** discusses his business and how it can help your club

site energy systems, such as battery storage, clubs will have a form of backup power during grid outages. Additionally, this stored energy can be utilised for out-of-hours events that may be taking place, reducing reliance on the traditional power grid and reducing energy costs. It will also contribute to reducing their carbon footprint.

We will also look at other renewable solutions for members, such as voltage optimisation, which adjusts incoming voltage to a more efficient level, helping to reduce energy consumption, extend the lifespan of electrical equipment

and, ultimately, contributing to reducing energy costs and carbon reduction.

EV charging will also be in the offering to members, as well as any other renewable solutions and services that meet their requirements.

For clubs seeking the procurement of green energy, we work alongside suppliers with Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO 100% certified) so that they have peace of mind knowing that the energy they use is not produced by fossil fuels. We also have an exclusive green deal in place for GCMA members for when their energy

is due for renewal.

Can you help with funding renewable solutions for GCMA members?

Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) are available to GCMA members, which feature a fixed pricing structure, shielding members from energy market volatility and enabling accurate budgeting.

Securing a PPA often allows businesses (as a whole) competitive, or even lower, electricity rates than prevailing market prices, leading to substantial long-term cost savings.

Individual PPAs can be agreed for clubs, however, by working closely with its members, we aim to aggregate the clubs' overall annual consumptions to achieve greater PPA terms and lower electricity rates. This way, each club benefits while still retaining their own PPA.

Roof repairs can be included within a PPA along with the installation costs prior to solar panels and battery storage, for example, being fitted. During the term of a PPA, clubs will have peace of mind knowing that insurance and maintenance of the renewable hardware is covered, and at the end of the PPA term, clubs would be gifted

the renewable hardware and will still benefit from reduced energy costs as well as a reduction in carbon.

Revenue share schemes are available for voltage optimisation and EV charging, and we aim to share all of these renewable offerings to members in the coming weeks.

With no initial financial outlay, members and clubs can start on their journey towards self-sustainability today.

How Important is that environmental aspect and the drive for net carbon neutral?


When I entered the utility industry over two decades

ago, my client base was predominantly within the hospitality sector, pubs, bars, restaurants and takeaways. There wasn't much emphasis on renewables, other than LED retrofit lighting, for example. Everything was price driven as everyone was price conscious, and the onus was not on whether the energy they bought for their business was produced from fossil fuels or by wind, solar or hydro. There wasn't a great push to go green back then.

The only real thing that was ever really associated with the environment at that time was the Climate Change Levy (CCL), which was introduced in April 2001.

Businesses are more price conscious than ever however, as a lot has changed over the last two decades (and even more so over the past several years), as every size of business from every industry sector now has to consider implementing renewable solutions in order to reduce their carbon footprint.

Businesses now see the benefit of renewables, as they understand that they can potentially achieve zero cost for their energy by harnessing solutions such as solar.

It is important for businesses to understand their commitment to carbon net zero but even more important to ensure they receive the right advice. This is where we play our part in the process. 



LEARN MORE

Click [HERE](#) to visit the Energy Direct Group Partner page

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...

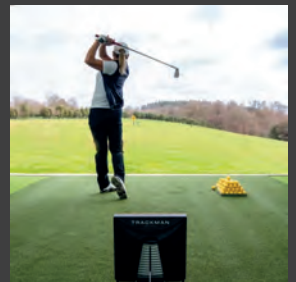
Quantum Golf is here to support you through the planning application process. We offer advice and will check whether planning permission is required.

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



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

Nine ways to improve STAFF WELLBEING

GCMA board director **Gareth Morgan** on **how to look after your team**



Why should the wellbeing of your team members matter to you as a leader?

For me, there are two primary reasons for this being such a crucial topic for any leader.

Firstly is the human side of managing a team of any kind – treating those who work for you in a way that you would want and expect to be treated yourself. To have your team respond to you and work with you because of the relationships you build with them and the mutual trust and respect you have for each other, rather than the now outdated “do it because I say so” approach.

However, this subject has become absolutely crucial on a business level since the time I first entered the leisure industry.

Statistics show that 31 per cent of people suffer from mental health problems at some point; 54 per cent of people who suffer from mental health problems

consider that their employer fails to support them well; and only 43 per cent of people suffering from a mental health challenge disclose it to their employer.

Figures from 2021 showed the corporate cost of poor mental health provision was £1,400 per employee (10 employees = £14,000 and 100 = £140,000).

Why else should it matter to a

business?

Experimental work shows that improving wellbeing can boost productivity by as much as 15 per cent, while impaired wellbeing often manifests as mental ill health, which is now the main cause of sickness absence in much of the world.

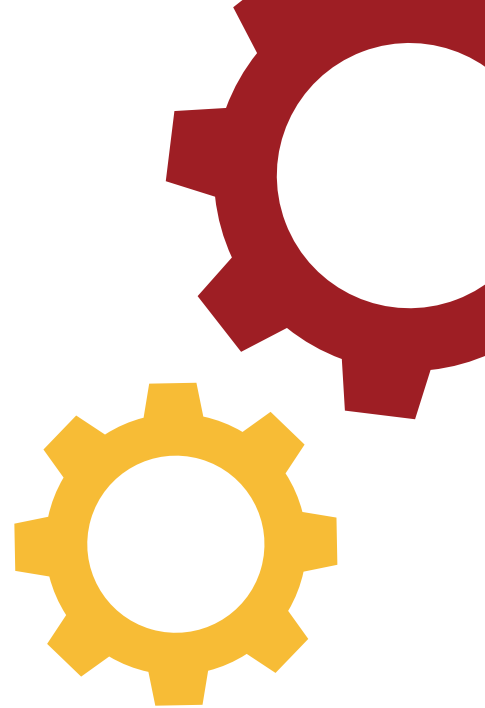
Presenteeism – turning up to work and being present but doing the bare minimum – is even more common with reduced wellbeing and is estimated to cost businesses at least one-and-a-half times their absenteeism bill.

Customer experience is also strongly aligned with the wellbeing of the employee with whom they interact.

What is, at times, disappointing is that the measures we as leaders can put in place, in policy and in our own actions, to dramatically reduce these negative business effects are relatively simple and straightforward. Here are my ‘9 Holes of Team Wellbeing’.

1) NO EMAIL WHEN NOT WORKING

No actual emergency has ever been reported to a senior team member by email. Your team members need time away from the stresses of their jobs, and it can be hugely damaging to an individual suffering with stress, anxiety or depression to receive a critical or disappointing email while they are supposed to be relaxing away from the workplace. Can it possibly be a good thing for a course manager who is sat in a pub with friends to receive that angry email on a Saturday night from a disgruntled member who shot net 85 that day because “the greens were awful”?



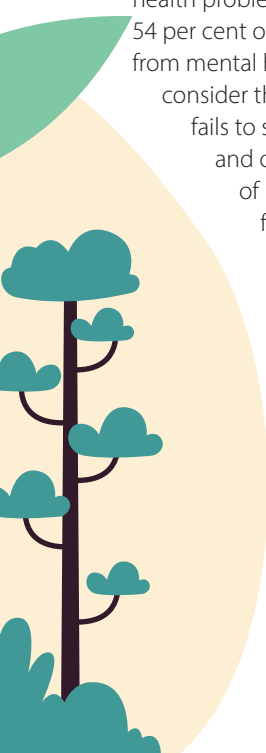
2) ENSURE EMPLOYEES TAKE THEIR TIME OFF

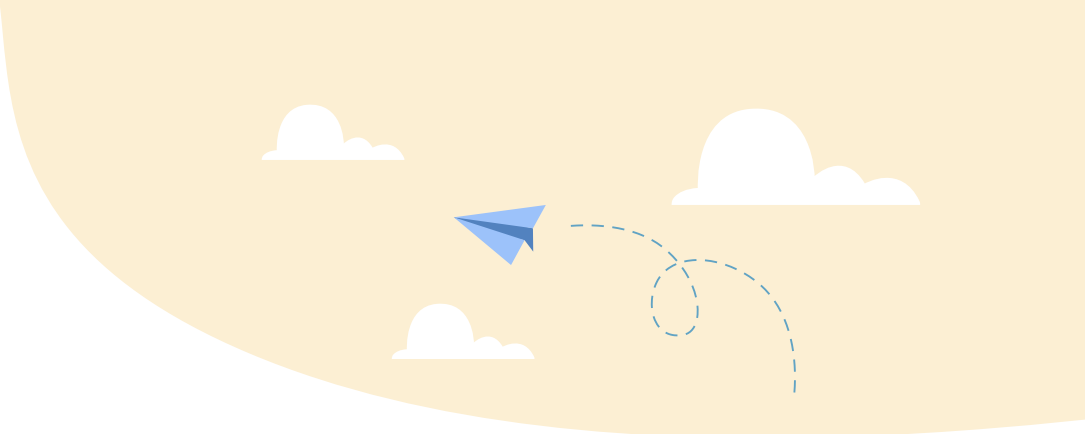
We often think of those staff who will work extra, stay on at busy times and come in on their day off at short notice to help us out at difficult times as our best staff. To a degree, I would share that view because in the leisure industry our businesses would struggle without such individuals.

However, if we do not give those staff members the time back or refrain from always going to them every time there is a short-term crisis, we run the risk of burning those staff out or pushing them to the point where they feel taken for granted – not to mention becoming run down and mentally and physically tired. When this happens, we run the risk of losing the very people we feel hold our club operations together.

3) URGE SICK EMPLOYEES TO STAY AT HOME

Covid brought this point to the fore for obvious reasons, but anyone who experienced an





outbreak that swept through entire departmental teams, as I did, will now have a greater understanding of how that staff member “soldiering on” because they “can’t miss this Open Competition or Club Dinner” can have even greater consequences for the club down the line.

And what about the wellbeing of that individual who battled through illness to deliver on their targets? What about the wellbeing of their fellow team members who did not ask to be exposed to this illness and probably felt they couldn’t refuse to work alongside the sick employee?

4) AVOID CONTACTING TEAM MEMBERS OUTSIDE THEIR WORKING HOURS

Ask yourself the question – is this REALLY an emergency? Does my question that cannot possibly wait really have to be answered right now? Even an innocuous query by telephone or WhatsApp that gives you the answer you wanted in the short term can leave the employee who is sat at home or by the side of a pool worried and anxious about what is going on in their absence. Is that really conducive to them recuperating and coming back to work at their best? Is that really the best thing for them as an individual and their family?

5) DO NOT SHARE FULL NEGATIVE EMAILS WITH LINE MANAGERS OR STAFF

We’ve all done it. An angry or frustrated member emails in with their complaint about the course or the clubhouse that day. There seem to be some valid points that require investigation, so we forward the email to the relevant line manager and ask for comment.

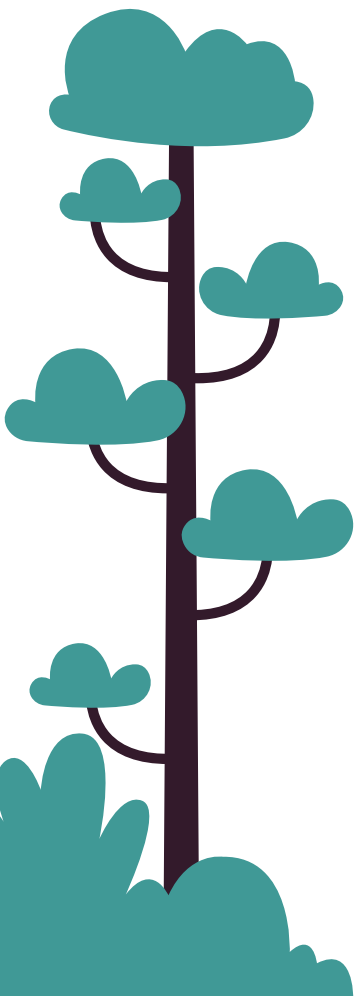
DON’T DO IT!

The line manager concerned doesn’t need to read the vitriol and emotive things contained within that email. Pick out the main points that need to be investigated and either speak to the line manager concerned or send them a separate email of your own outlining these points.

6) ENSURE THAT ALL STAFF TAKE BREAKS

Lead by example here. Don’t be that manager who eats a sandwich at their desk while reading and replying to emails. Take an actual break away from your workstation and let the team see that you do it.

Ensure that staff get their breaks. If you need to muck in yourself or get people from other departments to help out, that is preferable to the negative effect of leading employees to believe their wellbeing doesn’t matter by making them work all



day with no break. What will the customer experience be like if a member encounters a tired and annoyed employee in hour seven of their shift with no break? For those of you who have mystery shoppers, what would your score be for F&B if a mystery shopper encountered this employee?

7) ASK EMPLOYEES FOR REGULAR FEEDBACK

We ask our members what they think of us as clubs. We ask our visitors and society organisers what they think of us. Why don't many clubs ask the team members what they think of us as employers?

This should be done anonymously and questions asked that allow for data collection to enable trends to be identified but also allow enough room for them to make more in-depth or personal comment.

This process should be used to make things better for the staff as a whole moving forward – NEVER to go back to the staff justifying things they have raised as being problematic, and if you can work out which employee has written a certain comment, NEVER use it as a stick to beat them with.

8) ORGANISE REGULAR TEAM SOCIAL EVENTS

In clubs, we can sometimes become cocooned within our

various departmental teams. All of the top-performing club teams in the UK operate as one big team.

There is nothing wrong with departmental-specific socials but running quarterly whole-team events brings everyone together and gives each a better understanding of the challenges each of them face every day.

These events shouldn't be compulsory, but you shouldn't make your staff pay for their own team social either. It need not be big expensive events all the time – a simple quiz night with some food and drink while mixing up the teams from each department can be a great team-bonding evening!

9) TAKE EMAIL OFF PHONES

Yes, this is a duplicate point – but it is, in my opinion, the single greatest problem in our industry in terms of managing your own wellbeing and that of your team members.

If you can't quite bring yourself to do this just yet, remove notifications. That way, at least you only read them at a time of your choice, and you don't have them popping up on your screen at all times of the day and night or at times when the last thing you should be doing is replying emotionally to an email that has upset you.

Do it today! 📧



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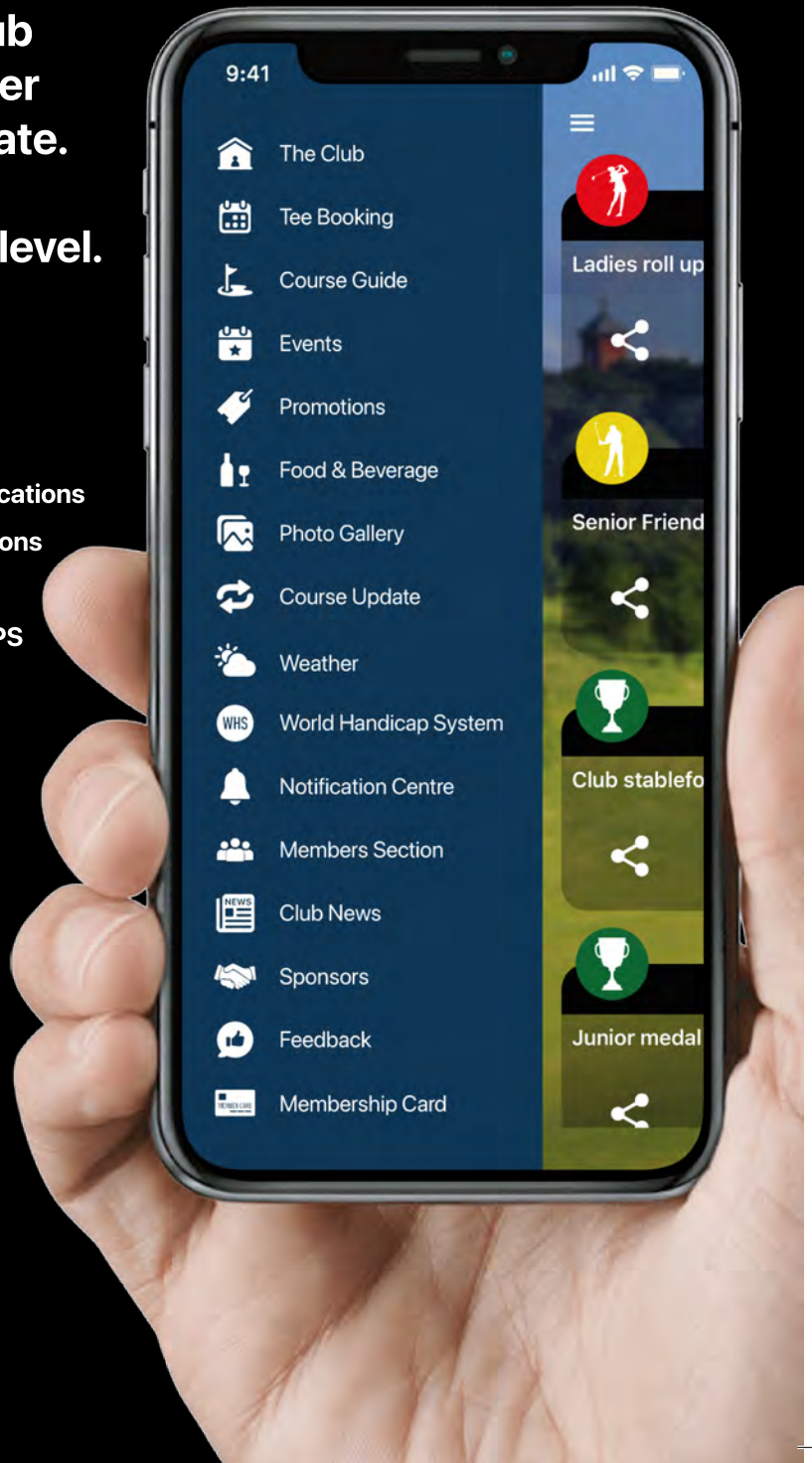
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Meet our new captain **JOHN BARNARD**

Learn more about the **GCMA Captain** who was **appointed at our AGM**



A someone who decided to move away from farming to become a DJ on an Italian island, it's fair to say assuming the role of GCMA Captain is unlikely to faze John Barnard.

His appointment was confirmed at the AGM in April, and we caught up with him to get his thoughts on the role and find out more about our new captain.

Congratulations on becoming GCMA Captain. How do you see the role and what are you looking forward to?

Thank you, it's an honour to be appointed. I see my role as being a go-between for the regions, the regional managers and the GCMA board, because it's important to have a strong connection across all of those. I want to help foster a common link and make sure everyone's view is heard. Hopefully, I can show the value that the role of captain can bring to the GCMA. As for what I'm looking forward to, I think the international matches are certainly something to be excited about.

Can you tell us a little more about your career background?

I started off in a farming background before deciding I wanted to try other things, so I travelled a bit and spent some time in Africa, and then I became a DJ and ended up working on the island of Elba in Italy.

I decided at that point that farming probably wasn't for me, and an opportunity came up to help a small 9-hole golf club at Bawburgh develop into an 18-hole facility, and that's now quite a major 27-hole venue with

function rooms and an excellent reputation.

When I finally left managing the golf club, I wanted to stay in golf, so I became the Regional Manager for Norfolk, now the East Anglia Region. I sold up on every business I had been involved in and am basically retired now.

How would you summarise the importance of the GCMA?

It's got huge importance because the role of golf club manager can be very isolated. They are often alone in their office with lots of responsibility on their shoulders, and it can be a very

"I want to help foster a common link and make sure everyone's view is heard"

demanding role. The GCMA offers an opportunity to have that bond with other managers and others who are in the same position, and that's really important. I know in the East Anglia Region there's a very strong WhatsApp group where people can discuss all sorts of issues with other managers.

I know that education is an

important part of what the GCMA offers, but that sense of community is also valuable, especially for some of the more senior managers who feel they already have that education. Having that ability to speak with other managers, even just about day-to-day things, is very important.

You had a strong relationship with past captain Ian Symington – can you tell us a little more about that?

I put Ian forward as National Captain from the Norfolk Region when Bob Williams was still in office, and he got chosen for the role. This was in 2019, and not long after he got chosen, he started losing his eyesight, which was obviously a worry.

Bob asked me what we should do, and I told him, 'I tell you what, one thing is for sure about Ian – he will do the role come what may'. As his eyesight was leaving him, I travelled to some events with him and stood behind him lining him up for his shots.

I got to know Ian really well, and he was well received everywhere he went. He could still see a little bit, but it was very vague. He got through his year as captain, and then during lockdown he collapsed in his kitchen and died. He was a truly great ambassador for the GCMA. 🙏

QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS...

Favourite film?

The Shawshank Redemption

Favourite sports team?

Norwich City - I'm a season-ticket holder

Favourite band or artist?

Pink Floyd

Ideal weekend away?

A nice quiet trip up to Scotland – I love the Scottish islands

AGM ROUND-UP

A review of the day's events at the **2024 GCMA AGM**

North Hants Golf Club played host to the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Golf Club Managers Association in April.

Here is a round-up of the day's events:

- ✔ Gareth Morgan BA (hons) CMDip and Ed Richardson were re-elected as board directors
- ✔ JR Jones was re-elected as the GCMA President for his 15th year of dedicated service to the Association
- ✔ John Barnard was elected as the 2024 GCMA Captain
- ✔ Outgoing captain Alan Davey was recognised for outstanding contribution and service with the award of life membership of the Association

The Captain's Cup event took place, including the new captain's 'drive-in'.

- ✔ Congratulations to the winners, Ken Dooks and Chris Ingram
- ✔ The runners-up were Patrick Dawson and Paul Gaylor

A big thank you to North Hants Golf Club for hosting a wonderful day, and to everyone who attended. 🙏





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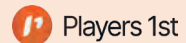
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GCMA



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PRINCIPLES OF GOLF CLUB MANAGEMENT

2024 COURSES

ONLINE

Monday June 10th to Thursday June 13th

RESIDENTIAL

Monday October 7th to Friday October 11th

ONLINE

Monday December 2nd to Thursday December 5th

For more information contact member services on
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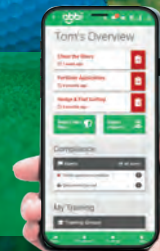
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