



# **Response to Issue 13, Policy CA1b (Q3 from Matters and Issues) on behalf of Wates Developments Ltd and Reading Golf Club**

Reading Golf Club, Emmer Green

15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

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**Client**

Wates Developments Ltd

**Our reference**

VOC-17-02

15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been produced to set out Reading Golf Club's (hereinafter referred to as Golf Club) position to assist assessment of the proposed inclusion of part of the Golf Club in the Local Plan under Policy CA1b.

1.2 The site allocation to which this request and supporting information, as set out below, relates is Policy CA1b, which is as currently worded:

*'Policy CA1b: PART OF READING GOLF COURSE, KIDMORE END ROAD Development for residential and replacement clubhouse, subject to additional land in South Oxfordshire being secured for replacement holes. On-site facilities should be provided to mitigate impacts on community infrastructure, for instance for healthcare. On-site public open space will be provided.*

*Development should:*

*Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*

*Provide a green link across the site from Kidmore End Road to the remainder of the golf course, rich in plant species and habitat opportunities;*

*Take measures to mitigate impacts on the highway network, particularly on Kidmore End Road;*

*Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*

*Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

*Site size: 3.75 ha 90-130 dwellings, community provision including healthcare and replacement clubhouse'.*

1.3 Upon review of the current wording and in light of the questions raised by the Inspector, we recommend an amendment to the wording of Policy CA1b as follows:

*'Policy CA1b: PART OF READING GOLF COURSE, KIDMORE END ROAD Development for residential and replacement clubhouse. On-site facilities should be provided to mitigate impacts on community infrastructure, for instance for healthcare. On-site public open space will be provided.*

*Development should:*

*Avoid adverse effects on important trees including those protected by TPO;*

*Provide a green link across the site from Kidmore End Road to the remainder of the golf course, rich in plant species and habitat opportunities;*

*Take measures to mitigate impacts on the highway network, particularly on Kidmore End Road;*

*Take account of potential archaeological significance; and*

*Take account of the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

*Site size: 3.75 ha 90-130 dwellings, community provision and replacement clubhouse’.*

- 1.4 Our rationale for this request is as set out in following text, which responds to the specific questions raised by the Inspector for consideration, namely that posed in Q3 from Matters and Issues and following discussion at the hearing held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018:
- Background and justification for site allocation, and current position of the Golf Club in respect of continuing use
  - Matters relating to access and transport, trees and ecology, topography and open space
- 1.5 Since the Reg.19 consultation, the Golf Club has selected Wates Developments Limited (hereinafter referred to as Wates) as its development partner to deliver the site proposals. The selection of Wates was the result of a six-month, two-stage bidder process undertaken by the Golf Club, which was completed in August 2018.
- 1.6 Given the questions posed by the Inspector, as discussed at the hearing, it is considered appropriate for Wates/the Golf Club to explain its current position and proposals, which include plans for the site allocation alongside a consolidated, more family-friendly golf offer on the rest of the site.
- 1.7 In line with that agreed, the proposals relate solely to land associated with Policy CA1b, which includes Wates proposed changes to the wording of this policy, as well as thoughts regarding the site area currently identified for allocation.
- 1.8 Whilst it is acknowledged that an initial masterplan for the whole golf course has been developed, the acceptability of these very separate proposals will require significant consultation with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to determine whether development can be suitably accommodated in a manner that also can contribute to wider infrastructure and services issues.
- 1.9 In this regard, the future of land outside of the allocation cannot and should not be controlled at this stage; it is for separate and detailed discussion. The purpose of this document is therefore to provide further justification to the proposed allocation of land at the Golf Club within the Reading Local Plan and to robustly identify how residential development can come forward in a deliverable and self-contained manner, as well as to provide certainty over the Golf Club’s plans for the remainder of land should development not come forward in future.

## 2. Background and justification for Site Allocation, and current position of the Golf Club in respect of continuing use

- 2.1 The position at the Golf Club is very new and is evolving with pace, the following being a summary of progress.
- 2.2 A vote was undertaken in August 2018 to decide whether to sell the club and to move to another location, taking into consideration not only proposals for the site, but the Golf Club's wider commercial position, which on the basis of current trends and required significant investment would see it fail and cease to exist in the relatively short-term (c.5 years).
- 2.3 The Golf Club members, 83.3% (383 out of 460 members) voted unanimously in support of the long-term proposal and strategy for the site.
- 2.4 The vote has therefore allowed the Golf Club to progress and reach agreement with another local club to purchase that site and effectively merge golf clubs, in turn releasing Reading Golf Club for development.
- 2.5 Evidence to support this position, as presented to Members at a General Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018, **Appendix 1**, is summarised as:
- Land-locked course
  - Sub-standard clubhouse
  - Sub-standard practise facilities
  - Ageing and declining membership
  - Limited appeal for families or new members
  - Loss-making, with few remaining assets
  - No budget for required capital expenditure
- 2.6 The proposals before the Inspector are for that identified in the Submission Local Plan allocation (Policy CA1b) for 90 - 130 units. This is identified as justifiable and deliverable by the Council in its response to Issue 13 (EC015).
- 2.7 Wates proposals for the site allocation are set out in **Appendix 2**. To summarise, as shown on drawing number 6463\_003 within the policy allocated area of 3.75ha, there is potential to provide 90 dwellings at 30 dph or 130 dwellings at 43 dph, alongside required community infrastructure.
- 2.8 Should the Inspector be minded to acceptable the proposed amendment to policy wording along the lines set out in paragraph 1.3, Wates also consider it appropriate to amend the

area subject to the allocation, as shown in drawing number 6463\_002. It is contended that this will allow a more comprehensive and relevant scheme to emerge that enables development to be placed along the lines of current fairways, releasing central land to provide a green link and access road, for both housing and course access (if the latter is needed) parallel to the central tree spine.

- 2.9 In this manner, the quantum of development envisaged can also be brought forward at lower densities: 27 dph for 90 dwellings and 30 dph for 130 dwellings. It is considered that layouts that sufficiently respect the setting and privacy of houses on Brooklyn Drive can emerge, particularly given the relatively significant garden spaces that exist between rear facades of properties on this road and the golf course perimeter.
- 2.10 The Golf Club is not seeking allocation for further land within the RBC administrative area at this stage, as it recognises that it has further environmental and technical due diligence to undertake to fully understand issues relating to transport, ecology, heritage, landscape, trees, utilities and services provision. Further detail to support the survey work undertaken to date is set out within Section 3 of this report.
- 2.11 The Golf Club has a membership that is drawn from the local area and as such it has a strong desire to be a steward of its land for local benefit. The development envisaged by Policy CA1b will therefore help significantly contribute towards provision of much-needed, family, retirement and affordable housing requirements to respond to the Council's stated housing need and the Policy H1 housing figures as defended by RBC Officers on the opening day of the hearing<sup>1</sup>. This is considered to provide significant benefit to a Council administrative area that is constrained by geography and which therefore has less ability to deliver the larger family accommodation required, houses in particular.
- 2.12 The Golf Club's relocation plans have been subject to discussion with England Golf and have received support, the detail of which is provided in **Appendix 3**. It is notable that as the site is not designated playing field, there is no requirement to consult with Sport England. Instead it is general practice to consult with the relevant sporting governing body, as has been undertaken with England Golf in this case.
- 2.13 It is of further relevance that consultation with England Golf did not identify a requirement to retain golfing activities of any sort at the Golf Club. Nevertheless, within the Golf Club's plans for the site allocation, provision is made for a clubhouse on land by the 7th green (in the SODC area), which will enable an enhanced local community leisure offer to emerge, the further detail of which is provided within **Appendix 4**. It is considered that this is in line with Policy CA1b, particularly as whilst the current wording seeks land for replacement holes, there is no specific requirement for an 18-hole course to re-emerge.
- 2.14 Further, in light of the Golf Club's failing financial position and the clear direction of England Golf Strategy towards formats that attract wider participation, see **Appendix 5**, it is considered that remaining land can provide a more short-form, welcoming and inclusive format that is likely to act as a feeder facility to other clubs in the locality, which will in turn receive much-needed support arising from consolidation of the local formal golf offer.

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<sup>1</sup> Policy H1 – 699 units p.a. as identified by the Council, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1.30pm hearing

- 2.15 In arriving at a decision to pursue a 9-hole course and family golf offer on the remainder of land should the site allocation come forward, the Golf Club has looked at the practicality of maintaining full golfing provision, typically comprising an 18-hole course, practice facilities and a clubhouse on site and has approached local landowners regarding potential purchase of land in the near vicinity to offset the loss of land associated with the Policy CA1b allocation. Evidence of these discussions, as provided in **Appendix 6**, highlights that there is no interest in the sale of the only realistically-usable land for golf club expansion.
- 2.16 Notwithstanding the investigative work already undertaken, it is contended any requirement for additional land for replacement holes, which could only take place on less-attractive (and less adjacent) land in the locality, would be on land attracting residential hope value or would effectively lead to a ransom situation, rendering the Policy CA1b allocation profit-neutral and therefore non-viable in terms of taking forward development in a manner that could bolster the Golf Club's precarious financial position and therefore secure its longevity through purchase of and merger with another local club.
- 2.17 Given acceptance by the Golf Club in 2015 that there was no viable, available land for expansion, alternative options to develop out the Policy CA1b allocation alongside consolidation of an 18-hole course and practice facilities within the remainder of the existing footprint were progressed but rejected on a variety of grounds. The most recent plans were put before the Board in September 2018, which considered that these offered nothing substantially different from earlier options and these were subsequently rejected on planning and commercial grounds.
- 2.18 A copy of the alternative plans, the basis of which are also predicated on the need to find investment to enable the club to continue, and response by the Board is provided as **Appendix 7**, but to summarise it is considered that golf on a consolidated footprint at the current site is not practical on a number of grounds:
- The Golf Club already sits on a small footprint compared to other clubs
  - There is no practical space to replace the driving range within a smaller footprint
  - The consolidated golf course layout would require substantial tree loss
  - Further reductions/compromises on course design would doubtless reduce attractiveness of the facility to players, particularly given alternative venues within a short drive
  - The above issues would accentuate the current pattern of reducing receipts from memberships and visitors' green fees, culminating in the Golf Club failing and the site coming forward to the market in a form where it would not have the same level of control and input with developers to bring forward a landscape-led scheme of high merit.
- 2.19 Despite the Board's concerns regarding the alternative option, Members were recently provided with a further vote on this matter, allowing them to accept the alternative proposals for a consolidated golf club or to continue with the sale of the Golf Club and its redevelopment. This vote, which took place on Tuesday 25th September 2018 identified

ongoing support for the sale and redevelopment plans 83.4% of Members (307 out of 368 Members voting).

- 2.20 Taking into consideration the above, it is strongly suggested that the Golf Club's current proposals, which will put in place more family-friendly and publicly accessible golf on the remainder of the site alongside a clubhouse, remain a more cost-effective and deliverable solution, whilst ensuring the long-term viability of the Golf Club, albeit at another site in the local area.
- 2.21 It is contended that the wording of Policy CA1b can be largely retained, given that planning applications for residential development on the land subject to allocation and a clubhouse can be made on land within the Golf Club's control and provision for community infrastructure identified within this. In this regard, the current policy wording is largely supported by Wates and the Golf Club.
- 2.22 It is, however, suggested that the wording '*subject to additional land in South Oxfordshire being secured for replacement holes*' is onerous, as the allocation as worded would rely on land both outside of the Golf Club and the Council's control.
- 2.23 It is also considered that allocation on the basis of current wording would most likely lead to the Golf Club facing increased costs associated with purchase of additional adjacent land (assuming this could be found which in itself is considered unlikely in light of previous work undertaken, as evidenced in Appendix 6), effectively ransoming the Golf Club and reducing the limited potential for this land to come forward.
- 2.24 In light of the evidence submitted regarding work undertaken by the Golf Club and its plans to purchase and relocate to another local club, which have been subject to consultation with England Golf, it is therefore suggested that the onerous wording is removed from the allocation, with the new wording reflecting that set out in paragraph 1.3, above.
- 2.25 It is conjectured that changes to the wording would not provide any tacit support for the wholesale redevelopment of the Golf Club, they would simply recognise the unworkable nature of the current wording and instead provide a more practical version that would allow the retention of the majority of golfing activities on-site, pending future consideration of wider redevelopment plans by the Council and SODC.



### 3. Matters relating to access and transport, trees and ecology, topography and open space

- 3.1 The Council's response to Issue 13 (EC015) identifies that the allocation is consistent with other policies in the Local Plan and that, in terms of consistency with other policies, Section 3.8 of the Local Plan Background Paper (EV002) looks at possible issues in more detail. Wates and the Golf Club agree with this position in respect of the proposed allocation.
- 3.2 The Council's position in respect of development of the full site (EC015 – pages 4 and 5) is also understood: it is recognised that any scheme progressed would require significant consideration either through the Local Plan process (which is not requested) or via means of later detailed planning applications to both RBC and SODC.
- 3.3 In terms of the current position, environmental and technical due diligence to underpin proposals of Wates has been undertaken, which can be summarised as (in the context of Policy CA1b):

- Acoustics - Given that the proposed site is at significant distance from strategic road networks (i.e. trunk roads and motorways) and railway lines, it is likely that limited noise mitigation, to control current levels, would be required.

Should mitigation be required, it is likely that this would be for a relatively small number of dwellings in order to maintain acceptable noise amenity. No sources of potential vibration impacts, other than vehicle movements along closest existing and proposed roads, have been identified in the surroundings.

- Archaeology - No Designated Assets are located on the site but the information from both Berkshire and Oxfordshire HER's suggests that there is an archaeological potential that will need to be assessed, evaluated and (possibly) mitigated.

No discussions have taken place with the Archaeological Advisers to Reading Borough Council but the information that we have seen to date does not provide any evidence of significant constraints to development from archaeology.

- Ecology - A number of ecological constraints are identified within the site, with potential veteran class trees representing the most notable constraints along with the local plan policy zones. Additional habitat and faunal constraints in the form of Priority Habitats and potential for protected faunal species are identified, which will require consideration as part of a planning application. However, it is considered that these potential constraints could likely (subject to confirmation from Phase 2 ecological survey work) be accommodated within an appropriately designed mitigation strategy, alongside a sensitively designed masterplan. Indeed, the retention of key areas of the site within green infrastructure provide an opportunity to bring forward significant net gains for biodiversity. Accordingly,

with careful planning and the inclusion of embedded mitigation within the design of any emerging masterplan, the site is considered to be highly deliverable in ecological terms.

- Ground Investigation - The geological succession below the site comprises Black Park Gravel Member overlying the Seaford and Newhaven Chalk Formation. It identifies that the site has a current use as a Golf Club, having potentially contaminative area from the previous infilled pits present within the site boundary and adjacent to the site. There are no potential off-site sources of contamination. The site is surrounded by residential properties and their associated gardens. Basic Radon protection measures are necessary. There is no flood risk.
- Landscape and Visual Assessment - The character of the site is strongly influenced by the golf course itself, but also by the prominence of residential uses to the east and west, creating a suburban feel which is therefore less susceptible to adverse landscape and visual effects caused by residential development.

The site is visually contained, and consequently any visual effects would be localised. There would be no effects on the Chilterns AONB, and there are no rights of way crossing the site.

There is the potential for further mitigation to reduce landscape and visual effects. Existing trees could be retained and new woodland, and other tree and shrub planting, could be introduced.

- Transport and Movement - A connected and walkable safe neighbourhood will be created with high quality links between the site and existing facilities in the local area, such as Emmer Green local centre, so that active travel is an attractive choice.

The site has good public transport accessibility with bus services 23 and 24 routing along Kidmore End Road adjacent to the site and service 25 routing along Peppard Road. Elizabeth Line services will be stopping at Reading Station by December 2019 providing enhanced services from Reading through to Central London.

The masterplan will be designed to accommodate necessary movements by car and service and emergency vehicles but prioritise active modes where possible. Such measures as car clubs offer the ability to minimise car ownership and therefore car use and are a growing means of mitigation for larger sites.

The site will be accessed via an enhancement of the existing access on Kidmore End Road, it is considered that this would provide sufficient capacity for the allocated site.

The number of peak hour car trips that could be generated by the allocated development could be in the region of around 70 two-way vehicles during the peak hours based on current trends. It is likely that this could be reduced through effective travel planning targeted at informing new residents of the site the travel options available to them.

This relatively low number of trips would disperse on the local highway network and traffic flows generated by the development travelling over Reading and Caversham bridges will be low and within daily variation percentages and therefore will not significantly impact traffic congestion.

Trees – A tree survey schedule, along with a preliminary tree constraints plan (TCP) has been produced. These documents form a due-diligence arboricultural assessment to provide meaningful input into the promotion of this site for inclusion in the Reading Local Plan. This will enable the initial concept or parameter plans to take proper account of the below-ground and above-ground constraints associated with existing trees.

- 3.4 Proposals for the redevelopment of the full site have not been formally submitted for review, as noted by Council Officers, although an approach was made at the Local Plan Review consultation in 2017 and subsequently by way of meeting in November 2017 to help understand potential structural issues, which were then built into the bid process brief to ensure that a site-wide solution, taking into account the cross-boundary nature of proposals could be found.
- 3.5 The issues raised by Council Officers and Members during earlier consultation are very similar to those set out in the Council's response to Issue 13 (EC015 – final paragraph) and Wates therefore recognise that any move to redevelop the entirety of the Golf Course will require these wider issues to be resolved to the Council's satisfaction out with the Local Plan process.

## 4. Third Party responses to Issue 13 questions

- 4.1 Looking at responses to Issue 13 provided by third parties, the figure of 700 homes across the wider site, as submitted by Trevor and Sigi Teer is correct. The Teers are Golf Club members and have been kept informed of developments, including detail of all options which include the 700 homes masterplan, the family golf offer as evidenced in Appendix 4 and intervening positions. This detail was presented to Golf Club members on 11th September 2018.
- 4.2 The 700 homes figure is based on the environmental and technical due diligence undertaken to date, which has identified a developable area, following which consideration has been given to land uses, location of these together with density and mix, based on policy (and SHMA) requirements.
- 4.3 The Teers make a number of other points in their most recent response to Issue 13 (EP029) which Wates and the Golf Club respond to and provide clarification as follows:
- The Golf Club is committed to providing a clubhouse whilst golf remains at Emmer Green.
  - The Golf Club is committed to providing community infrastructure in line with the wording of the allocation.
  - The proposals seek to open up what is currently privately-owned land for public use. Longer-term, should a planning consent be secured for larger-scale development, the intent is to bring forth a landscape-led scheme with significant (c.21ha) open and play spaces alongside contributions towards leisure provision in the RBC area. As such, the proposals, whether solely via the allocation or as part of the wider scheme, will significantly improve access to leisure provision within the locality.
  - It is recognised that the traffic associated with the development will require appropriate mitigation. Depending on the quantum proposed, a range of access and highways enhancements are proposed. It is also considered that should larger-scale development come forward, this will lever a park and ride scheme, which it is considered will provide benefits to traffic flow in the locality of a similar scale to that seen in South and East Reading, where a series of Park and Ride Sites have been implemented by the Council in recent years.
  - Contrary to that asserted by the Teers, Park and Ride schemes do not specifically require dedicated bus lanes and the reduction in traffic associated with the park and ride would provide a quantifiable reduction in traffic flows, helping to free up congested roads, particularly that entering Emmer Green from the north, whilst also providing users with time and car parking savings (as parking facilities in Central Reading are generally more expensive and not necessarily as centrally-located as bus nodes).

- Currently the site is private and offers very little benefit to the locality, including in terms of access to views. The intent is to open up the site for public use, first for family-orientated leisure uses and potentially as a series of linked open and play spaces across the wider site which will provide very significant benefit to the locality.
- In terms of flooding, a series of SUDS measures will be incorporated into any development coming forward, helping to provide additional flood capacity and significantly reducing surface water runoff rates to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- The proposals for the emerging Site Allocation, will be underpinned by further technical and environmental due diligence and associated, appropriate mitigation. The intent is to provide a very sustainable, open and usable site that is a benefit to the local community in line with the Golf Club's desire to be a responsible steward of its site and the stated commitment of Wates to sustainability and 'being a good neighbour'.
- The intent for the site is to consider both the Policy CA1b and potential future positions and plan properly for every eventuality. Key is that the Golf Club is failing (Appendix 1). The level of investment required in the site and the lack of ability to reprovide a full-scale facility within the locality means that the Golf Club has had to consider options to sell the site and purchase another golf club in order to protect its long-term viability. This has taken time to progress, but the current position reflects commercial realities.
- The Golf Club's desire to be a responsible steward for its land is reflected by the bidder process for which 27 bids were submitted, with 4 selected for further development, interview and update prior to the decision being made to progress with Wates. This was subsequently ratified through two rounds of Members votes.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Changes to the Golf Club's position have emerged over the course of 2018, which have been crystallised further to agreement of commercial positions with Wates and a local golf club in respect of the sale of the site in Emmer Green and relocation of golfing activities associated with the Golf Club.
- 5.2 The information submitted provides detail to set out the Golf Club's current position and matters relating to technical and environmental due diligence and in this regard is considered to provide much-needed clarity to the planning position that enables the Inspector to make an informed judgement based on the wording of the policy allocation both as currently proposed and in light of the amendments proposed by Wates.
- 5.3 In light of the detail submitted, it is respectfully requested that a minor variation to the wording of Policy CA1b is made, which will allow the residential and community development as envisaged by the policy wording to be progressed without delay.
- 5.4 Should the Inspector be minded to accept this amendment, alteration to the site area to enable a scheme to emerge that is more in line with ambitions of the policy in terms of provision of accommodation and green infrastructure is also mooted.

**Appendix 1: Reading Golf Club – The Future.  
General Meeting Presentation,  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2018**



# Reading Golf Club

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THE FUTURE





# Reading Golf Club

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FINANCIALLY – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

# Topics

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- The Challenge
- The Financial Picture
- The Future

# The Challenge

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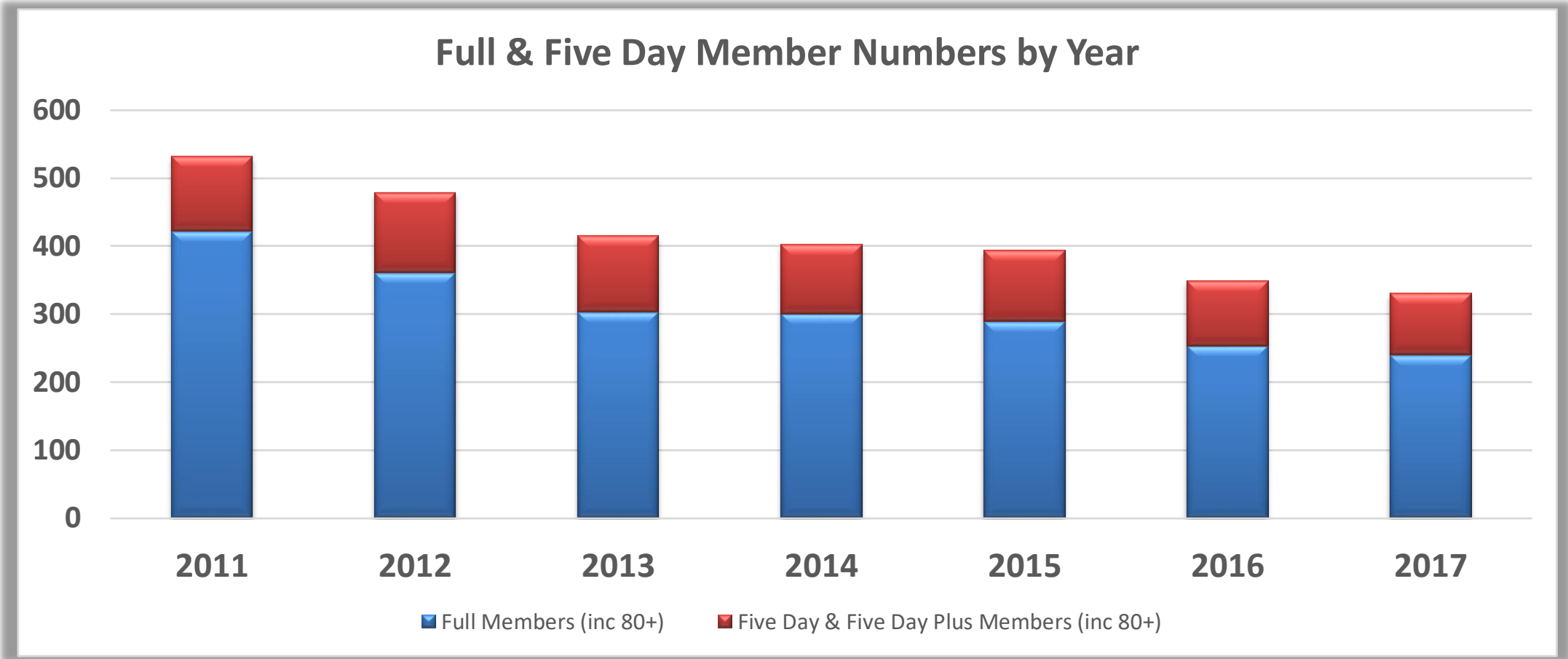
- Land-locked course
- Sub-standard clubhouse
- Sub-standard practise facilities
- Ageing and declining membership
- Limited appeal for families or new members
- Loss-making, with few remaining assets
- No budget for required capital expenditure

# The Financial Picture

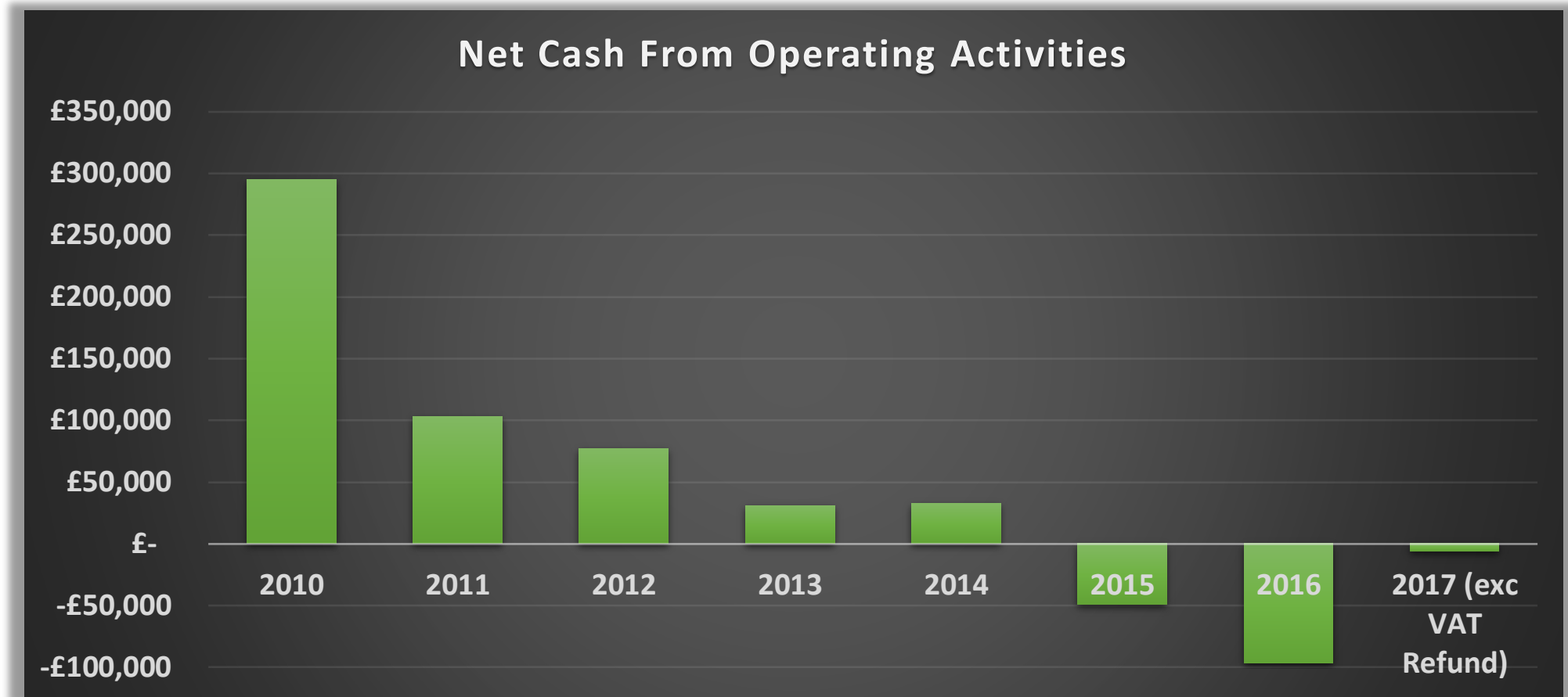
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- Membership Numbers Falling
- Net Operating Cash Falling
- Cash Reserves Falling
- Costs Have Overtaken Income

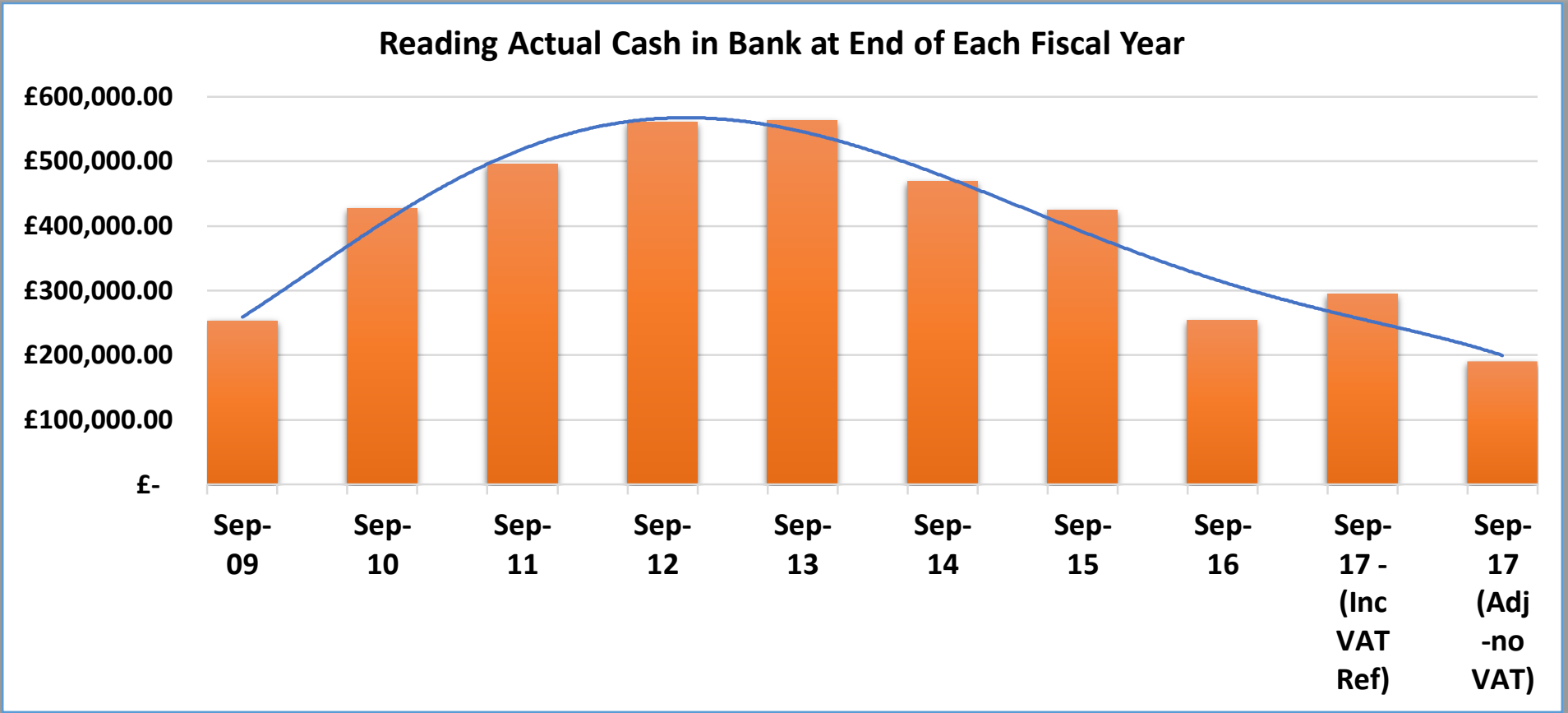
# Membership Numbers Falling



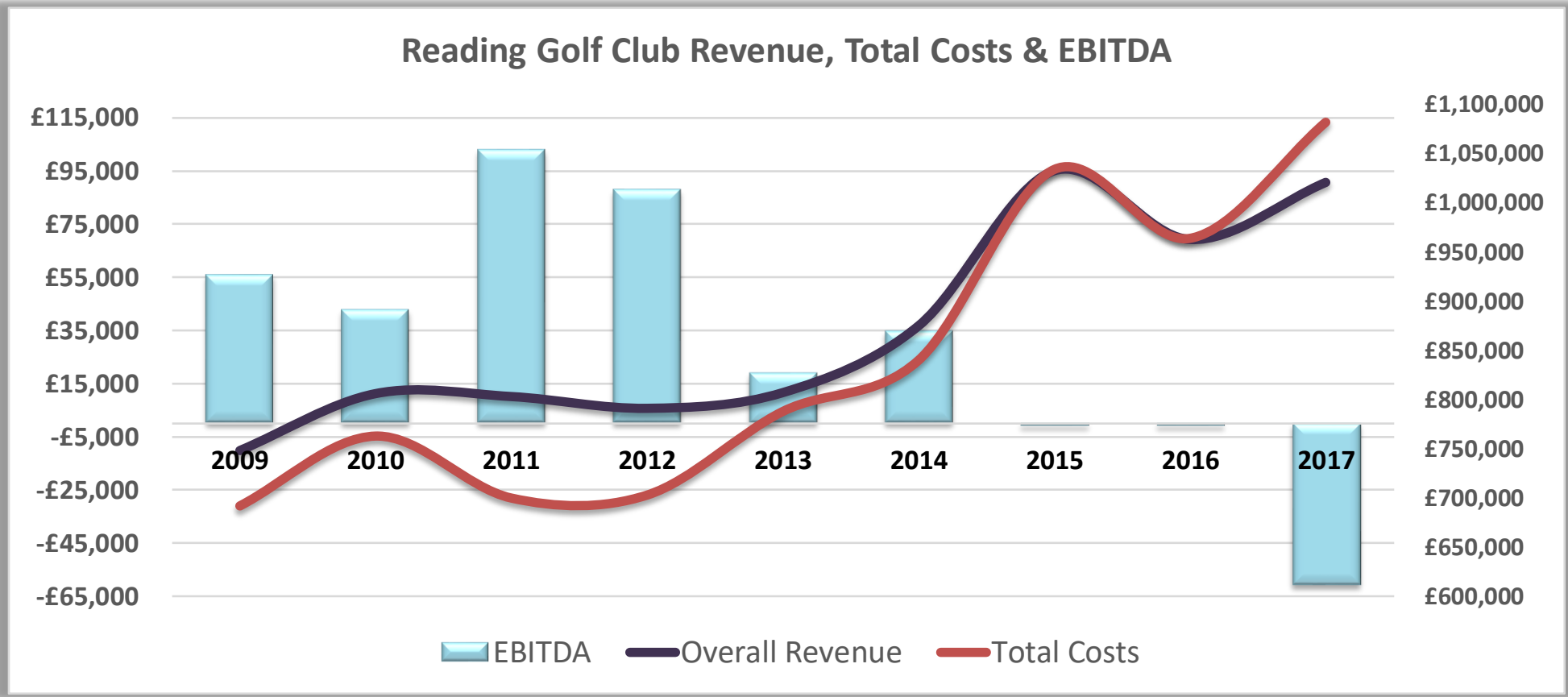
# Net Operating Cash Falling



# Cash Reserves Falling



# Costs Have Overtaken Income





# The Future

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- We are not seeking “Sticky Plaster” solution
- Promotions & gimmicks would be ineffective
- Borrowing money to pay operating expenses is a slippery slope
- Nothing much left to sell. The House (after Mortgage and CGT) would not save the club - and we would lose the rental income.
- Meanwhile large capital items are coming down the pipeline...

# Compulsory Operational Costs

Keeping the Business Running in next 1-5 Yrs

Expected Operational Costs	Yr 2019 (£GBP)	Yr 2020-24 (£GBP)
Lease Renewal of Golf Club Equipment (One off Costs)	£60,000	
Lease Cost Increases Going Forward (Incremental to current expenditure over following 4 years)		£160,000
Club House Roof		£30,000
Bore Hole Pump	£25,000	
Worming Chemical Change	£10,000	£40,000
Greenkeepers Shed & Shower area to meet HSE guidelines		£250,000
New Tables & Chairs in Club House		£8,000
Wash Down Facility		£25,000
<b>TOTAL KNOWN</b>	<b>£95,000</b>	<b>£513,000</b>

# Investment Projects

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Items required to improve RGC and Compete in the Future

Expected Operational Costs	£GBP
Fairway Irrigation System	£400,000 - £700,000
Car Park Re-Surface	£70,000
Kitchen Upgrade	£400,000 - £500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£870,000 - £1,270,000</b>



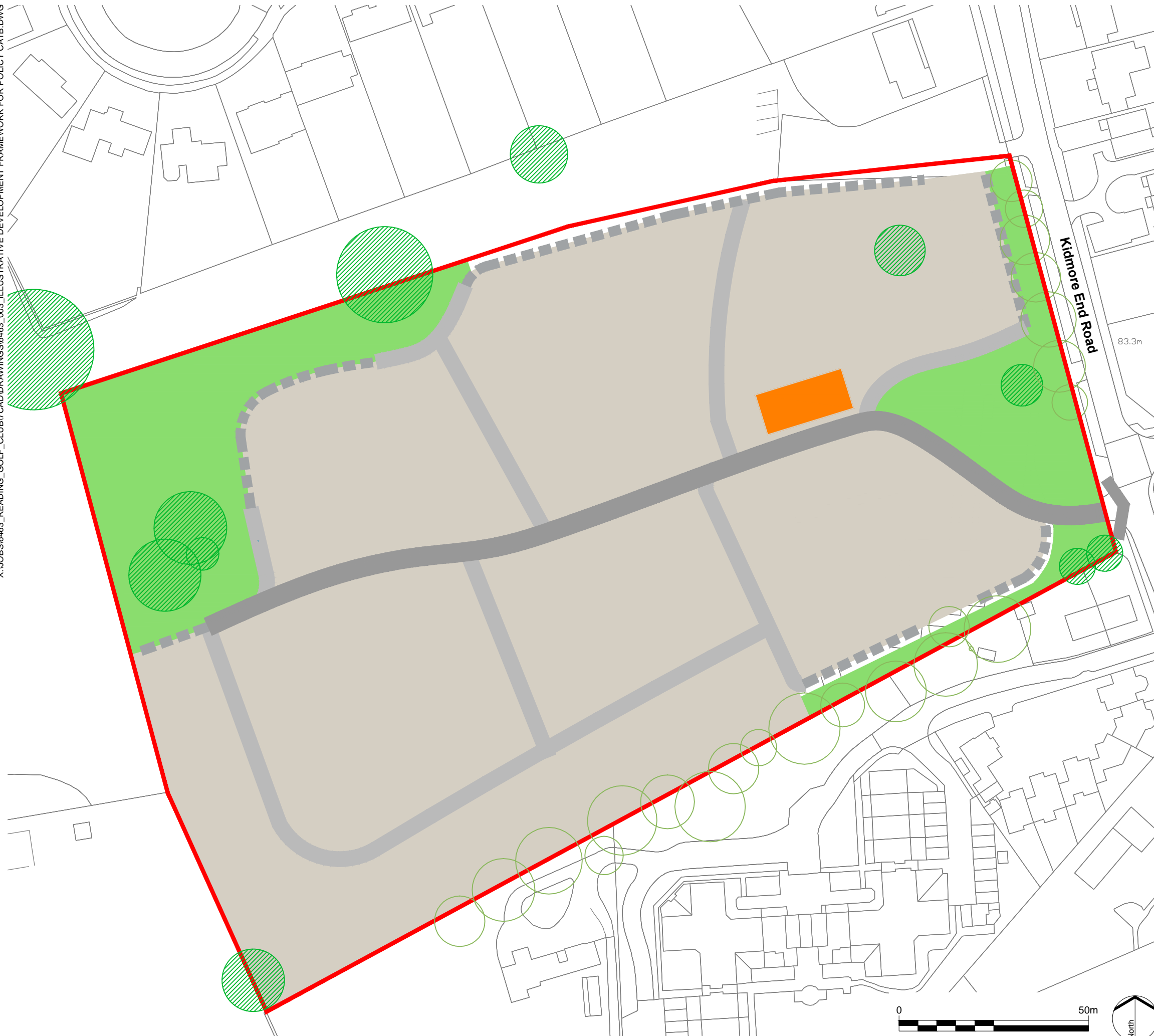
# Reading Golf Club

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THE FUTURE

## **Appendix 2: Policy CA1b Area – Wates Proposals**

X:\JOBS\6463\_READING\_GOLF\_CLUB\CAD\DRAWINGS\6463\_003\_ILLUSTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY CA1B.DWG



LEGEND

-  Policy CA1b Boundary (3.76 ha)
-  Primary road
-  Secondary/tertiary road
-  Lane/ private drives
-  Residential Development
-  Public open space/ amenity space
-  Potential community infrastructure
-  Tree Preservation Order
-  Trees to be retained

Notes:  
 Proposed residential area: 3 ha  
 Potential to produce 90 dwellings at 30dph or 130 dwellings at 43dph

REV.	DESCRIPTION	APP. DATE
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# LDĀ DESIGN

PROJECT TITLE  
 READING GOLF CLUB

DRAWING TITLE  
 Illustrative development framework  
 for Policy CA1b

ISSUED BY	Peterborough	T: 01733 310 471
DATE	12 Oct 2018	DRAWN FG
SCALE@A3	1:1,000	CHECKED NL
STATUS	Sketch	APPROVED NL

## DWG. NO 6463\_003

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.  
 All dimensions are to be checked on site.  
 Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

© LDA Design Consulting Ltd. Quality Assured to BS EN ISO 9001 : 2008  
 Sources Ordnance Survey



"X:\JOBS\6463\_Reading\_Golf\_Club\5graphics\Plans\_Images\6463\_illustrative development framework for Policy CA1b-01.jpg"



LEGEND

- Proposed Policy CA1b Boundary (4.3ha)
- Current policy CA1b boundary (3.76ha)
- Primary road
- Secondary/tertiary street
- Lane/private drives
- Key frontages
- Residential development
- Public open space/amenity space
- Potential community infrastructure
- Tree Preservation Order
- Trees to be retained

Notes:

Proposed residential area: 3.3 ha  
 Potential to produce 90 dwellings at 27 dph or 130 dwellings at 30dph

# LDA DESIGN

PROJECT TITLE  
 READING GOLF CLUB

DRAWING TITLE  
 Illustrative development framework for Policy CA1b  
 with proposed extension

ISSUED BY	Peterborough	T: 01733 310471
DATE	October 2018	DRAWN OP
SCALE@A3	1:1,000	CHECKED NL
STATUS	Draft	APPROVED NL

**DWG. NO. 6463\_002**

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.  
 All dimensions are to be checked on site.  
 Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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Sources: Ordnance Survey...

## **Appendix 3: Consultation with England Golf**



**From:** Abbie Lench  
**Sent:** 22 June 2018 15:18  
**To:** '[manager@readingolfclub.com](mailto:manager@readingolfclub.com)' <[manager@readingolfclub.com](mailto:manager@readingolfclub.com)>  
**Cc:** 'Bob Sharples' <[Bob.Sharples@sportengland.org](mailto:Bob.Sharples@sportengland.org)>; Ashley Rump <[a.rump@englandgolf.org](mailto:a.rump@englandgolf.org)>  
**Subject:** Update and Introduction

Hi Gary,

Thanks for your time just now.

Over the last couple of years we've worked with Sport England to assess all potential course closures/relocations, with a view of protecting golf provision wherever possible. We don't believe in keeping every course open at all costs, more so, we try to work with clubs and facilities to ensure they meet the needs of the local demographic. Our mapping tool supports us in understanding supply and demand for golf at a local level, and this combined with the knowledge of our delivery team forms the basis of our position as a governing body.

We also recently published some facility guidance, produced in conjunction with Sport England, which backs up the need to be more customer focused both on and off the course, developing facilities that are fit for purpose and sustainable long-term – see document attached. Based on what you've shared about your vision for the future, England Golf are supportive of the club and its plans to relocate and in turn develop a more comprehensive golfing offer.

I've copied in Bob Sharples, Planning Manager at Sport England, as he may require some further information.

If you have any additional questions, just let me know.

Kind regards,

Abbie



**ENGLANDGOLF**

10<sup>th</sup> October 2018

**Mr. Gary Stangoe  
General Manager  
Reading Golf Club  
17 Kidmore End Road  
Emmer Green  
Reading, Berkshire  
RG4 8SG**

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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Dear Gary,

### **READING GOLF CLUB'S RELOCATION PLANS**

England Golf is the National Governing Body for amateur golf in England and offers support and guidance to all its affiliated golf clubs. In this case we have made our facility mapping tool available to Reading Golf Club. This identifies the provision of golfing facilities within the locality and can help assess the potential for growing the membership of a club.

On the basis of the information provided the results support the proposals by the Board of Reading Golf Club for a move, and indicate that the local area will be well provided for in respect of golf facilities.

England Golf will not, however, get involved in decisions which are properly for the club to make. Nor will England Golf be making any representations in respect of any planning application, which would clearly be outside our remit.

We hope this clarifies our position and are happy for this statement to be shared with the Board and wider membership if needed.

Yours sincerely,

**Nick Pink  
Chief Executive**

## **Appendix 4: Rest of Golf Course - Wates Proposals (Family Golf Offer)**

## **Reading Golf Club “The Future”**

With the alternative proposal of trying to build an 18 hole course with practice facilities and clubhouse presented by the “remainers” overwhelmingly rejected by 83% of the membership as not desirable, viable or sustainable, attention has turned to what could happen with the remaining land at Emmer Green. Whilst work is likely to continue to investigate opportunities for housing across the site in the future the club are, as they have always been, keen that the land is managed in a way that is beneficial to the local community and for the club.

From the start of the investigation into possible development, the Board of Reading Golf Club and its members have been focussed on leaving an appropriate legacy. One of the main attractions for selecting Wates as its development partner was that from the first meeting, their focus was on what the local community required by way of infrastructure and community facilities. On the very first site visit by Wates there was talk of how Reading Golf Club could manage the remaining land and Wates suggested that providing a community golf facility would be an appropriate way forward.

Several studies have been undertaken of existing facilities to develop a stand-alone model that will be sustainable, attractive and beneficial to the local community.

Our General Manager, Gary Stangoe previously managed the Norwich Family Golf Centre and Bawburgh Golf Club in Norfolk. Two golf businesses under the same umbrella but located on separate sites. Gary has revealed that at the 9-hole family golf centre, in Norfolk where golf membership is virtually half the price of membership in Berkshire the green-fee income at the 9-hole pay and play site was over £30,000 more per annum than Reading is currently achieving. The total green fee income was nearly £110,000. The 9-hole course was not the standard of course conditioning expected at a members club such as Reading GC, however this was obviously good enough to satisfy the pay and play market and clearly there was a market for that.

Currently a 9-hole facility exists at Grey’s Green at Peppard Common and this will soon be joined there by a fully 18 hole course plus an additional 9 hole academy course and driving range. The clubhouse model planned there is a small “one-person” operation, where the same person serving beer and snacks can also take green fees and driving range tokens. Their planned clubhouse will only have a few tables and chairs. This is an interesting model. Our General Manager has travelled extensively studying golf club models across the world in his 20 years of managing golf clubs. The planned model at Grey’s Green is one he fully endorses. He references public courses in Ontario Canada and in Portugal and Spain where less emphasis is made on changing facilities and the additional clubhouse facilities model associated with the UK golf market.

On our remaining SODC land a small clubhouse facility with toilets, refreshments and a quality 9-hole golf offering will not be crippled by the overwhelming operational costs of operating a traditional members clubhouse. These costs are currently evident by studying the accounts of local members golf clubs over the last two years. The golf holes and machinery compound are currently operational and therefore no construction costs will be necessary other than additional car parking and the small clubhouse/reception building.

Basic golf memberships will be offered at this new club for regular players and this may well be attractive to some of our existing members however those still wishing to engage in the evening social aspect of the club, club matches etc would need to either move with Reading Golf Club to its new home or join one of the many other local clubs located within a 15-minute drive.

One issue that would need to be addressed however is the remote locality and security issues experienced previously with the location of the proposed clubhouse up near our other small car park off Tanners Lane. Our half-way hut has existed on this site for some 26 years however both a small wooden and a brick-built facility have both been the victims of arson attacks. We do believe however with appropriate security this will not be a problem.

Some of our other land within the SODC boundary could be used to create a driving range or practice facility. This provision will have to be reviewed in line with what will happen within the remaining RBC land.

On this RBC land we have the opportunity to create a family golf/leisure facility. Again, our General Manager Gary Stangoe has experience of this as within the Norwich Family Golf Centre there was an 18 Hole Adventure Golf facility that proved very popular. So much so the operator has invested in a second facility at a separate site. This would be attractive to families and also a par 3 course could be created, again with little additional construction costs which could double up as a footgolf facility.

Only a small clubhouse/reception with refreshments and toilets available would be required to manage this. From a cost point of view again this would not be strangled by huge operating costs and would give a further community facility for leisure and recreation on land previously not accessible to the local community.

Golf has been slow to promote the health benefits of our sport but there are many. The “image” of our sport has also not been welcoming. We see these facilities as being ideal “feeder” facilities not only for Reading Golf Club in our new home but the other golf facilities in the area who are all struggling for members.

Our members deserve to have a quality golf facility worthy of our 108-year history. To be attractive and sustainable as a member’s club we need to have an improved offering by way of additional revenue streams and an attractive clubhouse to attract the female and family market. The modern golfer requires practice facilities suitable to embrace modern technology. Additional leisure offerings or an alternative sport on the premises is now very much part of the modern club and in relocating we have such a model available to us and thus also securing the future of another club within the local community.

Responsible management of our land going forward has always been at the forefront of our thoughts and using the land available to further promote our sport, enhance the local leisure offering and give back some public green space to the community is just that.



Golf is a tough market to survive in currently, many clubs are regrouping, restructuring and trying to find the best ways to survive. It is inevitable there will be casualties. The latest industry figures are that more than four million Britons played golf in 2006, but by last year this number had fallen to just over 2.5 million. Membership of clubs in England has fallen from 850,000 to 652,000 over the same period, according to England Golf.

The Board at Reading Golf Club were not prepared to be a victim of these statistics but identified major changes were necessary. The financial position of the club, in particular the cash position has been following a worrying trend for years. We strongly believe that the merging of two local clubs will give this area a strong, sustainable members club with hopefully another 108-year and longer of life. Having these additional facilities managed by our club over the next few years and possibly longer can only help sustain Reading GC and offer the local community additional recreational facilities.

X:\OBS\6463\_Reading\_Golf\_Club\Graphics\Plans\_Images\6463\_Overview of Reading Golf Club proposals-01.jpg



**LEGEND**

-  Temporary Club House with possible Mini/Adventure golf
-  New configured 9 hole golf course TBA
-  Draft allocation Policy CA1b
-  Proposed extension to Policy CA1b draft allocation
-  Sustrans Route 5
-  Public Right of Way

**DEVELOPMENT: UP TO 130 HOMES**

Delivery of initial housing development of up to 130 homes within draft allocation CA1b including The Fairway green spine with access from Kidmore End Lane.

**Options could include:**

Full engagement and consultation with the Club and members to shape the interim offering associated with the remainder of the course for golf and other complimentary activities. This could include:

- A reduced golf course to 9 holes
- Opportunity for pitch and putt
- A new temporary clubhouse
- Opportunity for practice course / driving range

**L D A DESIGN**

PROJECT TITLE  
READING GOLF CLUB

DRAWING TITLE  
Overview of Reading Golf Club proposals

ISSUED BY	Peterborough	T: 01733 310471
DATE	October 2018	DRAWN OP
SCALE@A3	Not to scale	CHECKED NL
STATUS	Draft	APPROVED NL

**DWG. NO. 6463\_001**

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing. All dimensions are to be checked on site. Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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Sources: Ordnance Survey...

# **Appendix 5: England Golf, Strategic Plans 2014 and 2017**



## England Golf unveils seven-point strategic plan

August 4, 2014 Golf News

As England Golf outlines a new three-year strategy to help grow the game across the country, development manager Richard Flint tells James Tompkinson about their seven-point plan



Can you give us an overview of the new strategy and why England Golf have launched it?

England Golf have launched our strategic framework for 2014 to 17 and we're pretty excited about it.

It's been the culmination of almost a year's worth of consultation with national partners, county stakeholders and local deliverers, and the key drivers within the strategy are England Golf being at the heart of a network of partners.



We recognise that England Golf can't deliver everything it wants to by itself so we're working with partners like the PGA, the Golf Foundation, the Golf Club Managers' Association.

The strategy is based around getting more people playing, increasing club members, creating stronger clubs and supporting those clubs that want held driving their business and participation.

As an organisation we will continue to run high-quality championships and events for people of all ages and we will continue to support talented players and our elite players.

Underpinning this strategic framework is how we communicate and how we market England Golf, how we market and communicate the game, and looking at how we improve the governance of the sport.

### **What are the issues surrounding participation?**

We have 1,900 affiliated golf clubs and there are currently 712,000 golf club members.

We're a big participation sport, but membership has been declining for the last 10 years and therefore we can't do what we've always been doing otherwise membership will continue to fall.

What we have to do is think differently with our partners and provide support to our golf clubs.

That means we need to understand our customers and what our potential customers want in terms of pricing, in terms of value for money and in terms of offers, then we need to work with the golf clubs to make sure they are supporting the customers' needs. That's absolutely crucial.

At the same time, golf clubs needs to understand their place in the market and what their USP is.

We have traditional clubs, we have elite clubs, we have entry-level clubs, community clubs - there is a place for all those facilities within the game.

The key is getting them to understand their place in the market and which customers they should be targeting.

### **Why is golf club membership declining in England?**

There is no one answer. Some of the research that we have done suggests that time, cost and perception are three barriers that are stopping people from joining golf clubs and therefore we need to address that.

There has been an economic decline since 2008 and that has had an impact on people's disposable income.

Also, it is pretty cheap to play on courses without becoming a member, so that's another challenge.

What we are trying to do is turn around participation and turn round trends in membership British cycling has seen a big increase in participation and membership but, likewise, there are other pursuits that people do and golf is competing against them.

If you look at the time side of things, if you play 18 holes it could take up to four hours and even five hours. We're all pretty busy and people have busy lifestyles, so can golf accommodate that?

We should be looking at trying to work out shorter formats of the game, promoting nine holes, six holes, going to the range, having coaching. Golf can be played in an hour, an hour and a half, to suit people's lifestyles.

There are thousands of golfers out there who do want to play 18 holes and that's fine, but we're looking to introduce new people into the game and therefore maybe we've got to start thinking slightly differently.

### **Do you think there is already a captive market out there or do you need to actively go out and find golfers?**

We're a big participation sport in terms of people playing regularly and also number of members, so that's a good starting point.

We know we're doing something right and the industry is offering a lot to a lot of people.

We also know from research that there is a significant amount of people interested in playing golf and would like the opportunity.

The key for us is to make sure that we are offering them what they want, which might be something different.

So all the research out there is telling us that there are a lot of people who want to play golf, and what we have to do is communicate with them. From that point of view, there is huge potential to grow the game.

#### **Can you make golf cheaper, and if so, how?**

It depends on who you speak to but there is a perception out there that golf is quite expensive.

But if you look at the facts, golf is on a par with other sports and there are opportunities to try the game for free or at low cost in terms of buying equipment, going to taster sessions, or structured sessions that are offered by PGA professionals, so it's not as expensive necessarily as people perceive.

When you then progress on to memberships, a lot of golf clubs are now offering flexible memberships, so you haven't just got that business model where you are asked to pay £1,000 in January for full membership.

There are different pricing strategies that golf clubs are putting into place which appeal to different customers and different markets.

So again there are great value-for-money opportunities that golf clubs are offering.

#### **Why did you set the strategy out across three years, and where would you like to see England Golf in three years?**

Initially the strategic plan is three years but there are things that we have to get right to lay the foundations.

Clearly we have ambitions and visions beyond 2017, but there is something called the Whole Sport Plan, which is a partnership between England Golf, the PGA and the Golf Foundation, and that brings in significant money from Sport England. Their time scales are up to March 2017, so we've aligned ourselves with that current plan.

What we are trying to do is turn around participation and turn round trends in membership. In terms of the first two or three years we are looking to stabilise membership.

It has been falling since 2004 so we're not naive to think that we can turn around those trends straight away and see a big increase, but if we can start to stabilise the market, stabilise membership, then from 2017 we can look to increase it.

England Golf (<https://www.nationalclubgolfer.com/tag/england-golf/>)

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GROWING  
THE GAME OF  
**GOLF**  
IN ENGLAND  
THE STRATEGIC PLAN  
2017/21



ENGLANDGOLF

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# WELCOME

**I am very pleased to introduce you to Growing the Game of Golf in England, our updated strategy for England Golf.**

You'll see that we're building on the hard work and commitments of our 2014-2017 strategy and adding a fresh focus on things we believe will make the biggest difference in turning around the sport we're so passionate about.

There's no doubt about recent progress. We've seen growing numbers of golfers make their way through the talent pathway to success on the global stage. We've run and enjoyed outstanding championships for the best amateur players. We've now also started to see participation stabilise and the decline in membership slow down. But there is still much to be done.

Our aim now is to work even harder to support county bodies, golf clubs and golf facilities up and down the country so they can get more people of all ages and abilities playing the sport and maximise their own potential. Clubs have reported some very positive results from our business support in recent months and this has encouraged us to do more of this targeted, bespoke work with clubs who recognise the need for change.

The perception of golf remains our primary challenge. We know it's good for health and mental wellbeing and that it promotes the social connections that enrich life, and we know it provides opportunities for relaxation and competition for all ages. Golf could do more to sell the benefits it brings and we are determined to do that.

My early golfing memories are of amazing summer days spent with my grandfather, who taught me to play. I love that golf is one of the few sports that allow you to learn and have fun across the generations. We need to share these positive experiences and get the message out there that golf is a wonderful sport for all.

This is the driver behind our new strategy and we're looking forward to working with you to inspire and enable more people to play – and to grow the game in England.

**Nick Pink**  
**Chief Executive**  
April 2017

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**We are the national governing body for amateur golf. We work at the heart of golf in England, supporting and empowering a thriving community of players, counties and clubs to get the most out of the game we all love.**

## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

**3.6m**

adults played golf in England in the last year

**971k**

people over 16 play golf at least twice a month, 2.2% of the population

**5<sup>th</sup>**

biggest participation sport in England

UK golfers spend

**£4.3bn**

a year on the game, 14% of all consumer spending on sport

The annual social value of golf participation in England, representing the cost of improved health, happiness, wellbeing and education performance is...

**£1.8bn**

Over 1,900 golf clubs and...

**MORE THAN  
650k**

members are supported by England Golf

The 55 championships we organised last year attracted...

**6,368**

players who were supported by over 1,000 volunteers from the sport's estimated total of 40,000

Our website has...

**9.2m**

total page views a year and we have 27,600 Twitter followers, 4,200 on Facebook and 2,800 on Instagram

We are supporting...

**169**

players in our regional and national talent pathway squads

### Supporting golf in England

- National marketing campaigns
- National and regional team management
- Championships, competitions and events
- Talent identification and development
- Maintenance of rules, standards and handicapping system
- Continuous engagement with industry partners
- Partnering with commercial organisations
- Public affairs
- Business support and education
- Initiatives to increase participation
- HR, legal and governance support
- Member Benefits Programme

## WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

Golf is having to find its place in a fast-changing world. Which is why finding ways of doing things differently, and better, is a big part of what we enable and support. By working together we're able to test new ideas quickly, learn from each other continuously and spread the word about the developments and improvements that will make the most difference to the game's future.

# 730

clubs uploaded activity onto the Get into golf website in 2016, which introduced.

# 32,595

beginners to the game and led to...

# 5,000

new club memberships.

We offer support to...

# 1,900

clubs around legal, disciplinary and governance issues every year.

**OVER**  
**1,000**

clubs have received business support as part of our Training and Education programme.

## OUR VALUES

**Our values are the touchstone for how we do things and how we want clubs, counties, players and partners to experience our organisation.**

### HONEST

Acting with integrity, trust, fairness, reliability and transparency.

### INCLUSIVE

Welcoming and enabling everyone to be involved with golf in England.

### RESPONSIBLE

Being personally accountable and passionate about driving a strong future for golf.

### EXCELLENT

Continuously improving, exceeding expectations; setting and encouraging others to adopt the highest standards.

### SUPPORTIVE

Working together to make golf better for everyone and inspiring people to achieve their goals.



In 2014 we developed our first national strategy to help golf in England rise to some serious challenges.

Membership was declining. Many clubs were facing financial and business problems and the perception of the game was proving damaging. We decided to lead from the front and set out recommendations for actions that would help us all raise our game.

## HOW DID WE DO?

**427,111**

PEOPLE INTRODUCED TO GOLF FOR THE FIRST TIME

**31,913**

NEW MEMBERS FOR ENGLAND'S GOLF CLUBS FROM NATIONAL INITIATIVES

**OVER £25m**

GENERATED FOR GOLF CLUBS THROUGH NEW MEMBERS

**SUPPORTED 4 COUNTIES**  
TO MERGE THEIR MEN'S AND WOMEN'S UNIONS ASSOCIATIONS

**15,200**

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND COUNTY SQUAD PLAYERS SUPPORTED

**OVER 150** CHAMPIONSHIPS AND EVENTS ORGANISED ACROSS THE COUNTRY



**OUR  
UPDATED  
STRATEGY  
2017/21**

**It's now time to identify exactly what golf needs from us over the next four years. To do this, we've looked back to make sure we bring the best practices and programmes with us and we've looked forward, listening to the golf community's concerns and priorities to create a shared vision for the future and a refreshed strategic plan.**

## WHAT THE GOLF COMMUNITY TOLD US

We organised regional workshops, meetings and an online survey to find out from thousands of managers, captains, secretaries, PGA professionals, county organisations, volunteers, voting members and stakeholders around the country what they think about the state of the game and what's important to them.

There's a need to see members as customers who can vote with their feet and go elsewhere.

Take a greater lead in encouraging more radical developments in the format of the game.

Clubs need to be open to the public more and change dress codes and other barriers holding the game back.

Clubs need to be open to change, to make the game more accessible for women, children and families and make golf more about social and healthy activities.



## WHAT WE NEED TO FOCUS ON NOW

The golfing community believes there is still a lot of work to be done if golf in England is to realise the potential we all know it has to thrive and grow.

There's consensus on where this work needs to be concentrated: reaching more new players, particularly women and girls, and retaining more existing players. This lays down a challenge: we've got to get a better understanding of players, our customers, and get better at providing what they want.

We believe this is the key to unlocking the changes we need to see.

More women and girls involved in golf. Rising membership revenues and flourishing modern clubs, welcoming all with appealing membership and playing offers. We have put this focus on the customer at the heart of our new strategy to give us the greatest chance of being able to...

**grow the game of golf  
in England.**

# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We're setting out to grow the game of golf through seven strategic objectives. Developed in consultation with the golf community, six of these objectives are developed from our work since 2014.

One is brand new - and will boost the impact of them all.

## NEW

### BEING CUSTOMER FOCUSED

We aim to put everyone who has an interest in golf, from independent players and supporters to club members and investors, at the heart of everything we do.

By understanding each customer's motivations and behaviours and responding to their differing needs and wishes, we will engage them in a way they want, expand their involvement and grow the game.

## **STRONGER COUNTIES AND CLUBS**

Our ambition is to help counties and clubs strengthen their business models and internal operations and become more resilient and responsive to customer needs. Enabling golf clubs to survive and thrive is the route to more members and players and a more buoyant sport.

## **EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE**

Our goal is to become a model of best practice delivering our strategy in line with our values. We will work alongside the golf community to make sure structures, policies and procedures promote the highest standards, resulting in stronger management and supporting sustainable growth.

## **IMPROVED IMAGE AND PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF THE SPORT**

We are intent on challenging the negative perceptions of golf, promoting the positive health, wellbeing, social and economic benefits of the sport and raising the profile of the England Golf brand. We will share information across the golfing and wider communities and make best use of all media to build our case through compelling evidence and customer experiences.

## **MORE MEMBERS AND PLAYERS**

Our goal is to inspire more people to take up golf, to play more often and to join a golf club. Membership will always be a core part of our sport but the health of golf in England now demands that we explore ways of attracting more independent players into golf clubs and become more adept at retaining their business, ideally but not only by converting them into members.

## **OUTSTANDING CHAMPIONSHIPS, COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS**

Our aim is to target all levels of golfer with a wide range of well organised and professionally promoted competitions and events. From top-level championships to regional competitions and other events, activities like this are essential to the golfing experience and the expansion of the game.

## **WINNING GOLFERS**

We aim to support and develop elite golfers. We manage a performance pathway which aims to produce the best amateur golfers in the world. We also support the transition of individual into the professional game. The more winners we produce, the more players we hope to inspire.

# WOMEN AND GIRLS

**Getting more women and girls into golf is essential if we're to grow the game in England.**

This is the group with by far the greatest growth potential for our sport and the group that must be fully represented within the game if it's to modernise and thrive.

So we're setting our sights higher than ever, and will focus more intently than ever, on encouraging female participation, removing barriers to representation and putting the welcome mat out.

## Getting more women and girls into golf: the case for change

ONLY **15%** OF CLUB MEMBERS ARE WOMEN

GIRLS REPRESENT **1%** | BOYS REPRESENT **6%**  
OF CLUB MEMBERSHIP

THE AVERAGE CLUB IN ENGLAND HAS 21 UNDER-16 MEMBERS  
**LESS THAN 3**  
OF WHICH ARE GIRLS

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF WOMEN MEMBERS PER CLUB HAS STAYED STATIC FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS AT **70**

**640,000**  
WOMEN AND GIRLS SAID THEY WERE INTERESTED IN TAKING UP GOLF

## Golf is a game for everyone

There's nothing inherent in golf that makes these statistics inevitable. Everyone of any age and gender can appreciate the personal benefits golf brings, from excitement and relaxation to healthier living and friendship, as well as the opportunities it brings for family fun across the generations and, unlike any other sport, its handicap system allows people of different abilities to play and compete together. Even the traditional separation of golf bodies is becoming a thing of the past, with men's and women's organisations now united at national and international levels and the R&A and the Ladies Golf Union merging in January 2017.

## It's time to make change happen

We know what we can achieve when we put our collective minds to it. Of the 32,500 beginners introduced to the game via Get into golf, for instance, 43% were female. The time is right to make this issue our top priority. To make sure that it guides every plan we make and directs every action we take to achieve our strategic objectives.

It's not just about designing membership schemes to cater for women's lifestyles and taking marketing messages to the places they go. It's also about making sure women's voices are heard everywhere from the club committee to the county board. Only when female golfers have access to the same resources and roles as men can we truly promote the sport as a game for all.



A woman in a white tank top and visor is captured in the middle of a golf swing. She is wearing a white visor, a white tank top, and light-colored pants. Her hair is blonde and pulled back. She is holding a golf club with both hands, and the club is positioned behind her head. The background is a bright, white, slightly hazy sky. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

**DELIVERING  
OUR STRATEGY**

# BEING CUSTOMER FOCUSED

Putting everyone  
from players to  
volunteers at the  
heart of everything  
we do

## What we'll do

- Promote equality and diversity throughout golf in England and continuously develop our understanding of barriers to the sport experienced by under-represented groups and what would encourage them to play
- Roll out an effective digital engagement strategy with communications and offers tailored to different customer needs for improved relevance and response
- Develop a better understanding of the volunteer workforce in order to implement an effective recruitment and retention plan
- Develop research and insight into golf in England and share this with local and national partners to help develop the sport in line with our strategy
- Continuously develop our understanding of players' motivations and behaviours through insight and segmentation so we can respond to their differing demands

## How we'll measure success



**Improved golfer and stakeholder satisfaction** with England Golf performance year on year measured through surveys



**Help clubs** understand their market position and understand their customers



**Increased customer engagement** with the number of members registered on our benefits programme up by 30%

# STRONGER COUNTIES AND CLUBS

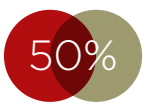


Helping counties and clubs become more resilient and responsive to customer needs

## What we'll do

- Implement a club-centric approach across all areas of the organisation
- Develop relationships with appropriate partners to improve business-to-business support that provides financial and other benefits to golf clubs
- Improve effectiveness of England Golf communications to county bodies and clubs that positively support the game of golf
- Develop the existing training and education programme for counties and clubs
- Support the development and delivery of county action plans that contribute to the seven strategic objectives
- Encourage the creation of merged county bodies responsible for all golf activities
- Develop a governance code for golf and specific governance guides for club and county bodies
- Lead on the development of handicapping, including any changes to the Central Database of Handicaps

## How we'll measure success



**50% of counties merging their men's, women's and golf development organisations** to create one strong body for golf in each county



**An increase in the Net Promoter Score** for golf club and county engagement measured through an annual stakeholder survey



**Targeted active engagement** with 1,300 golf clubs leading to an increase in membership by 50% of clubs

# EXCELLENT GOVERNANCE

**Adopting standards, policies and procedures to become a model of best practice**

## What we'll do

- Embed the England Golf values throughout the organisation
- Ensure we maintain the highest standards of governance and exceed our legal and HR obligations in order to become a model of best practice
- Develop workforce plans for our staff and volunteers with dedicated resource
- Gain Investors in People accreditation
- Promote diversity in our leadership and workforce and all forms of participation in golf
- Ensure we retain a strong financial position, explore all appropriate income streams and ensure that all investment demonstrates value for money

## How we'll measure success



**Compliance with the Code for Sports Governance** by 1 January 2021



**Gain highest standard of accreditation** for Sport England Equality Standard



**5 commercial partnerships in place** with national brands to increase our exposure and reach

# IMPROVED IMAGE AND PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF THE SPORT



Promoting the benefits of golf and challenging negative perceptions of the game

## What we'll do

- Grow and develop a public affairs programme targeting key influencers to raise awareness of the positive benefits of playing golf
- Promote the social, health and wellbeing benefits of playing golf with a particular focus on the promotion of women and girls
- Implement more targeted and effective marketing campaigns
- Establish and maintain strong commercial partnerships that are aligned to our strategic objectives
- Secure national, regional and local media coverage of our activities and events

## How we'll measure success



**Increase the public profile of England Golf** with more Ministerial and MP engagement



**10% of our income** to be derived from commercial partnerships



**Improve communication** with counties, clubs and golfers

# MORE MEMBERS AND PLAYERS

**Inspiring more  
people to play  
golf, to play more  
often and to join a  
golf club**

## What we'll do

- Implement marketing campaigns and programmes to support recruitment and retention, including the promotion of alternative playing formats
- Deliver specific programmes aimed at women, people with disabilities, children and young people to grow the game
- Develop relationships with stand-alone ranges, par-3 courses, adventure golf and other facilities that support growing the game
- Encourage an innovation culture with key partners, sharing good practice through a range of media
- Develop a national club volunteer plan with key stakeholders
- Support clubs and counties, national and local partners in developing and improving players of all abilities

## How we'll measure success

675 000



**Increase the number of golf club members** in England to 675,000

1m



**Increase the number of people playing golf** in England at least twice a month to over 1 million

20%



**Increase the proportion of female golfers** to 20%

# OUTSTANDING CHAMPIONSHIPS, COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS



Organising first-class events for every level of golfer and every type of customer

## What we'll do

- Provide appropriate support to regions, counties and clubs for their championships, competitions and events, such as templates and training events
- Enhance the organisational structure to put England Golf at the heart of national and regional amateur championships and events
- Lead the national implementation of the new rules of golf in order to support the golfing community
- Enhance the development of championship volunteers at regional and national levels through training and incentives
- Increase the engagement of clubs and their members in our championships
- Build a national and regional referee network through educational recruitment and retention campaigns

## How we'll measure success



**Increase the satisfaction ratings** of players competing in England Golf championships



Championship panel consists of **20% women referees**



**Full field for England Golf women and girls' championships** by 2020 season

# WINNING GOLFERS

Supporting and developing elite golfers

## What we'll do

- Support the progression of talented players through the pathway from clubs, counties and regional to national level
- Develop personalised development plans for national and regional squad players
- Carry out a full review of our performance programme
- Identify appropriate competitive opportunities at national and international levels
- Maintain a continuous professional development programme for coaches, managers and volunteers
- Support the transition of elite amateur golfers to the professional game through the give-back agreement

## How we'll measure success



**Improvements in performance** in World Amateur Golf Rankings for our elite men and women



**Average handicap reduction** of 1.4 among regional under 16 boys and girls. Average handicap reduction of 4 for county level boys and girls



**90% attendance** at continuous professional development sessions by England Golf national and regional coaches



## PARTNER

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*“England Golf not only provides very good strategic direction for the sport, it also has a first-rate attitude to partnering that means we have clarity about our roles and complete confidence in each other as we work together to bring young people into the game and make that crucial transition between welcome and retention.”*

**Brendon Pyle**  
Chief Executive, The Golf Foundation

## COUNTY

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*“We decided on incorporation because the time was right to stop burying our heads in the sand and look at the possible implications of not protecting volunteers from personal liability, but we could not have done it without the assistance of England Golf, whose guidance meant that what could have been daunting was made simple.”*

**Trevor Reynolds**  
President, Devon Golf Limited

## GOLFER

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*“Winning Gold in the 2016 European Team Championships topped off my England Golf career in a way I could only have dreamt of. I owe so much to the tireless work of England Golf, my coach and his 100% belief in me. From the very beginning of my days in York to the very end in Iceland he pushed me to be the best player I can be.”*

**Bronte Law**  
Professional Golfer

## CLUB

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*“England Golf’s online mapping tool has helped us target our marketing better, giving insights into the behaviour of groups of potential golfers and the ability to profile our membership. This is exactly the kind of help golf clubs need.”*

**Richard Haygarth**  
Owner, Maple Leaf Golf Group

**LET'S GROW  
THE GAME  
OF GOLF**

Email: [info@englandgolf.org](mailto:info@englandgolf.org)  
Telephone: 01526 354500

 [@englandgolf](https://twitter.com/englandgolf)

 [englandgolf](https://www.facebook.com/englandgolf)

The National Golf Centre  
The Broadway  
Woodhall Spa  
Lincolnshire  
LN10 6PU

[www.englandgolf.org](http://www.englandgolf.org)

## **Appendix 6: Evidence of discussions with local landowners**

-----Original Message-----

From: Phillip Morley <[secretary@readinggolfclub.com](mailto:secretary@readinggolfclub.com)>

Sent: 18 January 2015 10:23

To: Rob Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

Cc: Rowan Gardner \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: FW: Land at Tanners Farm

FYI.

Philip Morley

General Manager

Reading Golf Club

01189 472909

[secretary@readinggolfclub.com](mailto:secretary@readinggolfclub.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: Brazil, Jeremy [mailto:[Jeremy.Brazil@MARKELINTL.COM](mailto:Jeremy.Brazil@MARKELINTL.COM)]

Sent: 17 January 2015 13:37

To: 'secretary'

Subject: Land at Tanners Farm

Dear Philip

Thank you for your letter dated 12th January 2015 and for your interest.

However we would not be interested in entering into a discussion with Golf Club regarding the sale of the land.

Kind regards

Jeremy Brazil

Sent with Good ([www.good.com](http://www.good.com))

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'Before printing, think about the environment.'

**Appendix 7: Alternative Plans – Reading  
Golf Club retention and  
Response by the Board –  
September 2018**

# Keeping Reading Golf Club at Emmer Green

This is a summary of the discussions and alternative option/s that was presented at the General Meeting held at Highdown School on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September. The meeting was legally held at the request of some members. It was criticised by the board who did not want it to take place and was described as an unnecessary delay but, given that several hundred members attended, it suggests that members had a genuine desire to get **more facts** about the board's proposal and for **alternatives** to be considered. The board have since acknowledged that it was well received.

Two out of seven alternatives were presented that showed it is financially viable for us to remain in Emmer Green. There is actually less risk than relocating. The main points were:

- The **only two options** presented by the board so far are a), relocate or b), do nothing and go bust. This is a **third option** c), sell only part of our land and retain an 18-hole course on land we fully own.
- You will get a brand-new clubhouse which could bring in additional income streams.
- You will get fantastic practice facilities which will help membership numbers.
- We will retain the vast majority of our members and have a predictable subscriptions income.
- You will keep a beautiful 100-year old course that is the best in the area on land that we own, not lease.
- We will be financially secure for another 50 years and the financial model is predictable.
- Planning permissions for these options are highly likely, whilst they are unknown for the relocation option.
- The income from the sale of land (to the ridge) is spent on a fully-disclosed project with a specified surplus, whereas the spend is not known for the relocation option.
- In the relocation option, the suggested 6-figure sum pay-out to members is utterly unrealistic.

## Our present financial situation

The board presented a picture of declining financial health and stated that doing nothing is not an option. We fully agree. Where we disagree is that RGC does not need to sell all the land, only some of it.

## Wates

Wates have offered RGC an undisclosed sum for the land up to the ridge. That land is in a draft version of Reading Council's 20-year local plan. The approval of that plan will only be **decided later** this year. Only after that, can a planning application for development be submitted. The remaining top 6 holes are **not even in the plan** and all further submissions are now closed. Likewise, the land in SODC is **not in their plan** either. It may be possible to get permission for the land up to the ridge but, contrary to the board's view, the rest of the course is extremely unlikely to get building permission within the next 10 years if ever. That is critical because the intended move to another club will soak up all the income from the sale of the land up to the ridge, as confirmed by the board last night.

## Pay-out

Consequently, a 6-figure pay-out in the next 10 years is **utterly unrealistic**. In fact, any pay-out at any time is unlikely. The board has stated that members would be shareholders in a separate Emmer Green land-ownership company or trust. It is not clear if members would have to bear the accompanying overhead costs in maintaining it, even though they are unlikely to get any pay-out. The idea of a 9-hole course at Emmer Green is dubious because initial costings show it to be probably loss-making and Wates' options mean that they would have the legal right to kick us off the land at any time in the next 10 years. Being a shareholder in that land would **not** mean we can



control it. Is that what we want? Furthermore, each member that does not go with RGC to the new club is effectively losing £25k to £30k. Why? Because the club has sold an asset partly owned by that member and RGC has not paid out his/her share. Instead RGC have spent it on an acquiring an unknown golf club.

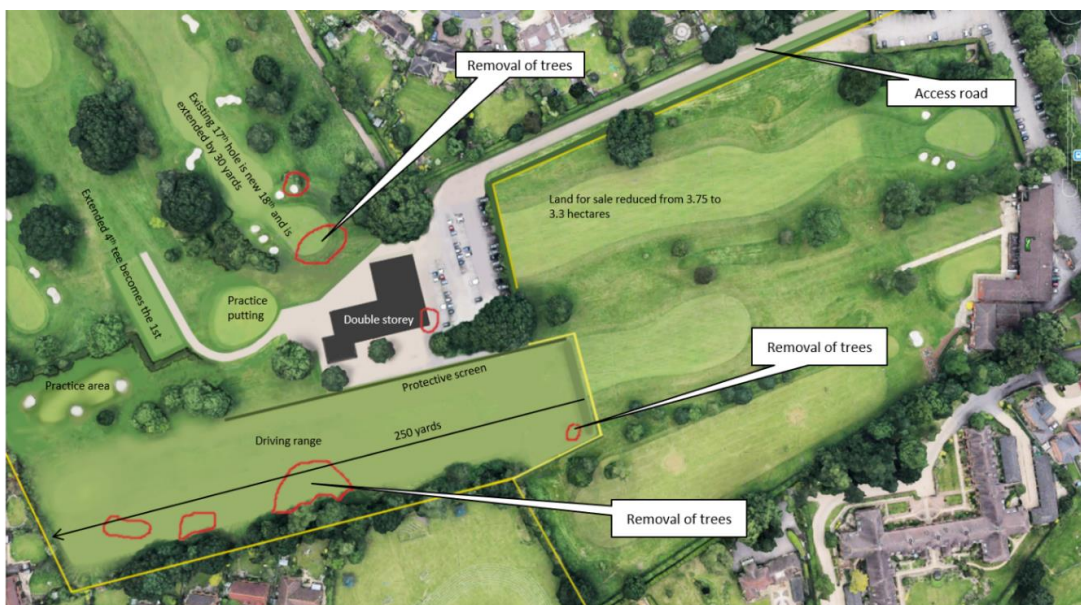
### Relocating

Relocating to a new club also means moving to a leasehold site, with a hefty **annual leasehold cost** (Maidenhead's is £120k) and the risk is that, like Maidenhead, we may be forced to move again. The target club is unknown but strong rumours have it as Caversham Heath, Greys Green and Sonning in that order. Their courses and clubhouses would require a varying amount of time and cost to improve on RGC as it is today. Many RGC members will not go to the new club, as admitted by the board. The combined membership of the ex-RGC members and the existing members of the target club could easily be **no more** than RGC at present. Nobody can be certain what that will be, yet it is of **fundamental importance**. The total subs income could be no better than it is today, yet we would have the additional overhead of the leasehold cost. Furthermore, disparity between the members' subs of the target club and the members' subs at RGC would be difficult to resolve without losing members or subscription income. All of this poses a **significant financial risk**, which is ironic, given that many RGC members don't actually want to leave. They have previous **reluctantly** voted yes in the belief there is no financial alternative or **speculatively** voted yes in the hope of a windfall. We may simply be transferring existing problems to a different location. No further information was given about the new club, yet members must vote. The need for confidentiality is understood, but there was not even a vision given by the board on what type of club, facilities or course RGC wishes to have.

### Alternative option

Which is why some members looked for alternatives. The most obvious was to return to the original contingency plan - to sell the land up to the ridge, build a new clubhouse and find land for two replacement holes (which is how it is described in the local plan). No adjoining land was available so it died at that point. That was 4 years ago and the current board has not revisited the matter, even though the local market is very active. But work continued on seeing if two new holes could instead be accommodated in the remaining footprint.

### The new clubhouse and practice facilities



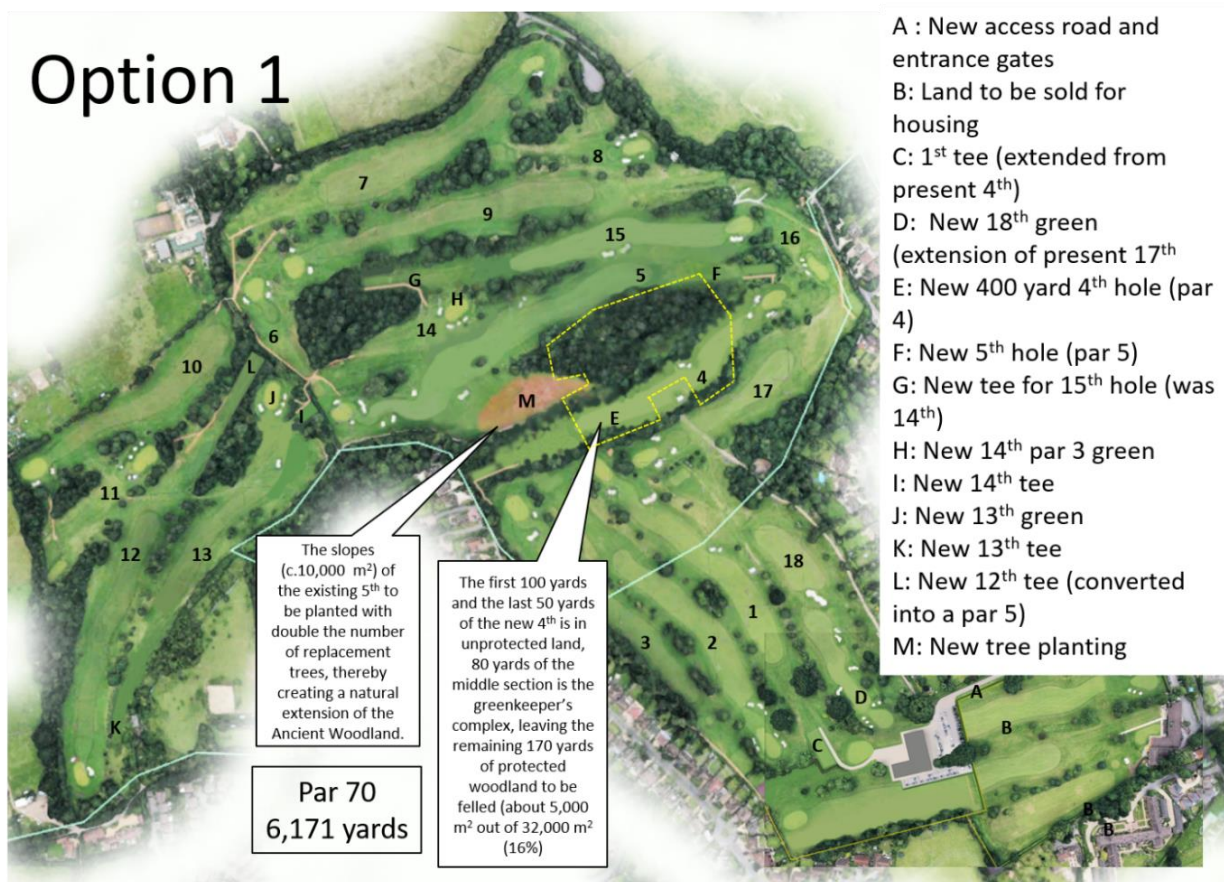
But what about the financial viability of this option? In the absence of any information, it is assumed that £14m has been offered for the land. 4 years ago we were offered £13.5m and we should be getting **more** than that. Building costs for the new clubhouse have been based on

£2,250 per <sup>2</sup> inc VAT. To give you an idea, our present complex of buildings (including the flat and the house) are 1,100m<sup>2</sup> in total floor area and would cost roughly £2.5m to build today. Add about £500k for external works, fittings and furnishings and the total is £3m. If it was 50% bigger (1,650m<sup>2</sup>), the total would increase to £4.5m. This type of building could accommodate an upper story function room. To be conservative, the higher figure of £4.5m has been assumed.

We would not sell all 3.75 hectares as presently offered to Wates. We would sell only 3.3 hectares at an assumed price of £12.3m (£9.85m after tax). That would give us more space to accommodate the clubhouse, car park and extensive practice facilities. At the meeting it was claimed that the location of the new clubhouse and driving range would be objected to by local residents due to the noise factor but many of those local residents were in the meeting and they do **not** object to it and would prefer it to a housing estate. Besides which, Lyefield Court/Bell Court/Brooklyn Drive/Kidmore End Road/Chalgrove Way all put up with the noise coming from the existing clubhouse. A different clubhouse location simply moves the noise source – it does not create a new problem.

We could sell more and reduce the length of the driving range or sell less and increase the length of the range. On average, only <5 handicappers can hit the ball 250 yards including the run. Handicappers between 10 and 28 hit the ball between 215 and 195 yards, even less when using range balls. However, safety nets on the sides will be required. The location will be perfect – there's no long walk to the driving range as is the case with some other local clubs. Our practice facilities would be **among the best in the area**. A proper academy could be established and juniors could walk to the club or arrive by bus.

**Fitting 2 replacement holes into the remaining footprint (option 1)**



The **1<sup>st</sup> course option** keeps the course roughly the same length and par and would cost around £0.9m. Basically, we are building 3 new holes and tweaking 5. The new holes would be a significant enhancement to the course. This club has done much more than that at different times in its long history. It was claimed that the course is not up to the standard of where we are moving to (unknown), yet the course has a) clearly been the best in the local area this last year and b) if more drainage is required for improved winter playability then it would be perfectly affordable if desired by the members.

There is a planning issue in that some of Cucumber Wood is protected as ancient woodland and we would need to clear some trees but, by planting double the number of new trees, that could be got around. This was disputed at the meeting but there is certainly more chance of getting permission for that than there is for housing in phase 2 onwards. As an aside, building the 3 new holes would not interfere with playing the present course as it is. We would also relocate the greenkeeper's complex and (potentially) the borehole to between the 7<sup>th</sup> green and the 8<sup>th</sup> tee at a cost of £0.4m. It will include a washdown facility thereby addressing existing concerns.

After taking off all costs, the final cash left over will be £4.05m. Assuming we continue to run at a deficit of £80k per year (as at present although we should be able to significantly improve on that), that cash surplus is **enough to fund the club for 50 years!** That does not even take into account any interest earned on the surplus, which would almost subsidise the loss. This **1<sup>st</sup> course option** is the preferred option.

### Fitting 2 replacement holes into the remaining footprint (option 2)

As a backup to the 1<sup>st</sup> course option, there is the **2<sup>nd</sup> course option**. It avoids the greenkeepers complex and the protected trees. It would reduce the length of the course by 501 yards, retain the driving range and the par would become 68.

## Option 2

Compare to Mapledurham GC:  
5,689 yards par 69

- A : New 4<sup>th</sup> hole: 120 yards par 3
  - B: New 14<sup>th</sup> tee (over the path)
  - C: New 14<sup>th</sup> green
  - D: New 15<sup>th</sup> tee
  - E: Protected woodland
- Course = 5,713 yards (white tees) par 68



Although shorter, the course is no less tough. Some RGC members are against shortening the course but it **is** the future. Golfers are demanding shorter rounds. Older golfers don't want a long course and younger ones don't have the time. Shorter courses are on the rise, according to the R&A and England Golf. If they think it's good, we should not dismiss it - it is a **genuine option**.

The cost is likely to be £0.7m, a new clubhouse costing £4.5m resulting in cash left over of £4.65m, enough to **fund the club for 58 years**.

There are **5 other options** and details are available if required. These options are not perfect, but **neither** is where we are relocating to. All the options would need to be properly surveyed and costings validated. You could also borrow bits from one option to add to another option.

### **Interim finance**

However, while the build is ongoing, we need to be financially secure. There are plenty of areas where we can immediately improve our income. According to England Golf, membership is on the **rise** again. They also tell us that clubs on average are getting 21% of their revenue from green fees. RGC only gets 7% so there is clear **room for improvement**. Regarding costs, in-house catering and pro-shop should be reviewed. We disagree with the board's assertion that we need a £700k irrigation system. We also have the option of re-mortgaging or selling our property on Kidmore End Road. We will **not** be bankrupt within a few years!

### **The spirit of the club**

Beyond the cold facts of finance, the spirit of the club is a more emotive matter, yet just as important. It was claimed that the spirit could be transferred to a new destination. But when up to half the members are no longer there, when the camaraderie and atmosphere in the bar has a different feel to it, when some familiar competitions no longer exist and when the beauty and subtle nuances of our Emmer Green course are gone, can it truly be said that the spirit lives on?

### **Your vote**

Members attending the meeting received little new information about the board's plans whereas the alternative option/s was presented as an illustration of what might be possible if we wanted to stay at Emmer Green, given an open-minded willingness to consider it. Architects have not been engaged for the clubhouse design nor the course alterations. How could they be at this stage? Even so, there was much more detail provided than the board's recommendation. In closing, we urge members and the board to **delay making the final decision** until a more complete picture of the planning decisions emerges, then the risks of the board's recommendation can be re-assessed and the alternative proposals in this document can be considered. The only way you can do that, is to vote **NO** at the General Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September.

## **Statement from the Board of Directors**

Once again, thank you to everyone who attended the General Meeting on Monday evening. It was good to see so many members able to give up their time to hear what the Board and the “Remainers” had to say. It is with regret that we find ourselves in a position of disagreement so close to the final decision when the Board originally communicated its strategy in regard to this process some 13 months ago. We are not naïve to think that everyone would be 100% supportive of our actions. We would have welcomed the chance, had these members stepped forward, to work together on this process in a conciliatory manner, rather than the confrontational one that we now find ourselves in.

### **Summary**

This is an extensive document that covers the Board’s response to the proposals put out on Monday nights by the “Remainers” and presented by Rob Bishop. As stated on Monday prior to the meeting the Board had not been made aware of the proposals in advance of the meeting.

In summary and for anyone with insufficient time to read the entire document we offer the follows key items:-

- The offer tabled as the starting point for all the assumptions was a speculative bid put to the club in 2013 by a House Builder. They were on the bidders list this time round but did not offer anything approaching the figure quoted by Rob Bishop. That effectively puts all the other forecasts into considerable doubt. This was not shared with the membership at that time although the current Board are being asked to reveal everything in minute detail.
- It was stated that the board had not considered a ‘remain on the site’ option. This was a speculative assertion which is untrue. It would have been irresponsible of the Board not to consider this as the first option.
- We were promised a fully costed proposal but what we were shown were estimates prepared by non-professionals. No golf course architect had even cast an eye over the proposals.
- The “Remainers” agree that long term survival of the club will depend in some measure on selling land.
- No cash flow projection was offered that demonstrated how the timing of receipts from the land sale could fund all the proposed work.
- Planning is doubtful, particularly with regards to cutting swathes out of ancient protected woodland and the feasibility of the so called 250-yard driving range.
- There would be major disruption to golf for a long period due to extensive earth works. This will drive members away which will not help our current precarious financial position. They may never return. No allowance was shown for business interruption in the costings. With the relocate option, uninterrupted golf will still be available in Emmer Green for some years to come albeit on a 9-hole course as well as 18-hole golf elsewhere.
- At the end of all the disruption, if all the many boxes get ticked and cash flow doesn’t dry up in the period of getting planning permission and construction, the business model will still be fundamentally flawed on a much smaller footprint.

- The land will remain in private ownership offering no increase in public ownership vs the Wates proposal which returns 40% of the site to public space.
- The Board cannot support this proposal. We don't believe enough cash flow from our operations can be generated to get to the point of achieving planning approval, let alone the work actually being carried out.
- A vote for the Board offers a certainty in the medium to long term whereas vote against puts the club in financial jeopardy.

### **Development** (by Steven Smith of Haslams)

- 1) Any deal along the proposed lines will mean doing a subject to planning permission deal with the developer which will mean funds won't be available for 12 to 24 months and, if planning is delayed, it could be even longer (or never if the planning is refused – unlikely but that can never be ruled out).
- 2) The developer will want access to the land as soon as planning permission is granted while you can only start to think about building the new clubhouse (and that assumes planning permission for that is achieved at the same time as the residential planning permission).
- 3) The developer would fund the cost of the planning application for the clubhouse – that does not appear to be a cost that has been considered because that cost would come off the price paid for the land.
- 4) The clubhouse will take 12 / 18 months to build – how can that work when you are immediately losing the first two holes for that period, probably have no use of the current clubhouse which will need to be demolished (occupies a key area within the development site) before you even start to think about adding the two additional holes. Even if kept temporarily it will not be readily accessible during major building works.
- 5) The planning points raised by Jonathan Walton at the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> September - especially on the ancient woodland loss – are also highly relevant.
- 6) The transition from a practical viewpoint is more than a touch challenging; and will you retain all your current Members during that period?

### **Planning** (by Jonathan Walton of Vocalism)

**Basis of Earlier Offer:** Steve has already commented upon this to an extent, but I thought I'd add to this in terms of the wider planning issues. Essentially, the earlier offer of c.£13.5m was made on the basis of progressing land on the 1st and 18th fairways to the ridge. The offer letter, which I have seen, was not detailed and was more of an opening position akin to some of the bids submitted earlier this year. It is notable that the bidder making the earlier offer did not choose to renew this, but instead chose a different offer, much lower in nature than other bids made, including that of Wates. In making assumptions to underline the later offer, the bidder noted the following: *'The requirement to provide onsite community infrastructure, specifically healthcare and a green network connection/public open space, are more readily addressed as part of a detailed scheme for development on the allocation site but the land take required has to be kept in mind when considering the potential residential development area achievable'*. This is key: the earlier offer did not anticipate the requirement to provide healthcare or the green link, merely the clubhouse (the offer be made pre the Local Plan process meaningfully commencing). As such, less land would have been available for housing than initially envisaged and costs of providing the facility would not have been factored in. Both issues provide less commercial return, which would certainly have been

reflected in a revised, lower offer for the land than that used for the purposes of planning the alternative option.

In addition, it is likely that the offer will have been based on an element of 'enabling development', i.e. the cost of the clubhouse reducing or negating the need for affordable housing. As such, it is not clear if any provision has been made for affordable housing within the alternative assumptions. Central to any proposals likely to be accepted by the Council will be a requirement to provide 30% affordable housing on site. The Council will not look to reduce this figure unless there is a valid viability argument. Given that the proposals theoretically accrue a surplus for the club's use, despite the proposed surplus, it would be expected that this surplus is used to ensure that affordable requirements are met. As affordable housing effectively is provided at a no profit rate, this would have the effect of reducing the anticipated surplus significantly. This would be more than 30%, due to the need for the development to still provide the same level of infrastructure and contributions towards local services.

**Planning Position:** The land up the ridge is allocated in the emerging Local Plan, whilst other areas are not. This is reflective of the position of the club at the time of making submissions to the RBC Local Plan. Set against this, further submissions have been made to both Local Plans and detailed representations will be submitted to SODC to consider allocation in the emerging Local Plan. SODC and RBC have well-catalogued issues with housing land supply; RBC has a stated shortfall of 644 units across the Local Plan period to 2036 written into Local Plan documents (this is actually higher if the Berkshire SHMA update is factored in), whilst SODC is currently undertaking a review of potential larger development sites for allocation in its Local Plan. Accordingly, delivery of a site that is sustainably-located and able to bring forward a policy-compliant housing mix to meet identified local need has significant merit. Sat alongside this, the area available for development allows for significant placemaking, ensuring high-quality development, sat amongst a range of land uses emerges. In particular, the land will open up to half of the site for public use as open spaces, helping to truly Keep, or even make, Emmer Green. The site itself is greenfield, not subject to land contamination and is conducive to housing development as a consequence of course formation which gives rise to tree-lined avenues. The intent is to work with both Council's and local residents and businesses to bring forward a scheme that benefits the locality, particularly in terms of schools and healthcare provision. Wates will continue discussions with both Councils and to assist this are currently undertaking significant environmental and technical due diligence works. There is robustness, common-sense and certainty associated with the proposals, which will appeal to decision-makers.

**Trees:** it is somewhat surprising that "Remainers" & KEG sought to protect trees on site via means of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) then seek to remove a significant amount of these to bring forward their alternative proposals. The alternative proposals, whether Option 1 or Option 2 seek to remove many more trees than is proposed by the Wates Masterplan. Removal of significant amounts of ancient woodland will not be supported, either by RBC, SODC or the Woodland Trust; it is ancient and is not as easily replaceable as single, mature or growing species which are common along the fairways. As such, Option 1 could not proceed. In terms of Option 2 there are also issues with the proposed loss of trees around the clubhouse. This has been rather crudely dropped into an area that is equidistant from housing, which in tandem with the proposed driving range has the unintended consequence of loss of a significant number of trees. Whilst this would not in itself potentially lead to refusal of any planning application coming forward, it would need to be balanced by other aspects of the scheme, which is where the proposals drastically unfold, see below.

**The Driving Range:** The driving range is located adjacent to existing houses and the proposed location of new houses. As such, residents would either be subjected to noise and disturbance from users of the range, which is unlikely to be considered acceptable if playing from west to east (as evidenced by signs along this boundary requesting that noise is kept to a minimum) or alternatively, the Golf Club would face a series of complaints/claims from errant balls going into gardens either at the end of the course or along the side boundary. To offset this, housing would need to be set back further into the proposed development area than currently identified (either to offset noise, disturbance and/or visual amenity), which would reduce overall commercial return. In addition, large nets would need to be erected, which would have a much greater visual impact on residents' amenity than new housing around which sensitive buffer zones and landscaping would be provided. There would also be no opportunity for floodlighting, meaning that the facilities would provide limited use. In addition, 250 yards, whilst better than the current situation, would not be sufficient. Many low handicappers within the club can quite easily reach this distance, particularly in times of dry ground or high winds. It would be impossible to police the range and ensure that users did not hit woods or play with long distance (non-range) balls and so this would be a disaster waiting to happen, given that known from the experience with Brindles. Put simply, the practice facilities would be inadequate at best, unimplementable at worst.

**The Clubhouse:** The scheme is double-height and would offer a range of provisions to increase patronage and income. The siting and built form proposed is acceptable and is similar to a block of flats or local centre, but the use is different. Providing any event of significance would certainly give rise to noise and disturbance on a scale that is not domestic in nature. This is what separates this issue from those relating to housing. It is also likely that the events, if successful, would occur in greater regularity than that taking place in domestic back gardens of new housing. Importantly, the clubhouse car park would abut the area of proposed housing, forming a harsh border, rather than the green buffer of the golf course. As such, garden spaces would either need to be extended or houses set further back, reducing developable area. Noise and disturbance from the clubhouse and its associated events would have a similar impact. Whilst it is alleged that residents would rather have a clubhouse than housing, this is not actually known: the land proposed for the clubhouse is in an area currently envisaged to provide a local centre, so built form will be similar. Land where the driving range is proposed is largely set aside for extension of the school field and the area to the east of the ridge follows the pattern set out in the Local Plan, which is identical to that proposed in the alternative option. It is likely that residents, if not golf club members, would object to or support different aspects of both proposals. The key difference is that Wates' scheme actually gives something back to the community through opening up land that is currently closed to public use and by identifying and meeting local needs, not just healthcare and schooling, but potentially towards 4G sports pitches which could be provided on-site or within the locality, perhaps at Highdown School or Abbey Rugby Club through S106/CIL payments.

### **Golf and the Business Model**

Members will remember the damage done to our land by machinery when the first phase of drainage work was carried out. The same will occur with any remodelling work and will impact severely on being able to play 18 holes during construction.

We must also assume, although it was not costed, referred to or accounted for in the presentation, that the drainage work and the subsequent 5-year programme of sand banding using a sand cat machine is planned for the remaining existing greens. This work is required to get the promised improved playing conditions through the winter months. From actual experience in 2015/2016 the



capital costs and business interruption from all of this drainage work will have a further serious financial impact on the business model proposed.

- 1) No felling of trees in the ancient woodland will be permitted thus making the design presented null and void before it begins (See Jonathan's notes above).
- 2) The new holes would take a long time to mature.
- 3) No allowance was made for the impact that the growth from the large volume of trees planted a few years ago will cause in reducing an already questionable "air space" for the golf ball to travel through. Some of these new trees are already subject to TPOs.
- 4) No golf architect has been consulted, this is purely a Rob Bishop design.
- 5) The layout presented whilst stating maximum distances of holes believed achievable offered no proper scaling of width of fairways, rough etc and immediate concerns are raised with obvious health and safety issues cross over holes, very tight fairways and we would struggle to produce a credible risk assessment on that basis.
- 6) There was no offering to improve our already failing business model. It was just another sticking plaster and from experience likely to lose members when remodelling. The model presented may be acceptable for some local residents but will not be appealing to the experienced golfer.

The presentation on Monday was delivered in a professional manner and the "options" presented were two of seven. These were claimed to be the best options, and both looked credible at first glance. However, it was obvious after a few minutes that the plans were not, as promised, fully costed, and offered no long-term credible solution.

As stated previously, retaining an 18-hole viable course on our Emmer Green land was considered very early on in our investigation and dismissed for many reasons stated above. The Board would like to go on record in expressing its extreme disappointment with the content contained within the presentation given the build-up to it. Responsible dialogue without the involvement of solicitors or the added influence of KEG could have dramatically reduced the additional time, effort and money spent over these last few weeks. Planning and development is understandably emotional, and the Board has done its best to fully respect that in selecting Wates as its development partner, but it is a separate matter to Reading Golf Club's future and the waters between the two have been muddied causing unnecessary disharmony within the club and unfortunately with some of the local community.

There is no doubt that challenges will lie ahead for the club, and we will be undeniably sad to vacate our home at Kidmore End Road. A lot of factors were taken into consideration in the selection process for relocation, but we believe our selected site offers the best long-term and financially viable solution for us in challenging times for the golf industry.

As said on Monday night we believe we have been good neighbours and responsible custodians of our land. We are very proud of the work the Board and FIST team have carried out to ensure we leave a proud legacy here for Emmer Green. Staggeringly we will be adding in excess of 40% of our land to public green space, land that has been for so long inaccessible to the local community.

We were diligent in our search for a responsible development partner. We wanted the best in terms of supplying infrastructure and also a commitment to the local community for services provision and we couldn't have a better partner in respect of that than Wates.

The Board remains committed to working with Wates and both RBC and SODC and will look at continuing a reduced golf offering of some description within the Emmer Green community for as

long as is possible. This will be subject to lots of further discussions and we can't comment on a timeframe or promise any more than that at this current time.

This, the previous Board and many before that over the last 50 years, have dedicated much of their time in trying to find a long-term future for this great club. We have always worked in the best interest of the membership as a whole and we give you a solemn promise to do so in fulfilling this relocation project if that remains the will of the majority of the membership.

**Please remember to vote or appoint a proxy for the General Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September.**

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