



Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

Longside Golf Club



Version 0.1

May 2015



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INTRODUCTION

This document provides a strategic plan for Longside Golf Club for the period 2015 to 2020. The aim of the document is to provide direction for the committee, enable a continuity of approach for respective committees and demonstrate to our members and stakeholders that our club has a clear vision.

While document is intended to provide a framework against which more significant investment decisions should be made. The plan is flexible enough to cope with improved or reduced trading conditions and should remind all of those governing the club why we exist.

BACKGROUND

Longside, with its present course opened in 1979, although not quite in St Andrew's league, can truly boast of a village working together, without outside help, on a project that most sceptics said was impossible. Their commitment, dedication and sheer hard work in creating out of a water-logged bog and council tip a golf course to be justly proud of and a great amenity to the community.

Liaison with the amenities committee established the fact that they may consider donating money to the proposed Gold Club to purchase available land from Sainsbury.

The amenities called a public meeting on 7th March 1973. After considerable discussion, a vote was taken and a substantial majority supported the motion to hand over £1,000.00 to the proposed Golf Club. This being the asking price for the water-logged bog separating the village from the River Ugie.

The public meeting appointed a chairman, Mr Ron Massie to form Longside Golf Club. This he did and ten committee members were appointed and a Constitution was formulated.

The first fund-raising event was arranged for 21st April 1973 in the form of a roup in the public hall. In 1973 an application for planning permission was lodged, permission in principle was requested, also grants from the Sports Council and Deer District Council.

FROM THEN ON IT WAS A STRUGGLE.

Deer District Council was the stumbling block for the next three years. The Sports Council expressed interest as did the Education Authorities, but neither would commit themselves until Deer District made their views known. The Club went on to get planning permission in principle and an estimate that work, including a clubhouse, would cost £25,000.00.

In 1974 the Club entered into an agreement with Aberdeenshire County Council to lease a 6- acre former refuse tip in its present state to add to the private 18.5 acres.

Deer District was given background information in an application in February 1974 and a month later was given detailed plans and estimates. The Council then asked for title deeds before considering the matter. In August 1974 the club pointed out that title deeds were not available but that the club had submitted an offer to purchase the land.

In September 1974, the Council asked for deeds for the whole project. The club felt that the Council, by insisting on seeing deeds for the whole project, was most unfair since the refuse tip was to be leased and it was impossible to provide title deeds.



Items of intent to purchase the land were produced and sent to the Council on 23rd April 1975. However the application did NOT go before a full Council meeting as it was supposed to. Shortly after that the Council went out of existence under Regionalisation. This change meant more delay.

In June 1975 a request was made to Leisure & Recreation to try and arrange a meeting between them and the Golf Club with the view of re-opening negotiations for grants. This request was rejected. The Club contacted various locally based firms and asked for financial help. No help was obtained although 27 firms were contacted.

Since repeated applications to the Council for grants were turned down, a decision had to be made about what should be done, since the club had been raising money. For three years the village had been in the unusual position of having a constitutionally formed Golf Club but NO GOLF COURSE!

The Club called a public meeting on 12th February 1976 to help determine how much support they would have in constructing the course on a SELF HELP BASIS. The residents of the village gave their overwhelming support to go ahead, construction to be organised by Jim Hislop. 51 people attended that meeting.

By this time the £25,000.00 estimate for the project was 3 years out of date. The club placed the blame for the protracted delay squarely on the shoulders of the former Deer District Council. The people of Longside felt they had been very badly dealt with by Deer District for delaying decisions.

In the spring of 1976, the course eventually got under way. Construction commenced on 3rd March 1976. It was thanks to the villagers themselves that the base of the course began to appear after a 3-year struggle. The refuse tip had to be cleared and a huge waterlogged area had to be filled in. Some 1000 tonnes of topsoil had to be purchased and a vast quantity donated. Local builders brought in heavy equipment to add their weight. A nearby quarry provided sand for bunkers. A local firm helped with transport. Local farmers help cultivate and seed the course. Fairways and bunkers were shaped. Future members and villagers gathered stones off the fairways in the evenings.

In May 1976, the first equipment was purchased - a tractor and cart for £110.00. A shed was also purchased for £50.00 (in need of major repair), this served as the Green-keepers' workshop for 18 years.

On 18th August 1976 an open meeting was held in the public hall for the purpose of opening membership to the club. This was to raise money so that greens could be surfaced professionally. It was decided to accept Entry Fees of £10.00 and 32 people paid an Entry Fee at the meeting. It was agreed to accept a maximum of 20 Life Members at £100.00. This would cover the cost of laying the greens, which was to cost £2,200.00.

A task force of volunteers worked in their spare time preparing a car parking area. While this was in progress an article appeared in the Evening Express Postbag written by a John Dunn expressing his concern that the village, with its neat "Welcome to Longside" sign welcomed visitors to a dump. An irate Secretary, Jim Hislop, replied to Mr Dunn, putting him well and truly in the picture and inviting him to come and see exactly what was going on in the village of Longside.

In 1977 the lifting of Government restriction on certain grants made it possible for greens cutting equipment to be purchased. Gang mowers and green mowers were purchased costing £1,950.00. Grants received were 50% from the Sports Council and 12.5% from Banff & Buchan Council.



An attempt to attract a part-time green-keeper was unsuccessful. Members agreed to carry out grass cutting during summer months.

The first A.G.M. was held in the public hall in February 1978 and 33 people attended. The A.G.M. in 1979 and 1980 were also held in the public hall.

In February 1979, interest-free loans were accepted from members, in multiples of £25.00, to be repaid after a maximum of 5 years. This raised £525.00.

On 28th May 1979 the course was declared open. Committee members played a trial round. By this time there were about 60 members, Entry fee was £15.00, Subscriptions £18.00, Senior Citizens and Senior Juniors £10.00, Juniors £5.00, green fees on weekdays £1.00 and at weekends £2.00.

The Clubhouse was built on the site of the old "Killing House" (Slaughter House). The derelict building had to be demolished. Most of the rubble is buried in the car parking area. In 1979 work began on building the clubhouse, a contract was engaged to carry out the building of the walls. Norstone had been donated and was used to build both outer and inner walls. After the walls were built, the inside work took some time as all work was done voluntarily by local joiners and electricians working mostly in the evenings.

In August 1979, after checking the finances it was decided to fit doors and windows. Because the club could not afford to get into debt, it was not until February 1980 that work was carried out on floors and ceilings. The APPROXIMATE cost of the clubhouse was £7,000.00. A grant of £1,500.00 was received. Most fittings were second-hand and donated. Doors came from the Old Kirk in Church Lane, as did the PEW seats in the changing rooms. A member installed kitchen units and the bar counter as his own expense. The wrought iron bar shutters were another member's donation. From Peterhead Golf Club came surplus curtains, tables and chairs.

During all this time fund-raising events were being held regularly. Members carried out these with great effort and enthusiasm. The village hall was the venue for most of these events. Between 1973 and 1980, 6 rous/sales tables took place. Jumble sales, coffee evenings, whist drives, sponsored slims, quizzes, darts matches and golf tournaments were held and were well supported. All together fund-raising plus donations raised approximately £5,000.00.

From 1974 to 1980 all committee meetings were held in the homes of committee members. In 1979 the Parent/Teacher association offered to site a bench seat in the club in memory of Mrs Flora Buchanan, a local leader who joined the club as a Life Member but had suddenly died before the course was playable. Since there was no real income, everything had to be done on the "scrounge", but it was the incredible support that made it all possible. The members took great pride in the fact that they had a course and clubhouse incurring any debt. All work was done one step at a time - as funds were raised, another job got done. For the first 4 years all staffing in the clubhouse was voluntary.

The official opening took place on 16th August 1980. The opening ceremony was performed by Mr Rick Anderson, a well-known local man and a ball was driven off the first tee by Jim Hislop. This was followed by a 9-hole fun competition. Rick Anderson contributed to the funds by selling his famous waistcoat and hat, which he made from lager cans. He stipulated this had to be used to bank up the River Ugie, and this was done. The first prize-giving was held in the Four Seasons in 1980. In 1981, a greens' watering system was installed at a cost of £1,600.00 and a grant of £400.00 was received from Banff & Buchan.



Further progress was made in 1988 when an extension was built to the clubhouse. For this project a brewer's grant became available and also an interest-free loan from Banff & Buchan. The official opening of the extension was carried out by Councillor Mr Norman Cowie in July 1988.

In 1993/94 it was agreed to build a green-keepers' workshop. Building permission was granted and the workshop was completed in September/October 1993. The existing car park was extended and for this an area of land had to be purchased.

In 1991 a proposal to extend the Golf Course to 18 holes was passed and full planning permission was granted. For this project Mrs Hay, Bridgend, gifted an area of land in memory of her late husband. More land was purchased from local landowners. Grant became available from Banff & Buchan and the Royal and Ancient. There was a levy on members' subscriptions and the extension was opened for play on 6th April 1996.



OUR VALUES

Our values are based on what our members have said we are and who we are.

1. Our club, staff and members are friendly **and welcoming**
2. Membership of Longside Golf Club will be **value for money**
3. We are at the family **club at the heart of the community**
4. Our course will be **well maintained and challenging**
5. The club will be **well run**

PRIORITIES

As a club with limited resource we must prioritise our activity. Our priorities will be:

1. Creating the best golfing experience on the golf course between 1 April and 31 October
2. Keeping the course open during winter
3. Optimising the availability of our clubhouse for members and visitors
4. Improving our clubhouse
5. Developing our membership based
6. Increasing our role in the community



THE COURSE

The core offer at the club will be:

1. Flat and well mowed tees
2. Clearly defined fairways
3. Well maintained and smooth greens

In addition we will:

1. Maintain our bunkers
2. Maintain an optimum amount of trees
3. Ensure rough punishes poor play but does not slow play
4. Maintain appropriate drainage

To deliver our aspirations we will:

1. Keep a core of at least two greenkeeping staff with one part time summer members of staff
2. Provide our staff with appropriate training
3. Provide our staff with the tools to do the job ie machinery
4. Develop our team of volunteers
5. Undertake projects on prioritised basis as follows

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reduce use of fertilizers	Remove trees on 14 th	Address drainage on 15 th fairway		
Introduce best practice in course maintenance	Cut back trees on 13 th	Improve tees x, y, z,		
	Flatten 18 th forward tees / introduce new tee	Improve practice area		
	Clear drainage canals	Clear drainage canals	Clear drainage canals	Clear drainage canals

On an annual basis to ensure the course and tools are fit for purpose we will undertake an annual review in September and update this plan as required.



THE CLUBHOUSE

In 2015 the clubhouse was a significant financial drain on the club. However, members valued the services provided within the clubhouse particularly food. We recognise that the clubhouse is a critical service for members. Nevertheless there is a real conflict between keeping the clubhouse open at all hours and maintaining a financially viable club. Due to this we will:

1. Commit to opening the clubhouse locker room open from 7am to 9pm during our core golf season
2. Commit to optimising the opening of the bar including providing a full catering service. In practice this will mean:
 - a. Opening at the time our cater considers is most viable for their business
 - b. Ensuring we are open early for opens and on medal days

In addition to optimising the times the bar and clubhouse are available for members we will seek to continually improve clubhouse facilities. Over the period of the plan we will:

1. replace all furniture with improve chairs and tables
2. invest in soft seating areas to allow us to exploit new markets from the local communities eg young parents / children (and potentially a play area)
3. Improving the decoration including seeking memrobilia, clear statements of our values and the creation of a more contemporary look
4. Upgrade kitchen and bar facilities as required
5. ensure our IT equipment is fit for purpose

IN THE COMMUNITY

As a community asset and as a business keen to contribute to our community we will do our best to deliver within our existing resources. There will be benefits in contributing more to the community for our club as we will be able to identify new markets and generate new members. Specifically over the next five years we will:

1. Create a new series of social events open to the community (via our members)
2. Create a new range of social members focused on the use of the clubhouse in the day time
3. we will investigate progressive partnerships with other key community groups. This may include formalising our relationships, use of facilities and resources for mutual benefit
4. investigate funding opportunities which can benefit us, our partners and the Longside community

FINANCING AND RESOURCING