

VISION STATEMENT

AND

PATHWAY

DOCUMENT

**FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE
GENERATIONS**





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1.0 Introduction

Flempton Golf Club (FGC) strives to provide a welcoming environment to members and visitors alike, to present an excellent golf course in great condition playable all year round, and to offer a high standard of hospitality services as expected of a traditional, quality members club.

However, FGC currently faces critical challenges from a cultural, financial and management perspective that need to be addressed.

The club has attempted to meet these challenges by adopting a new management structure in recent years, which is still evolving and requires further fine-tuning. This **Vision Statement** and Pathway Document seeks to address this issue as well as recognising that a key priority is to further develop its key asset the golf course. This document whilst providing a vision will also detail strategic decisions that the Management Council wish to implement as a priority.

It is important to note that this **Vision Statement** it is not a detailed financial plan with budgets, forecasts and expenditure but instead a pathway document from which a detailed **Business Plan** can be constructed and approved by the newly elected Management Council.

It is recommended that a detailed strategic **Business Plan** will be formulated by the Management Council and adopted by the members alongside this supporting **Vision Statement** to provide them with a full understanding of the proposed path and options. This should allow members to understand its benefits as well as enabling them to share in the ownership of the project. This will be crucial in gathering support for fund raising and other vital activities to make the project a success.



2.0 Strategy and Aims

- All businesses, including golf clubs, need a plan to successfully navigate the path ahead. A **Business Plan** that includes a detailed phased development plan with indicative costs for a period of 5 to 10 years is not unusual.
- This long-term **Vision Statement** and subsequent **Business Plan** will ensure continuity of direction considering the Management Council of FGC can potentially change every 3 years, enabling the club to evolve in a consistent and managed direction.
- The approval and adoption of this document will be the basis for all future undertakings. It will guide the council in its routine work and will help the membership to understand and appreciate the background to developments being undertaken, and to assess the progress that is being made. This process will be consistent with the 'Club Forum' held in autumn 2018 and the more recent EGU members survey carried out in spring 2019.
- As part of this engagement process the long-term strategy will be presented to members once it has been approved by the council.
- It is anticipated that the Business Plan will be supplemented by the appointment of a professional general manager with responsibility for its implementation, which is a practice in common with 94% of members clubs. (*EGU 2018 Survey*). This would allow members to enjoy the club rather than have a need to oversee and be responsible for its day-to-day functions.
- The **Business Plan** will not be a fixed plan and will inevitably need to evolve and adapt each year.
- Until recently there has not been a need for the club to consider adopting a formal long-term strategy since it has enjoyed a long period of stability and financial security. This situation is no longer the case and it presents the club with several challenges that must be addressed. There is a need for more long-term financial planning and appropriate investment in the club's infrastructure and staffing arrangements. Additionally, there is an immediate need to arrest the decline in playing membership numbers.



This document will first review the golfing industry trends and will provide both context and background to the current position of FGC. It will then examine the key challenges faced by the club and finally set out a plan of action to address these challenges over the period of the next 5-10 years.

In summary this Strategic Vision focuses on the following key areas and identifies the key challenges faced by the club:

- Club culture and ethos
- Course management and development
- Membership retention and recruitment
- Income and fund raising
- Marketing and brand development
- Staff recruitment and training



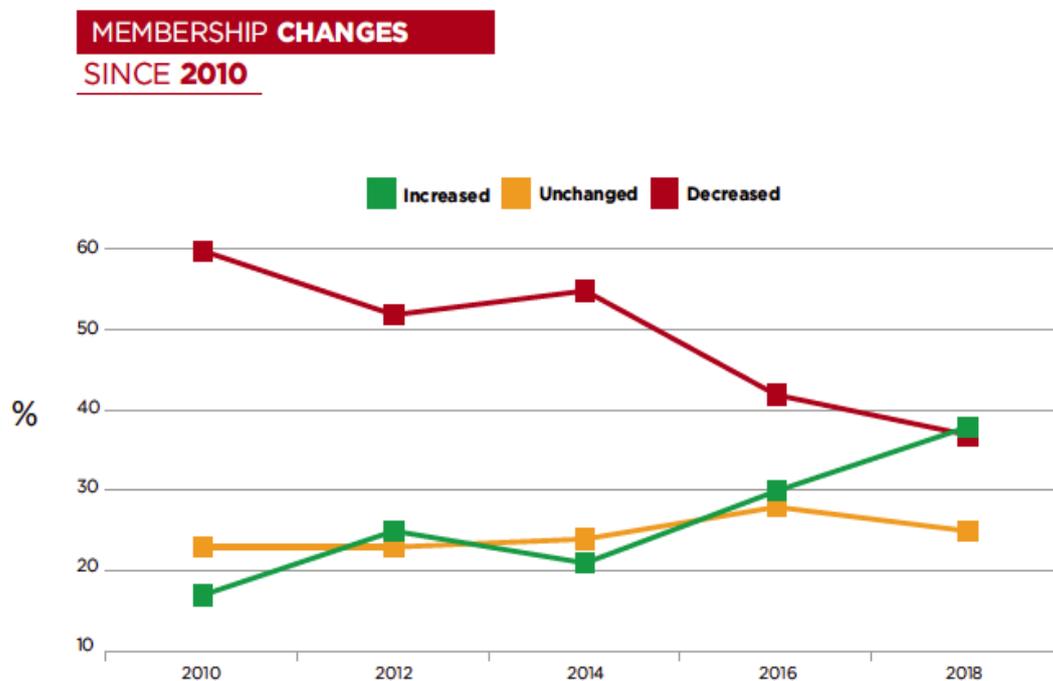
3.0 Background Context

- Over the last decade the golfing landscape has changed considerably. Club memberships across the UK have steadily declined and only recently have shown signs of stability while the number of nomadic golfers and leisure golfers has continued to grow.
- Golf as a sport has diversified in this time and there are numerous opportunities to play, outside the traditional 18-hole format. Some affiliated golf clubs have started to respond to the evolving market with flexible memberships, academies, fun golf formats and by improving the off-course experience.
- Given the competition for our leisure time, clubs need to continue to develop and trade on their differences. It is true that some clubs have closed during the last 24 months, but new facilities are being built and other clubs are investing in redevelopment projects to diversify their business and generate additional income streams.
- The good news is that golf is the 5th largest participation sport in England and there is significant demand for the game.
- Importantly, clubs that are growing are creating points of difference and continually evolving to remain relevant. This backdrop to the golfing sector is important for Flempton Golf Club to understand, in addition to the increasingly competitive environment it operates.
- Levels of full playing members over the last 20 years have largely been supported by attracting members from other competing courses in the immediate neighborhood. New members have been attracted to FGC for reasons such as its more traditional values, the quality of the course and its capacity to offer a much better speed of play. It is therefore vital that the competitive advantage offered by these points of difference is nurtured, alongside investment in redevelopment projects to meet the needs of an ever more demanding and diverse golfing membership marketplace. This will enable FGC to offer an exclusive members club with unrivalled course conditions and exceptional service.



4.0 Key External Factors (Appendix 1a and b)

- Flempton Golf Club operates in a competitive environment. English Golf Union states the following in their 2018 club membership report ***“In 2016, we identified common themes among clubs which were successfully growing their membership. These included the importance of creating a welcoming environment, catering for a range of different needs, communicating regularly with members and visitors, developing facilities to broaden income streams and becoming part of the local community.”*** (Graph 1).
- Participation in golf has been falling for several years due to an ageing population and the growth of alternative leisure pursuits such as cycling. It is easy to be pessimistic about declining participation, however, as demonstrated by the graph below, there are a few proactive members clubs bucking the trend (in green).



Graph 1



5.0 Club Culture & Ethos

Flempton Golf Club is a private members club, which has traditionally been built upon strong family ties within the local community and has always operated in the interests of both existing and future generations of members.

It seeks to uphold the best traditions of the game, whilst acknowledging the need to modernise and evolve in response to an ever changing golfing and social dynamic.

The aim of the club is to provide a friendly environment for all members and visitors alike. The facilities of the club whilst modest have always reflected the understated and traditional nature of the golf course, its members and its loyal staff. In so doing an important emphasis has been placed upon personal relationships and enhanced social engagement through the medium of golf.

This ***ethos statement*** alongside the common themes identified in the EGU 2018 report for club members will underpin the proposed detailed Business Plan, placing it at the centre of the clubs evolution.



6.0 Course Management and Development

It is generally recognised that the improvement of the course and its evolution should be the **primary objective** of the club and that such improvements would bring huge benefits in membership satisfaction as well as in marketing opportunities and in membership recruitment and retention. This will enable the club to move forward with confidence in its identity and in its strategic planning. It will also encourage its current membership to take pride in their role as ambassadors of the club whilst enjoying both the course and the wider social aspects for years to come.

FGC engaged Mackenzie and Ebert (renown world-class golf course architects) in 2018 to initially carry out a historic review of the golf course. Martin Ebert was then instructed to create a golf course '**Master Plan**' that would be sympathetic to the original layout of the course which was designed in 1906 by the five times open winner, JH Taylor. Crucially, the **Master Plan** needed to reflect upon the needs of the modern game, whilst also focusing on the enjoyment of golf for all its participants, regardless of age, gender, and ability. The **Master Plan** is a blueprint for the evolution of the golf course and provides continuity in the medium to long term. *(Appendix 1)*

The **Master Plan** will, whilst attracting prospective and future generations, ensure that the club thrives as a unique members 9-hole golf club, with an aspiration to reach a top 10 ranking for 9-hole golf clubs in Britain & Ireland over the forthcoming years. *(Appendix 2)*

The proposed **Master Plan** approach has been recognised as a proven strategy in re-establishing and securing the viability of many notable golf courses that have sought to evolve for future generations. In agreeing and adopting a course improvement programme it must be acknowledged that significant investment will be required to achieve the desired outcomes and as such the implementation of any form of strategic planning must be a medium to long-term objective. This is underpinned by the concept of a 5 to 10-year **Business Plan** recommended in this document. It will require continuity of both purpose and direction to be successful with crucially the recruitment of a general manager to oversee its implementation and progress



7.0 Membership – Retention & Recruitment (Appendix 3a and b)

The club needs to extend its reach and attract a wider mix of members across all age profiles and player abilities and to acknowledge that the social interaction within the club is as important as the game of golf itself. The club must promote a family and inter-generational environment for all to enjoy.

7.1 Full Playing Membership (FPM)

- 262 to 270 is the historic level the club has sought to cap the full playing membership.
- In 2008 the club had 271 full playing members, the highest for 15 years.
- 2010 represents the last year the Club had a near full quota of 261 full playing members.
- In 2018 this figure had reduced to 228, falling again in April 2019 for the new membership year to 204. It currently stands at 210. Membership levels have not been this low since 1939 at 204.
- The club has 125 full playing members over the age of 70 who are likely to cease playing golf within 10 years. This will result in 55% of the membership needing to be replaced over the next 10 years in order to stand still and maintain current membership levels.
- Only 16.6% of full playing members are under 50 years of age (2018).
- The full playing female membership has significantly dropped to an all-time low of 42, of whom 34 are under the age of 80. Ladies numbers have not been this low since 1945, at a post war level of 47. More positively, this number as a percentage of total membership is high in comparison to other clubs.
- The age demographic of the club compared with the UK average shows that between the ages 25-64 the club is below average, whilst for the 75+ age group it sits at 12% above average.



7.2 Other Membership Categories (OMC)

This section of the membership includes Country/Corporate/2nd Club/Non-playing or Social/Honorary/Military/Academy/Invitation/Student/Juniors/Associate/PGA

- Between 2004 and 2015 the number of members in this category had remained steady at approximately 100.
- From 2016 to date the full playing membership numbers have fallen while the number of members in the OMC have proportionally increased. This is mainly due to the ageing demographic of the club.
- The percentage of non-playing/social members is set to significantly rise over the coming years following a similar trend.
- It should also be noted that the club's recent efforts to increase members within this category in an attempt to hopefully convert a proportion of them to a FPM category. This initiative also increased income to compensate for the falling income from the reduction in full playing members, however this must only be considered a short-term solution.
- There are currently **175** members in the OMC.

It is important to retain members in this category, and to acknowledge the income they generate and appreciate their contribution to the social aspects of the club. However, growth in this category will not enable the club to achieve its financial aspirations.

The financial stability and aspirations of the club can only be achieved by growth in the number of full playing members. It is this category that contributes the most to the recurring income source for FGC. Therefore, to address the challenges the club faces it must focus its efforts for retention and recruitment on increasing the number of full playing members.



7.3 The Effect of Membership Numbers Upon Course Capacity

It is important to recognise that for a sustained period the club was able to limit the number of full playing members to a notional 260-270. This was considered the optimal level to prevent the overcrowding of the course and to maximise member's enjoyment of their golf.

Over the past decades the club had the benefit of a waiting list and was therefore able to maintain its desired full playing membership level as individual members left due to age, health and relocation. Importantly, for some time now Flempton Golf Club (as well as other golf clubs) has found itself operating in a different more competitive environment for members, and the number of full playing members has steadily declined. Consequently, vital income has declined. To date it can be argued that the club has not responded to this challenge as effectively or urgently as other regional clubs as these key facts suggest.

This has affected not simply the finances of the club but has directly impacted upon the social fabric of the membership and its ability to attract and embrace new members, and therefore naturally evolve with a modern outlook in touch with the new golfing environment. The reality that in 2012 when the membership level of full playing members had reached its quota, the course was still only lightly used.

“ The average golfer plays no more than twice a month. ”

(English Golf Union Report 2018).

If we then take into consideration the expected change in membership composition as discussed in 6.2, it will have a limited impact on the overall playing capacity of the club, whilst generating a still valuable but modest income. However, when looking at the overall membership figures it should be recognised that the playing capacity of the club is not negatively affected by this group and it should not prevent the financial necessity of increasing the full playing membership.

The initial target must be to bring full playing member levels back to the 270 high and then consider extending this further over a targeted time period. Based on standard industry norms the total calculation for Flempton Golf Club would be a notional 500 members. This is both an undesirable and an unnecessary figure, but it does illustrate that historic levels of membership have been quite low and that there is some capacity for growth without it having a detrimental effect to member's enjoyment of the course.



Therefore, it is proposed that once the initial 5-year target of 270 is achieved, the aim should be for a further increase to 300 full playing members in addition to other categories. The clear justification for this further increase is based on the need to secure the long-term financial position of the club whilst retaining value for the existing members and being competitive on annual subscription levels with competing regional golf clubs.

In order to achieve this, it needs to be recognised that the clubs predicted average annual attrition rate based on the age demographics of the club can be realistically estimated to be up to 18 full playing members per year. To reach a target of 60 new members in the next 5 years, there is a need for a net gain of 12 new members in this category annually. This therefore equates to the pro-active recruitment of approximately 30 new full playing members per year.

In financial terms 60 new FPM's equates to an additional £54,900 to the annual income stream for FGC at current membership rates. A further £30,000 if the current joining fee of £500 was obtained for each new member, thus totalling £84,900.

The club should be ambitious and optimistic in its outlook in this regard. This approach will need a willingness to plan for the future, to change and evolve, and at the same time to retain a welcoming environment for all. A number of neighbouring clubs are currently thriving, and it could be argued that they have been too successful in member recruitment. FGC must now seek to grow and utilise this document, the Mackenzie & Ebert Course **Master Plan**, and subsequent development of a Business Plan to engage and attract these necessary new recruits.



7.4 Target Groups for Membership Recruitment

- General full playing members (age profile 35-65) is the club's priority for membership recruitment.
- The next priority is to increase the full playing ladies membership.
- The club should consider the introduction of a family/couples package within the membership fee structure. It could be argued that this could be incentivised by suspending the joining fee for the 2nd adult member and lowering the combined fee to £1,530.00, down from £1,830.00. If this incentive were to be introduced the club would stand to lose £5,700.00 since there are already 19 current married couples whom are members. This incentive would need to be measured against the potential gains of increasing membership via this route and should only be used in the period of building the initial numbers. It is interesting to note that only an additional 9 (9.2) new member partners of existing members would need to be found. However, this type of approach will potentially entice completely new members to the club with their family and friends and in so doing further expand the reach of the club.
- Encouraging juniors to participate in any sport should be encouraged for its well documented beneficial effect on health and behaviour. A secondary benefit of doing this ensures that we would also be planning for the future retention of the membership. Some of these juniors in 5-10 years could become full playing members and would be the bedrock of sustaining the culture and ethos of the club.

7.5 Timing of the Annual Subscription Renewal Date

Many clubs have now taken the view that membership retention can be greatly assisted by moving the date of renewal from the 1st January to the 1st April of each calendar year.

“In addition, 37% of clubs run membership renewals in April, but 19% still choose to do this in January. Unsurprisingly, clubs showing growth tend to have renewals between March and September” (*English Golf Union Report 2018*)



8.0 Income (Appendix 4a and b)

Retaining and growing the membership to the levels indicated will ensure that enough income will be generated, not only to sustain the club and its on-going running costs, but crucially will also provide a significant yearly surplus/profit.

This is a key element of any strategic business planning. The alternate approach would be to increase the subscription levels to raise income. However, from a survey of regional golf club membership fees it is clear that Flempton already stands at the higher end of this market and is therefore not sufficiently well placed for a further increase (*Appendix 5a and b*).

- Member's subscriptions make up 71.2% of total income generated.
- In 2017 full playing members contributed to 66.4% of the total income from membership subscriptions.
- The club requires approximately 220 full playing members to maintain its existing operating budgets. However, this number does not take into consideration any monies necessary for future investment expenditure nor unforeseen running costs e.g. reseeding, replacing and maintaining machinery.
- Green fees made up 11.2% of income in 2017. This is set against an average over the last 10 years of 11.8%.
- The cost of a full playing subscription at FGC ranks as the second most expensive club out of 15 Suffolk clubs. It is just above the average when compared with 22 local clubs, with 11 of these clubs obtaining a higher rating for course quality than FGC in the recent members marketing survey.

Green fee income has seen no significant growth in the past decade but will continue to have an important place in the club's financial future. However, FGC is a 9-hole golf course, any additional player traffic resulting from an increase in visitor numbers will need to be carefully balanced to ensure the current enjoyment and speed of play is retained for all as the membership numbers grow.



The playing informality and freedom from prescriptive tee times is a key selling point of the club and a retention point for existing members. Therefore, whilst recognizing the need to maintain a welcoming environment for visitors and friends of the club and acknowledging the leverage this brings in recruiting new members, it cannot be viewed as a solution to the club's current weak financial position.

The key to managing the necessary financial growth and sustainability is to reach a sufficient level of full playing members rather than excessively expanding this secondary avenue of income.

8.1 Catering Income

The recent changes to catering arrangements following the retirement of the previous resident stewards are beginning to show a modest profit for the club. However, although turnover has risen by approximately £18k, alas so too has running cost's at approximately £17k.

This is clearly an aspect of the club that would benefit from further modification and is a key area in need of development to improve the quality of service provided and value for its customers. It also plays an important role in the social fabric and enjoyment of FGC and potentially membership retention.

Catering should not be primarily about generating profit since the majority of golf clubs only break-even in this area, but rather about adding value to the clubs service when compared to other establishments. This is a key area needing attention since it plays such an important role in the social fabric and enjoyment of FGC and potentially membership retention.

8.2 Partnership & Corporate Income

The 100-year historic link with Culford School has been rekindled in the past few years. The creation of The Culford Golf Academy has been important for the school and the renewal of its partnership with FGC has been an enabling factor in its successful establishment. It has been a success story for both parties and it is in the collective interest that this partnership strengthens and develops further. The need now is for this partnership to be embedded in a more formal arrangement that sets out with greater clarity the contribution that each party will offer to the partnership as it develops further. In so doing it will be a critical component in strengthening both the Culford Golf Academy and in furthering the development of FGC.



A strengthened partnership will provide Culford School with more long-term security about its playing and practice facilities, as much as it will provide them with an incentive to invest in the continued improvement of both. The benefits for FGC will be an investment partner sharing the vision for future development. This has the potential to be a mutually advantageous arrangement in the interests of both FGC and Culford School.

The development of key relationships with industry experts, local businesses and importantly other golf clubs and institutions that share the same values and ethos is another potential development. This would facilitate a sharing of best practice and allow the club to better understand the changing face of golf in the current climate. In addition, the club and its membership would stand to benefit from the offerings these partnerships might bring by way of mutual incentives and possible corporate memberships that could have the potential to generate significant additional income for the club.



9.0 Surplus and Reserves *(Appendix 6a and b)*

Using net current assets as a measure of cash reserves:

- The cash reserve level peaked at £169k in 2013. The predicted 2019 figure has dropped significantly to £95k. The drop in 2019 is in part due to significant 'exceptional' expenditure including remedial work to the course following the dry weather conditions of the summer 2018 and essential work to the cottage.
- Over the past 10 years the club's annual surplus has averaged around £5,000, representing on average only 1.9% of total income.
- Over the past 10 years the club has spent some £200k on capital expenditure, £60k of this was spent in 2017 and 18.
- Certain of the club's key assets are now nearing the end of their useful economic lives and will either require replacement or significant maintenance. For example, the machinery shed, cottage, irrigation system, parts of the clubhouse and the course.
- In order to build the club's capital reserves FGC will aim to generate a 'minimum 10% surplus' of total revenue. At present turnover levels this would equate to nearly £30k per annum. As we grow the membership this will increase proportionally. This approach if continued long term, will not only build reserves but also protect the ability of the club to maintain and upgrade its infrastructure and facilities long into the future.



10.0 Project Expenditure, Financing & Fund Raising

The club will need to raise a significant sum over a 10-year period to fund the course evolution and to upgrade its key facilities and infrastructure. It is unlikely that existing reserves can be called upon to support these needs and therefore there is a necessity to find income from other sources. There are numerous options (examples below) and more to consider for this purpose:

1. A loan arrangement.
2. A levy on membership to re-pay any loan.
3. Fundraising activities.
4. Members' donations.
5. Corporate partnerships.

The further erosion of existing reserves would clearly not be wise despite the pressure for continued investment. It would not be prudent to expose the club beyond the existing threshold, which effectively rules out this option. By the same logic, a loan can only be taken out if it is linked to a demonstrable capacity for repayment over the period of the loan so that the club avoids being tied into an unsustainable arrangement.

One option to increase the cash reserves could be to introduce an annual levy (*Appendix 7*) on all members, which is commensurate with the size and length of the loan. For members to give approval to this arrangement they would need to be assured about its intended purpose and to be able to see the clear benefits it would bring. It should also be possible during the period of a levy to “freeze” the annual subscription and to rely on increased income and the growth of reserves to be derived from the projected increase in membership.

The opportunity and benefits to be had from fundraising should not be underestimated. It is not only a tool for generating income, but also a positive way of bringing together the club, its members and the wider community through a shared enterprise. Fundamentally it needs to be highlighted as a core activity of the club over the next 5-10 years to support the agreed expenditure projects as well as generating additional reserves for other essential projects in the future.

The forthcoming 125th anniversary of the club should provide an opportune moment for significant fund raising and appeals activities if it were to be addressed in this way by a dedicated and committed fundraising group. This needs to be a priority adopted by FGC as soon as possible.



11.0 Marketing

A detailed marketing plan needs to be adhered to as the strategy for the club evolves focussing on the core recruitment and retention of full playing members. There has been encouraging signs in this area recently and this momentum needs to be sustained and built upon with a focus on the key member targets highlighted under 7.4

The key aim of this strategy is to increase existing membership satisfaction by communicating the plan for course investment and evolution, consolidate upon improvements already underway, establish exceptional catering provision, and improve the management of the club and its staff. Achieving these aims will encourage members to reach out and personally recommend and promote the club to others.

The use of social media, the website and more traditional marketing methods to promote the exciting changes the club is undergoing and the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the club in 2020 will be critical in raising awareness and communicating the right key messages that will drive interest and ultimately the recruitment of new members over the next 12 to 24 months.



12.0 Recruitment of Staff, Succession Planning & HR

The club has recently relinquished its catering franchise and has instead implemented new arrangements for bar and catering. To date this process has delivered mixed results and will continue to need further consideration and improvements.

The loss of the club steward role on the social fabric of the club and its effect on membership cohesion has possibly been underestimated. The recruitment of a professional and personable general manager could go some way to recreating a welcoming, friendly environment for all members and their guests.

The management of the greens staff and succession planning needs to be handled with both sensitivity and clarity. The club employ a small and loyal team that need additional input, training and managing through annual appraisals that are accompanied by an up to date professional HR overview. It may be worth using an external agency to conduct such a review provided there is a willingness from the club to learn from their input and the skills and abilities they can offer.

Continuity, recruitment and retention of good, skilled staff is both fundamental and essential in maintaining the club's welcoming environment and would be an important element of the proposed new general managers role.



13.0 Specific Projects: the way ahead and immediate actions

The following constitutes many issues that are generally accepted as needing to be addressed and where specific plans need to be put in place. There must be appropriate prioritisation, an agreed budget, a specific timeline, and an allocation of Council responsibility for each item. The Management Council will establish the correct structure of sub-committees and working parties, with appropriate skill sets to achieve required outcomes and establish membership engagement.

This list is not exhaustive and can be reduced or enhanced after wider discussion and consultation.

1. Develop and adopt a detailed, fully costed, 5-10 year **Business plan** with the support of sub-committees responsible for specific areas that will be task and time orientated. (*Appendix 8*)
2. Accurately communicate to the membership the merits of the **Master plan**. The obvious next step is therefore to invite Martin Ebert to present his course Master Plan to the membership.
3. Establish a formal fund-raising sub-committee to set up an '1895 Club' to raise funds for ring-fenced activities. The first initiative to be implemented is that FGC will offer, by invitation only, a limited number (10) of lifetime memberships for £15k each. FGC will ring fence £13k of the income from each lifetime membership to be used towards course or facilities development.
4. Increase full playing members by at least 5% per annum over the next 5 years and consider changing membership subscription renewal dates to April of each year.
5. Confirm, develop and promote the partnership with Culford School and its golf academy.
6. Improve the course and practice facilities through the implementation of the course **Master plan** when finances allow.
7. Improve clubhouse facilities when finances allow.
8. Acknowledge the importance of, invest in and support our employees. Perform a review of all in-house personnel to assess strengths and weaknesses, identify any training needs and support employees to work to both required and desired standards.



9. Employ a general manager with the view that their salary would be self-funding after 12 months, to run the club and ultimately deliver on the outcomes that result from **Business plan**. The general manager will be supported by and accountable to the Management Council and ultimately the wider membership.
10. Redefine the role of the head greenkeeper to embrace the concept of a 'course director' with direct responsibility for maintenance and development of the course, with continuity of actions set out in the Mackenzie & Ebert Masterplan. The course director will develop and nurture the skill sets of his team, and work closely with the general manager, and report directly to the respective Council Member.
11. Re-establish the club on a firm financial footing through a considered mix of financial and revenue generating activities. Publish quarterly profit and loss accounts to the membership so members can monitor and evaluate the financial status of the club.
12. Start the journey to establish FGC as a top 10 rated 9-hole golf course in Britain & Ireland. This will raise the club's profile 'as a hidden gem' not only regionally but nationally. FGC should become a leading example of the merits of 9-hole golf in today's time-poor leisure environment. The roll-out of the newly designed website will greatly support this initiative whilst also improving the quality of experience for current and future users.
13. FGC will become both welcoming and exclusive in equal measure with a waiting list for membership that brings long-term financial sustainability. Exclusivity in terms that many people will want to join, not in terms that it is so expensive only the wealthy can afford, nor dependent upon a members sex, age, race, or occupation.



14.0 Conclusion

Flempton Golf Club to recover its good standing within the golfing community and return to being *'the local golf club of choice'* needs to adopt a strategy that is ambitious but has a clear vision for the way forward.

It is fundamental that the membership and finances are returned to a level that will allow a sustainable evolution. Members need to be informed about the direction that the club needs to take and the scale of the challenges faced to allow the outlined strategy and advocated solutions within this pathway document to be agreed upon and action taken. It is vital that;

1. The Management Council works effectively together and communicates with the membership so that we can achieve our shared goals. The Management Council are ultimately held accountable by the membership.
2. The club achieves an 'engaged' membership that are aware of the real challenges the club faces, which is essential to nurture trust in the Management Council now and in the years ahead.
3. A sensible and detailed fully costed Business plan is developed within 9 months. This can only be achieved with the support of its members. Our membership has numerous skill sets that need to be identified and utilised. Members will be essential to work for or support sub-committees that will be tasked with specific, time-orientated projects that will help develop the business plan.
4. The club's finances stabilise not only for the day-to-day running of the club but importantly to enable the club's reserves to build in the years ahead.
5. There is an acknowledgement that it is the full playing membership subscriptions that contribute by far the most to the recurring income of the club. Therefore, there needs to be an acceptance by the members that the membership must significantly grow and exceed the levels of previous years.
6. Development and enhancement in the clubs key asset *'the course'* must be addressed to aid membership retention and recruitment.
7. If members both long-standing and new want to enjoy a welcoming, self-sustaining and exclusive members club, the course, practice facilities, clubhouse, staff facilities and customer service levels must strive to be 'best in class'.
8. Club cash reserves are not used to plug any future operating deficits.
9. Members acknowledge that the club has reached a point in its development where it needs to appoint a professional general manager in a paid position.



10. Everyone in a position of responsibility recognises the importance of good accurate communication to and from the membership of FGC of all the challenges, difficulties and successes the club has now and in the years ahead.

11. Everyone acknowledges that it will take time to deliver and overcome all the challenges that currently face FGC, but with continuity of both leadership and purpose that is to be provided by the detailed 5-10 year business plan the future of the club can be a very positive one that we can all be proud of.