



THE DRIFT GOLF CLUB

FIVE YEAR ROLLING PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS

1st APRIL 2017

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Introduction & History

The Drift Golf Club was formed and founded in 1975. Professional golfer, Sir Henry Cotton, and golf course architect, Robert Sandow, were jointly appointed to design the course and nine holes opened for play in the summer of 1975. The excellent layout was cleverly designed to make the most of the beautiful site and mature oak woodlands. Initial work concentrated mainly on the construction of greens and tees but over the years to enhance the individuality of each hole a number of small ponds and some bunkering have been added to some of the holes.

The course is a par 73 measuring 6,447 yards from the white tees and a Par 72 measuring 5,443 from the red tees. With an interesting mix of par 3's, 4's and 5's the current course is arranged in two loops of nine holes with the 9th and 18th greens returning to the clubhouse. The club benefits from four starting points with the 6th and 15th holes, in addition to the 1st and 10th tees all located in close proximity to the clubhouse. The holes are arranged in a varied manner with no more than two consecutive holes running parallel to each other.

The current owners purchased the club in May 2001 and since then the owners have invested heavily in developing the facilities for the enjoyment of Members and visitors alike. The Owners, Management and Members should be proud of the progress made over the years, especially in the desire to make the Drift Golf Club the **"Club of Choice"** in the area.

However, we should not be satisfied with resting on our laurels and now is the time to build upon the efforts to date and take the Club to the next level. This will primarily be achieved by investing further in making improvements to four key areas:

- 1. Clubhouse**
- 2. Driving Range & Practice Facilities**
- 3. Staff Training & Development**
- 4. Golf Course**

The aim is to accomplish upgrades in all these areas whilst retaining the ethos of being a friendly member orientated club, in touch with modern trends, not afraid to move with the times but committed to retaining the best traditions the wonderful game of golf offers.

This document deals mainly with the proposed works to be carried out over the next five years. It is a working document that is subject to change as time moves forward and new ideas develop.

Incorporating significant feedback from Club committees, the wider membership and staff a thorough appraisal of the four key areas was carried out by Jon Connell, Managing Director, Ben Beagley, General Manager, Mark Ogden, Course Manager, Sam Quirke, Head Golf Professional and Paddy Flavin, Golf Consultant.

The works highlighted in this document are in addition to the annual maintenance works carried out by Mark Ogden and his Green-keeping team.

1. Clubhouse

Whilst most of the investment by the current owners has been undertaken on the course, the clubhouse has also benefitted from considerable enhancement most recently through the installation of the lift to the first floor and the front office upgrade currently taking place. The reputation the club now enjoys as an excellent hospitality venue for lunch, dinners and functions does, on occasions, cause operational issues. The desire within this plan is to extend the clubhouse by building a 'Golfers only lounge bar' separate from the existing lounge and restaurant areas and whilst undertaking this extension possibly increase the size of the upstairs function room. This significant enhancement is of course subject to achieving the necessary planning permission.

Exterior

As part of the Five Year Plan we need to consider what external aesthetic enhancements should be undertaken.

At the entrance to our driveway we would like to install new gates, welcome signs and walls all of which will be subject to the usual planning constraints, along with the planting of new trees either side of the drive to create an 'avenue' which will hopefully form a grander sense of arrival at the Club.

Our desire is to significantly improve the patio areas by reviewing the required areas, re-bedding, leveling, replacing broken paving slabs and introducing further planted areas to particularly break up the entrance to the club house. Whilst undertaking the patio works we will undertake a review of both the shoe cleaning area and walk off the 18th hole to ensure both these areas are not unsightly but instead create the right lasting impression. A bespoke shoe and trolley cleaning area will include steel grids for ease of use.

We will also consider creating a patio area for function guests that allows both golfing and function visitors separate outside areas to enjoy the Drift hospitality.

Further works to complete the screening to the irrigation tanks will be undertaken between the lake and the tank.

New lighting will be installed in the car park to eradicate the current issues. Once the electrical works are completed we will top up the bases with some low maintenance year-round plants and shrubs such as heathers, ivy's and lavenders. Like the beds around the clubhouse could this be a Member led activity?

Interior

Internal decoration is an annual task, which in year one will concentrate on refreshing the reception office with new flooring, decoration, storage and customer seating to promote and more open, modern, welcoming and professional feel.

Further improvements to the locker rooms will be carried out including shower facility upgrades.

Kitchen equipment upgrades will also be necessary with a new Carvery serving unit for the Pheasant suite top of the current list.

2. Driving Range & Practice Facilities

The Club benefits from having a large central practice range, which has the potential to become one of the best facilities in Surrey & the wider South East. At present it is wide open often giving the appearance of being unkempt due to a lack of screening and for many years the range has suffered from appalling drainage causing it to sometimes have to close during very wet periods.

In 2013 the Club embarked on what was hoped would be a relatively straight forward request to build an irrigation storage lake, reshape the outfield using inert soil and a water harvesting scheme to eradicate the drainage issues and build a 30 bay driving range that allows us to develop a **Teaching Golf Academy** for the benefit of members, local schools and the local community.

Unfortunately obtaining permission was anything but easy but after three years of hard work in December 2016 Surrey County Council finally approved our application. We are now working through the planning conditions and we very much hope this major improvement project will commence in either late 2017 or early 2018 and take about twelve months to complete.

Once constructed the new facilities will create one of the best targeted driving ranges allowing us to become a Teaching Academy of the highest caliber.

With state of the art technology, including swing analysis, launch monitors which measure the balls spin, distance, height. Furthermore, tracking of the clubhead including measurements for the path, angle of attack, and the angle of the face at impact. A variety of dedicated short game practice areas will be created including bunker practice, chipping and pitching areas and a new large undulating putting green, located close to the first tee which mirrors the type of putts experienced on the course and will be of sufficient size to provide space for numerous flags and some long and interesting putts!

In addition, our ecological credentials will be significantly enhanced by the water harvesting scheme created underneath the reshaped targeted outfield and through the solar panels that will be installed on the roof of the range which should make the electricity used by the range sustainable.

3. Staff Training & Team Development

The Drift Golf Club aims to provide excellent careers in an exciting, positive, and safe working environment.

Further actions have been identified to enhance HR practices and service standards at the Club, including;

- Develop the new staff induction process with additional mandatory online training courses prior to first shift.
- All staff to undertake further customer service training.
- Annual staff appraisals and job description reviews.
- Identify training required to encourage career and team development within the Club enabling excellent staff satisfaction and retention.
- Review and implement new staff hand book with revised 'standard operating procedures'.

4. Golf Course

In 2008 Ken Moodie, from Creative Golf Design, Ken Brown, PGA Professional and television commentator and John Nicholson, qualified arboriculturalist, were appointed to undertake a proposal for course improvement. The program of improvement from that report commenced in 2009 and continues to the present day.

In 2011 a fully automated Toro irrigation system to all greens, tees, approaches and fairways was undertaken by contractors Lakes & Greens.

The courses reputation for producing quality playing surfaces for golfers of all abilities to enjoy continues to grow and many of the greenkeeping practices, such as significant top dressing to the greens and continuous aeration will remain as standard practice. The main desire is to continue to improve the all year-round playability of the course both through drainage and path network development and enhancements and to continue to ensure playing surfaces of the highest standard are achieved during the extended playing season.

Greens

Over the last few years in addition to creating new run off areas and generally taking the areas of semi rough away from the green surrounds to create finer turf so a variety of short game shots can be played, a policy has been in place to enlarge the putting surfaces where ever possible. In addition to constantly reviewing the mowing practices of each fairway the green enlargement policy will continue.

Tees

In recent years certain holes have either had new tees installed or had existing tees enlarged and refurbished. Improvements have occurred at 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 16. Further significant tee improvements will take place over the next 5 years and details about which holes are to be given priority can be found in the hole by hole analysis later in the document.

In addition to the tee renovation works the distance from tee to fairway will be reviewed and reduced where it is felt the carry is excessive.

Fairways

The course remains narrow in certain places, particularly on some of the front nine holes and although we enjoy a reputation as providing a tough test of golf we want to try and develop a reputation of fairness where the course rewards a well struck shot, is not too narrow and penal for high handicappers and bunkers and other hazards are placed at distances and in positions that test the best.

Ecology

The Club benefits from many varieties of wildlife living within our ecologically diverse environment and one of the main aims of this new Five Year plan is to enhance the clubs ecological reputation. Enhancements, particularly through woodland management, pond clearance and a sympathetic attitude to the use of fertilizers, fungicides and pesticides has always been part of the club strategy but our desire is to create further biodiversity through additional wildflower and wetland habitats mainly in locations that have little or no effect on play such as around the refurbished driving range.

Woodland Management

Woodland management was one of the main areas highlighted by the 2008 course improvement report and in 2009 extensive clearance work was undertaken, particularly to the back nine holes which previously had rather a claustrophobic feel to them due to significant rhododendron encroachment. Since the work the back nine holes benefit from more variety as there is generally more width between trees on each side of the fairway and a greater variety of terrain.

Many of the front nine holes still play through narrow corridors of woodland and have a rather claustrophobic feel to them. The intension is therefore to concentrate the next phase of woodland management to the following holes 5, 6, 7, and 13. As a way of compensating for the loss of any trees the intention is to bolster stock in certain areas, particularly around the redesigned driving range outfield and on certain holes detailed in the hole by hole analysis. This will not only give a wider age to our trees, essential to any woodland management plan, but will also mean we will be planting significantly more trees than we take out.

In addition, many fast-growing species of shrubs have encroached amongst the trees and the canopies of the mature trees have become increasingly lower reinforcing the "tight" feel to many of these holes. We therefore propose to further thin out the shrubs and bramble and remove low branches and weaker trees to not only help the course breath and dry out more quickly in prolonged wet periods but to also allow the better and healthier specimens of English Oak to develop and flourish.

Essentially, further sympathetic tree clearance work will create more distinctive and strategic holes which can be further enhanced by the introduction of fairway bunkers. A good example of this is on the 2nd hole.

Bunkers

Having strategically placed bunkers is an essential part to the make-up and canvas of any Club and hole. Bunkers provide a strong visual impact on the course and for many players dictate their shot choice.

The Drift does not have significant bunkering. In 2009 and 2010 new bunkering and re-siting and refurbishment of existing bunkering took place on holes 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 18. The bunkers that were not refurbished as part of those works need to be brought up to the same standards. Some are not located in the best place or presented in the best possible condition as they have become contaminated over the years and suffer from poor drainage.

The intention is to completely renovate all the bunkers including new drainage and sand, starting with holes 1, 5, 6, 7 and 15. The bunker style is similar throughout the course with most having a high sand face and of relatively small size. It is proposed that a variety of bunker size and shape is adopted when the renovation is carried out thereby giving each hole its own character whilst retaining the same sand and lining.

Path Network

The path network is an essential part of winter golf at the club. The existing network will be refurbished within the plan but more importantly new paths to certain holes such as the 9th will be installed in an effort to keep buggy access to the course available as much as possible.

Summary

Overall, when considering the improvements to the golf course, we have striven to make the experience a fair one whereby a poorly struck shot is penalised yet the player may, in most cases, recover the ball and secure the opportunity to choose between risk and reward.

A quote from Creative Golf in 2008 read:

"The strategy of the golf course is the soul of the game. The spirit of golf is to dare a hazard, and by negotiating it reap a reward, while he/she who fears or declines the issue of a carry, has a longer or harder shot for his/her second, or his/her second and third on long holes; yet the player who avoids the unwise effort gains advantage over one who tries for more than in him/her lies, or who fails under the test. "

We believe that the proposed improvements will both add to the enjoyment for golfers of all standards whilst embodying the spirit of the Game. Course conditions greatly influence the playability of any course and we believe that the measures outlined will enhance the playing surfaces on a year- round basis.

During our assessment we have considered the effect any changes will have on safety. By raising the canopy on many of the lower hanging trees we will reduce the risk of a ball ricocheting back onto a player.

In comparison to many other courses we are very lucky to have good separation between each hole. Access and egress from tees have been carefully assessed and where sleeper steps are in place the treads are all to be treated with a slip resistant surface.

The principal areas considered for Course improvement are as follows:

Fine turf areas will continue to be developed through, top dressing, aeration and revised mowing regimes.

Ecological enhancement through the creation of new and development of existing bio diversified habitats and woodland management.

Selective tree removal and canopy raising throughout to widen the feel of holes, aid air circulation and to allow more sunlight to the grasses beneath the trees.

Raise canopy of rhododendrons off the ground to promote a 'shaped/managed' look, allowing the golfer to retrieve an unplayable ball beneath the plant.

Improve Safety by continuing to roll-out of "grip clad" on treads of sleeper steps.

Develop sward density to allow improved definition between approach, fairway, semi rough and rough areas. This will also soften the bounce and enhance visual appeal.

Repair sunken drain lines by removing strips of turf, leveling, and re-laying with new turf creating a level surface and obviating the need for moving a ball at rest and install new drainage to the wettest areas.

Completely review and renovate all bunkers creating excellent drainage and consistency of sand.

Enhance, extend, and refurbish the path network to particularly help winter golf.

Create new and relevel existing teeing areas to selected holes.

Hole by Hole: Works Analysis and Proposals

General improvements applicable on several holes

- Raise the canopy of all trees abutting the fairway and remove dead roots.
- Top up sunken drainage lines and re-turf with new grass.
- Scarify the bare areas and over-seed with new grass seed, paying particular attention to improving definition between fairway and semi-rough.
- Conclude the safety works to the steps leading to the tees.

Front 9

1st Hole

- Create a sense of arrival and first impression.
- Consider box hedging and or additional colourful planting.
- Tidy up the Starters Hut and provide new signs welcoming golfers.
- Remove selective trees on left side particularly at the beginning of the hole to give greater choice of shot.
- Install a new yellow tee.
- Move greenside bunker further left and renovate and reshape this hazard.
- Enlarging the approach area will also allow the creation of a bigger 'entry' to the green.

2nd Hole

- Further tree and shrub/bramble clearing to left-hand side of the fairway.
- Install a new white tee raised in to bank of proposed storage lake.
- Install extensive drainage on fairway and to fairway bunker.
- Ensure greenside bunker drains properly.
- Lower height of the greenside bunker face slightly allowing better visibility of the flag stick from tee & fairway.
- Cut fairway closer to Ladies tee.

3rd Hole

- Renovate steps on to yellow and red tees.
- Reshape green mowing to reduce central pinch point thereby creating more pin placements.
- Ensure bunkers drain properly.

4th Hole

- Carry out scrub clearance on the left of tee area to open the views allowing free air movement and giving more sunlight to the tee.
- Improve drainage in and around fairway bunkers.
- Build a new yellow tee.
- Repair and improve paths to the 5th tees for ladies and gents.

5th Hole

- Remove selective trees down left hand side of hole.
- Install a new yellow tee to extend to par 5 distance.
- Use existing yellow tee for winter golf.
- Renovate, reshape & drain greenside bunker.
- Remove rushes from the water hazard to improve visibility particularly to the front (tee) side of the hazard.
- Install new fairway bunker as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.

6th Hole

- Remove trees on right hand side of landing zone to steer play away from 7th tee and to encourage more aggressive play from the tee.
- Install new drainage to fairway to alleviate puddles and raise sunken areas.
- Bring landing area of fairway closer to the tee to reduce the carry and improve the definition.
- Renovate, reshape & drain greenside bunker.
- Repair and improve the path to the 7th tee, particularly to the ladies tee.

7th Hole

- Strip off the turf, level and widen white tee area at rear.
- Re-construct the steps to the extended men's white tee including carrying out safety improvements to the treads.
- Level out the remainder of the men's tee.
- Renovate, reshape & drain greenside bunker.
- Remove selective trees down left hand side of hole creating a larger target area off the tee.
- Install drainage to left side of the green.

8th Hole

- Construct a new post and rail fence around tee to encourage use of steps.
- Remove poplars down left side of hole and repair area with new turf grass.
- Install a new pathway left of and behind green to spread the traffic load in winter.
- Install new bunkering as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.
- Alter shape of mounding as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.
- Expose and clear ditches between 8th and 9th holes.
- Introduce wild flower areas in woodland behind green.

9th Hole

- Thin out weak specimen trees around the white tee to allow exposure to sunlight. This will also aid the free passage of air movement which will improve the health of the sward in this area.
- Reconstruct and enlarge the yellow tee.
- Level the ladies tee.
- Refurbish, reshape and drain greenside bunker allowing for increasing the size of the green.
- Clear ditches left of white tee to increase the effectiveness of the drainage.
- Carry out scrub and tree clearance to the area left of tee to widen the feel and to expose the line of mature trees.
- Extend path network the length of hole.
- Improve fairway drainage and bring fairway back towards Ladies tee.
- Introduce fescue grasses over mounding on right side.

Back 9

10th Hole

- Reduce the reeds and rushes in the ponds to increase the visibility of the fairway from the tee.
- Extend the buggy path to skirt the left side of the ponds thereby creating different routes for winter play.
- Remove dead trees in the right side woodland at the upper part of the fairway.
- Cut back and contain rhododendrons and laurel encroachment up the left-hand side of fairway.
- Enlarge and level the ladies tee.
- Expose the more mature broad leaf trees by clearing debris all the way up the left-hand side.
- Drain the tops of the mounds and over seed with fescue grass to create better definition.
- Plant new trees and add wildflower areas between 10th and 18th holes.

11th Hole

- Remove heavy foliage around the tee to allow the free passage of air and sunlight.
- Canopy raising left of green / remove scrub and grow rough to 'hold' golf balls running off left side of green
- Selected tree removal and intensive rhododendron removal management for 50metres on top right side of hole.
- Selective foliage removal on left of green to open views, air, and light movement.
- Grow a band of fescue grass 4 meters wide to prevent the balls rolling off the left-hand side of the green.
- Extend the front of the green by mowing.

12th Hole

- Raise the canopy of trees to either side of the path to 12th teeing ground.
- Cultivate the planted area behind the tee and over-seed with wild flowers, this could be a Member led project.
- Join all teeing areas to create one large teeing ground allowing many varied tee placements thereby spreading the wear.
- Remove selected trees and carry out aggressive rhododendron management on left side of hole taking them back to the line of the mature birch trees.
- Reshape rhododendrons on the right of the 12th fairway

13th Hole

- Install a new white tee and consider locating further back into trees thereby lengthening the hole.
- Construct new steps to rear tee and cover all treads with safety material.
- Level and drain ladies tee.
- Install fairway and greenside bunkering as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.
- Remove selective trees along left side of fairway, replace with semi rough.
- Create a new path to the 14th tees.
- Install further drainage to wet greenside and approach areas.

14th Hole

- Carry out selective tree removal around white tee to aid air circulation, sunlight to the tee and open views across the adjacent fields.
- Consider enlarging white tee.
- Widen walk off area to the right of the green and consider reshaping mounding.
- Introduce wild flower areas around white tee.

15th Hole

- Connect 15th Greenkeeping path to back of 17th tee and install drainage at same time.
- Create a new white tee further back and to the left of the existing tee to lengthen hole.
- Level and drain ladies tee.
- Remove selective trees on the left side at the tee shot landing area.
- Clear dead trees and bushes on the left taking care to leave sufficient to screen the rear of the 17th green.
- Remove the greenside bunker on left and replace with a drained grassy hollow.
- Install new bunker on right of green as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.
- Tidy the area leading to the 16th tee by creating a new pathway.
- Improve drainage down left hand side of hole.

16th Hole

- Reshape and refurbish greenside bunkers as per Moodie/Brown course improvement report.
- Carry out tree removal and the canopy raising on the right side of hole particularly where they abut the greenside bunker.
- Add wildflower areas in woodland between 15th and 16th holes.

17th Hole

- Extend existing path to continue further up the hill on the right-hand side.
- Add drainage to start of fairway landing area and bring fairway back towards Ladies tee.
- Reshape the mounding across the approach to the green.
- Clear debris from the right of the fairway at the top end of the hole.
- Clear reeds from the pond and define the hazard clearly.
- Plant new trees between 12th and 17th hole.

18th Hole

- Carry out tree removal around tee to allow free passage of air particularly at the rear. Quality of grass on the tee should significantly improve.
- Extensive deadwood clearance in the rough areas between holes 10 and 18 is to be carried out allowing the promotion and growth of fescue grasses.
- Plant new trees and wildflower areas between 10th and 18th holes.
- Improve drainage to approach bunkers.
- Plant new trees or foliage to protect the new 15th rear tee.
- Create a definite exit route off the rear of the green.

Investment

The owners have a track record of investing in the club year in year out. The proposals contained within this **Five Year Plan** will be expensive to achieve, however the Directors are committed to making the investment and by doing so continuing to take the Club forward and grow our reputation both locally and in the wider golfing community.

These are exciting times for the Club and it is hoped that these proposals will be supported wholeheartedly by the Membership and that this is demonstrated through your continued patronage.

