



General Manager's Update: December 2022

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) nearly one year ago, I presented [a five-year strategic plan](#). To help you prepare for the 2023 AGM in January, here is a summary of the progress made on this plan to date:

Project 1 : Clubhouse

- Installed new windows in the clubhouse flat.
- Painted the clubhouse exterior.
- Paid for upgrading and moving the electricity transformer, but the work has been postponed to early 2023 as we explore removing the poles from the range to open up more space and future proof an area for juniors.
- Repaired the roof but a more comprehensive schedule of works will be carried out over the next few years.
- Upgraded the septic tank pump as the existing system could not handle the load and burned out during the recent heavy rainfall. An extension to the septic tank lid will be completed at the same time as the new greenkeeping welfare unit.
- Upgraded the coffee machine and improved its presentation in the lounge.
- Engaged an external company to conduct a Health and Safety audit. Their recommendations are being implemented in both the clubhouse, greenkeeping facility and golf course.

Project 2 : Greenkeeping facility

- It was hoped this work would be underway, but we have had to sort through some planning permission issues and are close to resolving them. We will give a start date as soon as we have it confirmed but it's important to have ticked all the boxes in preparation.
- The welfare unit will be the first capital improvement project undertaken.
- We will use the area that has been marked out for the new shed extension as a site compound to start.
- We have put in place a machine replacement program and have hired a new mechanic.

Project 3 : Improvements to the course

- These are ongoing and will be discussed more below.
- This winter we have completed the enhanced 2nd tee complex and walkway. Have begun work on enhancement of the 3rd tee complex. Next up will be the 17th walkways. It should be mentioned that the greenstaff completed all the irrigation install on the new 2nd tee complex and walkways in-house for the first time including all the electrics – so well done.
- Will install a new red tee on the 3rd and a new red/green tee on the 5th.
- Completed removal of the trees at the 17th and the shrub behind the 15th green.

Project 4 : Pro-shop refurbishment

- As the planning permission for this project was tied to that of the greenkeeping facility, we are behind with a start date.
- Design of the shop layout and swing studio are underway.

Project 5 : Irrigation upgrade

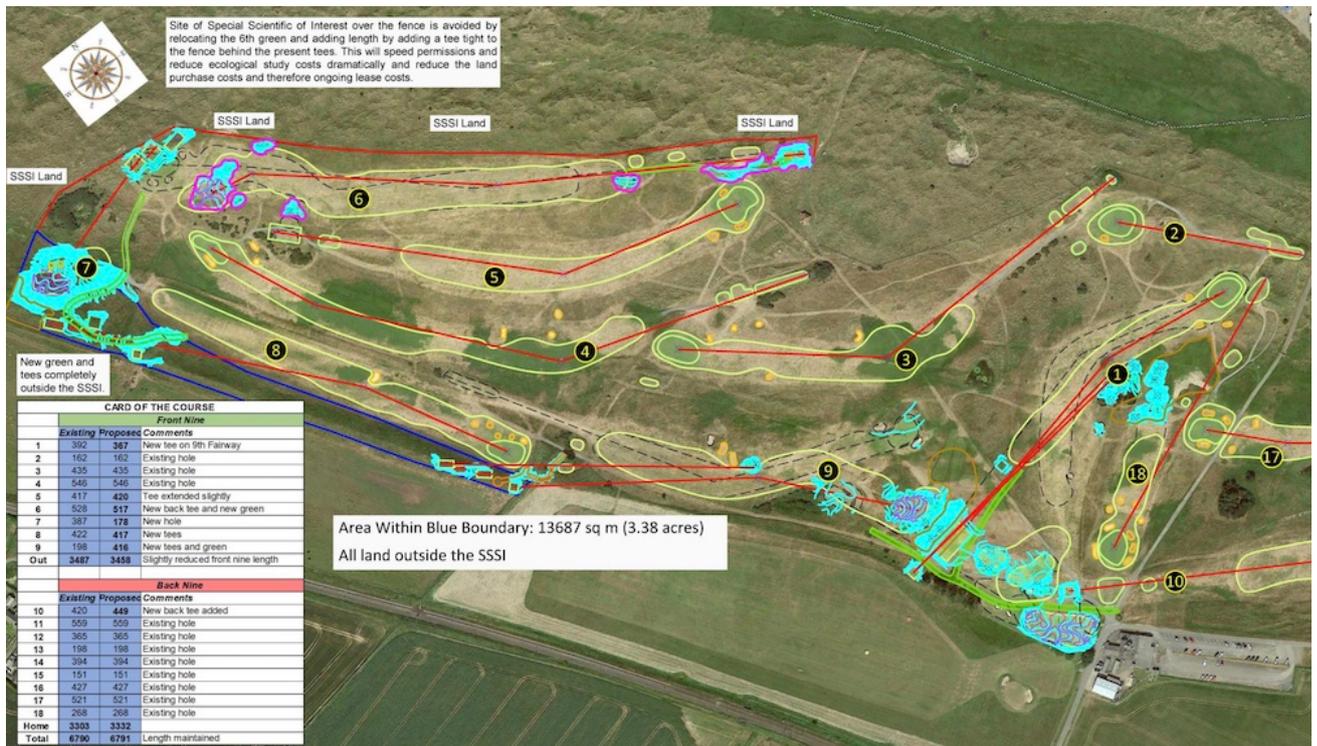
- Have now extended the irrigation to all the tees that will not be altered as part of the course changes. This will make a huge difference moving forward.
- Will irrigate all new grass walkways installed this winter.
- Have added irrigation to the practice chipping green and towards the end of the range. This will provide a water source for our turf nursery that is being grown in to help with the course changes program.

Additional updates will be provided at the AGM if there are any changes.

However, part of the meeting will be dedicated to voting on the timings and costings related to the course changes approved in June. The balance of this newsletter aims to help you get fully up to speed on these plans.

Front 9 Course Changes: Detailed Plans

Overview



At the general meeting in June, Goswick’s members approved by a vote of 86% in favour a motion to change five holes on the front nine as proposed by the golf course architect firm of Mackenzie & Ebert and to take the project to the next step: look at land options, find out costings and develop an implementation plan. [The minutes of that meeting, which summarize the discussion among those present, can be found by clicking here.](#)

A schematic of the approved changes can be seen above and a computer-generated rendering of the new layout is presented below.

This document walks through each of the changes, hole by hole, and explains the thinking behind them, the methods that will be employed to carry them out and the timing and cost for each. You will also find a list of answers to frequently asked questions that have been voiced by members since June.

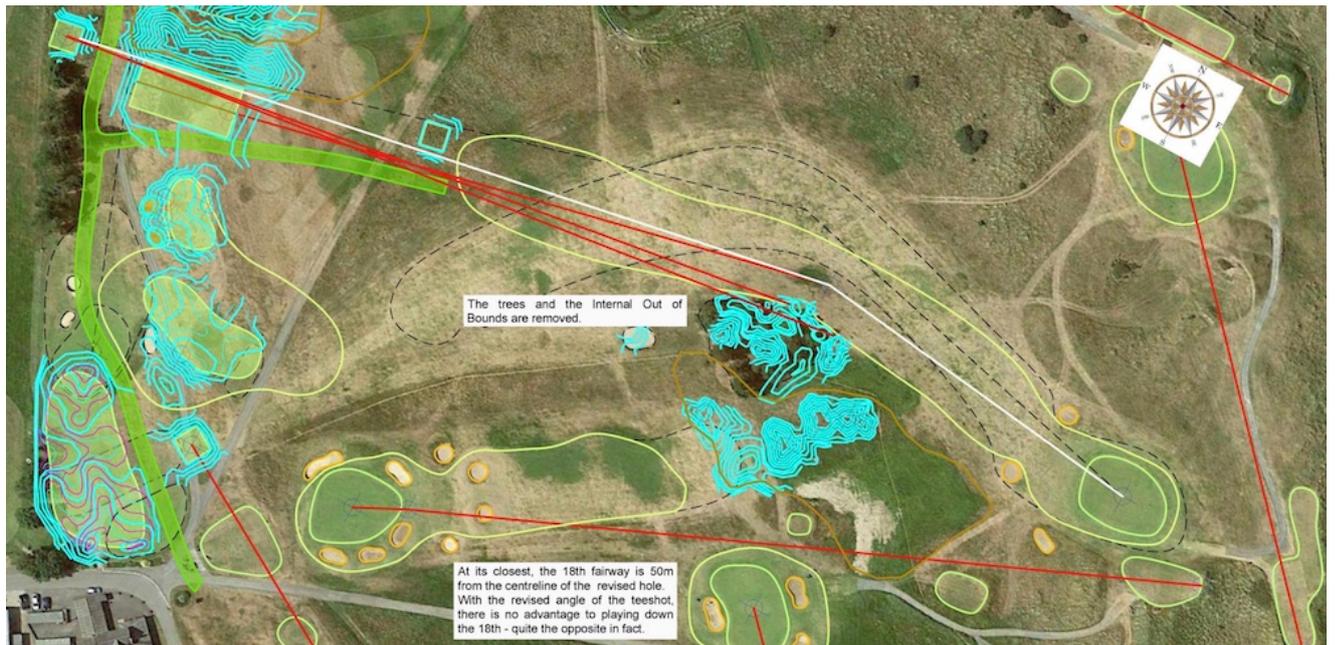
Before diving into the details, members should know that the proposed timeline for this project has shifted from what was discussed at the general meeting to accommodate the demands of hosting Open Championship regional qualifying in 2023 and 2024. This shift will also allow us to spread the workload and the costs over a longer timeline, making it less challenging to implement.

Also, though not part of this specific plan, we also intend to enhance the 4th and 5th tee sites and walkways over the same timeline. This will make it possible to complete the conversion of all remaining gravel walkways on the front 9 when the other changes are completed.

Members who have questions and/or comments that they'd like to express prior to the AGM are invited to do so by contacting me directly at keith@goswickgolfclub.com.

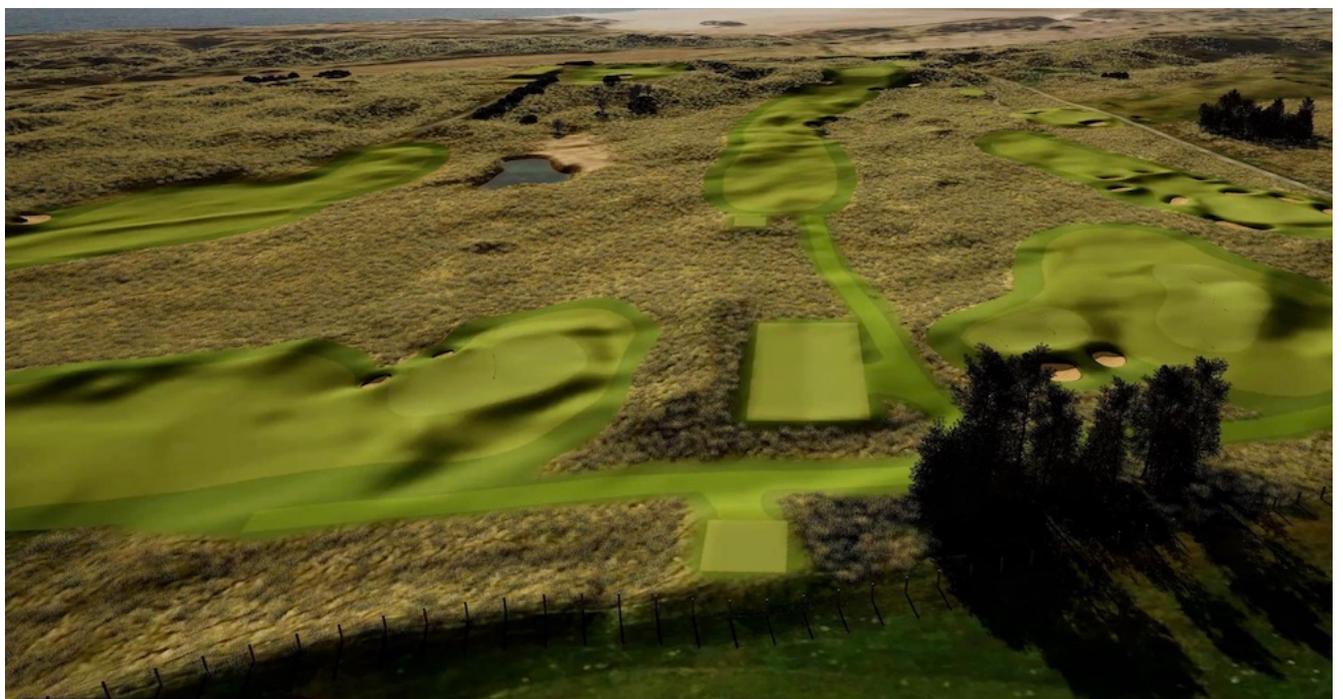


Improved 1st Hole



Summary

Goswick is a strong links course yet gets off to an uninspiring start that relies on internal out of bounds and a copse of trees at the corner of the dogleg to create difficulty. These features are not a good fit with an authentic and natural links. Removing the current 9th hole allows the 1st hole tees to be swung to the left. This straightens the hole and eliminates the need for the out-of-character obstacles. Additional design elements will ensure there is no advantage to playing down the 18th hole.



Method

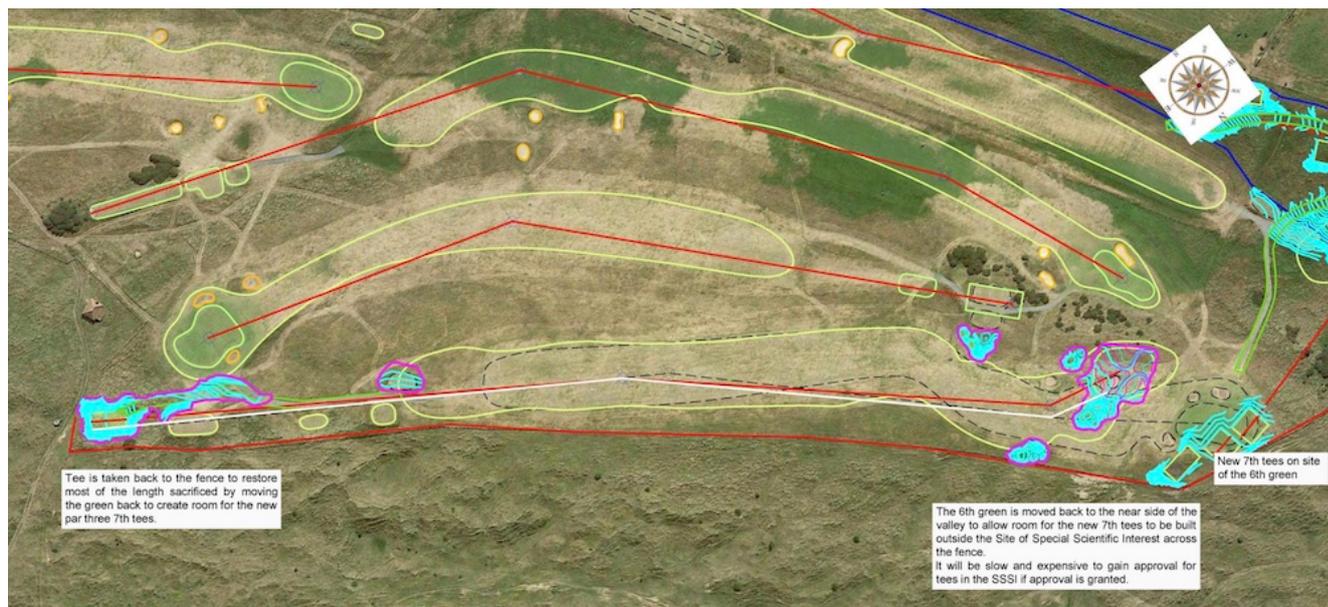
This alteration will include the following steps:

- Remove the trees with the help of a tree surgeon.
- Strip, mound, turf and plant the area with marram grass to restore a natural look and feel.
- Add and revet a fairway bunker.
- Add a walkway from the tees to the fairway through the current junior course.
- Mound and shape either side of the walkway to add protection and definition.
- Seed the walkway and turf the mounding with sod gained in removing the junior course.
- Mound to protect and create tee pads, these will be turfed. Mounding will be created in such a way as to further restrict and discourage attempts to hit tee shots down the 18th fairway.

Timing

The plan is to seed the walkway in spring/early summer 2023, with the majority of the work to be carried out in winter 2024.

Improved 6th Hole



Summary

After weighing multiple options (including purchasing land for new tees in an area that, after consulting with England Natural Heritage, was discovered to be SAC designated), it was determined that it was necessary re-site the green on the 6th hole to create the best possible new 7th hole (the replacement for the current 9th). This course of action is not being taken lightly. A key determining factor is that there is an alternative position for a new 6th green that will result in a par-5 that is every bit as good as the current one, potentially even better. While building a new green does add some cost to the project, Goswick is blessed with wonderful sand-based turf that makes the undertaking far less daunting than if it were a parkland course.

To retain the length of the hole, a new tee will be built back near the boundary of the course and the Shiel. This will create a more optimal landing area for most tee shots. Note that the fairway will be extended back in sync with the relocation of the tee to maintain essentially the same length of forced carry.



Method

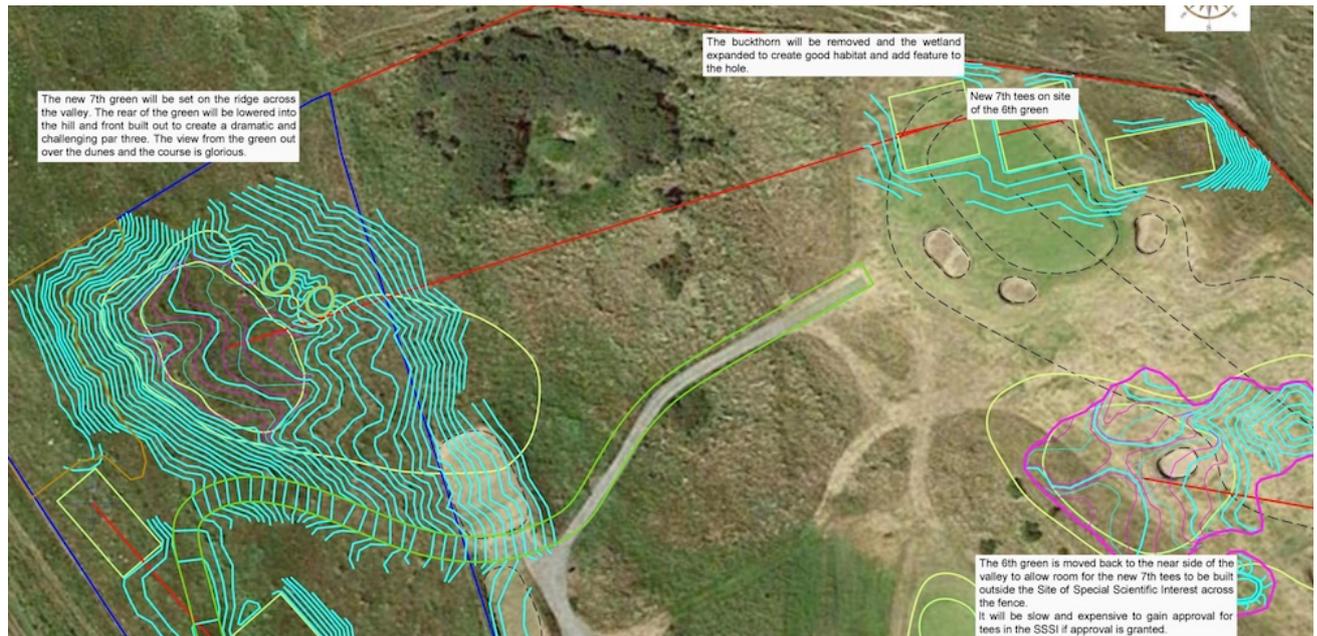
This alteration will include the following steps:

- Strip and shape the new green area and turf using sod from the current 6th green.
- Extend irrigation to the new green and surround.
- Lower the current yellow/white tee by a few feet to ensure a clear view of the landing area from the new tee.
- Remove the current red tee.
- Extend the fairway back in line with the new yellow/white tee (replicating the current landing zone distance).
- The current green tee will become the new red tee.
- The current yellow/white tee will become the new green tee.
- Shape and turf the walkway and add irrigation.

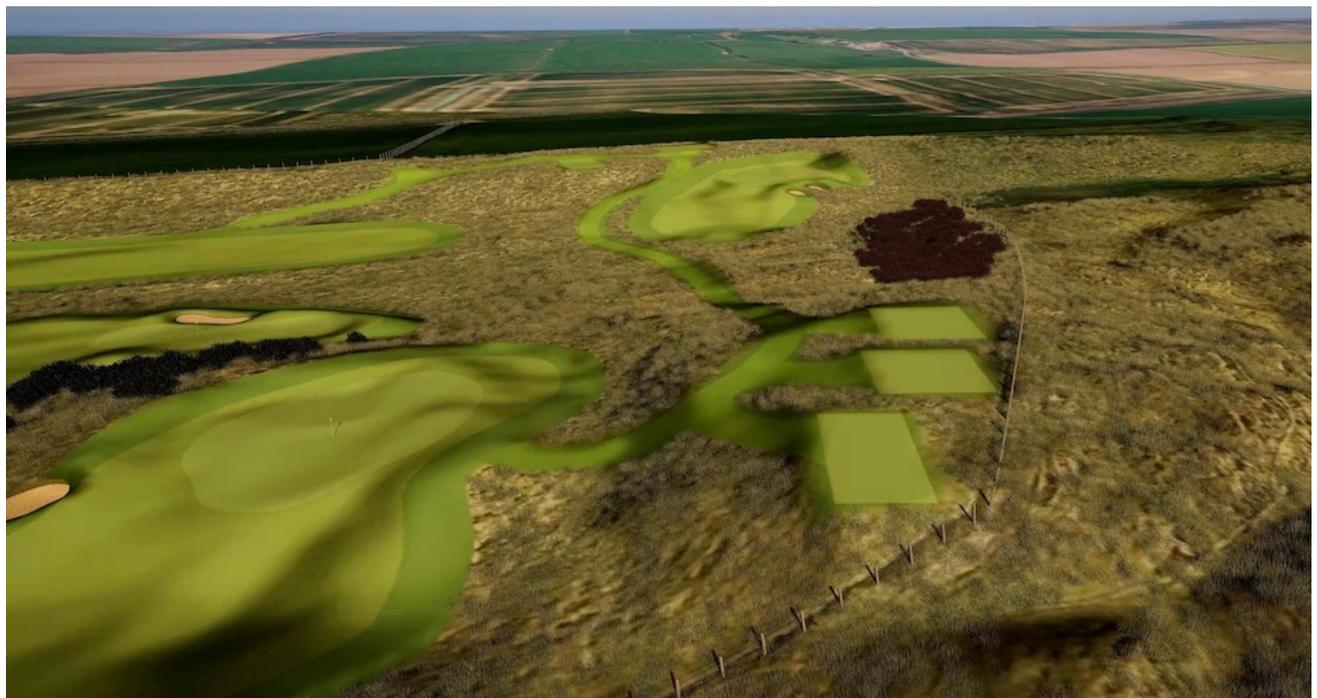
Timing

This work will commence winter 2024.

New 7th Hole



This new par-3, replacing the current 9th hole, will significantly strengthen the front 9. The tees will be built on the site of the current 6th green and the green will be set on the ridge across the valley, creating a dramatic and challenging hole. Also, its length (178 yards from the back tee) and direction (to the southwest) perfectly complement that of the existing three par-3s, helping to balance the overall course. And to top it off, the view from the green back toward the dunes on the other side of the boundary fence is stunning.



Method

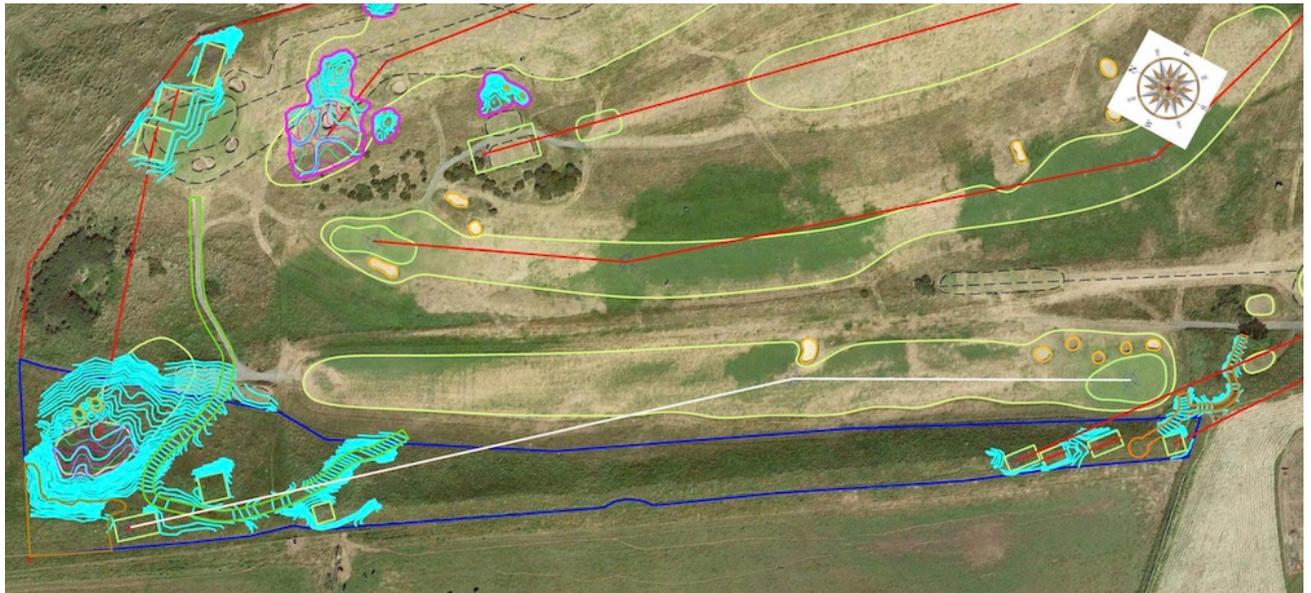
This alteration will include the following steps:

- Coordinate with the landlord to purchase the 1.4 acres of land required for the new 7th green and 8th tees and lease it to the club. This purchase will require a change-of-use planning consent. This process is currently underway.
- Adhere to a strong ecological methodology plan that essentially treats the site of the new green, which is close to an area that is designated as SSSI, as if it were subject to such restrictions. This will reduce the risk of contamination. The club has been in contact with England Natural Heritage regarding the construction method.
- Hire a shaper to strip the area in large chunks of turf and shape the sand below to the specifications in the architect's drawings.
- Extend irrigation to the new green and surround.
- Add nutrients to the inert sand, then hydro-seed with a fescue mix.
- All rootzone will be from within the site. No additional drainage will be needed (this is why costs are minimal – golf greens created on a parkland site need drainage or USGA specifications; this site will be naturally draining).
- Give the new green up to two years to grow in before opening it up for play.
- Shape, seed and irrigate the walkways as needed.
- Turf all mounding on both the green and surround with turf harvested from the stripped site.

Timing

If the change-of-use planning consent is finalized as anticipated, we will start this work in spring/early summer 2023. That will give us the most time to grow in the green for a potential opening in spring 2025.

New 8th Hole



The location of the new 7th green leads naturally to placing the tees for the new 8th hole up onto the ridge. This opens up a wonderful view of the entire hole and creates an angled approach to the fairway that lets each player choose the optimum line based on how far they are able to drive the ball. This change will also lengthen the hole by up to 30 yards, helping to offset the slight shortening of some of the other holes on the front 9.



Method

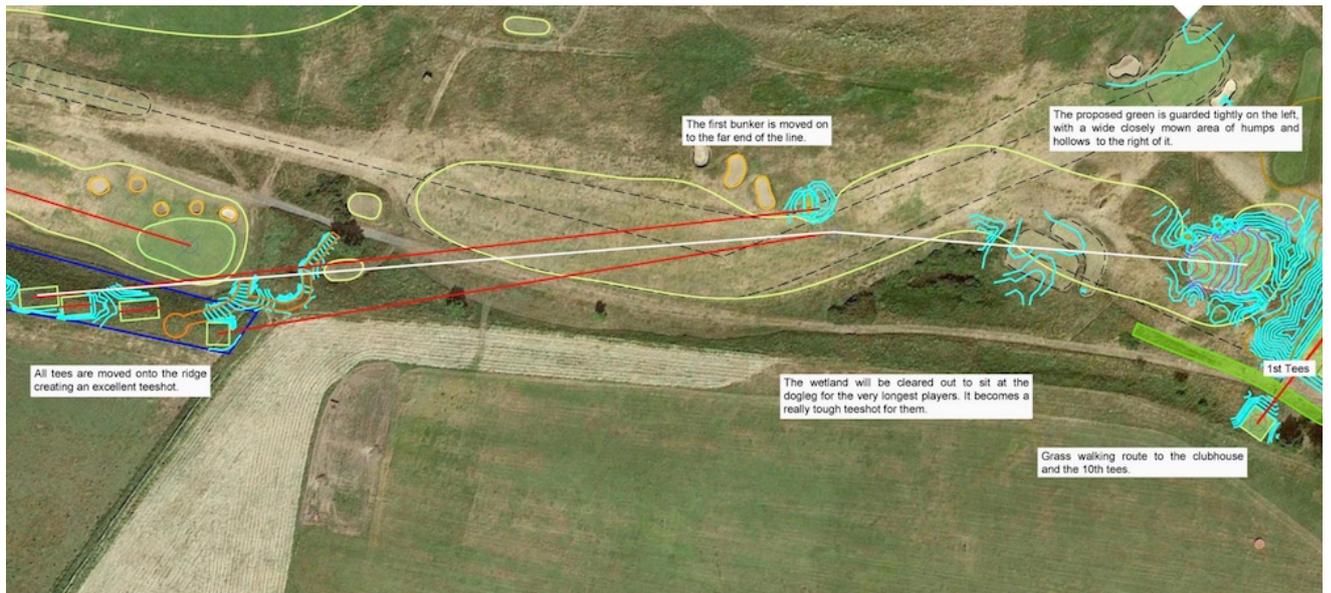
This alteration will include the following steps:

- Hire a shaper to add the tees for this hole during the construction of the new 7th green.
- Seed the tee pads and cover the tee banks with turf from the initial site strip.
- Extend irrigation to the tees.
- Seed and irrigate the walkways.

Timing

This work would be carried out at the same time as that for the new 7th green, so beginning spring/early summer 2023.

New 9th Hole



Similarly, the tees on the new 9th hole will also be located on top of the ridge, to the right of the current 7th green (which will become the new 8th green). This improves the view of and the angle to the fairway and relieves the congestion on the 4th hole caused by the current 8th tees.

The removal of the current 9th hole allows for the siting of a new green that swings the hole to the right, in the direction of the new 1st hole tee. Among other benefits, this will relieve the congestion between the 3rd hole and the current 8th green.



Method

This alteration will include the following steps:

- Similar to the new 6th green, hire a shaper to create the new 9th green using turf from the existing 8th green.
- Turf the green surrounds from on-site sod currently being grown in at the end of the driving range.
- Hire a shaper to create the new tee pads.
- Extend irrigation and seed the new tee pads.
- Shape, seed and irrigate the walkways.
- Level and turf a portion of the existing public walking path and add signage to alert those who use the path. There are no plans to move this walkway.

Timing

The tees and walkway to the fairway will be completed in phase one of the project, beginning spring/early summer 2023.

The new green will be completed in the final phase of the project in winter 2025 after the other changes have been finalized. The current 8th green will be used up to that point followed by a temporary green in winter 2025.

New Short Game Facility



Yet another benefit of the removal of the current 9th hole is the creation of a large space that can accommodate an expansive short game practice area. It will feature three main components:

- a 1,000-square-meter practice putting green (much larger than the current offering)
- a long and narrow chipping and pitching practice green
- and a bunker practice green

All will flow naturally along a grass walkway from the clubhouse to the 1st tee.

In addition, this change will allow us to build a new back tee for the 10th hole that will lengthen it by 25 yards to challenge the elite players.



Method

This alteration will include the following steps:

- Hire a shaper to sculpt the land in accordance with the architect's specifications.
- Turf the chipping practice green and bunker practice green with sod from the current 9th green.
- Shape, seed and grow in the new practice putting green similar to the new 7th green.
- Strip turf the area and use on banks.
- Sod the chipping practice area surrounds with sod from the turf nursery seeded this winter to help keep costs down.

Timing

This work will commence once the current 9th green comes out of play and the enhanced front 9 opens in spring 2025. The short game area will take one year to grow in.

There will be a temporary walkway to the 1st tee and then to the 10th tee whilst this work is completed.

Summary of Timings and Costs

2023

Spring/early summer (pending AGM approval and land use alteration permission)

Purchase land

Cost – Landlord to purchase

Build new 7th green, walkways and bunkers

Cost – Shaper (provisionally booked; day price agreed includes his time, his equipment, accommodation and fuel): £7,500. Equipment haulage to bring digger to site: £800. TIS irrigation commission (to make sure system works): £1,000. Irrigation parts: £4,000. Seed: £300.

Build new 8th tees and walkways

Cost – Tees seed: £150. Irrigation parts: £5,500. Seed: £200.

Build new 9th tees – Level and turf public path using nursery turf.

Cost – Irrigation parts: £2,000. Tees seed: £150. Walkway seed: £200.

2022/23 Capital Total - £21,800

2024

October

Remove 1st hole trees and turf mounds

Cost – £1,200

November

Move current 6th green

Cost – Shaper: £7,500. Haulage: £800. Irrigation: £4,000. TIS irrigation commission: £1,000.

Install new 7th tee

Cost – Irrigation parts: £2,500. Turf tees: £1,000. Turf walkway: £800

Remove 6th hole red and green tees and shape fairway

Cost – Irrigation parts: £4,500. Turf tees: £1,200. Turf walkway: £1,800

Build new 1st hole tees and shape walkway to 1st fairway

Cost – Irrigation parts: £5,000. Turf tees: £1,000. Seed walkway: £200 (this walkway will be completed in March/April 2023)

2025

April/May

Open enhanced front 9 for play

Shape, turf and seed practice ground

Cost – Irrigation parts: £5,000. Shaper: £7,500. Haulage: £800. Seed: £400.
TIS commission: £1,000.

2024/25 Capital Total - £47,200

November

Move 9th green to new position and shape surrounds

Cost – Irrigation parts: £5,000. Shaper: £3,750. Haulage: £800. TIS commission: £1,000.

Install new 10th back tee

Cost - £800

Remove shrub area by new 9th hole and make into waste area

Cost - £900

2025/26 Capital Total - £12,250

2026

April

Practice putting green and short game area opens

New 9th green opens

Total for Construction - £81,250 (as per Mackenzie & Ebert design)

Mackenzie & Ebert Fees - £12,000

10% contingency - £8,125 (for variable in irrigation parts cost)

(Split over 3 different capital budgets 22/23 (£21,800), 24/25 (£47,200) and 25/26 (£12,250))

Frequently Asked Questions

What land is needed? The club will need use of 1.4 acres of land adjacent to the current 7th tees to accommodate the new 7th hole green and new 8th hole tees. The landlord is currently working with her lawyer to finalise the purchase with Savills. Simultaneously, the land agent and club are working with planners and England Natural Heritage regarding the required change of use.

Why do we not improve the course first before starting these changes? Improvement of the course has continued, and will continue, day in day out. Examples include:

- Extending the irrigation system to the tees
- Increasing maintenance on the semi-rough and fairways to create better definition
- Removing all gravel paths
- Improving course presentation
- Making the golf course more enjoyable with changes to certain tees (specifically the greens and reds)

The altered timescale will help us to balance this work with the course changes. For instance, we can now look at improving the 4th and 5th tee sites along with softening the surrounds of the 4th green. Additional improvements will follow once we have completed all of the above.

We have the staff, experience and funds to carry out most of the course changes in-house and have provisionally hired a high-class shaper for those tasks we cannot complete on our own. We are confident we can work away at the changes whilst continually improving the course. You can't stand still.

Why do we not install fairway irrigation? Ideally, we would have fairway irrigation but the installation is not within the current 5-year plan. Before we can move forward with fairway irrigation, we will have to look at a more sustainable water source and holding tank – along with upgrading our current controllers. For now, we have invested in a water bowser and upped our input in products used to build the body within our fairways so they can handle stress when we have periods of low rainfall.

Given the rising cost of living and the uncertain impact that could have on the demand for golf, wouldn't it be more prudent to save our resources until economic conditions improve? The club is in a strong financial position and, thus far, the member renewals and visitors' bookings for 2023 have continued to build on that strength. Still, the current economic climate is a concern. To guard against a decline in revenue and/or unexpected expenses, we will continue to maintain a 'rainy day' fund of around £200,000 in addition to taking on the capital improvements and course changes. And we will continue to keep a close eye on our finances as the work commences. The altered timeline will help us to manage this with the costs and workload spread over three capital budgets rather than two. Once the course changes are completed and ready for play, we are confident they will allow us to command a higher visitor green fee that will generate a return on investment in fairly

short order. We believe these changes will only bolster the club's long-term outlook, further strengthening its financial position.

Have other questions? Please feel free to contact me.

Keith Martin
General Manager
keith@goswickgolfclub.com