



Introduction

There are many reasons why an organisation may choose to write a business plan. One reason is because they feel obliged to do so by external pressures (banks, funders, etc.), but it can also be...

- To exploit an existing situation
- Make a change to something that is currently happening
- Create something that doesn't presently exist
- Implement something new
- Maintain things as they are

The business planning support service provided by Scottish Golf is not a 'tick box exercise', if you are simply seeking to write a plan and put it on the shelf the fruits of your efforts will be short-lived. Rather, this business planning process is designed to help you create a meaningful plan for the future of your club. This plan should become the focus of your committee meetings and guide and support the actions that your club takes now, over the next year, and for many years to come.

A good business plan should become the management team's best friend and will empower them to make the decisions that result in meaningful outcomes for your club and members.

This User Guide document is provided to support you in completing, reviewing, revisiting and updating your golf club business plan. It may also prove useful when the current committee hand over to the future decision-makers of the club.

The following sections of the User Guide reflect the sections of the Business Plan template personalised for your club. Within each section it provides details on what should be included within the plan, actions to complete that section of the plan, and further tools and techniques you may wish to include if reviewing and developing your plan.

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Section 1: Where Are We Now?

This section of the business plan will be the first thing read by your members, committee, and other stakeholders. It is very important that the plan engages the reader and encourages them to read on as well as establishing a clear framework and identifying the areas that the plan will focus on.

Introduction

The introduction page is designed to give a simple grounding to the Business Plan, it should include:

- **A brief, relevant history and summary of your golf club**
The history of the club should be relevant to a Business context. There should be no mention of past Club Champions, or funny anecdotes. It is appropriate to make reference to large changes in the distant past, but the focus should primarily around recent developments.
- **Do we view our club as a business?**
How do those within the club (committee, members, staff) perceive it? Is it a Business? Is it Business-like in operations and management? Does this need to change?
- **What is our Golf Club's Business Plan Designed to achieve?**
It is important to establish a clear reason why you are writing this plan (see page 3).
- **Who will be reading the plan?**
Who will be reading (and using) the plan? Committee? Staff? Membership? Potential Members? External stakeholders like funders, sponsors, or creditors?

You might also like to include the following as part of your Introduction:

The legal status of your club

What is the legal standing of the club? Is it an unincorporated association? Is it a Limited Company? Does it hold charitable status? Does this bring specific considerations?

A timeframe for your plan

The plan should have a clear timeframe within it will work, what is this? Why has this timeframe been chosen?

The engagement you have undertaken with the club's stakeholders to create the plan

In preparing to write your plan you may have undertaken some form of engagement with your membership – a survey, an open forum, etc. – and any future engagement you may undertake.

How the plan will be shared

Unsuccessful Business Plans are put on the office shelf, and do not get used. How will the club communicate and use the plan? Via website, in paper form, kept in the clubhouse....

The introduction should be concise and provide an interesting narrative. You may want it to take the form of a Question & Answer page, or you may wish to combine the information into several small paragraphs. Here are two final thoughts:

- *Is there a resident 'wordsmith' at your club, who could draft this section?*
- *Ideally the introduction of your plan should be no-longer than one page.*

Situational Analysis

Any plan must start by establishing the answer to the question - *Where are we now?*

The answers to this are found in the Situational Analysis of your club and can be done using some simple exercises...

Undertake a SWOT analysis

This will clarify your club's *Strengths* and *Weaknesses*, *Opportunities* and *Threats*.

From this analysis it is relatively easy to identify what is special or unique about your club, and also what is holding it back. If you have engaged your membership through a **Survey** or **Forum** you should include the outcomes in this section including any weighting or importance placed upon the subjects raised.

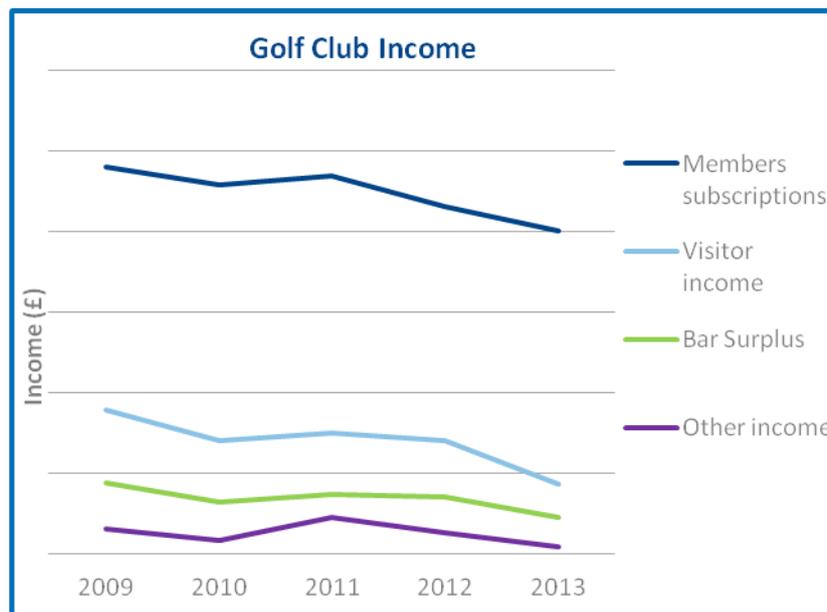
Identify Recent Trends at your club

To get a full understanding of your clubs financial and membership situation it is necessary to identify the trends that have occurred over the recent 3-5 years. To do this try answering these questions:

- What financial trends have emerged over recent years?
- What areas of the business provide the most income to the club, and how has this changed?
- What areas of business expenditure have changed?
- What is your current club membership? Has this increased or decreased?
- What membership categories have seen notable changes?

It is important to be as specific as possible in this analysis, include the actual numbers to provide a full picture of the trend.

As part of the business planning process you may also like to undertake a financial analysis of the club utilising a template available from your Scottish Golf Club Development Officer, this template can help you produce graphs that illustrate the financial trends at your club:



In producing your situational analysis, you should always be considering the readership of the plan. Some individuals will look for qualitative feedback (comments, feedback, stories), others will seek quantitative feedback (numbers, statistics, data). A good plan would include both of these forms of information.

Depending on the size and extent of the Business Plan your Situational Analysis can include a variety of other considerations relevant to your business operations. You might also like to include the following elements as part of your situational analysis:

More Of / Less of Analysis

Everyone has things that they would like to see or do more of, and things that they would like to see or do less of at the club. This simple analysis will identify these and can help you prioritise them.

More Of...	Less Of...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Female Members• Weekday Visitors (esp. Tuesday)• Member Social Events•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unexpected machinery breakdowns• Complaints about the coffee• Clashes with other club opens•

'PEST' Analysis

PEST Analysis is designed to help you understand the external market factors which impact your club and will influence future decisions. These typically fall into four different areas; *Political*, *Economic*, *Social* and *Technological*, but you may wish to extend it to include *Legal* and *Ethical* as well.

Political	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New pensions legislation• Local Authority focus on healthy activities• ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local job losses/unemployment rate - HIGH• Downturn in local property market• ...
Social	Technological
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aging population• Trend away from alcohol consumption• ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergence of social media• Online Booking• ...

Competitor Analysis: Other Businesses

In the modern marketplace your golf club is competing with the wider community and other businesses who compete with you for peoples' discretionary spend and time. This analysis helps you identify other businesses who are competing with your club in all areas of your business. This might include other sports or leisure clubs/venues, other places people can eat or drink, or potential other activities that will take people away from your club.

Your analysis should include notes comparing your club with the competitors, where you exceed their offering, where they exceed yours.

Area of Club Business	Competitor(s)	Notes
Food & Beverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Café XLocal Pub/Bar YLocal Restaurant Z	Club is lower in price comparison against all competitors.

Competitor Analysis: Golf Clubs

The market competition that your club faces includes other golf clubs. You may wish to consider a pricing analysis of other golf clubs that are your closest competitors to identify where your club falls within in the marketplace.

<i>Club</i>	<i>Full Membership Fee</i>	<i>Peak-Rate Green Fee</i>
[your club]	£ 500.00	£ 48.00
Competitor A	£ 420.00	£ 35.00
Competitor B	£ 480.00	£ 50.00
Competitor C	£ 350.00	£ 25.00
Competitor D	£ 550.00	£ 60.00
Competitor E		
Average	£ 460.00	£ 43.60

This, in turn, can create visual comparisons:



Customer Analysis:

In the good old days, customers came to your club, and you simply provided your product... unfortunately for most clubs this is no-longer the situation they find themselves in.

The modern consumer society sees a wide range of customer types, and people have more choice than ever before. To attract customers to come to your clubs, whether as members or visitors, you need to understand your customer types - their interests, values, attitudes, personality and lifestyles.

Current Club Members			
Type of Golfer	# in Club	Likes	Dislikes
Adult Male (aged <45)	Approx. 100 (20% of members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family/friends • Healthy food, coffee • Competition times to suit busy lifestyle • Mixing work & play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending too long at club • Boring/Overly Formal Events
Adult Male (aged 45>)	Approx. 200 (40% of members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medal Play once per week • Bacon Roll, Pint, Whisky • Formal Social Events • 'getting away' from work/home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow Play • Poor Green Condition • Noisy Children

As a minimum you should be seeking to understand the *Likes* and *Dislikes* of your current customers and the same for prospective customers.

Target/Prospective Customers		
Type of Golfer	Likes	Dislikes
Females (aged <45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family • Group activities with friends • Healthy food, coffee • Beginner-friendly golf (lessons, informal events) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress codes • Intimidating golfers/golf club environments
Adult Male (aged <45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family/friends • Healthy food, coffee • Competition times to suit busy lifestyle • Mixing work & play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending too long at club • Boring/Overly Formal Events

Section 2: Where Are We Going?

At first glance it may appear obvious why your golf club exists, after all, it has probably been around for a hundred years or more, but given that demand for golf has exceeded supply of golf for most of its existence it is possible that very little time may have been spent establishing why your club is here, and what its purpose is....

Purpose Statement

This is the most important part of your Business Plan!

The most dramatic change that you can make at your club is contained in this short section; it will help you answer this challenging question...

What is special about your club, and why would anyone choose to join, and remain a member?

To answer this, you require a simple and consistent message that reflects the club's situation. Different organisations may refer to the vision or mission statement for their businesses, but we simply call this your golf club's *Purpose*.

To create your club's purpose firstly take a glance back at the STRENGTHS section of the SWOT in your Situational Analysis, and you should see very quickly what makes your club special. Select the most important of these to be included in you club purpose.

- Next consider how you feel when at your club.
- Now construct a 20-word sentence that describes your club, using those strengths and the weakness/opportunity.
- Work within your Club Committee to fine tune that sentence until you recognise the club you belong to, and now you have your clubs PURPOSE.
- Additional Tools to assist the creation of your Club Purpose...

The SOOTy-Scale

If you want to test your clubs new PURPOSE, you may find that the prompts contained within the SOOTy scale will challenge you to agree on certain aspects of your club.

Answer these questions on a Scale Out Of Ten (the SOOTy scale), if you score zero out of ten, you are stating that you are not this type of club, and ten out of ten states that you can evidence that you are a leading club in this regard.

On a scale of 0 - 10, is your club ...

Family friendly?

Welcoming to new members?

Welcoming to novice/beginner golfers?

Set up to satisfy mostly low handicappers?

Set up to satisfy mostly high handicappers?

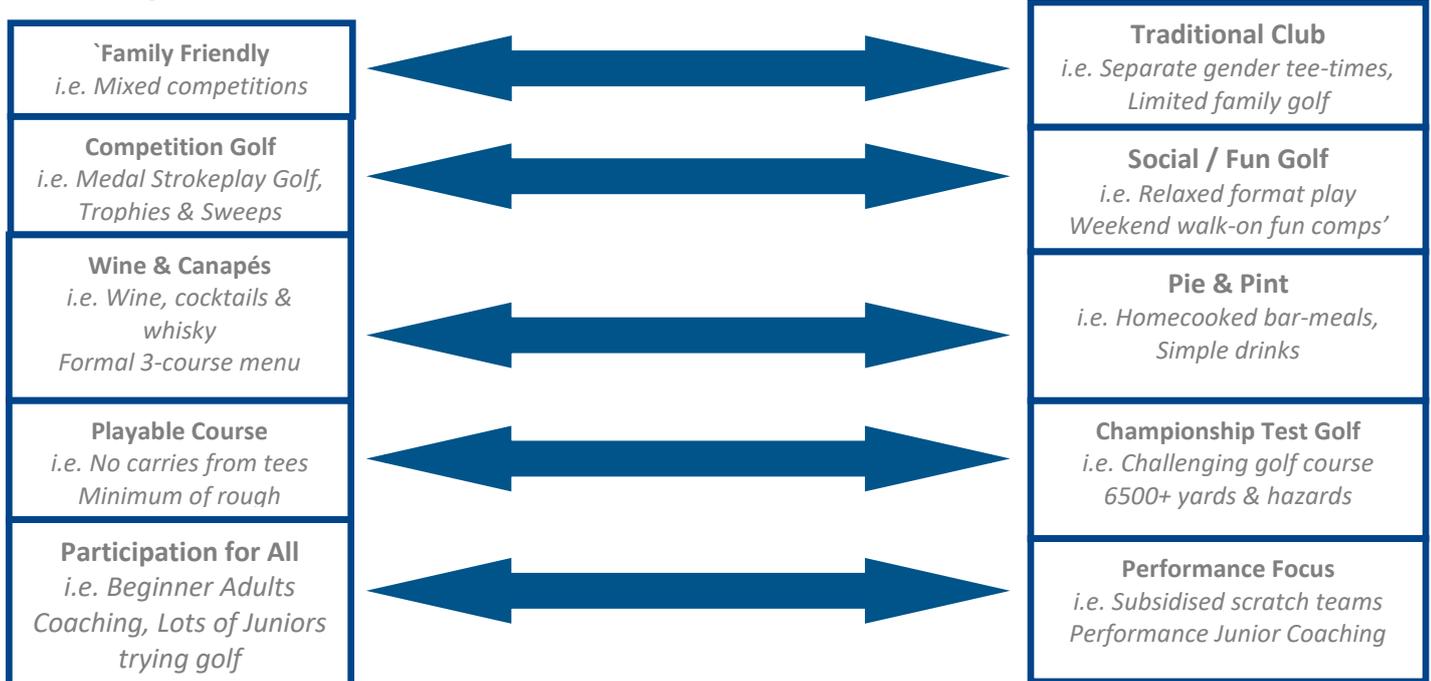
Focused on competitive play over social golf?

Welcoming to visitors &tourists?

Welcoming to non-golfers?
 Providing a range of activities other than golf?
 Fun to be part of?
 Geared up to focus on fine dining?
 Geared up to deliver passing through dining?
 Pricing the food and beverage to return a profit?
 Pricing the food and beverage to provide a subsidized service to members?
 Geared up to encourage people to develop their game?
 Proud to be tradition bound?
 Known for its structured social activity?
 Gender neutral?
 Focused on providing a level of service that retains loyalty from customers?
Don't forget that you should be able to justify the score you give with evidence!
This exercise may well result in you shifting your PURPOSE slightly, and it will ensure that you are in agreement on why the club exists.

What Kind of Club are you? Scales

In reviewing your purpose, it may prove helpful to see where your club falls on any of the following sliding-scales...



Of course, there is no right or wrong, and you club may fall somewhere in-between the two extremes. These scales are here to help you consider what words best describe your club and your activities.

Section 3: How Are We Going to Get There?

This section is the ‘engine room’ of your plan – where we identify what actions need to be taken. Section 3 is broken down into each of the various ‘departments’ that you could identify within your club – and for each of these it is necessary to identify a Strategy Statement, Objectives, and Initiatives.

Core Areas of the Club

Your business planning document has been designed specifically for Scottish Golf Clubs and to provide a framework for your plan it is necessary to identify all areas of your club that are central to its success... your club’s *Core Areas*. Initially we recommend that you focus your efforts in writing your plan around:

Club Governance
Membership Recruitment
Membership Retention

Further to these we have developed a menu of other *Core Areas* that may be relevant to your club. You should now reflect on this *Menu of Golf Club Core Areas*, and establish which are relevant to your club’s situation, how much importance you place on each, and whether you would like to include them in your plan.

MENU of Core Areas
Golf Course
Catering Services
Bar Services
Customer Service Levels
Visitors
Club Social Functions
Financial Management
Competitive Golf at our Club
The Professional or Retail Department
Junior Golf
Facilities Management
Other Revenue Sources

NOTE: Alternatively, you might like to add a Core Area that is particularly important to your club but is not listed in the menu; please feel free to do so and discuss this with your Regional Club Development Officer.

Strategy Statements

You may not recognise the phrase “inconsistency of mission” as one which is common in golf clubs, but that is partly because it is American business speak, and our clubs here in the home of golf may not have had to be run with such a business focus.

You may however be more familiar with the constant changes of direction that are commonly found in golf clubs. This could be on the golf course with the creation then removal of bunkers, or the growing in then cutting down of rough to suit changing green convenors, or changes in approach to catering to follow a whim or an individual’s demands?

“Inconsistency of mission” costs clubs money they no longer have to spare, and time that committee members are more commonly finding it difficult to give. If your club is to avoid “inconsistency of

mission” or breaking into separate departments with each doing their own thing, there should be one binding purpose, by which all departments base their decisions. This is the PURPOSE that you have just established in Section 2.

Now the challenge is to align each of the core areas of your business (golf course, food, beverage, etc.) to mirror that overall binding PURPOSE, and in doing so give each person responsible for that area of the business a mandate to proceed.

In each of the core areas of your club’s business, summarise in one or two sentences what your club’s strategy should be, ensuring that it helps you to achieve the over-riding PURPOSE you have already agreed upon.

Be prepared to be challenged, as it is very difficult to please all the people all the time, but if your rationale behind the PURPOSE is correct, and you have engaged sufficient stakeholders in that process, you will prevail.

For the first time in your club’s history you may have a strategy statement for every core area of the club’s business, and your committee and staff will focus on delivering in line with those statements.

No more...

- “Inconsistency of mission”
- Building bunkers one year and filling them in the next
- Personal agendas in the committee room
- Changing focus when new people join the committee

SMART Objectives

Understanding what your strategy statements are, your plan should now establish some SMART Objectives in each of those core areas of the business.

SMART objectives are: SPECIFIC – MEASUREABLE – ACHIEVABLE – REALISTIC – TIMED

This focus will ensure that you adhere to the strategy and enable you to measure yourself towards achieving those goals.

Set at least two SMART objectives for every one of your *Core Areas* of the business plan, giving some thought as to whether these objectives are in the short, medium or long term.

Initiatives

Committees are full of...



There is never a shortage of ideas in your club, whether committee, staff or members someone will always have something they feel (strongly) that will improve the club...

Now that you have established your club's *Purpose* and set down how each of the *Core Areas* of your business will be aligned to achieve your club's SMART Objectives.

The most creative part of your club's future is right now, and the people best placed to decide what will work at your club – are you, its members.

In this section brainstorm the Core Areas of the business to allow you to choose initiatives (ideas) that will work at your club, helping you achieve your objectives.

This business planning workshop provides an excellent opportunity to brainstorm an area of the business, but it can easily be reproduced at your next committee meeting, or a specially convened meeting of the members.

You will find that many of the initiatives are stimulated by the SWOT analysis carried out earlier, where you focus on your strengths, and set about eliminating your weaknesses. You can also respond to the THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES also captured during that session.

Initiatives Prioritisation Process

You cannot do everything at once, indeed if you try to do so is a chance that you will suffer from spreading your finite resources too thinly and fail to maximise the impact of what you do.

If you are struggling to prioritise your initiatives the following exercise can help you select those that will have the greatest impact.

As part of establishing initiatives in your plan you must consider what the true cost of each initiative is to your club (both financial and resource), and balance this against the impact it may have against your Objectives.

You must balance:

- Financial cost
- Cost of resources – who will do this?
- Likely impact on your Objectives

Initiative	Cost 1 = high 10 = low		Resource Requirement 1 = low 10 = high		Likely Impact 1 = low 10 = high		Priority Higher Score = Higher Priority
Advertise for Membership in National Print Paper	8	X	2	X	3	=	48
Member-Get-Member Incentive (20% off for both)	6	X	5	X	8	=	240
		X		X		=	
		X		X		=	
		X		X		=	

This part of the plan could be kept in the Business Plan Appendices – with the chosen Initiatives carried across into the Plan itself.

This will hopefully help you to arrive at prioritising those initiatives that have the most impact at your club.

You can establish these priorities by weighing up various factors including –

- What are your key objectives as a club?
- What are the initiatives likely to have the biggest impact?
- What initiatives prove best value for money?

As a final consideration when selecting your initiatives, you may also wish to consider which quick wins can be achieved to build momentum and belief in the club's new Business Plan.

Next Steps....

Whilst you will not be able to create Strategy Statements, SMART Objectives, and brainstorm Initiatives for every core area of your business at the Business Planning Workshop, you will take away a template and a format to use at future committee meetings.

Some clubs will dedicate half an hour at the start of every Committee meeting to the next most important core area of their business. For example, the club may want to review Social Functions at the club and spend 30 minutes....

- Agreeing a Strategy in this area
- Agreeing two SMART Objectives to achieve
- Brainstorm initiatives to help achieve those Objectives

MENU of Core Areas

Club Governance
Membership Recruitment
Membership Retention
Golf Course
Catering Services
Bar Services
Customer Service Levels
Visitors
Club Social Functions
Financial Management
Competitive Golf at our Club
The Professional or Retail Department
Junior Golf
Facilities Management
Other Revenue Sources

Section 4: Who Is Accountable?

A plan is only as effective as the people delivering it.

This section of the Business Plan is designed to establish roles and responsibilities, accountabilities and supporting roles of the people in your club and how to bridge any gaps.

Accountabilities & Supporting Roles

Having established the initiatives, you will take to help your club achieve its Objectives and fulfil its purpose, you must review

- Who will make these happen?
- Do those people have the necessary appetite and skillset to help the club achieve its Objectives?
- What additional support will they need, and how will you provide it to them?

For each of the Core Areas in your plan identify:

- The person who will be accountable
- The person, people or group who will support the accountable person

Bridging Skills Gaps

For many clubs the process of creating a plan will identify gaps that could stop the plan from being executed. This could be for many reasons:

- Your plan identifies something you have never done before
- Your club's situation has changed
- You are finding it difficult to get people to contribute to the running of the club

Use this section to identify where these gaps exist and how you intend to bridge those gaps to see the plan successfully executed.

Recruiting

For some of the areas of your club's Business Plan you may find that you have a gap that requires you to recruit a new person to fill a position within the club.

Training

Whether they have been in position for a number of years or are newly appointed, a plan may bring with it, requirements to broaden a role or undertake new tasks. For the people at your club to undertake their roles effectively they may require training and support.

Outsourcing

In some circumstances your club may be unable to fill the gaps. A final option is to outsource the accountability of that area – to pay someone to undertake that role.

Section 5: How Will We Know We Are There?

Keeping Score

The purpose of a business plan is not to produce a plan, but to produce results.

In order to prove the value of this process to your club, and to continue to engage all of the stakeholders in achieving the most important Objectives of the plan, it is important to report on the progress you are making as a club.

You can use the template KPI Scorecard as a means to report the progress to your committee:

Club Scorecard

The colours in this status report are Red-Amber-Green, indicators of confidence
A high expectation of achieving (GREEN), on track but work still required (AMBER), or low confidence of achieving target or simply not started yet (RED) for each of the objectives we are pursuing. These will be updated quarterly by the Board.

Objective / Key Performance Indicator	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Progress Comments
Visitor green fee revenue £30,000 by end October 20XY	Amber	Amber	Amber	Green									Facebook campaign boost to revenue this month
Membership: 400 members (all cat)	Green	Green	Amber	Amber									Currently 27 short of objective.

Section 6: The One Page Plan

By this stage of the process you are ready to paint a picture of what the next 3 months looks like for your club.

You can now create a one-page list of actions, clearly identifying the person who will take responsibility for heading up this action, and a timeframe in which this will happen.

This will create an immediate desire to act.

The club can then review and refresh this page every quarter, not forgetting to schedule the following:

- A standing item on every monthly management committee meeting to review progress against your plan
- A quarterly refresh of the 3-month One-Page-Plan
- An annual rolling review of what the next 36 months look like at your club
- Regular Communications with your membership on the purpose and progress of the agreed plan for their club

Ongoing support

Your Regional Club Development Officer is here to support you through this process.

Please reflect on how you may choose to involve your Scottish Golf Club Development Officer in this process, and agree as a club, the timescale for reviewing the overall plan, who will be involved, and how will you report the findings of that review.

Note: This business plan is intended to provide you with the headings under which you can develop your business plan. Whilst Scottish Golf is happy to assist in the preparation of this Business Plan, the responsibility for its content remains with the proprietor. The information and advice provided is of a general nature and Scottish Golf cannot be held responsible for any interpretation placed on it, nor subsequent actions taken by any party.