



# ANNUAL REVIEW

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# 2016-17





## Welcome from the Chair

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This past year has proved a challenging one for Scottish Golf but the hard work we have undertaken alongside our Clubs, Counties and Areas gives us grounds for renewed optimism.

As we sought to modernise the organisation, build investment and develop an environment in which our clubs can thrive, it was clear that we needed to get closer to our stakeholders and work collaboratively to understand the needs and complexities of what our customers want from their governing body.

The departure of our Chief Executive in October gave us the opportunity to take a fresh look at our priorities, embrace stakeholder feedback and move towards a revised strategy designed to tackle the key issues facing our game.

We chose to stage our first ever 'Future of Golf in Scotland' Conference in Edinburgh on December 2, providing a line in the sand moment and signalling a step change in our future direction and pace. The event drew in people from across the country with a huge passion for the game and a commitment to make a positive change. It was encouraging to see so many people in attendance, generating great discussion, debate and insight while laying the foundations to help us develop our new strategic priorities.

Following the conference, our rigorous recruitment process led to the appointment of Andrew McKinlay as our new CEO. Given his experience, enthusiasm and vision, I am thrilled that Andrew is joining us in May. His background in sport and business will be integral to taking our strategic plans forward and he will be tasked with empowering our team to deliver new initiatives to make the game in Scotland bigger, better and stronger.

The 'Impact of Doing Nothing' presentation delivered by our Non-Executive Director Stewart Darling at the conference stimulated much discussion about what needs done to put golf back on an upward curve. While we continue to boast the largest club membership in Scottish sport, we cannot shy away from the reasons that have led to an average of 5,000 members each year walking away from their clubs. It is clear golf needs to adapt to the changing demands of modern lifestyles, embrace families and dramatically change cultures and behaviours to attract new audiences, particularly the female non-golfers and the younger generation.

We have the fantastic platform of the Solheim Cup coming to Scotland next year to inspire more women to take up golf, with European team captain Catriona Matthew as a wonderful ambassador, but the changes need to take place at a local level if we are to maximise this opportunity and build a true legacy from the event.

We have fantastic examples of success at clubs across Scotland and our Annual Review reflects some of these stories, which all clubs can learn from. These achievements stem from the hard work of Club Managers and dedicated volunteers with a vision for positive change. The team at Scottish Golf is committed to helping our clubs and as we develop our new strategic plans, we will be even better placed to facilitate growth of membership, revenues and participation.

To do so, we need to work together in a guiding coalition to boost participation, help clubs become stronger and look forward to a very healthy future for this wonderful game.

For clarity, our new strategy we will be focusing on three priorities, underpinned by clear tactics and timelines designed to achieve our objectives by 2021:


- 1. Increasing national membership to 200,000, targeting 50% growth of female and junior members**
- 2. 50% of supported clubs growing their businesses through tailored development programmes**
- 3. Building revenues to £6m with more than 50% of our revenues coming from non-membership streams**

Whether you are a PGA Professional, Club volunteer, a long-time member, non-member golfer or beginner, it is imperative we unite at national, regional and local level to build both participation and stronger, healthier clubs welcoming a bigger, more diverse golfing community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributes so much to our golfing community, from those involved at Club, County, Area and National level to our sponsors and partners, as well as those representing Scotland on the international stage.

Best wishes to you all for the season ahead.

Yours aye

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eleanor Cannon', enclosed within a thin, hand-drawn oval border.

**Eleanor Cannon, Chair**

## Financial Summary

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As in previous years, our financial objective at the start of the year was to deliver our desired services while maintaining a break even position (prior to Special Projects). While the financial and economic environment remains challenging, Scottish Golf finished the financial year absorbing the impact of a reduction of income streams through effective cost management and prioritisation of services.

This resulted in a small surplus for the year prior to Special Projects. Special Projects require sign off from the Board of Scottish Golf and are considered on an annual basis as part of the wider budget discussions.

During the year, **sportscotland's** government and lottery funding sources were significantly reduced, directly impacting the governing bodies across all sports. Scottish Golf receives funding from **sportscotland** for the period 1 April to 31 March each year.

At the start of the financial year we had planned for a drop in our **sportscotland** funding from £1,275,000 to £1,025,000, taking into account the knowledge that the previously awarded funding for ClubGolf of £250,000 per annum had ceased. In addition to this, just prior to the end of March (six months into our financial year), we were made aware that the core level of funding received in the period would fall from £1,025,000 to £665,000.

Following a successful application to **sportscotland**, an additional £105,000 was subsequently awarded to Scottish Golf to support focus in areas of equality and inclusion. Overall, a net fall of £255,000 is spread across the current financial year ended 30 September 2017 and the financial year ended 30 September 2018.

The size of the reduction in **sportscotland** investment, alongside declining commercial income, resulted in some difficult decisions both internally within Scottish Golf and with regard to external services to ensure that our clubs were serviced at a consistent level whilst managing our costs efficiently. The majority of the burden fell internally.

The use of reserves was sanctioned again for a Special Project in the 2017 financial year – the payment of Ladies' Golf Union (LGU) fees of £58,000 in the current year to ensure equality of treatment between male and female members. This was the final year that these fees were payable, with the LGU now fully absorbed into The Royal & Ancient operations.

It is testament to the work of the team and the tough decisions taken during the year that despite the significant fall in income mid-way through the year, the final position met our objective of a break even position.

Overall, the balance sheet of Scottish Golf Limited remains strong with net assets of £1,132,000. This is largely underpinned by cash and the balance sheet remains robust as at 30 September 2017.

As a longer term strategy for Scottish Golf Limited is developed during 2018, the Board will look at a reserves policy that compliments the strategy, whilst ensuring that a prudent level of reserves is maintained.

As part of this strategy, the Board have also committed to look at reducing the organisation's dependency on **sportscotland** funding, reducing the reliance on membership income and increasing commercial revenues.

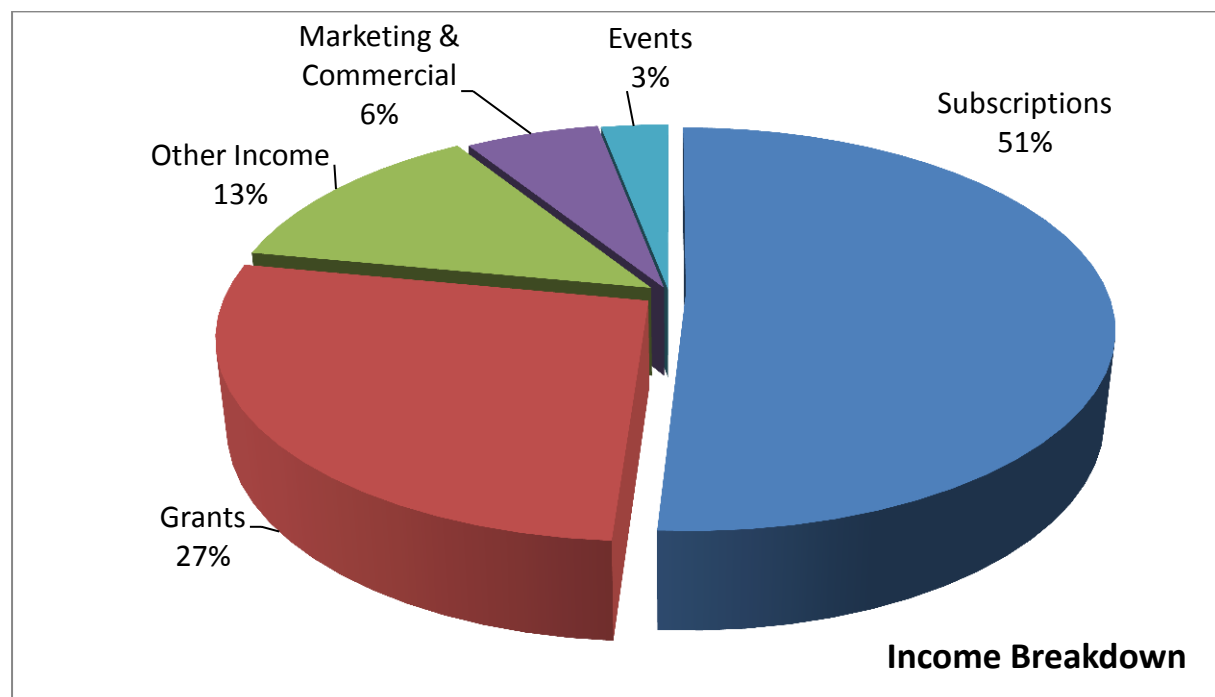
## Income

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Affiliated clubs in Scotland contribute 51% of our annual income, through a 'per capita' subscription collected as part of membership fees.

Through this, every golf club in Scotland, supported by their members, is making a contribution to the development of the game, and seeing a range of benefits in return – from hands-on club support and more young golfers on the fairways, to staging events and creating winning golfers.

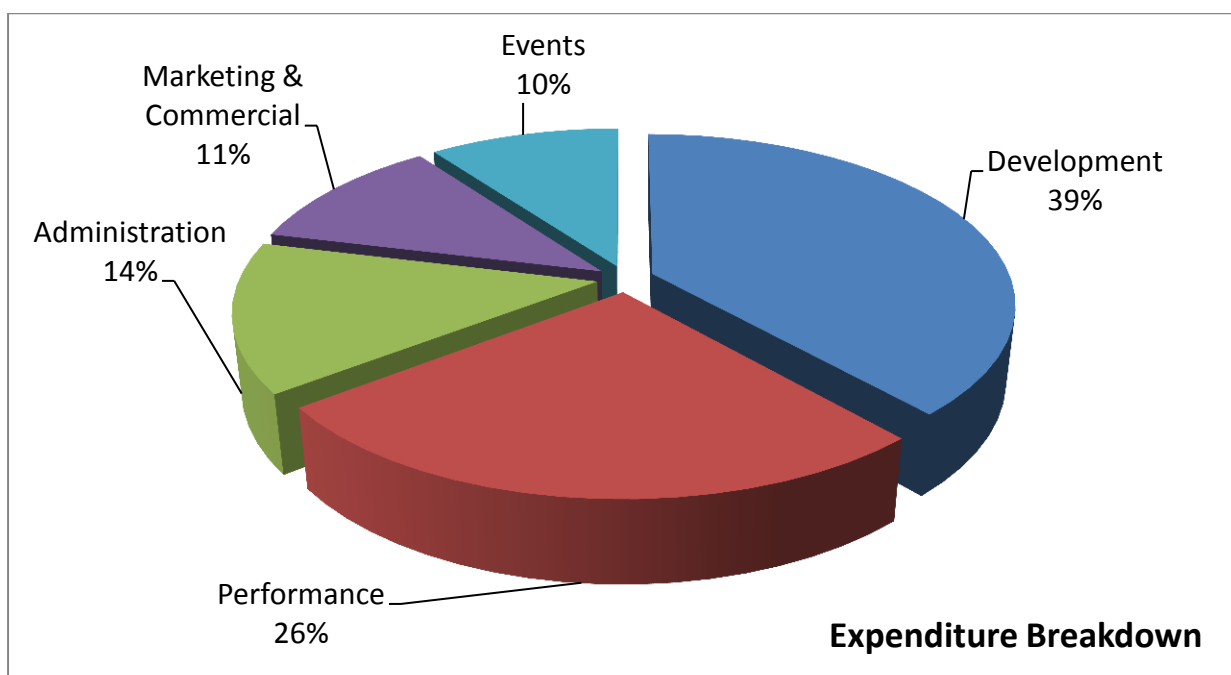
Our second highest level of income comes from investment and grants, such as revenue from **sportscotland**, The R&A and in-kind support. The sponsorship market remains challenging, yet still contributes 6% of overall income. Other income and event entry fees account for 13% and 3% respectively.



## Expenditure

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The organisation continues to have a broad remit, which is reflected in the diverse range of activities we allocate resources to. Indeed, our biggest area for investment is focused on the work we do in driving more golfers, more members and stronger clubs, with the aim of sustaining a healthy network of clubs and creating the next generation of players to play on our courses in the future.



Our highest area of expenditure is in development. This area covers junior coaching, development officers, club development, education, roving pro support and environment. Performance spend (supported by **sportscotland** funding) includes the Development and Performance Academies, men's and women's national squads.

Expenditure for Events centred around 17 national championships at all age groups for men, women, boys and girls, from Under-14s to seniors and four national handicap championships, including the Junior Scottish Open and the PING Scottish Mixed.

The breakdown of the Marketing outlay is for all communication channels, including website, national and local media, social media, e-newsletters. It also includes activity to secure commercial income and sponsorship and any club marketing workshops and individual club support.

Expenditure incurred for Corporate Services relates to ongoing costs of running the organisation, including the finance and admin teams as well as professional fees, audit, HR and staff training.

### Total Reserves

Year	Value
2014/15	£1,280,664
2015/16	£1,158,640
2016/17	£1,132,008

## Club Development

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### Supporting Clubs through the Business Planning Process

**“A wake-up call” is how George Anderson, Vice-Captain at Scotsraig, describes the club’s engagement in business planning and a governance review in 2017. Without making such a move, he wonders where the Fife club would be now, as their outdated ways were replaced by a more modern approach to running their business.**

Anderson refers to March 2016 to trace their turnaround, himself attending a business planning workshop staged by Scottish Golf in St Andrews. Quickly, he and the club embarked on changes which can be summed up in one word – ‘wholesale’.

In May 2016, Scotsraig then started working with Iain Evans, Scottish Golf’s Regional Club Development Officer in the area, developing the framework for a business plan which included a members’ forum, members’ questionnaire and staff insights. A group of six completed the plan and achieved approval by the Club Council at the beginning of January 2017. It was then immediately taken to the members. “It meant we changed all the committee structure, everything,” admits George.

‘Why’ is the obvious question to ask him? “It was a dated structure, both on the management and committee side,” he continues. “We ended up throwing out our total constitution and rewriting a new, more modern one. No longer did we have the recorded delivery of letters, we had emails instead, electronic voting and other areas like that.”

By August last year, the club – host to last year’s first-ever joint Scottish Boys’ and Girls’ Amateur Championships along with Drumoig – had built a completely new governance structure. When they held their AGM last October, they could ultimately take it forward officially. Overall, it was an approximate 18-month process for the entire project.

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**“If we hadn’t gone ahead with business planning, I think Scotsraig would have had serious concerns in the future,” George admits. “We are run as a business now. We have analysed every part of the business in depth.”**

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Scottish Golf works with clubs of all shapes and sizes to develop business plans. In the Lothians, for example, two capital clubs also took positive steps last year. Murrayfield adopted a new governance structure around equality given their 40% female membership. They are following this up with the development of a business plan in 2018.

Dalmahoy Hotel & County Club has also developed under new management. Fresh membership categories, achieving good publicity, have been introduced with more flexibility, including family friendly and golf-only options.

Back at Scotsraig, Evans has remained an important sounding board for the club since the constitution changed. Notably, it states that the captain has to propose a business plan for



the year ahead at the AGM, which then has to be approved by the members. So what are the early benefits for the club?

George says: “We have enjoyed benefits already to the extent we now have a committee structure which involves the members. We have an executive council, which is made up of six members. Below that are five executive sub-committees that do all the work. The convenor for each of the executive sub-committees is a member of the executive council.

“We have also integrated the ladies into all of the committees so that the existing ladies’ captain and ladies’ vice-captain are automatically members of the executive council. We want to go forward as a club that is working hard in getting women into the game. Our whole business now is run by convenors and volunteers.”

Our team of Regional Club Development Officers are committed to helping clubs like Scotsraig run more effectively. Business planning is one area, but additional free-to-use tools like the Scottish Golf Customer Feedback Tracker and club education workshops, of which over 400 people attended in 2017, offer other means for clubs to learn and grow.

## Club Development

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### Benefitting from Education across all Aspects of the Golf Club

**From the clubhouse to the course, customer service is crucial to helping clubs across Scotland thrive. A warm welcome on arrival, a well poured Café Latte before tee off and immaculately presented greens can make all the difference to members and visitors alike. This past year has seen some significant progress in this area of club business, helped in part by the support of Scottish Golf's investment in education.**

It is a huge year ahead for Carnoustie, who will host The Open Championship in July, and they were recently celebrating after being named Environmental Golf Course of the Year at the Golf Environment Awards. This was achieved thanks to their incredible work within the local community and their continued environmentally conscious practices in all areas of golf course management.

Each decision at the venue considers the impact on the environment and each member of staff is trained to work in such a way. Carolyn Hedley, Scottish Golf's Environment Manager who works with hundreds of clubs across the country, has helped Carnoustie attain these high standards:

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**"This award was well deserved recognition for many years of hard work introducing environmental and sustainable projects across the links courses. Sandy Reid, Craig Boath and the wider greenkeeping team should be very proud and I hope their success inspires others."**

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Down the east coast at Dunbar, Director of Golf, Jacky Montgomery, and his team were also raising a glass to their own accolade in 2017. Montgomery is among a number of club managers to have benefited from insights gained at Scottish Golf's education programmes and has consistently sought to look at new ways to improve the course, facilities and services on offer at Dunbar.

His work has certainly paid off with Dunbar rated 'amongst the best visitor experience of any golf club in Scotland' after achieving a remarkable 100% score for its customer service. Assessing the various level of service offered by each department of a club, over 50 Scottish golf clubs have taken part in the Mystery Golfer assessment programme but only Dunbar has claimed full marks. Jacky has been an advocate from the very first pilot, which was trialled after interest from managers on the Club Managers' Association of Europe's Management Development Programme, via Scottish Golf.

In all cases, the assessment found that Dunbar's interaction between the club's staff and visitors is 'flawless, friendly, helpful, knowledgeable and welcoming.'

Jacky said: "Internally, we aim to deliver the highest service levels at every customer engagement point, from start to finish, and every department plays their part in our 'One Team' approach to delivering an experience for members and visitors that we can all be

proud of. We also have customer feedback cards for members and guests available at all times. Ongoing assessment of performance is the only way to continue to improve.”

Producing fresh ideas to deliver growth has also been evident at Gourock GC. A new state-of-the-art development studio has opened to encourage people, particularly juniors, across the district and beyond to take up the sport.

The £184,000 project, the first indoor practice facility in Inverclyde, was funded by grants from the European Union ‘Leader’ fund, the National Lottery’s Awards for All Scotland scheme and with the rest contributed by generous benefactors and sponsors.

It features a range of facilities, including a high-tech simulator (two bays), teaching studio, club fitting, lounge area and a kitchen with hot and cold drinks. The overall project is aimed at adding value to the current members, creating pathways for those new to golf and engaging with juniors through a high tech and modern facility and other local community groups.

Sean Laird, Scottish Golf Regional Club Development Officer in the West, who has assisted the club with business planning, education, coach development and advice on accessing development funds, said: “Perhaps most importantly, this fantastic facility will help membership retention and growth across all categories, as well as help attract visitors.

“It could revitalise junior golf in the area, further grow and expand the club’s Junior Academy, the club’s links with Active Schools and their links with the Gourock Community Sports hub.”

## Club Development

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### Growing the Game through Junior Golf in Different Ways

Attracting more young people into the game remains a vital element of our strategy and Scottish Golf continued to make a difference at club level with support for junior golf through the national ClubGolf programme.

Encouragingly, overall participation in ClubGolf coaching increased by 11% on the previous year with the Highland region in particular showing impressive results. Golf is growing in popularity in some of the remotest parts of the country as participation figures across Highland, Orkney, Shetland, Western Isles and Moray grew by 10%. The proportion of girls involved in the North was also above the national trend at 25%, with Shetland and Moray clubs recording more than 30% of its ClubGolf participants being girls.

Down in Scotland's capital city, one club stands out for their junior set-up. Indeed, the hard work, two-and-a-half-years to be precise, has paid off in some style at Mortonhall Golf Club.

Impressively, the junior numbers at the Edinburgh club are now at their 'maximum' of 130, after adding 100 juniors in just a two-year period. It's been a job well done for junior convenor, Steve Hobson, and all at the club.

Steve tells the story: "After we spoke to Mandy Martin (Scottish Golf Regional Club Development Officer for Central) and I went on a junior convenor course, I realised that success depends on the club, the culture at the club and the support you receive.

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**"I noticed that a lot of clubs were putting a lot of their efforts into really young children, but they were struggling to convert them into membership. I spoke to Mandy about that and felt we needed to cover the whole breadth, a junior section covering every age group, which is ongoing. We have a ClubGolf section and we offer them membership, with a path then all the way through the juniors and the various age groups."**

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"We have now ended up with a waiting list, which is incredible as it is way above what we actually targeted. We have a full 130 junior members and that's thanks to the combined efforts of many within the club. It's been like a snowball effect, with the junior section at Mortonhall seen as a place to go and enjoy the game. The kids have been going to school and talking about it, bringing their pals along. What it has proved to me is that if you can get kids along to the club they love it."

Further development of their 5-hole junior course, a pitch and putt style layout, has helped facilitate the growth in the juniors.

"With us expanding so quickly, we knew we were going to have a lot of untested golfers who didn't know the rules and so forth, so we have created quizzes to help, with prizes at the end," added Steve. "We also have our short course, and members take players on out

on the course, sometimes for three holes. There is no one formula for me to it all – it's trying the things that work for you."

Another Lothians clubs, Broomieknowe, put more attention on their transition from ClubGolf coaching into junior membership in 2017, again with encouraging results. Participation in junior competitions doubled; junior membership increased by 50% and the number of juniors with a handicap grew by 33%.

In June, Peebles' reputation as one of the country's most progressive clubs was further enhanced with the official opening of its new driving range. Working with Regional Club Development Officer Lesley Nicholson, the club were able to access funding from sportscotland's Awards for All programme and the Scottish Golf Club Development Fund, adding to money they'd raised locally to generate the budget required to build the impressive new facilities, which includes 3 indoor bays, 6 outdoor bays and a state-of-the-art swing studio used by PGA pro Steve Johnston.

The club boasts a flourishing junior programme, winning the title of Scotland's Junior Club of the Year in 2015, and now attracts an average of over 60 children every Sunday across its three coaching sessions, with junior membership in the ascendancy and the implementation of the innovative '18 Steps' programme to bridge the gap between ClubGolf and junior competition play.

Scottish Golf's work between clubs and schools also continues to yield results, helped by our team of Regional School and Community officers. Scotsraig GC engaged 50 additional children through its school and community links, with more than 30 converted into junior membership. Carnoustie have been making great strides, as assistant pro Keir McNicoll, supported by the recruitment of 21 volunteer coaches, establishing a joint-club membership for juniors.

Last year also saw a ground-breaking education project in South Lanarkshire, helping young people develop through interdisciplinary learning – with golf included. Chapelton Primary School, Broadlees Golf, South Lanarkshire Active Schools and Scottish Golf are working together on the pilot project. It is the first of its kind in Scotland, linking with the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence through broader general education, and with a progressive structured golf pathway to Broadlees Junior Golf Academy.

One size doesn't fit all, but with an array of best practice case studies across the country involved clubs of all shapes and sizes, there is a model that can work for your club.

## National Championships

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### A Year of Change and Emerging Young Talent

It was a year of change for Scottish Golf on the national championships front, with a comprehensive review of schedules and formats leading to a new-look calendar.

Inviting input from players, clubs and other stakeholders during the previous year, a number of changes were implemented during the 2017 playing season, helping to provide a platform for the nation's amateur golfers to perform on while showcasing some of the country's outstanding courses.

Come the end of the year, no fewer than 39 clubs had hosted a national event, supported by an army of volunteers, recruited locally and from our national pool of dedicated helpers.

"Our national championships provide a fantastic stage for players to compete, with the opportunity to play on some great courses," said Fraser Munro, Head of Events at Scottish Golf.

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**"They also provide a great showcase for our clubs to market themselves, not only to the thousands of golfers who take part each year, but those who follow our events online and through the media."**

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The most significant developments concerned revisions to the major national match play championships, while the Scottish Youths Championship was removed from the schedule, the youths' category no longer complimenting the national structure or international amateur calendar.

In line with a number of other countries, the Scottish Boys' and Men's Amateur Championships changed from straight knock-out to 36-hole stroke play qualifying, with the leading 64 players (and ties) reaching the match play stages.

The Scottish Boys' Championship also moved from its traditional April slot into the school summer holidays, played for the first time alongside the Scottish Girls' Championship, running concurrently on two neighbouring courses, Scotsraig and Drumoig. The boys' field size reduced to 180, with the girls at 64 as player feedback from both venues suggested the changes were met with a very positive response.

At the Men's Amateur, there was glory at Prestwick for Sam Locke of Stonehaven following a convincing final win over Ryan Lumsden. Hannah Darling (Broomieknowe), at the age of just 13, became the youngest ever winner of the Scottish Girls' Championship after holding off a rousing comeback from Jillian Farrell (Cardross), before going on to claim another national title at the Loretto Golf Academy Scottish Girls' Under-14 Open Championship later in the season. Airdrie's Greg Dalziel was victorious in the Scottish Boys' Championship.

Like their match play equivalents, the Scottish Boys' and Girls' Stroke Play Championships were played on the same dates, moving to the Spring holiday slot in April, with Monifieth welcoming the boys and Montrose staging the girls. There was a home winner in John

Paterson (St Andrews, New) for the boys, with Germany's Hannah Leonie Karg triumphing in the girls.

Elsewhere, there was another home victor in the prestigious Carrick Neill Scottish Men's Open Championship at Western Gailes, with Liam Johnston (Dumfries & County) claiming the prize over a stellar international field after a rousing finish.

Down the coast at Troon, Sweden's Linn Grant secured the Helen Holm Scottish Women's Open Championship while Connie Jaffrey (The Ladies GC, Troon) won the Scottish Women's Amateur Championship at Royal Aberdeen, the north-east venue hosting the event for the first time since former Solheim Cup star Janice Moodie won there 25 years previously.

Like Darling earlier in the year, thirteen proved to be the lucky number for Calum Scott as the Nairn youngster clinched his first ever national title at the Global Golf Post Scottish Boys' U16 Open Championship which took place at The Fairmont, St Andrews.

Two young players given their chance to shine and certainly two names to look out for in the future.

## Handicap Events & The Scottish Golf Awards

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### Opportunities to Perform for Players of all Ages and Abilities

Events, on the course and off, proved highlights of the Scottish Golf year in 2017. While the organisation may be renowned for hosting leading domestic amateur events through our devoted army of championship officials, course raters and other volunteers, two championships for rank-and-file club members caught the imagination during the season.

Our exciting new sponsorship deal with PING teed-off in some style, the leading golf brand coming on board as the first sponsor of the new Scottish Mixed Championship. On a beautiful autumnal day over the wonderful Queen's Course at Gleneagles, 40 club pairings savoured the showpiece final. In their company was BBC Breakfast presenter Naga Munchetty, a self-confessed golf addict and regular competitor in mixed events, who presented the prizes.

It was the husband-and-wife pairing of Martin and May Britovsek who took the honours in the unique free-to-enter national event for club members – one that promoted the great benefits of mixed golf, offered fantastic prizes from PING and provided world-class hospitality in Perthshire.

Having moved to the central belt from the Highlands, the Britovseks swapped unpacked boxes for birdies to win their local club event at East Kilbride and continued their good form in the final to beat Ladybank duo Marion Campbell and Mark Johnston by a point.

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**Martin said: "It's a fantastic honour to have won the first event, certainly something we didn't expect. PING, Gleneagles and Scottish Golf did the event proud." May added: "It was the best Monday ever! Who would not want to win a day out here?"**

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John Clark, Managing Director of PING Europe, said: "We were delighted with the staging of the first-ever final of the PING Scottish Mixed Championship at such an iconic venue. We believe the mixed format has an important role to play in growing golf in the future."

Another Perthshire venue, Crieff Golf Club, also shone under the spotlight, as Irish-based health supplement brand Revive Active became our first women's event sponsor to support the popular Scottish Women's Regional Medals. Players representing nearly 300 clubs competed in four regional qualifying events to reach the Grand Final at Crieff, with 24 going on to battle it out for the prizes. A birdie at the final hole gave Leven's Dianne Watson victory in the Silver Division, with Turriff's Lesley Stuart picking up the title in the Bronze category.

As part of the sponsorship agreement, Revive Active is our official Super Food and Nutrition Partner, supporting the campaign to encourage playing golf as part of a healthy lifestyle which can increase life expectancy by up to five years.

Belhaven are continuing to support the Captains and Secretaries Championship in what will be their 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of sponsoring the amateur game in Scotland and a new 9-Hole



Scottish Golf Championship is being staged this year, as part of The R&A offering club members the dream chance to tee up in front of the stands ahead of The Open Championship at Carnoustie. Our national handicap portfolio truly offers events for club golfers of ages and abilities to take part in.

With the Junior Scottish Open staged at Troon Links, Lochgreen in July and 70 ClubGolf camps taking place nationwide throughout the summer, young golfers also savoured their chance to enjoy the sport in 2017 and make lifelong memories.

Off the course, our showpiece event again highlighted the success of golfers across the spectrum, as well as the sterling work of clubs, coaches and unsung hero volunteers.

At the annual Scottish Golf Awards, former amateur star Belle Robertson and long-serving journalist Jock MacVicar joined ex-Open champion Paul Lawrie in being honoured, alongside the achievements of several others.

The Dunaverty duo of Robertson and MacVicar saw their long-serving efforts proudly recognised with Lifetime Achievement Awards in front of over 550 guests at the Edinburgh Corn Exchange. Lawrie also collected an Inspiration Award for his outstanding efforts in growing the game at grassroots junior level through his Foundation, with the event itself generating £25,000 for the Scottish Golf Charity and our charitable partner, Beatson.

## Performance

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### A Year to Remember for Connor Syme

For two former members of the Scottish Golf Academy, 2017 was undoubtedly a year to remember. Blairgowrie's Bradley Neil and Connor Syme from Drumoig, two talented players in their early 20s, are lining up this season as European Tour card holders; new young professional hopefuls for Scottish fans to follow and cheer.

While former Amateur champion Neil has battled back from a difficult start to his pro career to gain a full card via the Challenge Tour rankings, Syme made a swift transition after representing GB&I in the Walker Cup to then coming through the Final Stage of Qualifying School.

"I'm looking forward to the journey ahead," says Syme, a two-time European Amateur Team winner with Scotland. "It's not always going to be easy, but it's exciting as well."

The success of both players highlights the building blocks Scottish Golf has put in place to help players achieve their potential. As we all know, golf is truly a world sport and to become successful and remain successful at the highest level requires talent, dedication, opportunity and support.

Scottish Golf is continually striving to put in place the best support systems and structures to ensure the most talented Scottish players are given the right environment and every opportunity to reach their full potential, aided by the support of partners such as sportscotland, Aberdeen Standard Investments and the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation.

Syme's journey started when he first joined the Scottish Golf Academy back in 2011. Helped by the support of his father Stuart, a PGA pro then based with the family in Dumfries, Syme made great strides and first represented Scotland at Under-16 level before graduating into the national squads to take advantage of the support systems.

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**"Probably, since 2013, my whole life was kind of based around Scottish Golf," admits Connor. "It's been excellent since 2013, four solid years. The overseas trips I was able to make, through the support of the likes of Aberdeen Standard Investments, who have been massive supporters of Scottish Golf, has been brilliant for my development. It's helped achieve my dream of becoming a professional golfer."**

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Syme's journey Down Under to win the Australian Amateur Championship at the start of 2016 can be identified as a turning point in his career. "That event was a big stepping block for me, giving me the chance to then play in the Emirates Australian Open," Syme, the 2017 Scottish Amateur Golfer of the Year, states.

"I had played Challenge Tour events through Scottish Golf's excellent partnership with Bounce Sports Management, but to play in the Australian Open, in a group close to Jordan Spieth, was amazing. I also played in the Joburg Open and qualified for The Open last

summer, but it all led on from the Australian Amateur. I offer a massive thanks to Scottish Golf for the opportunity there.”

Others may follow Syme and Neil’s path in the years to come, with a number of amateurs tasting notable success in 2017. Liam Johnston, now a rookie pro himself, walked away with the African Amateur title in March, while another new professional, Glencruitten’s Robert MacIntyre, enjoyed a fine season to join Syme on Walker Cup duty in Los Angeles in September.

Grantown on Spey’s Hannah McCook secured back-to-back triumphs in the Women’s Order of Merit standings, with Sheena Wood from Aberdeen Ladies doing likewise in the Senior Women’s rankings. At Girls’ level, Jillian Farrell from Cardross emerged victorious to cap her excellent season, even if Broomieknowe’s Hannah Darling, at the age of 13, became the youngest ever winner of the Scottish Girls’ Amateur Championship after holding off a rousing comeback from Farrell at Scotsraig.

The trio of Cawder’s Calum Fyfe (Men), Darren Howie (Boys) from Peebles and Hamilton’s Stewart Henderson (Senior Men) celebrated after winning their respective domestic Order of Merit titles.

Elsewhere, on the team front, the North East claimed a thrilling win in the GolfKings Scottish Men’s Area Team Championship at Newmachar, while Renfrewshire secured the Scottish Women’s County Championship title at Glenbervie.

## Our Year in Numbers

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An at-a-glance look at some of the key statistics across Scottish Golf over the past year.

<b>Competition Rounds</b>	1,317,422
<b>Highest Month (July):</b>	241,145
<b>Highest Week (May 6-12):</b>	64,932
<b>Web monthly unique users:</b>	41,811
<b>Social media followers:</b>	34,000
<b>Registered e-newsletter subscribers</b>	58,794
<b>Affiliated clubs</b>	585
<b>Adult playing members</b>	170,000
<b>9-hole courses</b>	158
<b>Staff</b>	32
<b>Active ClubGolf volunteer coaches</b>	995
<b>Course rating volunteers</b>	98
<b>New course raters</b>	44
<b>Attendees at education workshops</b>	414
<b>Economic value of golf tourism</b>	£286 million
<b>Funding grants allocated</b>	76
<b>PVG applicants processed</b>	600
<b>Clubs supported by environmental advice</b>	90
<b>Increase in junior coaching participation</b>	11%
<b>Increase in Get into Golf coaching</b>	60%
<b>Average male handicap</b>	14.9
<b>Average female handicap</b>	24.6
<b>Number of golfers reducing their handicap</b>	12%

## National Champions & Orders of Merit Winner 2017

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**Congratulations to all our winners and thanks to the host clubs**

CHAMPIONSHIP	HOST CLUB	WINNER	HOME CLUB
Scottish Boys' Open Championship	Monifieth	<b>John Paterson</b>	New Club, St Andrews
Scottish Girls' Open Championship	Montrose	<b>Hannah Leonie Karg</b>	Germany
Helen Holm Scottish Women's Open Championship	Royal Troon	<b>Linn Grant</b>	Sweden
Carrick Neill Scottish Men's Open Championship	Western Gailes	<b>Liam Johnston</b>	Dumfries & County
Scottish Women's Amateur Championship	Royal Aberdeen	<b>Connie Jaffrey</b>	The Ladies GC, Troon
Scottish Boys' Area Team Championship	Stranraer	<b>Lanarkshire</b>	
Scottish Senior Men's Open Championship	Royal Burgess	<b>Graham Bell</b>	Downfield
Scottish Senior Women's Open Championship	Blairgowrie	<b>Fiona De Vries</b>	St Rule
Scottish Boys' Amateur Championship	Scotsraig & Drumoig	<b>Greg Dalziel</b>	Airdrie
Scottish Girls' Amateur Championship	Scotsraig & Drumoig	<b>Hannah Darling</b>	Broomieknowe
Global Golf Post Scottish Boys' U16 Open Championship	Fairmont St Andrews	<b>Calum Scott</b>	Nairn
Revive Active Scottish Women's Regional Medal (Silver)	Crieff	<b>Dianne Watson</b>	Leven GS
Revive Active Scottish Women's Regional Medal (Bronze)	Crieff	<b>Lesley Stuart</b>	Turriff
Scottish Girls' U16 Open Championship	Mortonhall	<b>Alexandra Stevenson</b>	Beamish Park
Scottish Men's Amateur Championship	Prestwick & Prestwick St Cuthbert	<b>Sam Locke</b>	Stonehaven
Loretto Golf Academy Scottish Boys' U14 Open Championship	Crail	<b>Sebastiano Frau</b>	Italy
Loretto Golf Academy Scottish Girls' U14 Open Championship	Crail	<b>Hannah Darling</b>	Broomieknowe
GolfKings Scottish Men's Area Team Championship	Newmachar	<b>North East</b>	

Scottish Women's County Finals	Glenbervie	<b>Renfrewshire</b>	
PING Scottish Mixed Championship	Queen's Course, Gleneagles	<b>May &amp; Martin Britovsek</b>	East Kilbride
Belhaven Captains & Secretaries Championship	Elie Golf House Club	<b>Scott Henderson &amp; Charlie MacDonald</b>	Carrbridge
Scottish Club Handicap Championship	Fairmont St Andrews	<b>John Borthwick &amp; Ian Still</b>	Craibstone
Scottish Men's Club Championship	Eastwood	<b>Duddingston</b>	

## NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT CHAMPIONS

<b>Title</b>	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Home Club</b>
Scottish Amateur Golfer of the Year	<b>Connor Syme</b>	Drumoig
Scottish Golf Boys' Order of Merit	<b>Darren Howie</b>	Peebles
Scottish Golf Girls' Order of Merit	<b>Jillian Farrell</b>	Cardross
Scottish Golf Men's Order of Merit	<b>Calum Fyfe</b>	Cawder
Scottish Golf Women's Order of Merit	<b>Hannah McCook</b>	Grantown on Spey
Scottish Golf Senior Women's Order of Merit	<b>Sheena Wood</b>	Aberdeen Ladies
Scottish Golf Senior Men's Order of Merit	<b>Stewart Henderson</b>	Hamilton

## Contact Us

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