

Scottish
Golf

Annual Review 2021



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Chair's Review

A return to the green

“Golf in Scotland is in rude health at present, due in no small part to the commitment of clubs, players, coaches and the team at Scottish Golf.”



Martin Gilbert | Chair

It is testament to the popularity of golf that its resurgence has occurred during two of the most volatile and unpredictable years in recent history. We all thought we would be out of the pandemic woods by now, enjoying old freedoms and a return to some semblance of normality. We may have a little way to go, but hopefully the worst is behind us. As Scottish Golf's new Chair, I am enormously proud to have joined an organisation – and a sporting community – that has demonstrated resilience, energy and adaptability in ever-changing circumstances. Golf in Scotland is in rude health at present, due in no small part to the commitment of clubs, players, coaches and the team at Scottish Golf.

We are over a year into the World Handicap System (WHS) now, and while the rollout has presented its challenges, the implementation of a brand new, fully-operational scoring system has largely been a success. Scottish Golf's WHS team have worked tirelessly to offer real-time support to club members and casual golfers alike, ensuring a nearly seamless transition to the new system.

In 2021, Scottish Golf maintained its commitment to technological enhancement through the continued development of its Venue Management System (VMS). This comprehensive and innovative platform enables clubs to manage their entire operation from one place: from streamlined bookings to more direct communications, it has enriched the players' experience. Numbers of clubs using VMS grew in 2021, and Scottish Golf continued to onboard

new clubs, increase its market share, all while providing excellent customer service to existing clients.

Pandemic notwithstanding, this year saw the very welcome return of golf events. Over 2,200 entries were recorded, signalling the enthusiasm and delight of the golfing community. Some real successes too, in Performance, most notably in the Women's and Girls' games. Louise Duncan and Hannah Darling deserve special mention, having won the Women's and Girls' Amateur championships respectively. These victories garnered them invitations to play at the Augusta National Women's Amateur in 2022. In Junior Golf, we saw over 2,500 participants as part of the new National Junior Golf Framework.

Ultimately, none of this is possible without the staunch and unflinching support of Scottish golf clubs, whose employees, volunteers and committees I would like to thank for their steadfastness in the face of continuing uncertainty.

I have been a prominent supporter of golf in Scotland for over 20 years. It is with immense pleasure that I look forward to my tenure as Chair of Scottish Golf, working with the team to grow, promote and support the game across the country.

Martin Gilbert

Financial Review 20/21

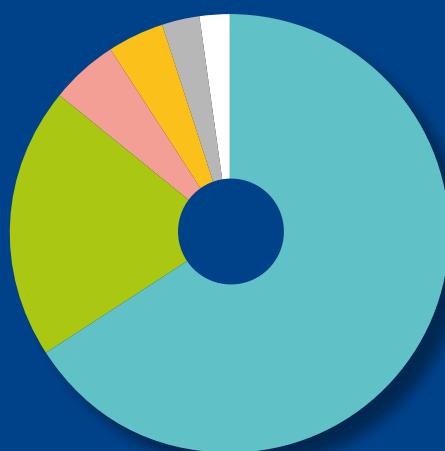
Income
£3,849,820

Expenditure
£3,657,824

Surplus
£191,997

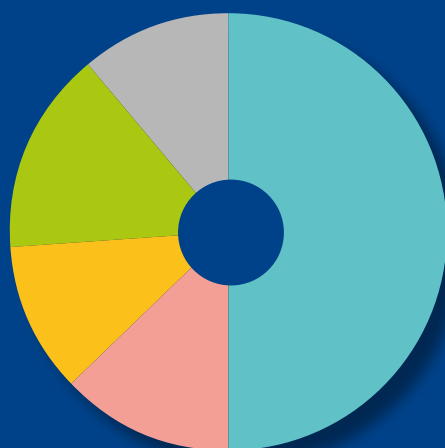
Reserves
£1,383,333

- Club Support expenditure increased from 44% (+6%) in 2019 and represents a real-terms increase even when offset against the uplift in subscriptions (+5%).
- Delivering a full Performance programme remained a challenge in 2021, navigating the ever-changing travel restrictions due to the pandemic. The planned investment and reduced expenditure contributed to an income surplus for the year. In the coming year Scottish Golf's ambitions are to return to the full complement of training and events and continue to grow opportunities for our top-performing golfers.
- Events expenditure increased with the return of a nearly-full programme in 2021 (+2%).
- Subscriptions income is +5% on pre-pandemic levels.
- Other income contribution decreased from 27% due to the 2020 R&A grant and other exceptional items.



Income

Subscriptions	66%
sportscotland	20%
Other	5%
Performance	4%
Commercial	3%
Events	2%



Expenditure

Club Support	50%
Corporate Services	13%
Performance	11%
Commercial	15%
Events	11%

Digital

The investment in technology continues to pay dividends. The Scottish Golf app saw a 78% rise in registered users in 2021. General Play scoring remained the most popular function, growing from 6,000 to over 409,000 rounds recorded in just one year. Digital scoring is becoming an increasingly important part of seamless game play, and the Scottish Golf app's link to WHS is a unique and popular feature.

The VMS system is available to affiliated clubs at no extra cost, and, among other features, enables direct tee time booking and communication between players and clubs.

Scottish Golf increased its market share in 2021 and has ambitions to continue the rollout of VMS across Scottish clubs.



142,700

registered accounts on
the Scottish Golf app

227,846

General Play scores
submitted through
the app in 2021



“

The simplicity offered by the app for booking tee times has increased green fee takings more than I had foreseen.

**Allan Warwick, Gourrock
General Manager**

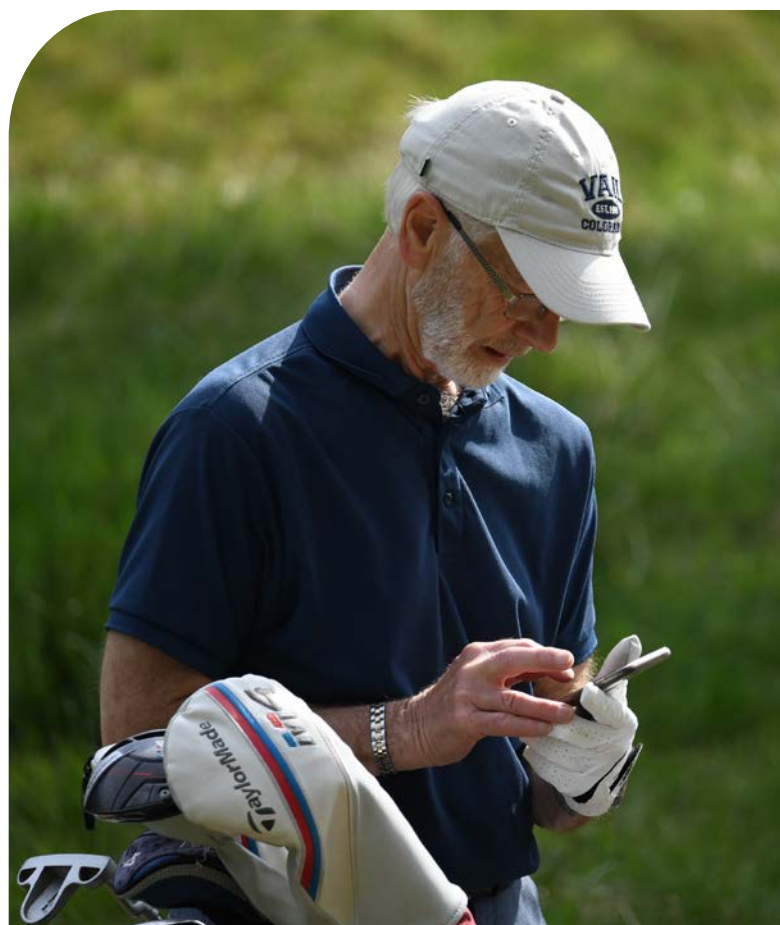
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Scottish Golf's commitment to opening up the game to new players is demonstrated in the continuing development of the OpenPlay app. Data collected from app users shows a lower age demographic, when compared to the club golfer by circa 15 years.

This suggests that younger players – interested in regular play, getting a handicap and competing at a high level – are attracted by the flexible approach that the app offers. We are also already seeing OpenPlay members transition to club membership.

We remain confident that OpenPlay is an important tool in retaining new golfers who might have joined the game in the last two years, and in improving accessibility to golf in general.

Total members	1,215	Average club member handicap	15.0
Average handicap	16.9	Average club member age	Approx 55.2 years
Average age	40.2		
Total with handicap	881		



World Handicap System

It's been over a year since the introduction of one of the biggest changes in golf in recent times. The new World Handicap System allows golfers in Scotland to have a handicap that they can use anywhere in the world.

Since 2 November 2020, in Scotland there have been an incredible 2,132,894 scores submitted through the system.

Scottish Golf App

We are delighted to see that there are over 142,000 registered accounts in Scotland for the Scottish Golf app. The app offers General Play scores, course look-up information, and is a valuable source of news and handicap information in Scotland.

International Scoring

Any Scottish Golfer with a WHS index who has registered for the app can submit their competition or General Play scores directly into the Scottish Golf app.



WHS in Numbers

WHS scores submitted since November 2020

2,132,894

Worldwide scoring on Scottish Golf app

General Play scores

409,721

227,846 of these within the Scottish Golf app

A contributing factor to the increase in 9-hole scores is that under WHS, every course receives front and back 9-ratings automatically.

Number of 9-Hole Rounds Played

Year	Number of Rounds	Increase/Decrease	Percentage
2018	44,834		
2019	47,132	2,298	5.1%
2020	63,563	16,431	34.9%
2021	113,592	50,029	78.7%

Customer Service

Customer Service is a growing part of Scottish Golf's business function. The customer service team continued to provide stellar support in 2021, solving tech queries (for golfers and clubs alike), answering handicapping questions and resolving a broad array of general enquiries. This 'always-on' assistance provides a solid foundation for the growing digital opportunities within golf.

36,788 Enquiries

98.1% SLA Met

Feedback on the quality and speed of the response has been excellent, and with robust measurement metrics now in place, the in-house team can track their activity, and demonstrate the real-terms value to individual clubs.



Department	Enquiries
Digital & VMS	11,024
General	8,818
Handicapping	6,392
APP Support	3,090
Event	2,300
Junior Golf	2,116
OpenPlay	1,883
Safeguarding	623
Club Support	542

Resolution Time	% of Enquiries
0-6 hours	54.7%
6-12 hours	10.9%
12-24 hours	16.7%
24-48 hours	9.0%
>48 hours	8.7%

Club MarComms			
	Number Sent	Total Audience	Total Opens
Covid-19 Updates	26	52,149	34,757 (66.65%)
Newsletters	20	41,812	22,432 (56.35%)



HIVE

The Scottish Golf HIVE learning system is now a year old. This online resource and engagement platform offers golf clubs direct and unlimited access to educational material and upskilling opportunities. Events, webinars, infographics and other instructional materials can be hosted

on the platform, and can be accessed as required. Hive allows golf clubs the opportunity to feed back to the Scottish Golf team – and also interact and share knowledge with each other, encouraging peer-to-peer connections.

VMS HIVE

57,900 views
2,600 comments
678 reactions
268 active members

WHS HIVE

50,400 views
3,500 comments
2,300 reactions
454 active members



Performance

We are, as ever, extremely proud of the sporting talent that comes from Scotland. 2021 has seen some noteworthy performances, results, and team selections for Scottish golfers:

“

The length of the drives, the accuracy of the iron play, the standard of short game is absolutely amazing, and that goes for the whole age range. If that's an example of where we are with Scottish Golf then we have much to look forward to ... it fills you with confidence for the future.

George Reid, Club Captain, Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society.

”



Hannah Darling

St Rule Trophy

Hannah Darling won this championship with an impressive score of -18 over 3 rounds.

R&A Girls' Amateur Championship

Hannah Darling became the first Scottish winner of this event since Clare Queen in 2001.

European Ladies Team Championship

The team qualified in first place for the match play stages, with Hannah Darling finishing as leading qualifier. Scotland would eventually finish in 4th place, their best finish since 2010 where they won bronze.



Carmen Griffiths

Carmen Griffiths won the **Scottish Girls' Amateur Championship**.



Penny Brown

Penny Brown was selected for the **Arnold Palmer Cup International Team**.



Louise Duncan

The Women's Amateur Championship

Louise Duncan became the first Scottish winner of this event since Alison Rose in 1997.

Louise Duncan finished tied 10th in the **AIG Women's Open** at Carnoustie.

St Andrews Links Trophy

Two Scots finished in the top 5 of this event, with George Burns (2nd) and Ruben Lindsay (4th).



Ruben Lindsay



George Burns

Boys' and Girls' Home Internationals and Men's Home Internationals

Scotland finished runner up in both of these events.

Thriving Golfers

The improvement in performance and results of our supported players has also been reflected by the number of Scottish players who are currently within the top 250 players on WAGR: Hannah Darling (9th), Louise Duncan (36th), Chloe Goadby (310th), Lorna McClymont (172nd) and Rory Franssen (161st).



Rory Franssen



Chloe Goadby



Lorna McClymont

GB&I Team Selections:

Junior Vagliano

Grace Crawford

Jacques Leglise

Connor Graham, Archie Finnie, Ruben Lindsay, Daniel Bullen and Cameron Adam.

Curtis Cup

Hannah Darling, Louise Duncan with Hazel Macgarvie named as first reserve.

Walker Cup

Sandy Scott was selected however had to withdraw due to a wrist injury.



Grace Crawford



Sandy Scott



Connor Graham



Archie Finnie



Daniel Bullen



Hazel Macgarvie



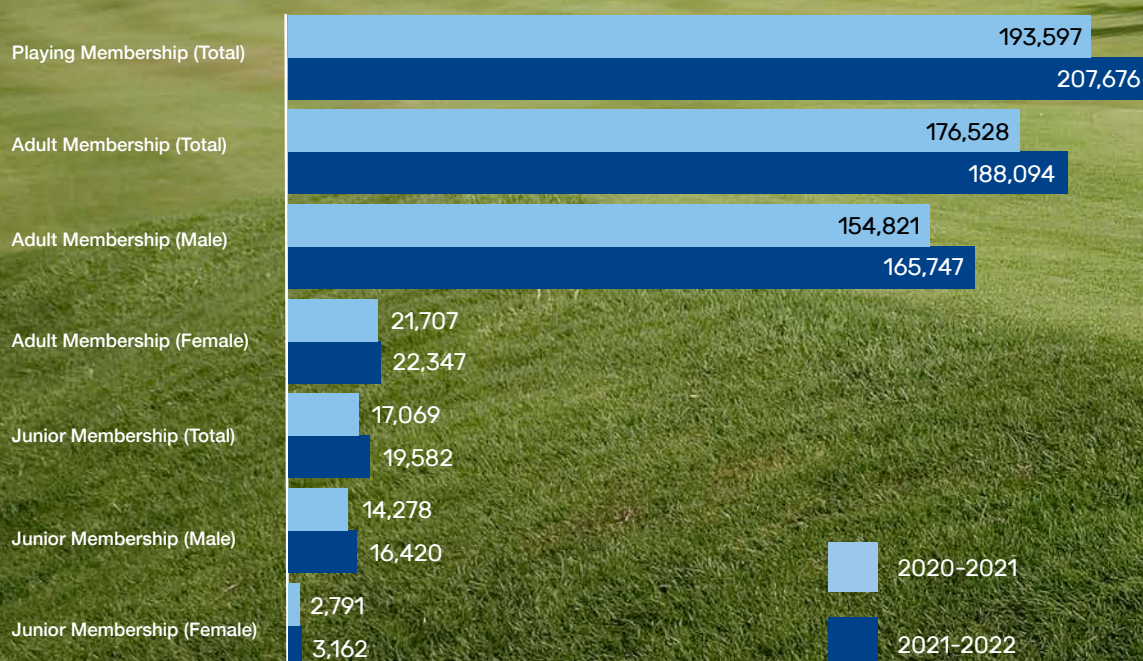
Cameron Adam

Golf Club Membership

The good news story from last year's growth in membership continues into 2021. A 7.3% increase in total playing membership of adults and juniors, and a total playing membership over 207,000 is a confident endorsement of the game's popularity in Scotland. Nine of our affiliated clubs saw an increase of over 100% in their membership numbers.

The challenge for 2022 will be to ensure golf retains those new players and encourages even more growth both for the health of the game and for golf clubs.

Membership Grows for Second Year in a Row



The State of Play

9 affiliated clubs saw

OVER

100%

in playing membership

INCREASE

+7.3%

in total playing membership (adult & juniors)

Junior Golf

This year saw the launch of the National Junior Framework, with 198 clubs registering in 2021. Much of the focus of 2021 has been on making it easier for golf clubs and Junior Convenors to access coaching and teaching materials, and expand opportunities to introduce competitive elements to young golfers. Golf Sixes, the season's most popular competition, was one of many real successes from 2021. Scottish Junior Golf will continue to build on this achievement.

Programme	Club	Participants
Learn to Golf	33	1,006
Golf Sixes	95	764
Flag Championship	49	767
Skills Challenge	18	565
Roving Pro	28	615
Girls Golf Hubs	24	208

A total of 128 clubs engaged in one of the programmes above.

There were 2,555 unique junior participants across all programmes.



[The] Roving Pro Funding has been a fantastic way to start and maintain PGA professional lessons for Saline Junior Golfers.

As a junior convenor, The Flag Championships ... gave me a basis to introduce competition, and an invaluable platform for our golfers to perform.

**Steven Miller, Junior Convenor
at Saline Golf Club**





Supporting our Clubs

Webinars

Number
delivered

11

Number of
attendees

1,277

Number
of affiliated
clubs attended

292

Number
of views

5,083

Funding

A total of 98 affiliated clubs were supported by one of the following funds.

Fund	Amount
Roving Pro	£15,813
Club Hire Fund	£10,000
HSBC Roots	£4,500
Girls Golf Hubs	£7,200
Membership Marketing	£20,825
Total	£58,338

The successful delivery of nearly £60,000 of funding in 2021 was supported by the new HIVE platform, through which a series of educational webinars were delivered to clubs. The funds are designed to help clubs increase and retain membership, but also to broaden the offering to junior golfers and lay a pathway to competitive play.








Women in Golf Charter

Scottish Golf's Club Support team conducted the first review of the Women in Golf Charter in Scotland in December 2021 to measure progress. The results demonstrate a real commitment by clubs to advancing inclusivity and diversity in golf.

Of 248 contacts surveyed, 85% responded (211 total).

Clubs were surveyed on a number of access-broadening measures they had implemented or planned to implement in coming months. These included (but were not limited to):

-  **Peak tee times being made available regardless of gender**
-  **Combined prize-giving**
-  **Overall commitment to increasing female membership and equality of membership**
-  **Recruitment, volunteering opportunities and Board-level representation**
-  **Supporting campaigns that help improve the perception of Women's Golf**

The results confirm that the Charter is encouraging clubs to plan for positive change, as most clubs returned 'Completed' or 'In Progress' answers for each measure.



Commitment to increasing female membership within the club's business plan

Completed	68
In Progress	122
No Response	10
Not Started	11
Grand Total	211

Events

Event Type	Entries Received
Open	845
Closed	776
Club	1,030

Event Type	Number of Events
Championship / Tournament days	54
Single-day events	10
Multi-day events (including 9-Hole Challenge)	14
Number of clubs hosting	23

“It’s been an absolute privilege ... The members have been so pleased that our club has been chosen to host this prestigious event.

Linda Syme, Ladies Captain, Strathaven Golf Club, on hosting the Scottish 2021 Girls’ Amateur Championships

The pandemic put paid to our entire Events schedule in 2020, so it was a delight to return to a healthy complement in 2021. International travel remained a challenge, and cross-border domestic journeys were not uncomplicated. However, with the exception of the Boys’ and Girls’ Opens, which we were unable to reschedule from their early season calendar position, other National Championships returned with gusto. Participation numbers signalled a renewed appetite for competitive golf, and Scottish Golf plan to capitalise on this momentum with an even broader events programme next year.



The Season Ahead

Chief Operating Officer

“ Strong golf club membership indicates courses and fairways will be full of activity this season. ”



Karin Sharp
Chief Operating Officer

Looking back at 2021 is a reminder of how far we have come despite the challenges of a global pandemic. I echo our Chair's sentiments that the achievements and resilience of Scotland's clubs, golfers, volunteers and other associations connected with the sport over the last two years cannot be overstated.

The coming season offers us much to look forward to. Strong golf club membership indicates courses and fairways will be full of activity and I wish all our affiliated clubs a successful season. As the world opens up again post-pandemic, we hope domestic and international visitors will be tempted not only by our outstanding clubs, but by our national events, including a brand new National Open series that can be entered by competitive golfers all over the world.

2022 is still young, but our top-performing golfers are even now making their mark around the world with warm weather playing opportunities in Portugal and South Africa – we wish them all the best in their tournaments this year.

Our digital journey continues apace, and we expect record numbers to be logging General Play scores through the Scottish Golf and OpenPlay apps throughout the year.

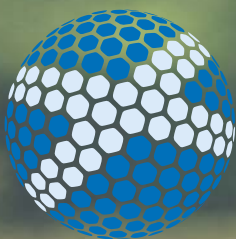
The future of golf also seems bright: our most popular junior competition, GolfSixes, has seen very strong entry numbers this year, and further development of the National Junior Framework will make it easy for coaches and junior convenors to create engaging programmes for enthusiastic young golfers.

And of course, one of our most important core functions – providing support through services, education and funding to our affiliated clubs – remains a focal point. We are delighted to report that all our funds are already highly subscribed, so the direct financial support to clubs we will provide this year will exceed last year's by some margin.

Lest we forget that every year brings its challenges, Scottish Golf is prepared to face 2022 with optimism and energy. As we enter a period of strategic planning, I look forward to meeting our stakeholders and partners in person again for rewarding discussions on the vision for 2022-2026.

Karin Sharp

Karin Sharp



Scottish Golf



Followers **26,155**



Followers **25,250**



Followers **8,634**



Followers **2,565**

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