



The Southport & Ainsdale Golf Club Ltd.

BRADSHAW'S LANE, AINSDALE, SOUTHPORT, PR8 3LG

Tel: 01704 578000 Fax: 01704 570896 Email: secretary@sandagolf.co.uk Web: www.sandagolfclub.co.uk

1st, 17th & 18th Hole Project – Members' Evening

Three weeks ago, I wrote about the above project in the Members' Newsletter and confirmed that a Members' Meeting will be hosted by the Green Committee on the evening of Wednesday August 1st. That meeting has now been confirmed with a start time of 7.30pm, and both the Green Committee, and newly appointed course Architect, Marc Westenborg, will be on hand to discuss the project.

What follows in this document is more information about the project, more images in respect to the plans and some finer details about the works.

1st Hole – Current Challenges

Discussions about the path on the 1st hole have been ongoing for many years, and the idea of replacing the path with something more natural and less obtrusive has been discussed by several Committees. It was this thought process that prompted a review of the hole; which in turn resulted in the plans presented today. There is little debate that the 1st hole here at S&A is a great par 3, which is why the planned changes are sympathetic to the current design, and why the question asked by the Committee and Architect when the discussions began was simply, what would make the hole even better?

The result of discussions concluded that obscuring the car park and green sheds from view would be beneficial; the removal of the tired brown fence would be a plus; being able to see more of the playing surface from the tee would reinstate its historical look; the actual teeing area is not large enough by modern standards and the granite path takes away from the aesthetic of the hole. Each of these matters is now being addressed by the plan.

1st Hole – The Plan

Below is a digital image of the 1st hole as it is today.





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Below is a digital image of how it will look once the work is complete.



Although the images are digital and are unable to reflect exactly how the hole would look if a picture was taken, the difference in the hole are quite clear. In addition, the digital imagery is taken directly from a full course survey, which allows us to ensure that all the levels, heights and the location of features, are exact.

What will change?

The Tee – The teeing area is currently around 370 square metres, with the recommendation for a par 3 tee being 500 square metres. The plan is to make ours just shy of 600 square metres resulting in a larger playing surface, which will provide better ground conditions, the opportunity for a wider variety of tee placements, and, as noted in my first newsletter, it is being reinstated to its original shape. In addition, you can see that more of the putting surface is visible from the teeing area, which is a result of raising the tee by half a metre.

The ladies tee will be relocated back to the front of the main teeing area, but still with their own teeing ground, and the raising of the existing tee will limit change in height the ladies will lose from their current location.

The mounding of the right and rear of the tee, blocks the car park and green sheds from view, and means we no longer need a fence to deter people from entering the tee from the wrong side. A far more presentable course boundary can be used as a result.

The Path – As can be seen in both the image above, and the image below, the new grass paths are no longer the feature of the hole. The grass surface, although still clearly a path, blends into the surroundings more and is far more in keeping with not only what we have on the course elsewhere, but what you see fantastic examples of on many great Links.



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The creation of two paths, and the use of irrigation on both paths, will ensure that wear and tear is manageable and that a route from the tee to the green will always be available, even during times of remedial work.



On the right of the above image is the new open-sand area that will be created by removing the rank grasses and the sand to be used on the 18th hole. The area will be planted with dune grasses to prevent sand movement and will naturally regenerate in the coming years. For those concerned about the final aesthetic of this area, you needn't be, it will be a managed area.

The Green – The only changes at this end of the hole are in relation to bunkers, of which 3 are being earmarked for removal. These are the 2 located front right, and the back right bunker, all with good reason. The rear bunker is seldom used and can't be seen from the tee as it is obscured from view by the middle bunker on the right. This is also true for the 2 front right-hand bunkers, which are hidden from view by the dunes. The plan for the back bunker is to create a grassy hollow, and the plan for the two front right bunkers is to create a prepared run off area, akin to what is currently in place around the 3rd green or the left-hand side of the 5th green. All bunkers that give the hole its visual impact from the tee will remain.

17th Green – Current Challenges

The Water Table is the single answer to the question posed, as evidenced every winter since the course flooded some years ago. The 3 bunkers on the right-hand side are all out of play at one time or another, and the middle of the 3 is often out of play for several months; not something acceptable for a Links of our stature. The green is also challenging from an agronomic point of view as its moisture levels are dictated by the water table.



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17th Green – The Plan

Below is the 17th green today – Below that is the planned 17th Green.





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You can see from the images that the green has moved to the left slightly, between 8 and 10 yards is the plan, which creates more space to the right of the green that has been populated with some small dunes as a screen for the 18th tee. In completing the green move, the level of the green will be raised by around half a metre, as will all the surrounding areas. This will lift the bunkers out of the water table, and with the green being rebuilt, the compacted clay layer within the green itself, will be removed to help improve performance.

The Committee have considered H&S issues that could result from moving the green, and at this stage are comfortable that no undue risk is being added to the course. That said, as with all new additions to the course, a full risk assessment will be completed before final designs are confirmed.

The shape and contours of the new green are yet to be finalised, as the Committee want to ensure that the new surface is in keeping with our greens across the course. The above image shows some of Marc's initial thoughts, but he is currently working on his technical drawing for the green, which will be added to the display in the Clubhouse when ready.

18th Hole – Current Challenges & Plan

The 18th hole is a good golf hole, but not one that couldn't be improved. As highlighted in the announcement a few weeks ago, it is the aesthetic from the tee that detracts from the hole, in that you can see the driving range boards and white gables on the houses from the tee. This, coupled with the blind nature of the tee shot, is something that the plan will address.

It will also address the granite paths on the hole, both the one leading to the fairway from the tee and from the green to the Clubhouse. Similar to the work that has already been completed on the 4th hole, and which is planned for the 1st hole, the aim is to remove as much of the granite paths as possible, reinstating them as grass paths where possible. The 4 images below, show all the planned works.





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Above is the aerial view of the new 17th green and redesigned 18th tee complex. You can see from this image, the clear separation of the 17th green and 18th tee, as well the new dune complex that will be created to the right of the 18th tee once the copse of scrubby trees and bushes has been removed.

Below is an eye level image of how the tee shot will look once the work is complete, and as you can see, the driving range is now out of sight, and the small adjustment to the dune on the left has opened up enough of the view to give golfers more of an idea as to where they should be aiming. The hole is still semi blind, but the new dunes on the right infer as to the direction the hole goes.

There have been some concerns that the dune on the left was to be removed, but this is not the case. The dune on the left is of huge importance to the success of the project as the new dunes placed on the right of the hole will be designed to mirror the height of what we currently have on the left.



The next image shows the new path configuration, as well as the newly opened sand area on the left-hand side, from which we will be using the fill to help build the new dunes on the hole.



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The final image is of the green, with the back right-hand bunker having been removed, and the existing granite path being pushed back further away from the playing areas. This work will also include the final landscaping of the dune to the right-hand side of the green, linking it into the new run off area that is created.





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Logistics

The project is hoped to be completed this side of Christmas with works to commence on October 15th. The golfing calendar has been looked at in some detail by the Green Committee and it is felt that at this time we will minimise disruption. During the period of works the course will be played as 16 holes, with the 1st and 18th holes being closed for the duration of the works. The 17th hole will be played to a temporary green, with the 2nd hole being played from a temporary tee at the start of the fairway. Golf will commence from the 7th tee during the works, with the 6th hole being the last. This will allow us to ensure that works traffic and golfers do not need to occupy the same area as each other. Once the project has gone to tender we will have a more definite timeline for the works, but we are anticipating it will take around 8 weeks to complete.

Once the work is complete we will of course need to keep the new 1st tee, 18th tee and 17th green closed, but the holes themselves will be able to re-open in a revised format. With conducive weather we would hope to have all the areas back in play from May 2019.

Costs

The total cost of the project is yet to be determined, but we have been informed it is likely to be in the region of £150,000. The bulk of this money was placed in the budget at the start of the year, £100,000, but since that time the 17th green has been added to the project. Final costs will only be known once tenders are received, with 4 companies selected to tender for the project. We will receive by the end of August, at which point the successful contractor and costs will be given to you all.

Planning & Ecology

As we are custodians of a SSSI rated piece of land, we are required to apply for permission in order to complete the works. Natural England are the organisation to grant that permission, and we are currently working with them to complete the relevant paperwork. We have already completed both a vegetation survey and sand lizard survey, which are two of the required processes.

In addition to surveys, we need to demonstrate that we are adding to the quality of the land in question, which in Natural England's eyes, simply means we are removing what shouldn't be on the land and replacing it with what should. In this instance the removal of granite paths is positive, as is the removal of scrubby trees and non-native trees, as neither of these are natural to the land. We will also be removing a lot of rank grasses during the creation of the new open sand areas. Whilst this in itself doesn't change the formal use of the land, it is seen as providing an ecological benefit to the area.

Philip Worthington - General Manager



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Scale 1 : 1000 @ A3

