



PGC COURSE PLAN
Spring 2017

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is threefold;

1. To provide a record of the current layout of Peebles Golf Course and insight into previous changes.
2. To summarise the Club's aspirations and investment intentions in respect of the Course layout, condition and greenkeeping equipment.
3. To support detailed prioritisation and planning of course maintenance and upgrade activity.

This document should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis (at least annually) to reflect the changes that have occurred and to ensure that priorities are in line with changing expectations.

Going forward, the club will improve communication on course development activity and will notify members of upcoming works prior to commencement.

Graham Lowther
Captain
February 2017

2. Aims and Objectives

The quality of our golf course in terms of both **CONDITION** and **LAYOUT** is central to the viability of the club. The aims / objectives are key to:

- retain and grow our membership
- attract visitor and corporate numbers
- maintain / grow how much we can charge for green fees (avoiding the current national trend of cost cutting, which is a race to the bottom)
- attract major amateur and middle ranking pro events, which can raise our membership / visitor profile

Currently we have a GOOD Course in a GREAT setting and excellent location to markets. We have the site opportunity to build on the great setting and develop a VERY GOOD going on GREAT course. A great course is key to much higher levels of visitor income that we need to aspire.

The improvements in **layout** will build on the **design principles** of the internationally famous Harry S Colt, the course's principal architect who in the 1930's laid out the basis of the current layout. The changes build on the playability of the course but build on the need for accurate play through attention to bunkering, strategic tree planting.

The existing Medal Course will be retained. The addition of new back tees will add an option for member and visitor play as well as providing a good test for the premier competitions mentioned above.

The additions should allow us to attract significant Amateur and potentially middle and lower ranking Pro events. We propose this activity to increase the profile of the course and to build our membership and attract visitors. A further initiative to create gender neutral tees seeks to improve playability and retention of members.

3. History

The course has a history of change with the original Willie Park Jnr course at Morning Hill (1892).

On the current Kirklands site there were three markedly different layouts

- The original layout from 1908.
- A major extension in 1922.
- The current 1934 Colt layout. This forms the basis of the current course.
- In 1952 the nines were reversed.

There have been significant changes to the Colt layout

- In 1973 the 15th hole was extended and the green relocated and the sixteenth hole extended.
- Since the mid 1990's, changes to the teeing routing on the 2nd hole, relocation of the green at the 6th hole, new back tee at the 7th hole and new tees at the 12th, 13th and 18th holes.
- Re-laying of the greens at the 11th, 12th, and 17th holes.
- Re-bunkering at the 5th, 9th, 10th, 13th and 17th holes.

In 2016 we substantially extended the practice area, installed a new all weather teeing matt and added a practice short game area with new green, bunkers and chipping zone.

Photos of the course in the 1990s show that the course was virtually tree free!

Change is not new to Peebles Golf Club and has been key to developing the course over the last 125 years.

The course is in very good condition and has a terrific setting. We should make much more of our rich history in our literature and our local landscape in our literature and our website.

There are interesting plans of the earlier course at Cademuir, before the move to the current site at Kirkland's in 1908.

The basis of the present course was laid out by the internationally famous golf architect Harry S Colt (the designer of Sunningdale, Muirfield and Hoylake) around 1933.

We will make more of promoting the Colt link and incorporating some of his design principles in our plans to upgrade our current good course to making it a very good / great course.

4. Conditioning

Conditioning of the course on a consistent and sustainable basis is important.

We intend to keep up and build on the current excellent maintenance regime, ensure our staff maintain and develop their skills and we provide them with the best green keeping equipment and facilities on a sustainable basis.

There are a very large number of competitor courses for the visitor pounds. The successful ones, such as Boat of Garten, Ladybank etc. – offering a great course, which is a key element towards much higher levels of visitor income that we need to aspire if we are to maintain our financial sustainability.

Progress has been made over the last two years, but we need to plan for the next 5 to 10 years if we are to achieve our objectives.

4.1 Course Equipment

Ensuring that our greens staff have the tools for the job is a top priority. Our staff focus on value for money in how we purchase and maintain our equipment. However, there can be risks in this approach if we have not got the funds available to replace key equipment at the end of life.

A review of equipment assets has been undertaken with the head of greens staff and the finance director. If we had to, the total replacement cost of our key machinery is currently around £500k (or for nearly new c£250K). We plan to commence regular cyclical replacement and upgrade of our equipment.

A start has been made in 2017 with the purchase of a new tractor, greens mower, tee mower and rough gangs

Over the periods 2014 – 2016 we undertook modest upgrading to the Greens Shed:

- Roof guttering work,
- New showers,
- Painting
- Hard standing,
- Access road surfacing,
- Improved wash bay / soakaway to meet SEPA regulations.

When reviewing the course, need look at all the greens assets, which includes the buildings. Therefore in the **medium to longer term** we will need to replace the sheds with a new facility. The ideal is to build a new shed along the lines of Cardrona and improve services (septic tanks, phone connections etc.).

There would be an opportunity to link a course toilet - best from services and security point of view and to minimize the potential risk of vandalism.

The new shed would be positioned to south of current sheds – allowing the use of existing sheds until demolition and located a bit closer to course for toilets etc. Improved hard standing for materials and any equipment kept outside (estimated cost circa £150k). Work would need to be done on discharge to comply with SEPA requirements.

4.2 Green Staff

Our current small team is delivering very well. We will ensure that we build on and enhance their skills and ensure that they have the tools they need to do the job (outlined above).

4.3 Course Maintenance and Conditioning

Activity 2014- 16

Over the last three years the condition of the course in terms of green condition and drainage have improved. Examples of these are as follows:

- Extensive green work carried out on 3rd and 7th
- Extensive drainage a 13th
- Bought new flags, holes, ball washers tee markers etc.
- Modest light tree planting left and right of 3rd, right of 4th, right of 9th, left and right of 12th, right of 15th left of 17th and left of 18th.
- Comprehensive planting of over 200 saplings at the 13th and 14th to meet the Forestry Commission license conditions
- Removal of dense Hawthorn / long grass close to playing areas (e.g. right of 3rd, right of 14th)
- Addition of some colour to the course - new shrubs at 1st and 12th in particular.

These changes have significantly improved the playability of the course.

Activity 2017 -18

Course condition is key to all we do and what we want to build on,

- Continuing to work on the green condition - including deep coring and filling with dried silica sand. Intended to carry out work on all 18 green in spring 2017.
- Level and condition of teeing areas – priority list is to be developed by the head greenkeeper
- Address drainage marks with improved soil - particularly 4th, 14th greens
- Path improvement especially at 4th, track crossing at 7th, 12th, 16th
- Weed treatment in some of waste areas
- Periodic cutting of long grass at fringes of plantation – e.g. 9th
- Planation trimming at 17th

- Removal of last of Hawthorn close to fairways at 6th
- Modest additional tree planting in open rough areas to provide definition
- Working on the bunker sand - (new rotavator purchased for 2017)
- Repairing / renewing bunker faces especially to right of 3rd, left of 4th, 12th, 14th
- New intermediate rough cut between the fairway and rough (to address the problem where there is a flush of rough growth producing a collar at the edge of the fairway)
- Additional shrub and flower planting to add colour around tees and greens

4.4 Tree Planting

The **purpose** of tree planting is to encourage accurate play, particularly that which avoids penal rough which was seen to be the course's main defence in the 2002 plans. Trees also add definition and separation between holes.

We need to avoid "blanket planting" as this potentially spoils views of the surrounding townscape and landscape. It will be worth thinning out some of the denser planted areas to give more views.

Trees have been removed to improve air circulation around greens in particular. We need to be aware that future planting does not recreate these problems.

Individual trees mainly oak and beech will be considered for planting, as an example returning the beech tree to the right hand side of the 2nd hole.

Groups of 4 or 5 trees - silver birch have been introduced to holes recently at the 3rd and 18th holes.

4.5 Tees

The teeing areas were assessed in Spring/Summer 2016. They were assessed in terms of (i) scale, (ii) level and (iii) condition

In terms **scale**, all the teeing grounds were measured to establish a baseline. The conclusion was that overall the tees were large enough. However, this will be reviewed given the encouragement for members in general play to use any tee.

The additional back black tees, would add about 3% to the overall surface area and therefore are unlikely to cause any significant pressures on staff time.

In terms of **levels**, generally the tees were satisfactory. However, the 6th and 11th had issues. The medal tee at the 6th has been leveled over the winter. The 11th will be the next to be addressed.

While the **condition** of the tees, was good at the height of the season, it was felt that the general condition throughout the season, could be significantly improved; particularly the older tees with heavier soil.

All teeing areas have been cored and the four par 3 holes sanded. All tees will be cored again and sand/ top dressed in the Spring. The tees will be double fed through 2017 and 2018. Once completed levels will be checked again.

This should bring substantial improvements and a further review as to whether any tees need to be extended.

4.6 Bunkers

When the bunkers are being refurbished the HS Colt style of bunkers will be considered. Any bunker additions will be to reflect the greater driving distances from those of Colt's time.

A program of bunker refurbishment is to be undertaken over time. This will involve the complete emptying of the sand and a review of the sub-base and drainage to the bunker will be carried out.

4.7 Bridges

All bridges on the course are ideally to be of a generic stonework "Swilken type" design adding consistency, quality and aesthetics to the course.

These bridges are to be funded by sponsors or gifted as memorial features, as an alternative to the traditional choice of a bench, and will not be a burden on the balance sheet.

Sites identified for bridges include

Hole 3 - in the medium \ long, a "Swilken type" footbridge could be added over the burn.

Hole 6 – in the medium term – two "Swilken type" footbridges could be added over the burn

Hole 8 – in the medium \ long term, a "Swilken type" footbridges could be added over the burn

Hole 14 – in the medium term, a "Swilken type" footbridges could be added over the burn

Hole 17 – in the medium \ long term, a "Swilken type" footbridges could be added over the burn

5. Course Design, Layout and Action Principles

In enhancing our course from good to very good; or very good to great the guiding principles include:

- building on the Colt legacy particularly in terms of greens, bunkering, layout balance and length
- ensuring the course is playable, encouraging accurate shots played at a good pace. This means avoiding penal rough; and instead of repositioning / adding bunkers, adding strategically placed individual trees or small groups of 4 or 5
- adding new back tees for “fun play” in line with the introduction of ability tees and to attract top amateur or middle ranking pro events
- building on the quality of the putting surfaces and the drainage (particularly drainage for periods of heavy rainfall)
- making the course as playable as possible in the winter months - further improve drainage and temporary greens
- adding more colour around tees and greens - azaleas etc.
- maintain good quality course hardware - flags, cups, teeing ground equipment etc.
- Regular investment in greenkeeping equipment

(Some of the above may be required to retain our current SSS rating, which is reviewed by the Scottish Golf on a regular basis)

6. Individual Hole Detail

Hole 1

Screening to the improved practice facilities is to be completed. Additional landscape planting to be carried out to add colour at the back of the green.

The top tee is to be re-instated as the main medal tee for competitions (original design). The fairway is to be cut back towards the tee to assist players that cannot carry the rough in its current position.



Hole 2

No planned changes to the hole from the existing tees, other than the replanting of a beech tree past the left hand bunker, a mature tree has been gifted to restore the hole to its former challenging glory.



There is a possible long-term option to extend the hole to a short par 5, by positioning a new green in current waste area short of the burn. This can be built without interfering with play to current green.

Exact green design and bunkering would be worked up only if a decision were taken by the members to change the hole. This would increase the course par to 71. Alternatively, this could be introduced in conjunction with reducing the ninth hole to a long par 4 hole being played off forward tees. This would retain the course par at 70.

It would provide a gentler start to the round, which is a common Colt design feature, and it would increase the case for positioning the Stroke Index 1 rated hole nearer the middle of the front nine, more in line with course design standards.

Hole 3

A new tee has been installed for the black course only. Rough in front of burn is to be lowered – this gives some recovery for poor shots from seniors / beginners.

Tree planting has been carried out to define the hole and improve the wet patch at the left side of the fairway. Hawthorn bushes have been removed to right of the fairway at the dry stone walling short of the green. Trees have been cut back at wall and the rough cut. Individual and groups of trees have been planted on right hand side improving separation from the 8th hole just over the burn.

The overhanging lip on the bunker to the right of the green will be corrected to replace the vertical face to the bunker.



Hole 4

No planned changes following trimming back rough short of the tree group on the right to make it safer and easier to find wild shots as this is blind from the tee.



Consideration is to be given to planting a thin strip of landscaping on the embankment to rear of the green to add colour.

Hole 5

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.



Landscaping including shrubs, plants and flowers is to be added to the large area on the left embankment at the green, creating a colourful backdrop to the hole.

Addition of a dog leg option for a new black tee cut through the existing waste woodland. This creates a completely new hole for the black course only.



Hole 6

No changes for the hole from the existing tees. The existing medal tee has been levelled.



A new back tee for the black course only is to be constructed on the embankment in the existing trees. This will also create a good viewpoint enhanced by some additional planting around the tee.

Long term, generic "Swilken type" design bridges could be added over the burn. Some landscape planting would add colour to the rear of the green.

Hole 7

No changes to the hole off the existing tees. The path materials are to be improved.



Consideration of a new green to the right of the existing location to remove the double green and enable the lengthening of the eighth was decided against.

Hole 8

No changes to the hole from the existing tees. Some dense non-indigenous trees behind the green have been removed to create a view of the town and surrounding hills. Replanting with indigenous trees will be undertaken in 2017.



Construction of a new back tee for the black course only, to the left of the current tees will create a right to left dogleg over the current wasteland. This addition would create an interesting alternative with a stunning view of the River Tweed and town adding to the visitor and member experience.

Hole 9

No change to the hole from the existing tees.

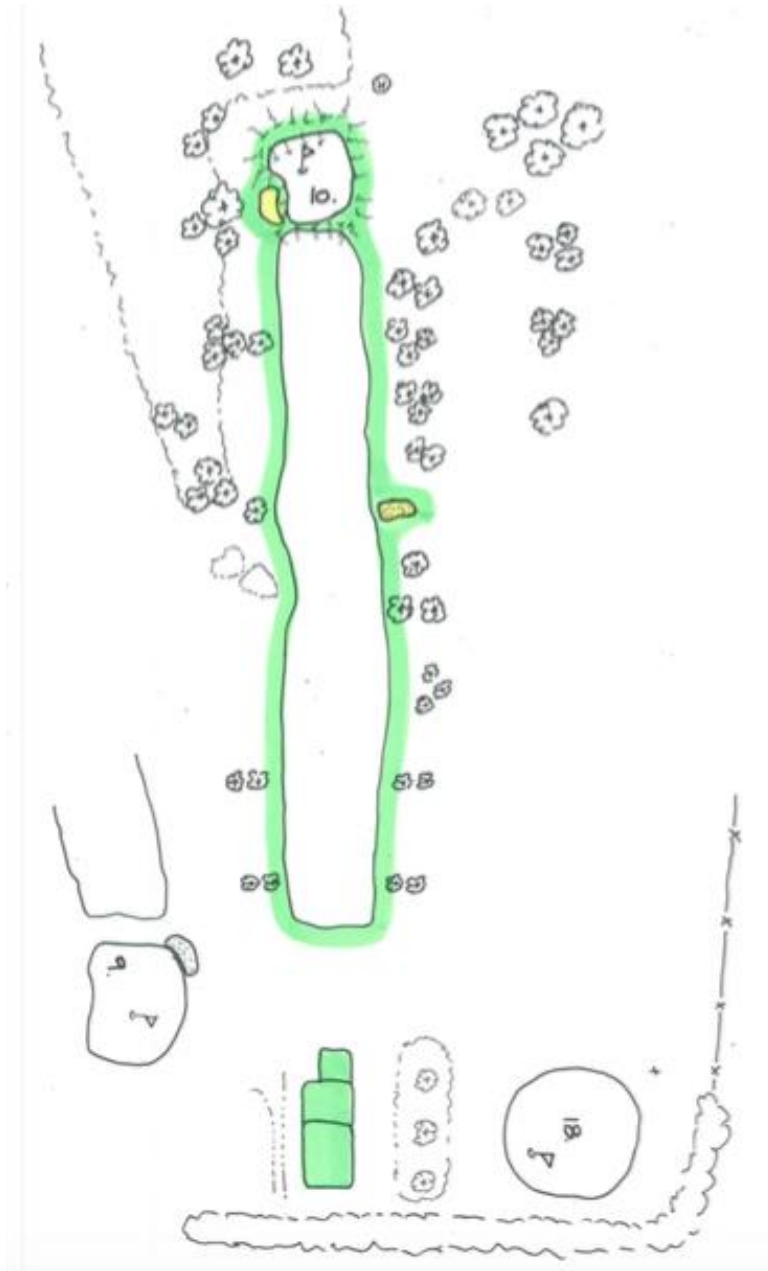


Additional tree planting to help screen practice area and define the hole has been completed. New back tee for the black course only has been added.

At the green, it is proposed to alter the contours marginally at the approach of the left hand bunker. This subtle change will tighten the approach to the green and replaces the previous option of additional bunkering or enlarging the left bunker itself. This will allow all categories of player to have a bump and run option to the green.

Hole 10

No changes to the hole apart from the addition of trees to better define the hole from the adjacent holes.



Hole 11

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.

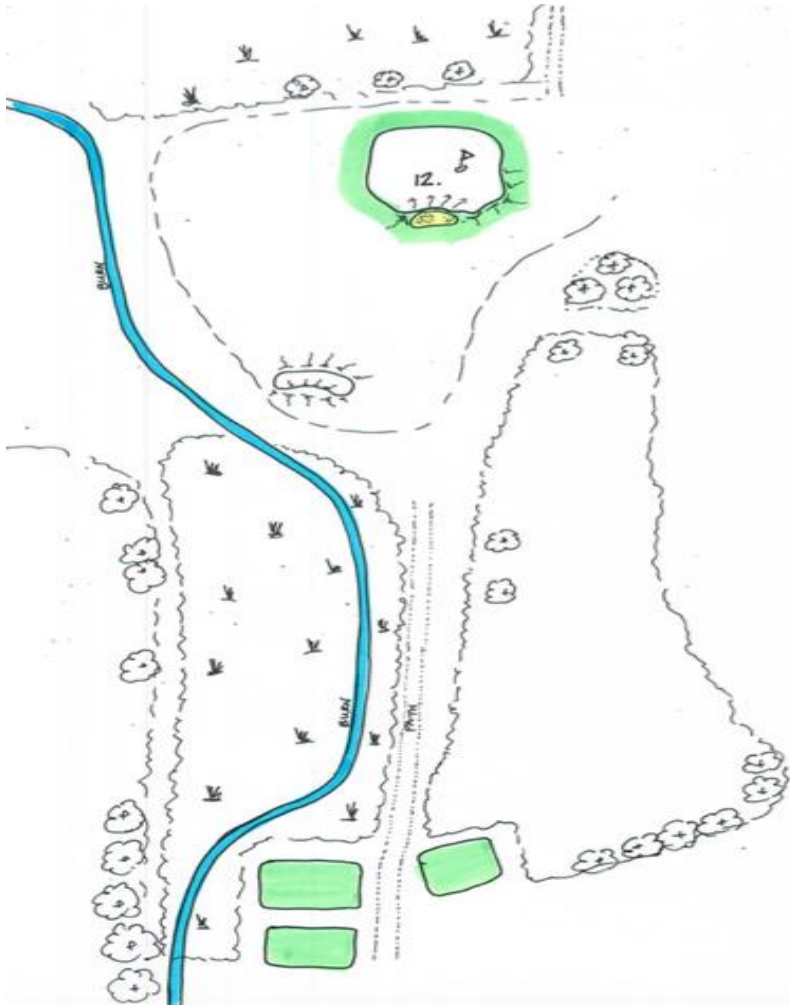


Additional tree planting is to be carried out in the 11th / 13th rough area, to improve definition between the two holes and to create a premium for hitting the fairway on both holes.

The existing yellow and white tees are to be linked and levelled for ease of cutting and maintenance.

Hole 12

No changes to the hole.



The area to the left of the burn has been planted up with whip trees, of species that thrive in wet conditions, to meet our Forestry Commission felling license. The soft / boggy areas are to be monitored over future months.

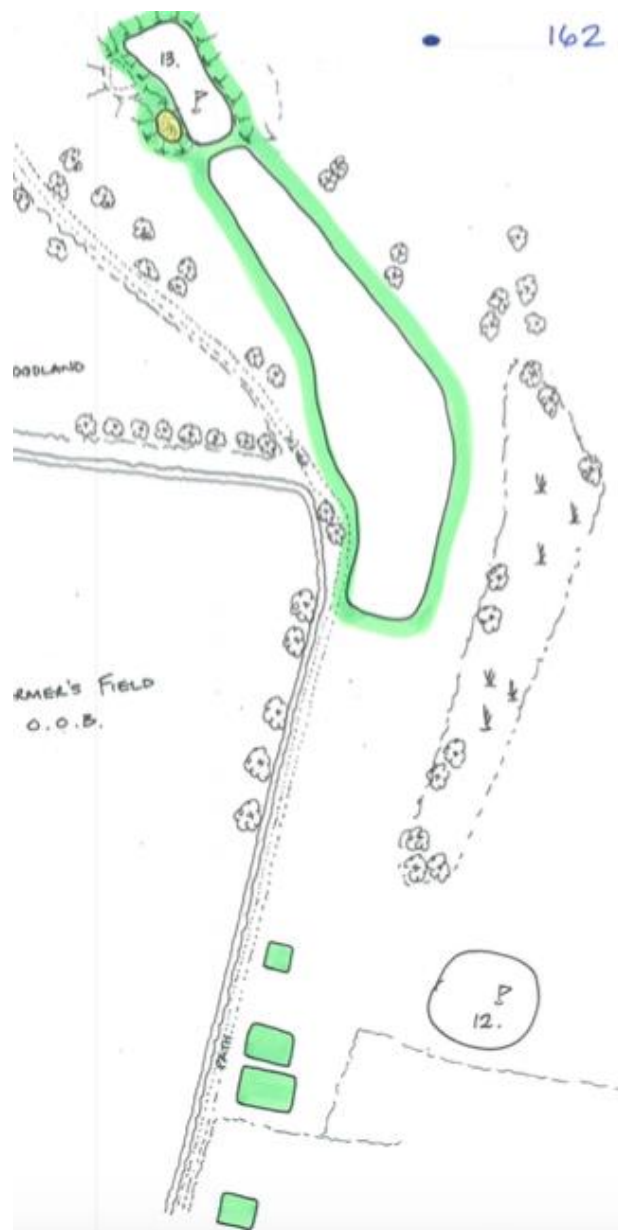
Landscaping to add more colour to the back of the green is to be improved. Extensive whip tree planting is an option there too.

Bunker work is to be started Spring 2017.

The path leading to the green is to be smartened up - material of construction is to be improved.

Hole 13

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.



New back tee for the Black Course only is to be constructed in the area behind the medal tee.

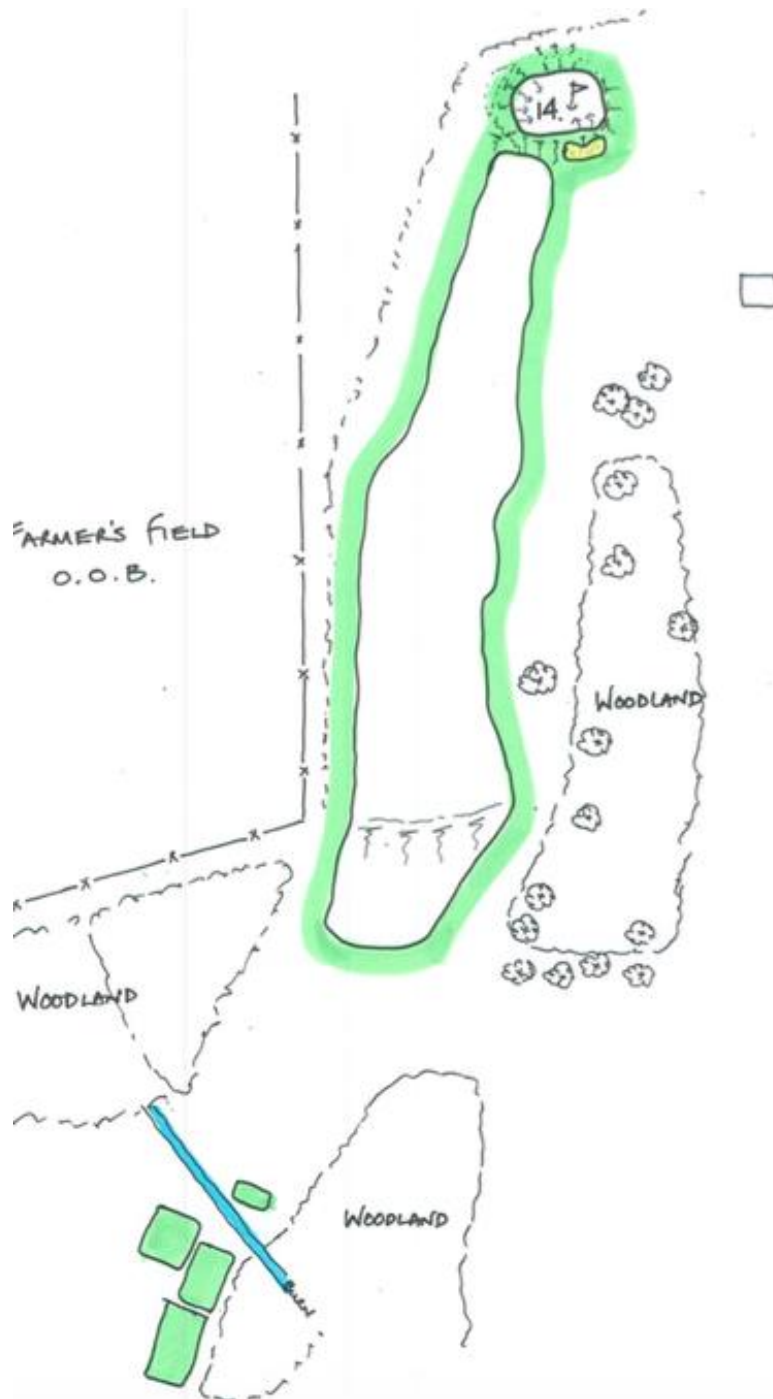
The trees on the left of the fairway that currently impede drives from the ladies tee will be cut back. The tee position and size is to be reviewed after this work.

The area between tees and fairway will have further drainage improvements.

At the green, lower cutting of the embankments and surrounds at the right of the green will be carried out to reward accurate second shots. Cutting would allow the option of either pitching or putting, for shots that miss or just run through the green.

Hole 14

No changes to the hole from existing tees.

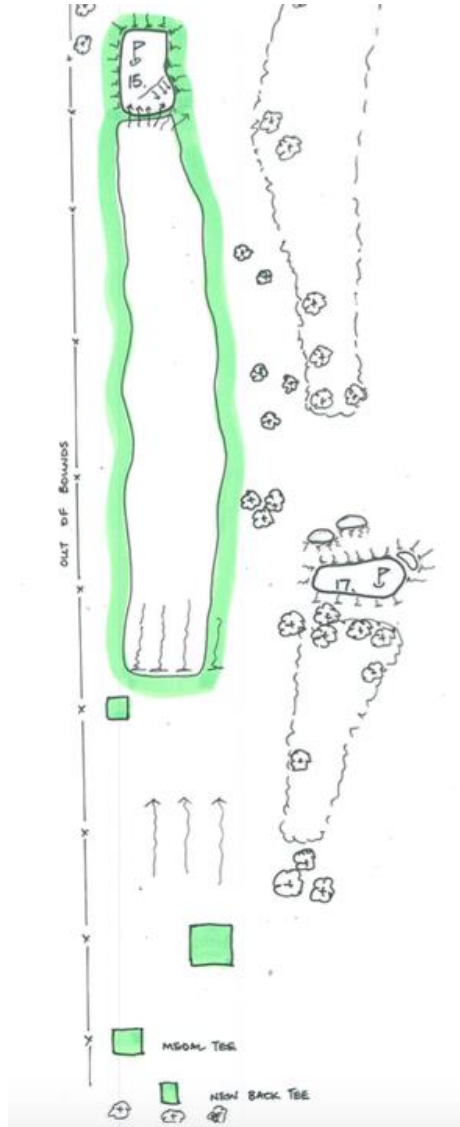


Work has been done within the plantation, removing Hawthorn at edge of rough. Landscaping behind green is an option for providing colour to the hole. The bridge over the burn has been repaired and the path is to be improved. At the green work on the overhanging face of the bunker will commence in spring 2017, restoring it to a vertical face.

Consideration of a new back tee for the Black course only is an option in the long term.

Hole 15

No changes from the hole from the existing tees.



Re-instatement of the old winter tee in the existing trees will form a new back tee for the Black Course only.

Landscaping at the back of the 14th hole and in the surrounding trees will add colour to the teeing area.

There is a long-term option to relocate the green to the right of the existing green, should the members choose to change the hole. Design of the green and surrounding area would only be started if this were required.

Hole 16

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.

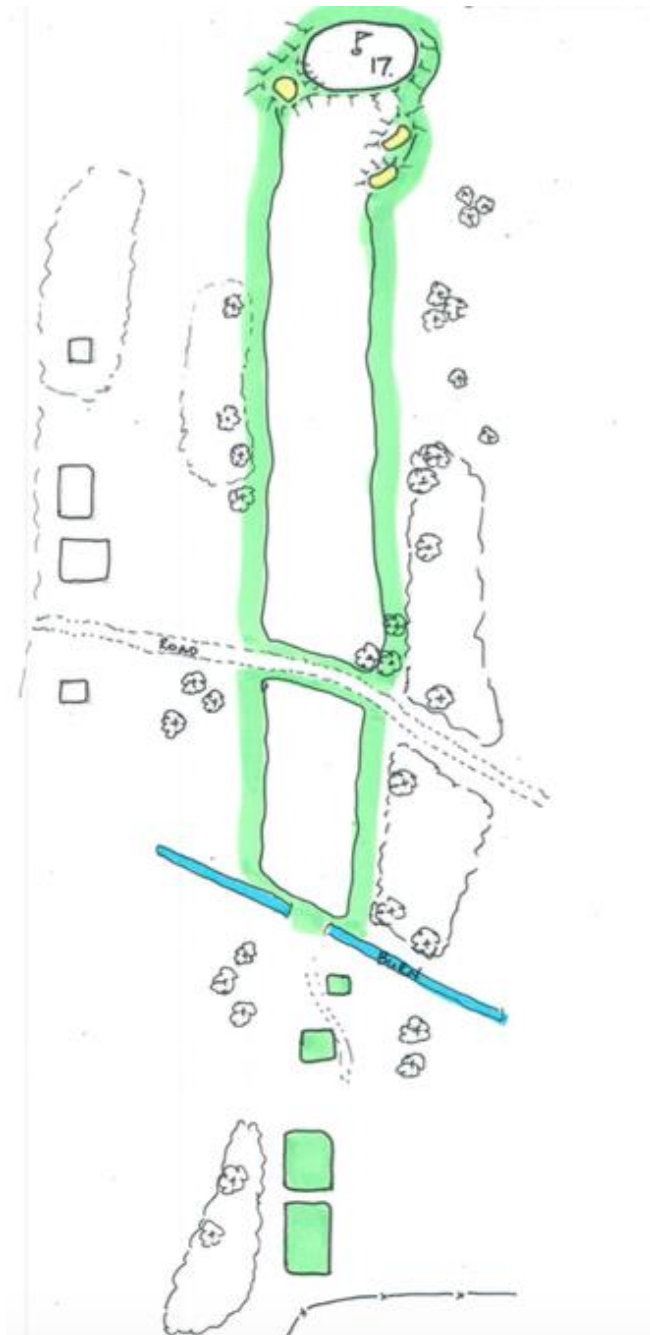


Consideration needs to be given to the possibility of the land to the left of the hole, currently owned by the Common Good Fund, being developed for housing.

A possible re-siting of the green just over the burn to the right of its current position is an option. This would make the hole a shorter trickier target with the burn coming into play. A green design would only be drawn up if the housing development came to fruition.

Hole 17

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.



Drainage work will be carried out to the area at the left of the green running diagonally down the fairway away from the green. This is an area that has been draining off the 14th fairway in recent years to form wet areas in the gully from the 14th hole.

There is potential for a future back tee for the Black Course only.

Plants / shrub additions at back of green are an option for adding colour to the hole.

Hole 18

No changes to the hole from the existing tees.



Re-instatement of old winter tee as a back tee for the Black Course only, has been completed.

Planting has been completed to the left of the fairway near the green to help the long term screening of the houses. Beech hedges at the top of the embankment are to be allowed to grow and further increase the cover to the houses. The copper bushes at the back of the 18th green are to be grown around the embankment to improve cover to the houses at the back of the green.

Black course Tee options

A brief summary of the potential extra length that can be added by creating a new black course for occasional play and use in major amateur or middle ranking pro events.

Hole 3 New back tee beside group of trees adds ~50 yards, now installed.

Hole 5 Dogleg - new tee to east of current tee ~30 yards

Hole 6 Back to fence line ~10 yards

Hole 7 Current winter tee ~20 yards

Hole 8 New tee to the left of 7th fairway and tee ~35 yards.

Hole 9 New back tee ~30 yards, now completed.

Hole 13 New back tee ~30 yards

Hole 14 New back tee ~20 yards

Hole 15 Re-instated back tee to fence line ~15 yards

Hole 17 New back tee ~30 yards

Hole 18 Re-instated back tee ~50 yards, now completed.

Total addition ~320 yards bringing total to around 6500 yards. (This is now seen as the minimum length for major competitions).

The construction of back tees and completion of a Black Course will be spread over the next two to three years.

7. Practice Facility

In the last two years there have been significant improvements:

- Extension to practice area
- New all weather premium quality practice mat
- -Practice chipping green with two practice bunkers
- Kids practice putting area separate from the main putting green

Further development of the practice facilities will be undertaken in 2017. This will provide;

- Enclosed bays
- Floodlighting to the range
- Swing studio
- Ball dispensing and cleaning machine