



Meet the Captain Sessions – Thursday 30th October 2025

Summary of Member Discussions

Club Strategy Overview

Captain AG presented the 2025–2026 Strategy Plan, covering updates and initiatives across three main areas:

- **Course**
- **Golf Operations**
- **Club Operations**

1. Course Updates

Bunker Project

AG provided an update on the bunker programme and progress to date.

Question: Why were the 1st and 18th signature holes not prioritised?

Answer: The programme is sequenced based on course conditions. Work on lower parts of the course is prioritised ahead of periods with a higher risk of flooding. The 1st and 18th will be addressed when ground conditions elsewhere are unsuitable.

Consistency across all bunkers—shape, sand, and raking—remains a key goal. Once all bunkers have been capillary lined, uniformity will further improve. The current approach of using softer sand at the base and firmer sand on bunker sides is proving effective.

The Captain confirmed that no alterations will be made to completed bunkers until the entire project is finished.

Question: Is the way the staff rake the bunkers intentional?

Answer: The Greens Convener noted that some issues may result from members not using rakes correctly. A bunker-raking video will be highlighted again in club updates.

Question: Will the greens team cut back long grass at the 7th mound, left of the 13th fairway, and right of the 13th green?

Answer: The grass is being allowed to knit in and will be cut at the appropriate time. No reduction in height of the top of this bunker is currently planned.

Question: Some slopes appear dangerous?

Answer: Members are reminded to exercise personal responsibility, wear appropriate footwear, and take a penalty drop if a slope feels unsafe.

Robotic Mowers

The Captain shared positive feedback from the robotic mower trials, noting plans to expand their use to daily fairway cutting. Mowers automatically return close to the clubhouse each evening for security; no security issues have been reported.

Flooding Management

AG updated members on ongoing collaboration with Ballater Golf Club and CBEC, specialists in water management. CBEC, in partnership with SEPA, will undertake hydraulic modelling at Deeside to assess flood performance in three key areas:

1. The riverside path
2. The main burn crossing the course
3. Riverbank vegetation

The in-house team continues clearing ditches, and swales near the 7th hole will be monitored after further rainfall.

Deeside GC is also working with the Deeside Path Group to widen the riverside path and with Camphill/Newton Dee to maintain ditches and soakaways.

Paths

The Captain reported that options have been surveyed to realign the 9th and 18th paths leading back to the clubhouse. Work is expected to begin with the 9th path and be completed by Spring 2026.

Question: Are there plans for machinery paths in heavily worn areas (e.g., around 14th/15th)?

Answer: No formal plan currently exists for machinery-specific paths.

The Greens Convener confirmed continued focus on improving the 15th path, along with general bridge and pathway repairs. Members are asked to respect roped-off areas. Staff have also been reminded to reduce speed around bridges.

General Course Observations

- Swales/Ditches: The greens team will clear these as workloads allow.
- Blairs Course Dumping Ground: Greens Convener to discuss alternative locations with the Course Manager.
- Winter vs. Summer Green Distances: No plans to introduce printed measurements.
- Divots: Greens staff will continue to reseed divots; members will not be asked to do so.

- Course Care: Discussion held around better education and communication to encourage members to care for the course.
- Flag Positions: A request for front/middle/back flags on the Blairs Course will be brought to Council for discussion.

General Comment: The course is in excellent condition for this time of year.

Trees

Question: Some conifers appear stressed or pale?

Answer: The Club's arborist will inspect and advise.

Question: Can we have more information on the long-term tree strategy?

Answer: The Club works closely with a professional arborist who conducts regular inspections and provides recommendations within a 10–15 year plan.

2. Golf Operations

Driving Range

The Captain highlighted recent upgrades, noting that Deeside GC is the only club worldwide offering TrackMan Range free of charge to members.

Pro Shop

The Captain confirmed ongoing price matching efforts where possible with recognised online retailers as advised by Foremost, despite challenges with online pricing.

Refurbishment is underway after 20 years; as the workshop is now used only for shoe er-spiking and re-grips, space will be repurposed for better use.

Juniors

The Captain praised the junior section for their team and individual successes, describing them as “a credit to the Club.”

Occasional issues with non-member parents/guardians were acknowledged.

3. Club Operations

Refurbishment Feedback

Overall feedback has been very positive, with increased member use.

Comments included:

- Lounge chairs uncomfortable and tables slightly low.
- Lack of staff presence outdoors when members wish to order coffee.

It was agreed to investigate relocating or extending the outside bell (currently by the Pro Shop) to the marquee.

Gents Locker Room

The carpet will be replaced in January.

Alternative flooring options were considered, but the Council agreed that carpet remains the most suitable choice.

Balcony & Outside Areas

- Balcony: Planning and building warrant applications have been submitted. Work will likely commence in 2027 following approval and tendering.
- Marquee: Will remain in place for another year. New furniture is planned for Spring 2026.

Finance Update

Finance Convener Chris Watson reported a healthy surplus, driven by:

- Strong Pro Shop and Food & Beverage turnover
- A healthy waiting list and entry fees
- Record-high rounds played in 2026

Deeside membership continues to offer excellent value with comprehensive benefits.

Questions Raised:

- Visitor Enquiries: The new website has increased enquiries, though most seek peak member tee times and cannot be accommodated.
- Visitor & Guest Rates: A possible rate increase for 2026 will be discussed at the next Council meeting.
- Subscription Increases: The Club maintains a long-term financial plan, with average Scottish club increases between 6–10% annually. Costs at Deeside have risen by £110 per member over the past two years, and a 2026 subscription increase is anticipated.

Closing Remarks

Members expressed strong appreciation for the Club's direction and vitality, noting that Deeside remains one of the few clubs that truly has a "heartbeat."