



# BALFRON

GOLF CLUB

## CAPTAIN'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026

### Introduction

2025 has been an exciting and frustrating year in equal measure. We experienced an exceptional summer giving us some perfect conditions for golf, and we delivered for members and visitors alike with a course in excellent condition, even though we operated out of a small red hut and a single Portaloo. The members of the committee have worked incredibly hard all year, and I would like to record my thanks to them for all their work on behalf of the membership. This last year in particular has demanded a huge amount of time in managing the building project on top of the day to day running of the club. The frustration remains that, at time of writing, we still do not have final resolution from Stirling Council to allow us to fully open the clubhouse. I could say that I expect it to happen soon, but that has become a tired phrase in dealing with a bureaucratic system that has a terrible habit of changing its mind. However, even with the frustrations, we finished the year with a healthy surplus, improved facilities, and recognition of our achievements from Scottish Golf. 2026 promises much at Balfron Golf Club.

### Finance

The committee's primary focus is to ensure the financial stability of the club, and 2025 brought additional challenges in managing a large capital investment alongside our normal operational costs. We are fortunate to have the services of Ian Rubython as Treasurer who, as a founder member of Balfron Golf Society, takes particular care to ensure that we work within our means. We are enormously grateful to our funders (Sport Scotland and the Paul Charitable Trust among others) whose support has allowed us to invest in the new clubhouse. At the SGM that paved the way for the project the committee stressed our desire to hold a minimum of £100k in reserve. Our final audited accounts show that we have achieved that and more. The good weather and our promotional work through Itison saw our visitor income increase by over 40% on 2024.

The annual surplus shown in the accounts does include a lump sum payment of £28,334 as an instalment for the sale of the telephone mast.

The generation of an annual surplus allows us to continue to invest in the course and in our members. At the start of last season, we invested in a new fairway mower. We will look again in the coming season to invest in the machinery necessary to ensure that our fantastic greenkeeping team have the equipment they need to maintain the course to the standard that we have all come to appreciate. We will keep close control on all costs for staff, machinery, fuel, fertilisers, and materials in managing our budgets.

The committee is recommending a modest increase in the Ordinary membership fee to £495 (4.2% increase). In recognition of our growing Junior membership, we are recommending a changed structure to mini (10 and under), Junior (11-14), and youth (15-17). Country membership and visitor green fees have also been reviewed. The recommended fees are set out in the AGM notice. In setting our budget for 2026 we have taken account of the increased staff costs arising from

operation of the clubhouse, which will need to be staffed for the majority of the time. With improved facilities for our members and visitors, we believe the recommended fees across all categories continues to provide our membership with excellent value. We will again be offering members the option to spread the cost of membership through the Fairway Credit scheme.

The audited accounts have been issued to all members. Overall, we recorded a very healthy surplus, and the club continues to be in a strong financial position. The treasurer will go over the accounts in detail at the AGM and will be able to answer any questions you may have. The accounts show a large surplus this year, it should be noted that there is an exceptional item included of £28,344. This is the final payment from the mast company for the lease we sold to help fund the clubhouse. Even without counting this payment, the club have still made a very healthy profit, which will of course be reinvested in the course. This year we are particularly keen to upgrade machinery which Kevin and team use to upkeep and present the course in the fantastic condition we have become accustomed to.

Much of our surplus has come from visitor income, the club intends to continue to encourage visitors. We hope the new clubhouse and the publicity we are currently receiving on the back of the Scottish Golf awards nominations, will further enhance our offering.

### **Course**

The course is attracting more and more visitors, and with improved facilities and increased exposure through our award nominations from Scottish Golf, we can expect that to continue. The condition of the course and the friendly welcome are regularly highlighted in feedback, and I have been particularly pleased to receive very positive comments from visitors and members whenever I meet them. Last year we ran various offers through Itison and offered reduced visitor fees at quiet times in order to promote greater interest. We intend to continue with these initiatives through 2026, always ensuring as best we can that our members have priority at peak times. Visitor income is essential in allowing us to keep our membership fees affordable, and to allow us to continually invest in facility improvements.

My thanks go to Kevin Wilkie (Head Greenkeeper) and his team (David Stewart and Steven Morgan) who regularly go the extra mile to present the course in amazing condition. David Bate left us during last season after many years, and we wish him every success. I am pleased to say that he remained a member. Thanks, must also go to Allan Mulgrew and Tony Davey who regularly assisted during the season with machine operation, and to Tom McGregor who always seems to be able to fix a machine when it needs a bit of TLC. He also managed to provide several hundred litres of diesel at no costs, all entirely above board and legal, which saved us a substantial amount of money. We are lucky to have such a dedicated team of greenkeepers and volunteers. My thanks to Jimmy McGregor, Greens Convenor, who coordinates all the on-course maintenance and management operations. We would also wish to extend our thanks to Jim Valente for his ranger work during the season. Jim delivered a welcome and organisation to our many visitors, in particular difficult conditions during the clubhouse build.

### **Clubhouse**

I am sure that, like me, all the membership would just like to see the new building in use! It has been a challenging year for those of us on the clubhouse sub-committee as we tried to steer everything through the bureaucratic morass of building warrant approval, design changes, and SER

certificates. I will say, however, that throughout the construction process our main contractor, MacGregor Building Services, were exemplary. They have been a pleasure to work with, always helpful and prepared to be flexible as we negotiated the challenges. Ledi Renewables, who installed our solar and air source systems have also been excellent.

We have received help from members Scott Benson and Scott McCallum in fitting out the clubhouse and providing electrical connections, for which we are very grateful. I am sure that everyone will be impressed with our new home once it is fully open, and I look forward to meeting up with members over a coffee before or after a round.

One very positive consequence of the new building is our shortlisting for two awards in the Scottish Golf Awards 2026, one for Enterprise, and one for Environment. The awards evening takes place on 27<sup>th</sup> March and we will have a good representation at the event. I'm sure we will have a great evening, whatever the outcome. Of course we want to win both. These nominations will give Balfron some great exposure and will result in an upsurge of interest amongst visitors. With a staffed clubhouse, the opportunity to provide some catering for visitors, and the quality of the golf course, I am sure that 2026 is going to be a bumper year. Every visitor is a potential new member.

## **Membership**

Our membership numbers remain fairly steady with a slight decrease in Ordinary membership offset by a significant increase in Junior and Student members. We are very pleased with the level of our Junior membership and continue to offer junior coaching through the season. We hope to develop opportunities for junior participation through dedicated tee times and team competitions, and encourage them to utilise their own space within the clubhouse. The committee is also recommending the award of Honorary Member to long-standing members Brian Davidson and Richard Hiseman, in recognition of their outstanding contribution to Balfron Golf Club. During the year, we lost 75 members and gained 111 new members.

| <b>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY SUMMARY</b> |                  |                  |
|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Category                           | at 30th Nov 2025 | at 30th Nov 2024 |
| Complimentary                      | 2                | 2                |
| Country                            | 11               | 14               |
| Honorary member                    | 3                | 3                |
| Junior                             | 107              | 63               |
| Ladies Ordinary                    | 31               | 34               |
| Ordinary                           | 291              | 301              |
| Staff Member                       | 3                | 4                |
| Student                            | 27               | 17               |
| <b>Totals</b>                      | <b>475</b>       | <b>438</b>       |

## **Match & Handicap**

A full schedule of competitions is in place for the coming season, including our open Texas Scrambles and Senior Open. This year we have added two further open competitions – a Ladies Tri-am and Gents Open – to further promote our golf course and as additional fundraising. These

events are open for booking through the club website and I hope that many of our members will participate.

We have also teamed up with Golf in Scotland to further promote Balfron Golf Club. They will host their US Masters Open Series event on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> April, with a chance to win a trip to The Masters in 2027. Entry is via the website.

### **Seniors**

The Seniors group continues to thrive with around 60 members, and open to all gents 55 and over. The regular Monday morning sweep is well attended and competitive. Over the past year there were two formal outings to Crieff and Glenbervie, and outings are fixed to those two courses again in 2026. Thanks to James Brown for organising the outings which are well supported. The Seniors also participated in the Kelvin Friendship League playing home and away against teams from Bishopbriggs, Campsie, Cawder, and Falkirk Tryst. Balfron were successful in retaining the trophy following their win in 2024. Well done to Jack Gerrard and the team members on their success.

### **Ladies**

The ladies section continues to enjoy weekly bounce games and participates in the Harper Kennedy League and Friendly League throughout the season, and played friendly tri-ams with Strathendrick and Dumbarton. Once again, a very successful Christmas lunch was held at Fintry Sports Club with 22 ladies in attendance.

### **Juniors**

The Junior section has really taken off with well over 100 members, many of whom enjoy evening coaching sessions through the season. We are in the process of securing a roving pro to deliver coaching again this season. My thanks to Fiona Holmes, Junior Convenor, for all her work, and to those members who regularly turn out to assist with coaching.

### **Charity and Fundraising**

I am pleased to report that the club has been able to donate to various charities over the course of the year following the John Mailer, Howie Cup, and Ladies Invitation events. Fundraising events for the club included the two Texas Scrambles and the Seniors Open, which all go towards keeping our membership fees as competitive as possible. Thanks to Jimmy McGregor, Ian Rubython, and the team of volunteers that help to make these days so successful. Thanks also to all our hole sponsors, your support is greatly appreciated.

It has been a privilege to hold the position of Captain over the past 2 years. I would like to offer sincere thanks to the office-bearers, committee members, and the membership for all their support, it is hugely appreciated, and it has been personally rewarding to be able to get to know many of the members and to take on board comments and suggestions. The Captain's role is made easy when you have the support of a great committee. Ian Rubython as Treasurer and Susan McKenzie as Membership Secretary do an incredible job that requires a lot of time and expertise. My particular thanks to Dave McCann as Secretary for his exceptionally hard work, and his continuous support throughout. It is not unreasonable to say that, without Dave's dedication, we would not have secured the funding that we did for the clubhouse, and we would not be up for the Scottish Golf Awards.

All that remains is for me to wish David Pettigrew all success as he takes over the Captaincy, and to wish all our members the very best for the coming season.

Alan Motion

Captain, Balfron Golf Society

[www.balfrongolfclub.co.uk](http://www.balfrongolfclub.co.uk)