

The Sustainability Drive

How sport and sustainability are learning together.



SUSTAINABILITY DRIVE
ENGLAND GOLF
ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPOWER

Who am I...



Golfer since the age
of 11

Three seasons as a
greenkeeper

Almost ten years in
golf clubhouse roles

Flood and climate risk
modeller for leading
global consultancy

England Golf
Sustainability
Manager

Back to the start...



The state of play...



Golf is a game played by millions, with wide reaching impacts. It is critical to acknowledge the scope of it in order to emphasise the impact sustainability initiatives can have.



11.1 million people engaged with Golf in England During 2025.

There are 2,423 golf clubs in England, 1732 of which are affiliated To England Golf, along with 71 facilities

Golf courses take up approximately 1200km² of land in England

Each golf club, county and golfer has an impact and can work to reduce resource consumption and carbon footprint.

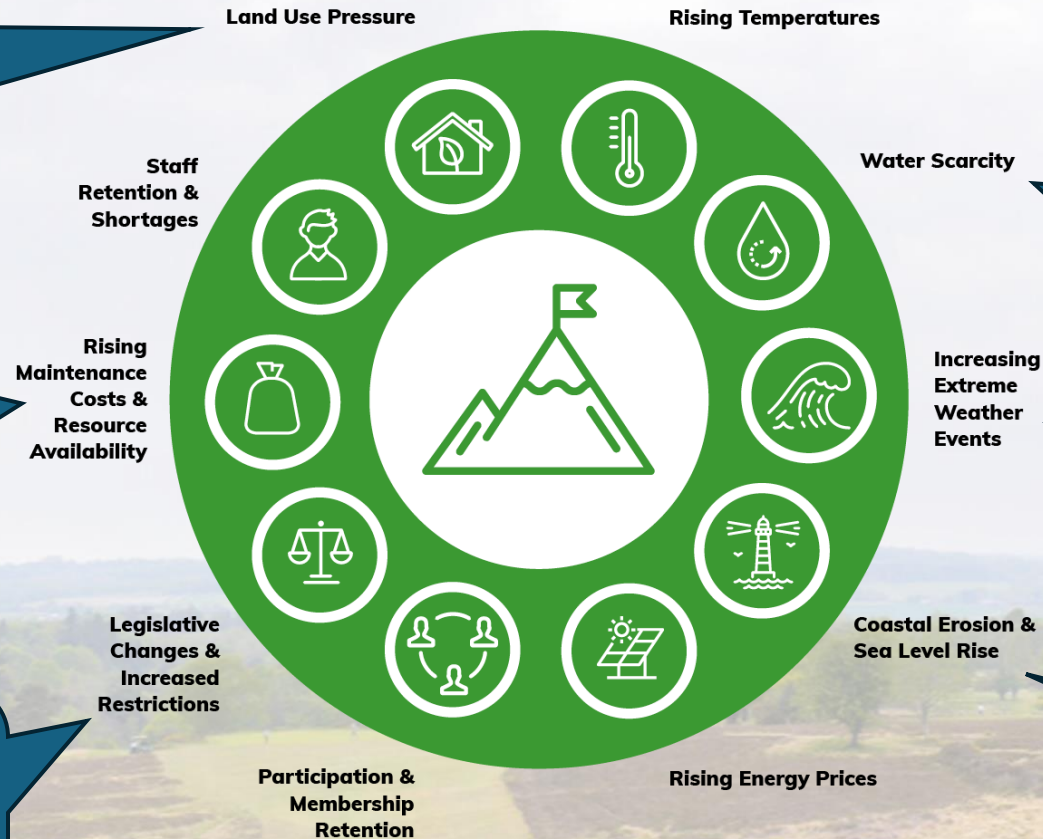
The Challenges...



Land is needed for housing as our population increases, and golf courses are often targeted by developers for building on.

The cost of fertiliser and seed have increased, in some cases by more than double, so golf course maintenance is harder, and quality of turf may start to be impacted.

Pesticides and fungicides are now heavily restricted, meaning issues such as turf disease, leatherjackets and worm casts will become more frequent

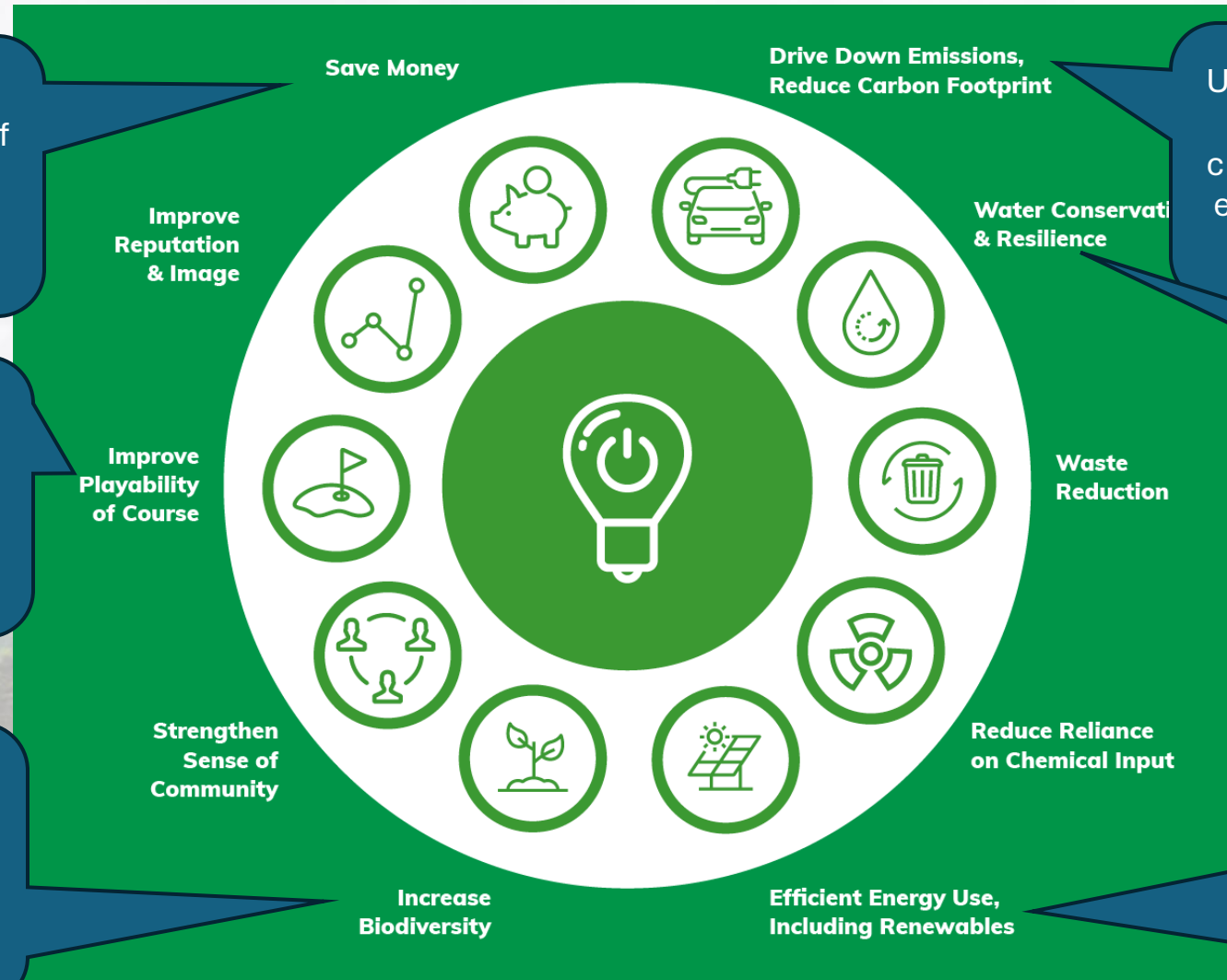


As temperatures increase, pressure on water supplies increases as water is needed for cooling systems, irrigation of food stuffs, as well as increased evaporation reducing supplies in rivers and aquifers.

Warm air holds more moisture, so as our climate warms, rainfall gets more intense, causing flash flooding and impacting turf health due to lack of infiltration

Warming oceans have more energy, so waves are more destructive. AS the water warms it expands, meaning sea level rises. Lots of our most historical golf courses are on links land, which is being impacted by erosion.

The Opportunities...



Reducing energy use will save a golf club money, as will changing turf type to use less water.

Embracing nature, or creating opportunity for water storage on site, could provide more features for strategic play, or more visual stimulation for golfers

Golf courses naturally have lots of space 'out of play,' so we have a real opportunity, as a sport, to help reverse some elements of global species reduction

Using less energy, reducing material use and transportation, and creating less waste will mean global emissions are lowered, slowing the rate of climate change.

Golf courses have huge opportunities to play a part in natural flood management, preventing community flooding, but also creating a sustainable source of water for their irrigation needs

The roofspaces of clubhouses and greens-compounds are ideal for solar panels, and driving ranges or chipping areas create huge potential for ground-source heat pumps to be used.

Two options...

Globally, the impacts of climate change are impacting societies. There are some possible short term mitigation solutions, while some are longer-term goals, which will rely on new technologies and research.

Whilst research and development is ongoing, there are two types of actions we need to begin taking immediately, in order to combat climate change:

The term net zero means achieving a balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, and the carbon removed from it. This balance – or net zero – will happen when the amount of carbon we add to the atmosphere is no more than the amount removed.

Mitigation:

This means taking direct action to try and reduce the speed of climate change, as well as to prevent it getting worse

1. Reducing emissions as fast as possible.

The Governments target is to be 'Net Zero' by 2050. At England Golf, we want to ensure our offices are decarbonised by 2029 and our activity is Net Zero by 2035.

2. Enhancing carbon sequestration opportunities and maximising habitat availability for pollinators

There are already too many emitted gases in our atmosphere, which are speeding-up climate change. Using plants, trees and technology, we can begin to take those gases out of the atmosphere and put them back into the soil. Pollinators are key to the survival of ecosystems, yet, due to pesticide use and habitat loss, species are being eradicated. By creating opportunities for pollinators we will enhance natural biodiversity. In golf, we want to ensure that more than 50% of our land is used for nature by 2040.

Adaptation:

This means changing the way we do things to match the current conditions, as well as making changes to prepare for future challenges

1. Updating facilities

As we see more extreme rainfall, drought and winter conditions, our golf courses will need to change. That means looking at drainage, grass type, efficient irrigation systems, storage of water on course and closures to allow for recovery.

2. Changing playing habits

Extreme weather poses challenges to health, so avoiding play in periods of extreme heat will be essential, as well as perhaps shifting the competitive season to meet climatic conditions. This may mean shorter seasons in some years, and longer seasons in others.

Creating a holistic sustainability strategy...

We are still immensely proud to use the principles of BASIS as the formation of our sustainability strategy.

Utilising these principles allows us to break sustainability down into individual categories, allowing experts to be experts in their own field.

You wouldn't ask a chef to order materials for the greenkeepers to use on the golf course. So why would you give them responsibility over making sustainable changes, in a department they might have little knowledge of?

While sustainability covers a wide range of topics, the following principles are used to provide a structure against which sustainability can be managed or assessed. They are categorised into three pillars: environmental responsibility, social progress and economic activity, but are not to be considered all-encompassing or exhaustive.

Environmental Responsibility



Energy & Emissions



Waste Management



Water Resources



Materials & Chemicals



Transport & Travel



Food & Drink



Biodiversity & Habitats

Social Progress



Accessibility & Equality



Healthy Options



Engagement & Education

Economic Activity



Procurement & Employment



Economy & Community

Creating a holistic sustainability strategy...



Since launching our Sustainability Drive, it has become abundantly clear that three of the principles stand out. These are the principles that pose some of the biggest challenges to golf, but also those that golf has the biggest opportunity to positively impact, both for the game and for the community. This isn't to say the other elements aren't important, they are, but these three, for golf in England, are a priority.

We are investing in these principles through resources, education and tools, to guide our stakeholders to see how interlinked they are with one another, and how they can all play a big part in future-proofing golf.



Water
Resources

Water management is arguably one of golf's biggest challenges. As our climate changes and rainfall becomes more intense, we are seeing more periods of flooding. Then, with hotter, drier summers, the challenge turns to finding sustainable, affordable sources of water to use in irrigation.



Energy &
Emissions

Global emissions are accelerating climate change, so reducing them is fundamental to our future. Further, costs of energy have increased nationally in the last 3 years, so reducing energy use is important to reduce emissions and save golf clubs money.



Biodiversity &
Habitats

The space we utilise for golf in England is sizeable, and the moral responsibility that comes with that means managing courses with nature in mind is becoming increasingly important. Out-of-play areas are huge opportunities for wildlife to thrive, so we need to ensure our club management policies embrace this.

Not forgetting events...



So far we have carbon footprinted 7 of our events (one of each type we run). We have since established our hotspots when it comes to emissions, and the target areas we need to focus on.

Between our 2022 and 2023 English Amateur event, we reduced emissions by 67.92 tonnes

On average, 67.6% of our event emissions comes from travel emissions

The Brabazon has our highest emissions, but this is expected given its international prestige!

The average emissions for our events in 2023 was 66.04tCO₂e

Each spectator at the 2024 English Amateur had a Carbon footprint of 0.03CO₂e

The 2023 Junior Champion Club created the same emissions as 2.4 homes do in a year.

Creating a sustainable facility...



England Golf started affiliated facilities in 2023, with a few pilot sites. We then rolled out our 'offering' in 2024. This work is being carried out by two of our 'CCSOs' and is a national drive.



What is a facility?



What do they need?



How can we support?

Creating a sustainable facility...



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What is a facility?

Anywhere that anyone can interact with golf. Short courses, pitch and putts, crazy golf, Ted in a Shed!

What do they need?

Financial savings, revenue generation, diversification, growth.

How can we support?

Financial savings, revenue generation, diversification, growth



Creating a sustainable facility...



What do they need?

Financial savings, revenue generation, diversification, growth.



Creating a sustainable facility...

What do they need?

Financial savings, revenue generation, diversification, growth.

Upgrade lightbulbs to LED

- Saves money
- Reduces carbon emissions

Reinvest saved money on water-saving taps

- Saves more money
- Reduces strain on water industry

Reinvest saved money on golf course improvements

- Attracts new members/visitors
- Increases club income

Leaving an extra strip of rough to rewild

- Reduces fuel bills
- Reduces carbon emissions

Creates a better habitat for species to thrive

- Attracts a wide range of golfers who are interested in nature
- Opens a business stream for photography groups etc

Bigger membership boosts spending on future projects

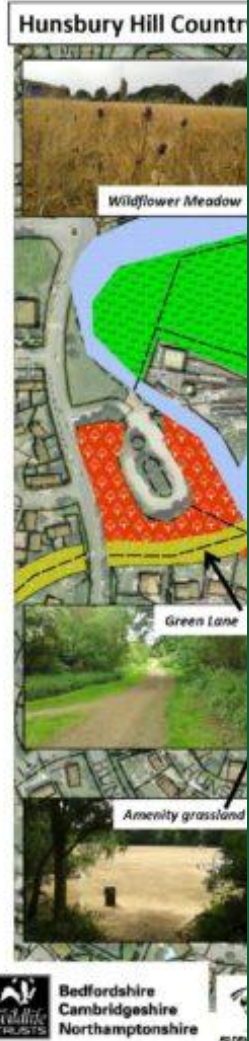
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Creating a sustainable facility...



Data Gathering

zellar



Creating a sustainable facility...

Educating



2021/201 Gap Analysis - Last Modified: 9 January

File Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View Automate Help Acrobat

Clipboard Font Paragraph Alignment Number Styles Cells Editing Sensitivity Add-ins Analyze Data Create PDF and Share link Share via Outlook Add-ins Acrobat

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2	England Golf Sustainability Gap Analysis											
3	Club Name											
4	Data Completed											
5	Completed By											
6	Role at Club											
7	Contact											
8												
9	The purpose of a Gap Analysis is to compare current state of operations and processes to the desired future outcomes and what you would like to achieve in terms of sustainability.											
10	Please fill in as much as possible and it is possible that you may not know the initial answer, but members of the team such as the Head Greenkeeper may know! Therefore, feel free to share this spreadsheet with any relevant members of staff. Any available information will help the sustainability team at England Golf to better understand where additional support is required along with anything which may already be in place.											

Introduction Person Responsible General Environmental System Energy W + - : 1011 09/10/2024



Sustainability Toolkit

https://www.englandgolf.org/resource-detail/sustainability-toolkit

Helpdesk: England... England Golf Sites Governing Bodies Sustainability Ideas Commercial Partners BBC News BBC Sport Maps General Info Case Studies

England Golf Competitions England Squads Play Golf WHS™ News Support My England Golf

er support the club on its Sustainability Journey.

Accessibility and Inclusion
Biodiversity and Habitat
Economy and Community
Energy and Emissions
Engagement and Education
Food and Drink
Healthy Options
Materials and Chemicals
Procurement and Employment
The Problem with Plastic
Transport and Travel
Waste Management
Water Saving

1011 09/10/2024

Creating a sustainable facility...



Informed Decision Making

Golf Club Water Audit

March 21, 2025

Part 3: Your water resilience plan. Review the draft plan below, edit and make it your own

Water Resilience Plan for Golf Club

1. Introduction

- **Purpose:** Ensure sustainable water use, efficient irrigation, and resilience to water scarcity and excessive rainfall.
- **Scope:** Covers water use across a environmental management.

2. Course Overview

- **Location & Size:** [Insert location, s
- **Current Water Use:** Summarize w
- **Water Sources:** Identify available

3. Objectives

- **Sustainability:** Reduce water con

[GOLF CLUB NAME]

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY 202[]

As part of England Golf's course-planner, sustainability has been identified as a key principle. In order to futureproof our golf club, we will adopt the following policy as of [Insert date].

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 [Golf Club Name] ('The Club') shares the belief of England Golf that golf has a crucial role to play in the global effort to become more sustainable.
- 1.2 The Club is committed to the principles of social, environmental, and economic sustainability. and will strive to grow in all areas.



Natural
Carbon
Solutions

Carbon
Measured
Event



Diversification...



The most sustainable action that ANY facility can take, is to make sure more people continue to use it. Growing and diversifying your customer base is fundamental to any holistic sustainability plan.



Key learnings...



A big Thank You...



**Huge thanks for listening...
Any questions?**

Get in touch anytime:
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