

Blackwell Grange Golf Club, the long established private members club near Darlington, has recently re-installed Open Solutions software as the heart of its fully integrated club management technology.



Club Name:

Blackwell Grange Golf Club

County:

Durham

Installation Date:

12th February 2014

Website:

www.blackwellgrangegolf.com

opensolutions

“Going to Open Solutions and Handicap Master was a good decision.”

One-stop-shop software solutions are much in vogue, but not all deliver what they appear to promise. When Blackwell Grange GC, a long established private members club near Darlington, was offered the opportunity to relocate their Club and take over Stressholme GC, the council’s own pay and play course (a land plus cash deal), the initial strategy was to change the new club’s administration, EPoS and bar card software over to a one-stop-shop solution.

However, after struggling with the software and the support received, just a few months later Blackwell Grange moved back to using the Open Solutions software they’d had at the old club premises. They installed:

- the GPOS point of sale software system for the club’s four tills and bar/loyalty card management,
- the OSIS software for the Administration, Membership & Subscriptions module,
- the additional Stock Control option developed by Open Solutions
- Handicap Master’s software for handicaps and competitions, which seamlessly integrated with the Open Solutions software.

This has given the club a powerful set of fully integrated management tools, all powered by one membership database. With a total compliment of 1,098 members, having the right tools with which to manage the club’s membership data,

results and handicap adjustments, bar sales, and especially all the subscriptions and invoices, is fundamental to the club’s operational efficiency.

OSIS administration, membership and subscriptions: easily customisable and speeds up time consuming tasks

Assistant to the Secretary Anne McNally takes up the story, “We had been using Open Solutions for several years prior to the take-over. I was both familiar with it and very happy when we went back to it after struggling with the other software.

Anne continues, “One of the first things I liked about the latest version of the Open Solutions Membership system was that it is easy to customise via the Settings tab. So for example, it’s simple to save data and reports in Excel which the Treasurer wants, whereas I usually save things in Word”

“It’s also very easy to filter data in the OS membership software, which I really appreciate. We have various membership categories and when we want to run a report on any of our categories, it’s simple, whereas with the other software it was a very different and very time consuming matter.”

Anne gives another typical example of the tasks she deals with frequently. “Cards often have to be replaced, either because they’re worn out or broken. With the other system, replacing someone’s card involved a lengthy process and changing of membership data, and it got to the point where I’d tell people I’d get back to them,

because we knew it would take some time. I was never confident that the previous software would do what we wanted it to do.”

“With the Open Solutions system I can replace a card there and then for the member. I just go into their membership record, pull up the data I need, change the card number from the stock I hold, click to save and that’s it – the new card is registered, and the member can go and use it immediately. Better still, the card data change is communicated to the Handicap Master software, so he or she can go straight to the Touch Screen and enter a competition. So we’ve got a happy member and it saves me a lot of time.”

“While we never tried to use the previous software for the subscription run – we had too much trouble just trying to print off some labels! – the same process with Open Solutions was simplicity itself. We prefer to do them alphabetically so that we can put a family’s invoices into one envelope, and between the training and the setting up we got from Emma Griffin - who dialled in to our PCs for our initial subscription run - all we had to do was check the letter and invoice template, and then print them out.”

“I was very happy when we went back to (Open Solutions) after struggling with the other software”

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GPOS till system: clearly superior, user-friendlier, preferred by the staff

The heart of the Open Solutions package is its market-leading GPOS loyalty card and point of sale system, and this has clearly scored a massive hit with Blackwell Grange's operational team that deal with four GPOS tills: two in the Bar, one for the 19th and one more in the Pro Shop.



Anne explains, "The feedback we get from the bar staff is that the GPOS system is really user-friendly. The till's screen provides up to 132 items per page and far more flexibility for setting up product pages. You can make icons any colour and any size your bar staff want, simply by right-clicking on the screen. Importantly, it's a large easy-to-see screen whereas the previous one was smaller."

"Our Clubhouse manager Paula Stoddart is delighted because the till's now set up exactly the way she wants it, whereas the other till screen was very difficult to customise, with insufficient tabs and a smaller screen. When three or four staff are serving, seeing what you're doing to an order, hitting the right tab and being able to interrupt orders means faster customer service. The stock control's also going to be really helpful for Paula as she will be able to 'check the checker' when we get the stock-taker's reports."

"One of the best aspects of our four GPOS till system is that the till software is linked to our Sage accountancy programme by setting up the same nominal codes on the Business Summary for things like the bar, the catering, and the Pro Shop. We like to check the data and Z readings first between myself and our part time accountant who does all the postings, before all the sales data is exported into the appropriate Sage accounts."

Anne picks up on one other handy point for the management of their green fees, as she outlines, "Our Course Warden is able to get all the tee time information off the Pro Shop till system as well, and armed with the list of the green fee payers, he's able to go out on the course and check that all the visitors he sees have paid their green fees!"

"The Open Solutions till system also runs our members' cards, of course. Besides the usual discount on drinks, these are also enabled to provide access control (in the near future)

through designated doors, and the main categories - Ladies, Full Men, Seniors - can load their cards to pay for competitions, using the touch screen in the Clubhouse to swipe and enter. Members can choose to load their cards with a value and get a 10% discount on drinks, but it's not mandatory here."

GPOS highly effective in the Pro Shop

The advantages of, and satisfaction with, the Open Solutions till system extend to the Pro Shop's situation, as Anne explains, "The GPOS till in the Pro Shop works alongside the Professional's own till system. There are two PGA Assistants at any one time, and it's a very busy place.

"The PGA Head Professional, Ralph Givens, uses his own till for sales of stock and equipment while using 'our' till alongside his for green fees, buckets of balls for our driving range, and buggies. It's proving very easy for his own staff to use our till as well as their own, and for us to then keep track of the sales of these products and reconcile the Professional's share.

"They also like the way any of them can interrupt the order of one of the other staff, a facility that means even during busy times they can maintain a fast service for the customers who are keen to get on to the first tee."

Anne points out the variety of sales the Pro Shop GPOS system deals with, "Besides the various green fees, buggies and buckets of balls, the Pro Shop till is set up to handle discounts via Durham County Golf Union cards for the seniors, groups and visiting parties, and even the occasional subscription that gets paid there, plus payments by Visa."

Top notch support



When it comes to software, support is as important as software design for a club's operational staff, as Operations Manager Emma Griffin explains, "We believe in offering a professional and friendly service, and we treat all of our clients as individuals with individual needs. We go the extra mile to ensure all end users get the most from their system, and the support they deserve; 90% of all logged calls are resolved on the same day. We have standard office opening times, however outside of these hours if a customer calls, he or she can choose to be diverted

to an 'on call' member of staff - usually me! This out-of-hours service is available 7 days a week until 10pm. We tend to encourage people to leave non urgent calls to office hours, whereas any urgent till faults can usually be resolved with me over the phone or remotely."

Anne is very happy with the level of support the club gets from Open Solutions, as she says, "Their support is terrific. Generally speaking, Open Solutions get back to us very quickly and you're speaking with a person not looking at an e-mail. In the process of learning the system, Paula, our clubhouse manager, practically has a hot line to one of the OS support team, Andy, and it's never a problem to ask someone what we have to do next!"

Anne comments on her own experience of the Open Solutions support, "Emma Griffin is really good, having talked me through all sorts of things. She's very good at explaining things, and finding ways of resolving things you happen to get stuck on!"

Summary: great decision to switch to Open Solutions

Anne summarises the difference between their old software and the new system from Open Solutions and Handicap Master, commenting, "I'm in control using the Open Solutions and Handicap Master software, something I didn't feel with the other software. With Open Solutions GPOS and OSIS, and Handicap Master, it's all seamlessly integrated and works beautifully."

Doug Christie, Club Secretary at Blackwell Grange and while he's still in the process of settling in since the relocation, he knows when something's doing what it says on the can, as he explains, "It's perfectly obvious to me that all the staff are much happier using the Open Solutions and Handicap Master package."

He continues, "Their feedback is very positive, and they like using all the tools in the Open Solutions box to do their particular jobs and tasks. It's especially important in the retail areas like the bar and Pro Shop where we get very busy and fast customer service is critical to someone's enjoyment of the experience we offer."

Doug summarises, "When you've got a happy team, it shines through to the members and visitors and makes for a much better golf club for everyone involved. From my perspective as the Club's Secretary, I'd say that was one of the biggest benefits of moving to Open Solutions."

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