



*Hillside Golf Club, Case Study, April 2010*

## **One step at a time: Hillside makes the most of BRS Golf's capabilities**

As tests of golf go, Hillside GC ranks with the best in the North West. It has a very active membership, a high frequency of Members' competitions, five Open events and many casual visitors, so the administrative load on Secretary Simon Newland and his team is very considerable.

Keen to take advantage of the benefits of moving the tee booking administration online, the club took the decision to install the BRS Golf online booking system modules in a series of stages. What follows is a classic case in point of a club learning to utilise and exploit fully the BRS Golf system's capabilities by installing and learning to work with each BRS Golf module one step at a time.

### **2008: Administration Module, easing the load on the Office**

Hillside originally started with just the BRS Golf Back Office Administration module, with the aim of handling the club's diary in a more efficient way. An immediate benefit was that all relevant users could see and share the booking system, with any changes made in real time for all to see and act on if required.

This first step gave the office team an online equivalent of the desk diary for handling all the visitor bookings and club events in one place. Simon and his staff soon found the BRS Golf system to be reliable, flexible and easy to use.

### **Spring 2009: Members Module and making competition entries more convenient**

Encouraged by the success of the first phase, Simon decided to go ahead with the Members Module for competition booking, with the aim of providing an automated way for members to book their tee times for competitions. From previous experience with another company's offline competition entry system, Simon knew that any system had to be capable of handling a large number of early tee time bookings, ie. as many as 120 within the first 15 minutes of a competition's timesheet going live.

So the Members Module was installed with all the members' usual details pre-registered by BRS Golf, and online registration into the BRS system by the members themselves was actively promoted by the club. The new online way of entering competitions was accepted by Hillside's membership very quickly, and all the Mens and Ladies competitions are now available to enter online.

Since its inception over 400 Hillside members have now registered their own e-mail addresses as well, creating a further benefit to administration of Hillside's membership. Posted online in the morning, competitions are usually full by the evening, and members enjoy the convenience of booking their preferred

competition times online at home. Furthermore the BRS Golf system easily handles in real time the exceptionally large number of entries in the first 15 minutes of the competition going live.

### **Autumn 2009: Launch of Hillside's new CLUBView website, the benefits of integration and one online database**

The acquisition of the market leading CLUBView website system gave Simon another opportunity to exploit the full potential of BRS Golf's capabilities. With each company integrating their respective software applications, the Membership details could be loaded from the BRS system onto the CLUBView website system. Hillside members can now log on to the website and are automatically logged on to the BRS system at the same time, making it effectively an integral part of the club's website.

The members can also go into the Hillside website to update any aspect of their contact details, creating a major administration benefit for the Office. It only needs to run one online Membership database instead of two, as any changes to a member's contact details are automatically shared by both the CLUBView and the BRS systems, and e-mailed to the Office.

### **January 2010: Visitors' Module, managing Open events, and reaching wider audiences**

Satisfied that the online booking system was working well and fulfilling all the early promises, Simon asked BRS Golf to enable the Visitor Module so that it could manage all five of Hillside's Open events in 2010. In previous years, managing the Open events normally needed at least a week of someone's time for:

- creating and mailing out all the appropriate letters, paperwork and entry forms
- receiving and sorting out all the applications
- processing all the cheques and banking them
- reconciling the accounts
- typing in all the names on a start sheet and mailing it to all the competitors...

Going live in February 2010, all the events' registrations, tee time bookings and payments have now been handled online. In fact Hillside received more than £30,000 of online payments within a week of going live, facilitated via the club's choice of Payment Services Provider, RBS WorldPay system, and set up by BRS Golf for the club. Just as relevantly, Hillside no longer has the expense of printing and posting flyers and entry forms to golf clubs locally, and avoids untargeted and wasteful marketing.

While there is a high demand for Hillside's Open events, those like the Ladies Open haven't usually sold out completely. This year it has, so going online to market the Open events has meant the club is now reaching a wider audience. Because the BRS Golf system automatically collects all competitors' e-mail addresses into a database, future Open event marketing is also made much easier.

### **Next steps: casual visitor bookings at off peak times**



For the future, Simon already has plans to market the normally difficult to sell off peak tee times via the BRS Golf online booking system. Given the habits of casual golfers and their focus on booking online via club websites, this objective should in view of Hillside's high profile, be very achievable.

Should the need arise, an added advantage is that Hillside can also market those time through whichever 3<sup>rd</sup> party channel it chooses, because the major channels including England's Golf Coast, are all integrated with BRS Golf.

Requiring a Hillside Board decision, another possibility is enabling members to book their casual golf online, an expansion of the membership services that will be a relatively simple expansion of the BRS Golf system's capabilities.

### **Summary**

Simon Newland is very pleased with the BRS Golf online booking system: "Hillside is a very fine course that has always attracted a lot of visitors and interest, so as a tool that handles their needs and our workload so efficiently, the BRS system has really delivered."

"But it's the way in which the BRS Golf system handles members' competition bookings and our five Open events that has really impressed both the staff and the membership. What used to take a lot of extra time and manpower is now a relatively simple operation. With the Open coming to Hoylake again in 2012, Hillside is ideally equipped for all the visitors who want to play golf during that period, wherever in the world they are and whatever time zone they happen to be in when they book."

"All in all, we're delighted with the benefits the BRS Golf system has brought to Hillside - and for any club running Open events, managing them online is definitely recommended!"