



Dunblane New Golf Club

IMAGE SOURCE: John Deere

Dunblane New replaces the old

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Dunblane New Golf Club's course is located in the centre of the cathedral city of Dunblane in one of the most picturesque areas of Perthshire. The course's elevated position provides beautiful panoramic views over the Forth Valley, the Campsie Fells and beyond, including Stirling Castle, the Southern Highlands and the peaks of Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi.

The 'New' name came about because until 1922 golf was played on a small nine-hole course adjoining the River Allan on what is now a public park. History states that play started on the new course in April 1923, after a horse, cart and harness with a roller box and two mowers were bought and Mr J C Ross was appointed as greenkeeper at £3 10s a week.

Almost 100 years on, course manager Wes Saunders has taken delivery of 11 new machines from local dealer Double A, the club's first John Deere fleet deal, as part of an ongoing landscaping and maintenance programme designed to continue the enduring quality and appeal of the course to members and visitors.

The latest fleet comprises two 2750E triplex and three 220E walk-behind hybrid electric greens mowers, two 7700A PrecisionCut fairway mowers, 9009A and 7400A utility TerrainCut rotary mowers, plus a Tru-Turf RB70 greens roller and a Campey Turf Care Air2g2 air injection machine.

These were bought using a tailored John Deere Financial agreement with six-year PowerGard Protection plans for full maintenance and servicing, allowing the club to have a fixed machinery budget with no extra costs. This is the first part of a replacement programme that Wes and Double A's golf key accounts manager John Bateson are working through together, with tractors and utility vehicles being looked at this year to complete the fleet.

Originally hailing from Sydney, Australia where he did his greenkeeping apprenticeship at Elanora Country Club north of the city, Wes Saunders has 27 years' experience working on golf courses across the world. After leaving his home country, he spent several years in the US and Canada before joining Dunblane New Golf Club six years ago as course manager.

"I first put a proposal to the club two years ago to update the equipment fleet, but the timing wasn't quite right for the finance so the idea was postponed for a year," says Wes. "The board then agreed what we could spend on a monthly basis and we held a competitive tender with the main manufacturers, bringing in various machines for demonstrations and assessment by the greenkeeping team.

"We made the decision based on whether the kit was fit for purpose, our likes and dislikes, serviceability and previous history with the suppliers. We chose John Deere, not just on price – although that was a prime consideration – but also on the key aspects of quality and reliability of the equipment and, most importantly, the strong relationship with the Double A dealership and their parts and service backup. The terms from John Deere Financial were also very flexible, which enabled us to get what we needed to meet the club's budget.

"All the machines were in place by the end of April this year, and everything's working out a treat now. We use the 2750E hybrid electric triplex mowers to cut the greens for most of the year, and the 220E walk-behinds for special tournaments when we need a little more refinement in the finish, then these are used on the greens throughout the winter.

"The new A Model mower technology is also proving particularly useful – even though we're still experimenting a little with its capabilities, the use of the programmable TechControl system to achieve the

desired results consistently across the course is proving to be a game-changer.

“Overall I am very pleased with the performance of the new machines. We have quickly seen improvements to the course as well as labour savings with the extra control provided by the new mowers’ advanced technology features.”

Source: ASM Public Relations Ltd; John Deere