Formby Golf Club is located on the west coast of Lancashire and takes pride of place amongst a number of other outstanding clubs within the area. Just over four years ago, the club took the bold step of changing how it was governed in order to improve the way it runs and functions.

General Manager Stuart Leech and the management committee set out to lay the foundations for the club to be sustainable in the future. Their reasoning was that customers have high expectations of how organisations should be run – and Formby wanted to meet them. Formby had already incorporated, to protect the liabilities of the members and committee. Next, the club made sure it complied with all the necessary national legislation in the UK.

Then, Stuart and the management committee looked at their overall structure to see how this could be improved. They wanted to bring all members of the club together to achieve their vision and ensure an excellent golf experience for their members and visitors.
Action

It took a number of years to refine the club structure, but now it is in place it underpins Formby’s success as a business.

Stuart Leech, as General Manager, is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the club. He is also responsible for the recruitment and management of the employees including staff appraisals, under the direction of the management committee.

Formby has a strategic plan which guides all committee meetings. The members are consulted on the plan through an annual survey. The plan is then finalised and shared with the members at their AGM to make sure the club remains transparent in what it is trying to achieve.

Committee members are identified as having the right skills and knowledge to competently fulfil their role, using a clearly defined role description.

Each year three new members are elected on to the management committee, having already been a member of a sub-committee.

The club has nine different subcommittees, all chaired by different people and with six to 10 different members in each. All committee chairmen serve for a period of three years and are responsible for guaranteeing that certain elements of the strategic plan are achieved.

In their third and final year as committee chair, they are shadowed by the person coming in to replace them so they can learn what that role entails. Each chair is also provided with terms of reference, as are the other committee members, to provide clarity on their roles.

Conclusion

Formby Golf Club realised that by having robust processes, systems and practices in place it would ensure the accountability of the elected management committee and transparency of its actions to the membership.

It also provides security that, whilst operating against the backdrop of a struggling economy, procedures are in place to maintain effective relationships and decision-making which will build sustainability for the golf club going forwards.

Stuart and the club wish to share their findings to support other clubs to apply the basic principles and to succeed in the future.