

## Personal Statement Peter Clapperton and Susan Moore

We purchased Clare Park Lake Golf Course for [REDACTED] in 1993 with a 99 year lease and acquired the freehold in 1997 for [REDACTED]. We opened the golf course to the public soon after purchase charging [REDACTED] for 9 holes and annual memberships of [REDACTED]. At the time vat was 8% rising to 17.5% in 1995, leading us to raise the green fee to [REDACTED] and membership to [REDACTED].

28 years on and the green fee is still only [REDACTED] including VAT and membership [REDACTED] including VAT and is comparable to other facilities close by. Over this time inflation has increased by 3.4% per annum showing clearly that our income has not kept pace with inflation.

Bury St Edmunds 9 hole golf course is [REDACTED] and is a much larger course and population of Bury is 35000. Plus there is no food afterwards for visitors.

Cambridge 9 hole pitch n putt is [REDACTED]

Over the 30 years we have owned the site we have purchased the extra land to enable us to build a clubhouse, built the clubhouse, converted the upstairs and continued to improve the course. However memberships and golf rounds have steadily declined mirroring the overall trend in golf. Surprisingly the new clubhouse had minimal impact on the number of rounds played and more surprisingly less than 5% of golfers visit the clubhouse for drinks or food.

The disparity in food and drink trade between 9-hole par-three golf courses and traditional 18-hole courses can be attributed to various factors;

1. Time Constraints: Short 9-hole rounds take just over an hour, reducing the desire for food and drinks. 18-hole rounds take 4-5 hours to play and so food and drink purchases are more likely and expected. 9-hole players prioritise efficiency in their experience.
2. Smaller Player Groups: Shorter rounds attract smaller groups, leading to fewer customers for clubhouse food and drink services.

At the same time the costs of running the Clubhouse have risen exponentially whether through inflation (fuel and insurance) or legislation such as wages, pensions, online accountancy and reporting, waste collection, recycling etc. The clubhouse costs are subsidised by the golf income and with that declining the business is unsustainable.

Originally income was split roughly 70% golf and 30% food and drink. As golf declined more effort was put into food and the split became 55% to 45%.

Taking an average of [REDACTED] income pre covid) food and drink would generate [REDACTED]. Less purchases of [REDACTED] this would give a gross profit margin of [REDACTED] for the clubhouse to cover all its costs (wages, energy, heat, light, water etc etc) to keep it open 7 days per week for 52 weeks of the year.

The associated costs have risen exponentially over the years not just through inflation but more legislative costs are now attached to running a business than they were 30 years ago.

Since its construction the clubhouse has not made any contribution to the running of the golf course and sadly has been a financial burden since its construction. Clare's population of around 2000 could not support our ambitions and our intention of increasing revenue by offering a

more comfortable setting as a Tea Room in the new clubhouse. It did not meet our goals and has been in gradual decline.

We have to emphasise that during this time we also built a successful golf course and driving range in Ipswich which remains prosperous today, ventured into the fishing bait business also in Ipswich which quickly became a national brand employing 15 people and developed one of the biggest and well-known successful fisheries in the country. We are no strangers to business success and our decision to subsidise Clare Park Lake Golf Course over the years has been born of our love and appreciation for its unique beauty and natural environment. That cannot continue.

Our time that is dedicated to running the business which includes the maintenance , cutting grass and many other essential tasks is unpaid.

I would estimate 2 hours a day each an that's every day

As requested, alternative uses have been comprehensively covered in the associated documents attached to this application however the number of interested viewings and all the ideas that they brought to the table (including but not limited to cabins, camping, glamping etc) all failed with many on the grounds (finance excluded) that the Clubhouse is too small at only 1700 square feet. Without it being used for hospitality what else could it viably be? Even that would take substantial investment which no one is prepared to make in this economic climate. Having had this discussion with many people from many walks of life and industries the question remains unanswered.

The golf course does not need the clubhouse. The clubhouse is too small to be economically commercially viable and is a redundant building.

