

TALKING HEADS

BUDGETING

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE

1

Do you have control of your own budget and if not what input do you have into the setting of it?



Name: Scott Ballantyne
Course: Cowglen Golf Club
Region: Scotland
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus five

I pretty much have control over the budget on wages, ordering new equipment etc. I make an initial recommendation to the committee and it goes from there.



Name: Andy Peel
Course: Bull Bay Golf Club
Region: Northern
Course type: Cliff top heathland, 18 holes
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus two

Yes. I issue a planned budget every 12 months and itemise every aspect. I also put in an amount for unexpected items.



Name: Phil Chiverton
Course: The Grove
Region: Midland
Course type: Parkland. 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus 19

Yes, I have full control. I agree the budget after talks with the Managing Director and Finance Director.



Name: Nick Sears
Course: Basildon Golf Club
Region: South East
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Four greenkeepers

We have control in part. It is a municipal course and we need to balance the books so we set the fees at the start of each year and can't exceed the bottom line.



Name: Tony Ramsden
Course: Budock Vean Country House and Golf Hotel
Region: South West and South Wales
Course type: Parkland, nine holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus one, plus summer part-timer

I don't have a budget as such. I explain to hotel directors what I need and they usually ok them.



Name: Paul Mathieson
Course: Hollywood Golf Club, Belfast, Co Down
Region: Northern Ireland
Course type: Parkland, 18 holes
Staff: Course Manager, plus four

I present the budget to the Green Committee and try to treat the money as if I was spending my own so we don't go overboard.

2

Do you involve your staff with the budgets?

No, not generally. I talk to the Chairman of Green and then we move to the full committee.

One of my staff was trained as a fitter so I discuss proposed mechanical expenditure with him.

I have regular discussions about machinery and training, for example, with specialists on our staff in their particular fields before finalising budget figures.

No. I talk to my area assistant and the club professional before suggesting the budget amount.

No, I only have one full-time member of staff and the budget items are done between me and the hotel directors.

My assistant will be involved. I seek his opinion on certain matters before I present the final figures.

3

Give a brief description of how your budget works.

I have a budget sheet and write everything down that I can think of that we need from switches to hole cups and fairway mowers. We also have a contingency fund in case I have forgotten anything.

The budget is broken down into four areas - day to day; machinery; annual, and capital and this goes forward to the finance committee each November after I have had a chat with the Chairman of Green. It then goes on to the full committee.

Our financial year runs from May to the end of April and a spread sheet is produced with all items under their various headings and budget codes.

I have money to set against each type of service in the council and can't go over that figure

I anticipate what bigger items we need on an annual basis and the smaller things every three months.

I break down the budget into the various areas for fungicide, materials, new machinery etc. A lot of it is historical of course. For example, if we needed 50 bags of fertiliser last year and the year before, the odds are that it becomes a repeat order.

4

How do you monitor your budget?

Every invoice comes through myself. I sign them off and they then go to the Secretary for totalling in the different sections. I get a monthly breakdown on every aspect of the budget to see where we are.

I have a monthly appraisal to see how the figures are holding up, but I like to think that I treat the expenditure as if it was coming out of my own pocket.

I give a monthly report and have talks with our financial controller. The system works very well.

I keep very tight records. Each item on the budget has a budget figure against it and every time I buy something it is recorded on a day to day basis.

I am not given a budget. I just requisition items and they are usually forthcoming.

I have a monthly meeting with my greens chairman and discover what we have spent and what needs spending the following month.

5

Are you finding that finances are tighter now than they used to be?

No. In fact the opposite is the case. As long as I can make a good case out for an item then I never have a problem getting it.

Very definitely. Finances are a lot tighter now, despite the fact that green fee income has gone up by 20 per cent in the last two years.

We have a new Championship golf course here, designed by Kyle Phillips, which is not due to open until the summer of 2003. We have agreed a budget which is appropriate to the venture.

Yes they are. We can't spend more than we earn and the golf course has to pay its own way. We run it like a business.

Our finances depend on how well the hotel is doing. It has been doing well so the directors are also keen to look after the golf course. All in all things work out well.

Very much so. To give you an example, we suffered a big falling off in revenue from visitor green fees late last year because we had a huge amount of rain which caused the course to be closed for many days. In these circumstances we have to keep a close check on spending.