



Albatross

FREE REPORT • OCTOBER 2026

The Annual Golf Club Software Report 2026

What 2,154 UK club websites run, how 11 club systems compare on open access, and what to ask before you sign.

2,154

UK club websites read

11

club systems compared

4

parts, free online at albatross.digital

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Every part is also free online, with a country switch and the self-check:
albatross.digital/resources/golf-club-software-report

FOREWORD

What clubs really run

Sooner or later every club we work with asks the same question: will this system work with everything else we use? This report is our answer, as far as published facts allow.

We read every golf club website we could on the England Golf, Scottish Golf, Wales Golf and Golf Ireland club lists, 2,154 of them, on 24 and 25 October 2026, and recorded what each one runs. Then we read what 11 club systems publish about connecting to other software, price and contract.

It comes in 4 parts, so read the one you need: what clubs run, the systems compared, how to choose, and a toolkit for your committee. All of it is free, here or as one PDF.

James Wilkinson

Founder, Albatross

KEY FINDINGS

6 things the census shows

Most clubs sell tee times online

70%

take visitor tee times online.

1,514 of 2,154

3 systems run most of it

82%

of those take them through BRS, intelligentgolf or Club Systems.

1,240 of 1,514

Joining is still mostly offline

21%

of membership pages offer an online application form.

398 of 1,892

Half can't see their visitors

49%

show no analytics or tag manager at all.

1,060 of 2,154

Tracking runs ahead of consent

61%

of the websites with tracking show no cookie consent tool.

578 of 943

Few connect a CRM

3%

load the tag of a CRM such as HubSpot, Zoho or Salesforce.

63 of 2,154

Figures for a nation with fewer than 30 club websites behind them read "too few".

THE SHORT VERSION

3 things to do on Monday

01 Find your contract end dates.

List every system the club pays for, what it costs and when each contract ends. A switch takes months, so anything ending within a year is already close.

02 Send the 12 questions.

Email them to your current supplier and any you are considering, and ask for the answers in writing. The email is in the toolkit.

03 Check your data clause.

Find the clause that says how your data comes back if you leave: in what format, how quickly and at what charge. If there isn't one, ask for it before you renew.



PART 1

What clubs run

What 2,154 UK club websites show about booking, membership, marketing and search, nation by nation, and a 15-question check of your own.

What managers say

What club websites run on

Booking and member systems

The membership journey

Marketing, consent and privacy

Search and AI readiness

Site age and social

Nation by nation

Check your club

WHERE CLUBS ARE NOW

What managers say

In a 2025 survey of 134 club managers in the UK and Ireland, run by 5 industry bodies, two thirds said they were looking at other software providers. Membership software scored worst, accounting and reporting best, and putting in a new system took most of a year. The survey was developed with Golf Genius, a supplier, so read it as a strong signal rather than a census.

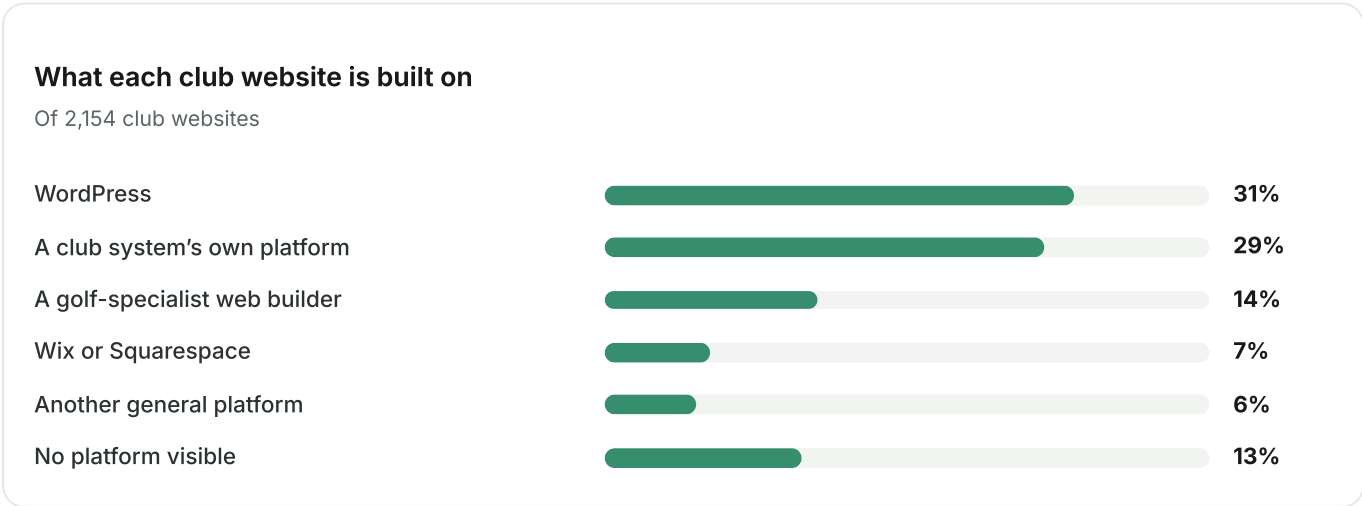
So we made our own census. A club’s website is the one part of its software anyone can see, and it shows a lot: how visitors book, how members log in, how someone joins, and what tracks them while they do.

WEBSITES

What club websites run on

Almost a third of club websites run on WordPress, and nearly as many are built on the platform of a club system, the same company that runs the tee sheet or the membership. Counting WordPress underneath every group, 935 of 2,154 (43%) run on it.

1,198 of 2,154 (56%) credit a web builder or agency in the footer, which tells you how many clubs rely on someone outside the club to change their own website.



43%
run on WordPress, counting it underneath every group
935 of 2,154

56%
credit a web builder or agency in the footer
1,198 of 2,154

What to take from it

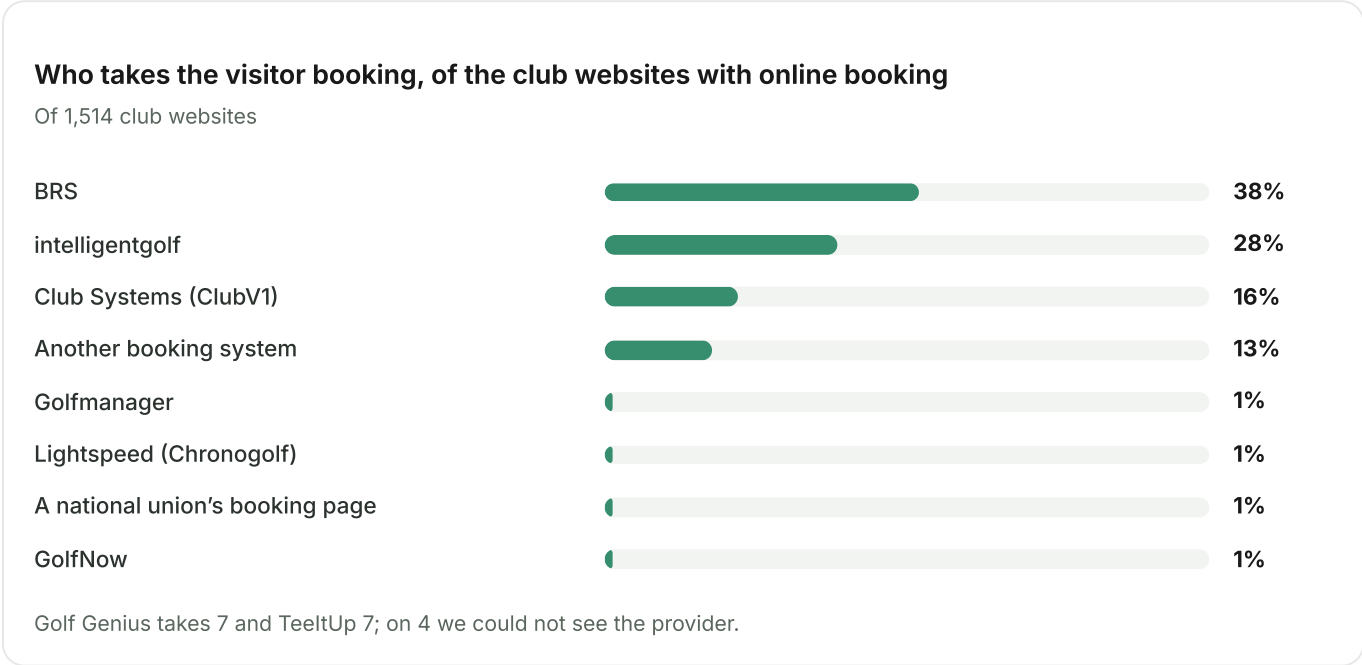
A website on a club system’s platform is convenient: booking and member pages sit in one place. It also ties the website to that contract, so a change of system can mean a new website too. Ask before you sign what happens to the website, its pages and its address if you leave.

BOOKING

Booking and member systems

Of the 2,154 club websites we read, 1,514 (70%) take visitor tee times online. 3 systems take most of those bookings: BRS, intelligentgolf and Club Systems, 1,240 of the 1,514 (82%) between them.

Members and visitors often book on different systems. Of the 881 websites where both can be named, 148 (17%) run them apart, most often visitors on BRS with members on Club Systems.



74%

of clubs whose website is built by intelligentgolf or Club Systems, and that take tee times online, take them through that same company's booking system

407 of 549

74%

show a member login link

1,602 of 2,154

70%

of those member logins show which system they belong to

1,115 of 1,602

4%

put a live booking widget on the homepage itself

92 of 2,154

2%

link a club app in an app store

50 of 2,154

What to take from it

Two systems for members and visitors is common and can work well. The question is whether they share information, so a visitor who books three times is recognised, and a new member's details reach every system without retyping.

Where a club published it clearly enough to record, on 266 of 2,154 websites, the lowest adult weekday visitor green fee had a median of £35.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership journey

We found a membership page or section on 1,892 of the 2,154 club websites. What happens next varies a great deal. Of those 1,892 pages, 398 (21%) let someone apply online; many more ask for a form to be downloaded and posted, or send people to a general contact page or an email address.

1,319 of 1,892 (70%) show membership prices on the page or in a linked PDF, which is good news: people who can see the price before they ask are further along when they do.

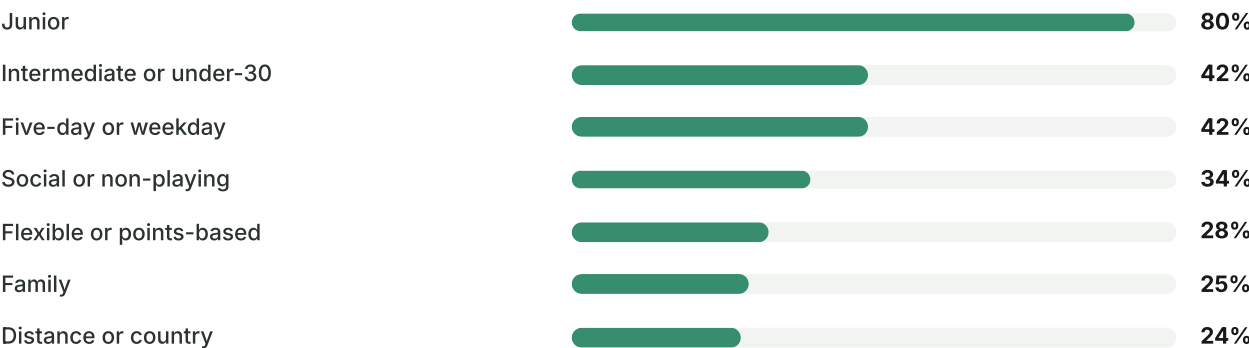
How a prospective member can apply, of the club websites with a membership page

Of 1,892 club websites



Membership types offered, of the club websites with a membership page

Of 1,892 club websites



39%

of membership pages carry an enquiry form

730 of 1,892

33%

of membership pages mention a joining fee

625 of 1,892

16%

mention a waiting list

300 of 1,892

6%

offer a trial or taster membership

114 of 1,892

48%

of society pages carry an enquiry form

586 of 1,218

36%

of events pages carry an enquiry form

428 of 1,205

What to take from it

Every step between “I’m interested” and a conversation loses people. An enquiry form on the membership page, a clear price, and a named person who replies the same day do more than any campaign. Whatever system you choose, check that an enquiry lands somewhere it will be seen and followed up.

MARKETING TECHNOLOGY

Marketing, consent and privacy

Almost half the club websites we read show no analytics or tag manager at all: 1,060 of 2,154 (49%). Unless something loads later that we couldn’t see, those clubs can’t tell how many people visit, where they come from or which pages lead to an enquiry.

Where tracking is present, consent often lags behind it. Of the 943 websites with tracking, 578 (61%) show no cookie consent tool. Of the 1,190 forms we could inspect, only 170 (14%) link to a privacy notice.

What the page code shows, of all club websites we read

Of 2,154 club websites



Tags loaded later by Tag Manager cannot be seen, so the tool figures are floors.

26%

of clubs with an enquiry form show a marketing consent tickbox

322 of 1,233

7%

show a newsletter sign-up form

150 of 2,154

7

had an AI-led chat widget; 5 of those are Capture Concierge, which Albatross makes

7 of 2,154

1%

show a WhatsApp link or button

27 of 2,154

What to take from it

You don't need much: analytics you can read, a consent tool that works, a privacy notice linked from every form, and an unticked box for marketing email. Together they let a club see what works and follow up with the people who asked to hear from it.

SEARCH

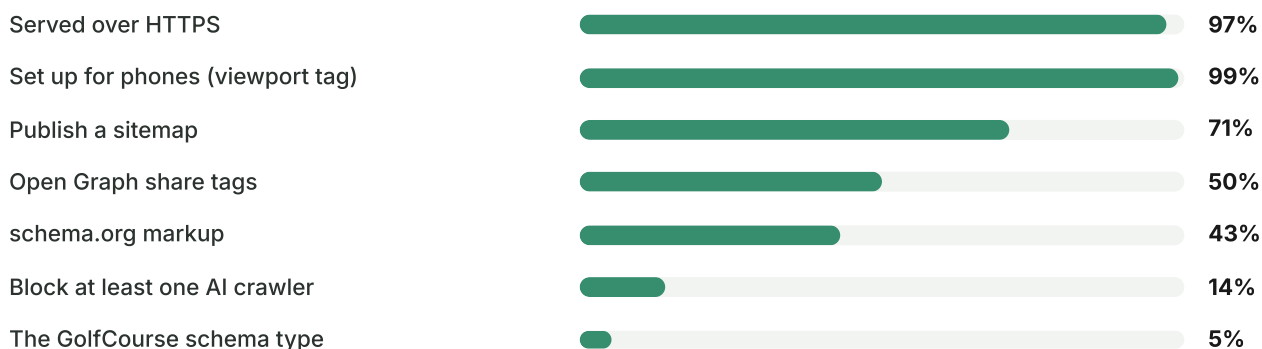
Search and AI readiness

Search engines and AI assistants read a website much as we did. Nearly every club website is served securely and works on a phone. Fewer give machines the structured information that helps them answer a golfer's question accurately: 932 of 2,154 (43%) carry schema.org markup, and 99 of 2,154 (5%) use the GolfCourse type.

294 of 2,154 (14%) block at least one AI crawler in robots.txt, often through a default setting nobody chose. That can keep a club out of the answers people now ask assistants for.

Basics for search and AI assistants, of all club websites we read

Of 2,154 club websites



What to take from it

Ask whoever runs your website two questions: does robots.txt block AI assistants, and do our pages carry structured data for the course, opening times and prices? Both are small changes, and both decide whether an assistant can answer a golfer's question with your club's own facts.

FRESHNESS

Site age and social

Most clubs link their social channels: 1,789 of 2,154 (83%) link at least one. Facebook leads by a distance, and 1,140 of 2,154 (53%) link both Facebook and Instagram.

News is harder to keep up. 699 of 2,154 (32%) show a dated news or blog item, and on 476 of those 699 (68%) the newest is more than a year old. Only 223 of 2,154 (10%) show an item from the last 12 months.

Social links, of all club websites we read

Of 2,154 club websites



17%

show no social link at all

365 of 2,154

5%

show a footer copyright year of 2023 or earlier. Many footers print the current year automatically, so this is a floor

113 of 2,154

18%

already had a Christmas or festive page live in late October

380 of 2,154

19%

link a gift voucher or online shop

410 of 2,154

What to take from it

An old news item on the homepage tells a prospective member the club is quiet, even when it isn't. If nobody has time to post, take the news section off the homepage, or show the next three events instead. Fresh, dated pages also help search engines and AI assistants trust what they read.

NATION BY NATION

The census, side by side

England has 1,530 of the club websites we read, Scotland 444, Wales 127 and Northern Ireland 53. The same questions for each.

Club websites that	UK	England	Scotland	Wales	N. Ireland
Take visitor tee times online	70% 1,514 of 2,154	73%	59%	69%	83%
Of those, book through BRS, intelligentgolf or Club Systems	82% 1,240 of 1,514	83%	78%	82%	86%
Show a member login link	74% 1,602 of 2,154	76%	73%	64%	75%

Club websites that	UK	England	Scotland	Wales	N. Ireland
Membership page offers an online application	21% 398 of 1,892	20%	23%	25%	20%
Membership page carries an enquiry form	39% 730 of 1,892	43%	27%	35%	20%
Show membership prices	70% 1,319 of 1,892	68%	73%	79%	66%
Google Analytics 4 or Tag Manager	39% 850 of 2,154	43%	32%	32%	23%
No analytics or tag manager at all	49% 1,060 of 2,154	49%	49%	56%	57%
A cookie consent tool	34% 724 of 2,154	38%	23%	18%	21%
Of sites with tracking, no consent tool seen	61% 578 of 943	59%	66%	79%	too few
A CRM tag	3% 63 of 2,154	4%	2%	0%	2%
schema.org markup	43% 932 of 2,154	44%	37%	55%	49%
Block at least one AI crawler	14% 294 of 2,154	17%	6%	3%	9%
Link at least one social channel	83% 1,789 of 2,154	85%	75%	87%	92%
A dated news item from the last 12 months	10% 223 of 2,154	11%	9%	13%	2%

Each share is of the club websites in that nation, or of the base the row names. A nation with fewer than 30 club websites in a base reads "too few". Tools loaded later by Tag Manager cannot be seen, so the technology rows are floors.

SELF-CHECK

How does your club compare?

15 questions about your own website, each beside what the UK club websites in the census show. A typical UK club website scores about 6. "Not sure" is a fair answer, and a useful one to take to whoever runs your website.

☐ **Can a visitor book a tee time online?**

70% of UK club websites do this (1,514 of 2,154).

☐ **Does the membership page show prices?**

70% of UK club membership pages do this (1,319 of 1,892).

☐ **Can someone apply for membership online?**

21% of UK club membership pages do this (398 of 1,892).

☐ **Can members log in from the website?**

74% of UK club websites do this (1,602 of 2,154).

☐ **Is there an enquiry form on the membership page?**

39% of UK club membership pages do this (730 of 1,892).

☐ **Is there an enquiry form on the societies page?**

48% of UK club society pages do this (586 of 1,218).

☐ **Does the website run Google Analytics 4 or Tag Manager?**

39% of UK club websites do this (850 of 2,154).

☐ **Does every form link to your privacy notice?**

14% of the UK club forms we could inspect do this (170 of 1,190).

☐ **Can someone sign up for news or offers on the website?**

7% of UK club websites do this (150 of 2,154).

☐ **Do your pages carry structured data (schema.org)?**

43% of UK club websites do this (932 of 2,154).

☐ **Does the website link to the club's Instagram?**

55% of UK club websites do this (1,185 of 2,154).

☐ **Does it show a cookie consent tool?**

34% of UK club websites do this (724 of 2,154).

☐ **Do your forms carry an unticked box for marketing email?**

26% of UK clubs with an enquiry form do this (322 of 1,233).

☐ **Is there a dated news item from the last 12 months?**

10% of UK club websites do this (223 of 2,154).

☐ **Does your robots.txt let AI assistants read the site?**

14% of UK club websites block at least one AI crawler (294 of 2,154).



PART 2

The 11 systems compared

Who makes each club system, who owns it, what it publishes about connecting to other software, and what it publishes about price.

One system or specialists

The 11 at a glance

System by system

Who owns whom

Price and contract

CHOOSING A SYSTEM

One system, or connected specialists

There are 2 ways to run a club’s software. One system that does everything gives one supplier, one contract and one login. Connected specialists let a club choose the best tool for each job and replace one without replacing the rest. Most clubs sit in between: a core system with a few specialist tools beside it.

Either way, the question that decides how well it works is the same: can the systems share information without someone retyping it? So for each of 11 systems we read what the supplier publishes about connecting to other software, price and contract, and set it out the same way. We didn’t test, score or rank anyone.

AT A GLANCE

The 11 systems

A filled dot means the supplier publishes an answer to that test; the tests are explained in part 3.

System	Owner	1. Public documentation	2. Who approves	3. Fee	4. Webhooks	5. Read or write
ESTABLISHED (7)						
BRS Golf	GolfNow	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
intelligentgolf	ClearCourse	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Club Systems International (ClubV1)	ClearCourse	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
HowDidiDo	ClearCourse	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Golf Genius	Not stated publicly	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
ClubNet Systems	Not stated	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Elite by ESP	ESP	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
NEWER (4)						
Lightspeed Golf	Lightspeed Commerce	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Golfmanager	Not stated	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Fescue	TeeTrack Ltd	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>
Paralo	Paralo Ltd	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

What each one is, and what to ask

TEE SHEET LED CLUB PLATFORM

BRS Golf

Owner	GolfNow, which bought BRS in 2013; GolfNow is owned by Versant since January 2026
Based	Belfast, since 2003
Member app	Members' booking app for iPhone and Android; bills can be paid in it
Handicaps	Through Golf Genius or HandicapMaster

BRS says more than 3,500 clubs in 14 countries use it.

GolfNow's affiliate programme lets a partner sell tee times on its own website; that is not access to the BRS platform itself.

ASK THEM

Can partners other than GolfNow read and book our tee sheet, and on what terms?

CLUB MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

intelligentgolf

Owner	ClearCourse, since June 2019
Based	Claverdon, England, since 2000
Member app	igMember; trade press describes the new HowDidiDo app as serving its members too
Handicaps	Fully accredited on England Golf's list

Payments run through intelligentgolfPay, from ClearAccept.

In December 2025 it announced tee time distribution through Golfbreaks and Your Golf Travel.

ASK THEM

Do you publish API documentation, and which partners can make bookings as well as read them?

MEMBERSHIP AND COMPETITION SOFTWARE

Club Systems International (ClubV1)

Owner	ClearCourse, since September 2022
Based	Manchester, since 1982
Member app	The HowDidiDo app (January 2026) and ClubV1 Members Hub
Handicaps	Fully accredited on England Golf's list

It began in 1982 with handicapping software, and says it works with more than 2,000 clubs in the UK and Ireland.

ClearCourse's own trade title, The Golf Business, put Club Systems and intelligentgolf together at around 80% of UK and Irish clubs (March 2026).

ASK THEM

Which partners besides HowDidiDo and the handicap system can connect to ClubV1, and how?

MEMBER APP AND GOLFER NETWORK

HowDidiDo

Owner	ClearCourse, through Club Systems International
Based	Created by Club Systems in 2001
Member app	A new app since 12 January 2026, for clubs on either ClearCourse system
Handicaps	Through the club's own system

A club can pay £1,400 a year for all its members (a limited time offer on 23 October 2026), or members pay £2.99 a year each.

Trade press reported more than 200,000 registered users of the new app.

ASK THEM

What will the club price be after the limited time offer ends?

COMPETITION SOFTWARE THAT SITS BESIDE A TEE SHEET

Golf Genius

Owner	Not stated publicly
Based	Wayne, Pennsylvania, since 2009
Member app	Golfer apps and live leaderboards
Handicaps	Fully accredited; approved by all four Home Nations unions in 2020

It says more than 11,000 clubs, associations and organisations in more than 60 countries use it, and it connects to BRS, Lightspeed and Golfmanager tee sheets.

It developed the 2025 club software survey with Players 1st.

ASK THEM

What does a club's API key let a partner read or write?

ALL-IN-ONE CLUB SOFTWARE FROM IRELAND

ClubNet Systems

Owner	Not stated
Based	Ireland; in the UK since August 2021
Member app	A member app, among its modules
Handicaps	Not found in public sources

Its modules include membership, live scoring, a tee sheet, tills, a website builder and a greenkeeper app.

ASK THEM

How do you connect to the World Handicap System?

LEISURE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE FOR GOLF CLUBS

Elite by ESP

Owner	ESP
Based	Sutton, Surrey
Member app	Not stated
Handicaps	Licensed by England Golf, its connection under development

It brings tee times, memberships, the driving range, competitions, food and drink, and retail into one system.

ASK THEM

When will your World Handicap System connection be complete?

CLOUD TEE SHEET AND POINT OF SALE, FORMERLY CHRONOGOLF

Lightspeed Golf

Owner	Lightspeed Commerce, which bought Chronogolf in 2019
Based	Canada; in the UK through Fore Group
Member app	Website and app, as an add-on
Handicaps	Through Golf Genius

Lightspeed says it works with more than 2,000 courses worldwide. Its UK pricing page says no long-term contract and no start-up costs.

Fore Group says it sets it up and supports it for clubs outside North America, and connects other systems to it.

ASK THEM

How often can partners check for changes, and are webhooks planned?

ALL-IN-ONE CLOUD SYSTEM FROM SPAIN

Golfmanager

Owner	Not stated
Based	Spain, since 2018
Member app	A mobile app, and a club app in the club's own name
Handicaps	Through a partnership with Golf Genius

It says more than 400 clubs and resorts use it; trade press counted more than 25 in the UK in August 2026.

In September 2026 it began letting AI assistants such as ChatGPT and Claude work inside it, in beta.

ASK THEM

Do partners pay for access, and which events can your webhooks send?

ALL-IN-ONE PLATFORM BUILT ON ONE MEMBER RECORD

Fescue

Owner	TeeTrack Ltd, trading as Fescue
Based	London, since January 2025
Member app	A members' app in the club's own name
Handicaps	Says scores go to the handicapping body; not on England Golf's list on 3 October 2026

It describes itself as a five-person company, and went live at its first clubs in January 2026.

It publishes its terms: one annual price per venue, 12 months minimum, then 30 days' notice, and a full data export at any time at no charge.

ASK THEM

How do you return scores for handicaps before you are on England Golf's list?

ALL-IN-ONE CLUB SYSTEM WITH IPHONE AND APPLE WATCH APPS

Paralo

Owner	Paralo Ltd
Based	England and Wales, since 2026
Member app	iPhone and Apple Watch; Android in progress
Handicaps	Says indexes sync when a competition closes; not on England Golf's list on 3 October 2026

It raised £270,000 in August 2026, prices per club rather than per member, and says most clubs are live within 4 to 6 weeks.

It says its tee sheet does not yet handle days of 36 or 54 holes.

ASK THEM

When will you be on England Golf's list, and when does the Android app arrive?

Also in the market, not counted among the 11

Fore Group: Not a system of its own: the firm that sets up and supports Lightspeed Golf outside North America, founded in 2020, with offices in the UK, Ireland, South Africa and France.

foreUP and Club Caddie: Cloud systems from the US, used mainly there. Club Caddie is owned by Jonas Software.

GolfBox: From Denmark: handicap and member databases for national bodies, and club tools. Fully accredited on England Golf's list.

WHO OWNS WHOM

The dates that matter

2013

GolfNow buys BRS Golf.

MAY 2019

Lightspeed buys Chronogolf, now Lightspeed Golf.

JUNE 2019

ClearCourse buys intelligentgolf.

SEPTEMBER 2022

ClearCourse buys Club Systems International, with HowDidiDo.

AUGUST 2023

The R&A and Golf New Zealand take equal shares of DotGolf, which runs the World Handicap System here.

OCTOBER 2023

Fore Group becomes Lightspeed Golf's only partner outside North America, Fore Group says.

JANUARY 2026

Versant, which owns GolfNow and BRS, begins trading. The new HowDidiDo app launches. Fescue goes live.

SEPTEMBER 2026

Golfmanager opens its system to AI assistants, in beta.

PRICE AND CONTRACT

What suppliers publish about price

Cost and lock-in are the first things a committee asks about, and almost no supplier publishes a price. These 5 publish something.

System	How it charges	Contract terms
Fescue	One annual figure per venue, excluding VAT; no charge per user or per module	12 months minimum, then 30 days' notice; full export at any time, at no charge

System	How it charges	Contract terms
Lightspeed Golf	Pay as you go; a quote for each club	No long-term contract, no start-up costs, no cancellation fee
Golfmanager	A quote for each club; says "no hidden fees"	Says you can cancel at any time
Paralo	Per club, not per member; no fee per transaction	Not published. Ask for term, notice and renewal in writing.
HowDidiDo	£1,400 a year for all members (limited time offer), or £2.99 a year per member	Not published. Ask for term, notice and renewal in writing.

BRS Golf, intelligentgolf, Club Systems, Golf Genius, ClubNet and Elite by ESP publish neither a price nor contract terms. No supplier we studied publishes a fee for API access. Ask every supplier for a written quote, the term, notice and renewal, and whether you or your other suppliers will be charged to connect.



PART 3

How to choose

5 tests for how open a system is, 4 clubs that changed system, and what to check on data, booking and AI before you sign.

The 5 tests

What each publishes

Which route suits you

4 clubs that changed

Your data if you leave

Booking channels

AI assistants

HOW OPEN IS IT?

5 tests for any club system

An API is a door one system leaves open so another can read or send information to it, with permission. “Open API” is used loosely: some suppliers mean anyone can connect, some mean partners they approve, some mean a few partners they connected themselves. 5 questions cut through it, and any supplier should be able to answer all 5 in writing.

01 Is the documentation public?

If anyone can read how the API works, your other suppliers can check before you buy whether they can connect.

02 Who approves a connection?

Can a supplier you choose get access, or must the platform approve each one? Approval protects members’ data, but it should be quick and clear.

03 Does it cost anything?

Is there a charge per connection, per partner or per use? No golf supplier we studied publishes one either way. In hotels, Mews says its API is free.

04 Are other systems told when something changes?

A webhook tells your other tools the moment a booking is made or a member joins, instead of them checking every few hours.

05 Can a partner only read, or also write?

Reading can show tee times. Writing can take a booking, update a member or enter a competition.

WHAT EACH PUBLISHES

3 of the 11 publish an answer

Test	Golfmanager	Lightspeed Golf	Golf Genius
1. Public documentation	API reference, readable without a login	Partner API reference, readable by anyone	Integration guides; no API reference
2. Who approves	The club signs a form; Golfmanager enables it	Partners ask by email; “Credentials are provisioned by hand”	A key issued to the club through its support team
3. Fee	Not published	Not published	Not published
4. Webhooks	A webhook setting is documented; events not listed	None today; partners check for changes	Not published
5. Read or write	3 levels, from booking only to full administration	Approved partners can book, change, check in and pay for rounds	Not published

The other 8 publish nothing on any of the 5 tests. That doesn't mean they can't connect: they connect through partnerships announced one at a time, such as BRS with Golf Genius for competitions. The question is whether the next tool your club wants will be able to connect too. The national handicap system shows it can be done: DotGolf's supplier API is public and sends webhooks to licensed systems.

WHICH ROUTE SUITS YOU

Start from your club

Find the line that sounds most like your club: where to look first, and which of the 12 questions in the toolkit matter most.

If your club...	Look first at	Questions
Has a small office team	One system, or a core system with few extras, so there is one supplier to call	6,11
Is a proprietary club or resort, with rooms, events or food and drink	A core system with documented connections, so each part can be chosen for the job	1,4,5
Takes a lot of visitor and society trade	Who can see and book the tee sheet, and at which prices	2,3,5
Has a contract ending within 12 months	The data clause, the notice period and the switching timeline	9,10
Is unhappy with its membership software	Whether membership can be replaced on its own, without moving everything	1,6,9
Wants to try AI assistants	Whether the system has an API, and how it controls permissions	5,12

4 CLUBS THAT CHANGED SYSTEM

What changing was like

Suppliers' pages say what a system can do. Clubs' own accounts say what changing was like. These 4 come from what each club, its supplier and the trade press published, one for each of 4 suppliers. We have left the clubs' names out.

01 GOLFMANAGER · 2026

A Scottish club with 4 kinds of tee time customer

Why it changed

The club sells tee times to international tour operators, overseas visitors, local guests and members, each with its own booking windows, prices and privileges. Building a new clubhouse, it also wanted one system for membership, the shop and food and drink.

What changed

It announced the move in September 2026. One platform now runs the tee sheet, membership (with the club's own profile fields, lockers and bag storage), the pro shop with stock in more than one place, and food and drink with player accounts. The supplier visited before and after the agreement, and the club calls the move smooth.

How it landed

No figures yet. The general manager says the platform simplifies the club's booking rules.

TAKE FROM IT

Write down every kind of customer and its booking rules before you talk to suppliers. That page is your real specification.

02 BRS GOLF · 2023 AND 2024

A Yorkshire members' club that moved everything onto its booking system

Why it changed

Members already booked tee times on BRS, but the bar card, the bar and shop, and competition scoring each ran on something else. The board wanted to cut costs and office time.

What changed

Announced in December 2023 and live in January 2024: a BRS wallet for the bar and shop (the only way to get the members' 10% discount), a competition purse that takes the entry fee when a member books, and the BRS scoring app.

How it landed

No figures published. From the end of January the club paid competition winnings straight into members' accounts.

TAKE FROM IT

Ask your current supplier what else it could take over, and tell members exactly what to do and when.

03 CLUB SYSTEMS (CLUBV1) · 2018 AND 2019

A club that rebuilt its systems after a fire

Why it changed

Fire devastated the clubhouse in September 2018. The club decided to rebuild its office systems and members' technology at the same time.

What changed

The general manager researched the market and chose Club Systems. By August 2019 the club ran ClubV1, new tills (some handheld) and the members' apps, with the tills linked to its second course 35 miles away. The clubhouse reopened in 2021.

How it landed

No figures published. Most of what was published came from a trade title owned by the supplier's parent company.

TAKE FROM IT

If you run more than one course or venue, link the tills and accounts across them from the first day.

04 CHRONOGOLF, NOW LIGHTSPEED GOLF · 2018

An Irish operator that moved 5 venues onto one platform

Why it changed

The operator had invested heavily in technology but still had no one system across its venues, which serve more than 3,000 members and 40,000 visitors.

What changed

After what it called an exhaustive international search, it moved all 5 venues by July 2018. Members book online and see one account across golf, the shop, snack bars and restaurants.

How it landed

At one club more than 900 members were using it in 2018, and the club's president said booking was easier and quicker than before.

TAKE FROM IT

Members judge a new system on 2 things: how quickly they can book, and whether they can see their account. Lead with both.

YOUR DATA

Your members' data, if you leave

Your club, not your software supplier, decides how members' details, booking history and subscriptions are used, and answers for them. In data protection terms, the club is normally the controller and the supplier a processor working on its instructions.

That matters most when you leave. Under UK GDPR Article 28 the contract must require the supplier, at your choice, to return or delete all the personal data at the end. Check now, not when you give notice, that yours says so, and says in what format, how quickly and at what charge.

You may hear about data portability. That is your members' right against the club, to get their own data in a common format. It doesn't give the club a right to take its database from a supplier: the contract does that.

Before notice

Ask in writing what format your data comes back in, how quickly and at what charge.

On notice

Ask for a full export, and check it opens and is complete while the old system still runs.

At the end

Ask for written confirmation that members' data has been returned or deleted.

General guidance, not legal advice. Your club's solicitor can review the contract.

BOOKING

Every channel needs the live tee sheet

Visitors now book through the club's own website, national booking sites and tour operators abroad. GolfNow reported more than £7.8 million of green fees for UK and Irish clubs in the first half of 2023, with bookings up 17% on the year before. Every one of those channels has to see live availability and take a booking without double booking a slot, and that works through APIs.

Ask your supplier

Which booking sites and tour operators can see our tee sheet today?

Can our own website take and charge for bookings directly?

Can we choose which partners see which times, at which prices?

Does a booking made elsewhere appear in our tee sheet straight away?

AI arrives at the front desk

In September 2026 Golfmanager connected its system, in beta, to AI assistants including ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini. Staff can ask an assistant to book a tee time or add a member to a competition, and it acts with the same permissions as the person using it, with every action logged. It works because Golfmanager already had an API: the assistant uses the same door as any other partner.

1

Someone asks an assistant for something

2

The assistant asks the club's system, through its API, with that person's permissions

3

The system checks live information and acts

4

The answer comes back, and the action is logged

Albatross makes one of the assistants that answer for clubs, Capture Concierge, so we should say how it works. It answers only from a knowledge base of the club's own information, which the club reviews, and it takes a booking only where the club's system supports a verified connection. Otherwise it gives the booking link and passes the enquiry to the team. It is one reason we care about the 5 tests.

You don't need any of this today. But a system you choose now may run the club for 5 to 10 years, so ask how it will work with assistants, and how that permission is controlled.

Other industries did this first

Golf isn't the first to open up. Mews, a hotel system, publishes a free API with more than 1,000 connected tools. OpenActive gives sport and leisure providers a shared standard for booking data. Open Banking let customers use approved apps with their bank. Each time, access came with rules: certification, a shared standard or regulated approval.



PART 4

The toolkit

A checklist, 12 questions for any supplier, the contract clauses to check, a timeline and an email to send. Print it, or get it as a Word document.

Buyer's checklist

12 questions

Contract clauses

Switching timeline

Email to suppliers

TOOL 1

Buyer's checklist

Print these pages for your next committee meeting, or get them as a Word document you can edit.

- ☐ We know every system we use, what it costs and when each contract ends
- ☐ We have asked staff and members what works and what doesn't
- ☐ We have decided whether we want one system, connected specialists or a mix
- ☐ Every shortlisted supplier has the 12 questions, and we have the answers in writing
- ☐ We have spoken to at least 2 clubs like ours that use each shortlisted system
- ☐ We have seen the system working with our own kind of data, not only a demonstration
- ☐ We know how the system connects to the World Handicap System
- ☐ We have checked the contract for data return, notice period and price changes
- ☐ We have agreed who leads the project and how members will be told
- ☐ We have allowed most of a year from first review to running smoothly

TOOL 2

12 questions for any supplier

Write each supplier's name at the top and note its answer, or the page where it publishes one. Questions 1 to 5 are the 5 tests.

Question	Supplier:	Supplier:	Supplier:
1 Do you publish your API documentation? Where?			
2 How does a partner get access, and how long does approval take?			
3 Is there a charge for API access, for us or for the partner?			
4 Do you offer webhooks, so other systems are told of changes straight away?			
5 Can partners make and change bookings, or only read them?			
6 Which systems do you already connect to, and which clubs use those connections?			
7 How do you connect to the World Handicap System in our nation?			
8 Where can members book and pay, and does the app work on iPhone and Android?			
9 Can we export all our data, at any time, in a standard format, at no charge?			
10 What happens to our data, and in what format, if we leave?			

	Question	Supplier:	Supplier:	Supplier:
11	Who will set the system up, train our staff and support us after go-live?			
12	Can you work with AI assistants, and how is that permission controlled?			

TOOL 3

Contract clauses to check

Data return

At the end of the contract the supplier returns all our data, at our choice, in a standard format, within an agreed time.

Export at any time

We can export our data whenever we wish, not only when we leave.

API access

Access for our chosen partners continues for the whole contract and through the notice period.

Notice and renewal

The notice period and any automatic renewal are clear.

Price changes

How and when prices can change is set out.

Sub-processors

We are told which other companies handle our members' data.

TOOL 4

Switching timeline

Stage	Allow	What happens
Review	1 month	List what you have, what it costs and what you need
Shortlist and questions	1 to 2 months	Send the 12 questions, see demonstrations, speak to clubs
Decision	1 month	Committee or board decision; contract checked

Stage	Allow	What happens
Set-up and data move	2 to 3 months	Data moved, connections made, staff trained
Running in	1 to 2 months	Old and new side by side for membership and billing where possible; members told

Managers in the 2025 survey said putting in a new system typically takes 7 to 8 months. Start well before your contract ends.

TOOL 5

An email to send your suppliers

Subject: 12 questions about [system] for [club name]

Dear [name],

[Club name] is reviewing its club software ahead of our contract renewal in [month and year]. Before we decide anything, the committee is asking every supplier the same 12 questions, below. Could you answer each one in writing by [date]? Where the answer is in your published documentation, a link is fine.

1. Do you publish your API documentation? Where?
2. How does a partner get access, and how long does approval take?
3. Is there a charge for API access, for us or for the partner?
4. Do you offer webhooks, so other systems are told of changes straight away?
5. Can partners make and change bookings, or only read them?
6. Which systems do you already connect to, and which clubs use those connections?
7. How do you connect to the World Handicap System in our nation?
8. Where can members book and pay, and does the app work on iPhone and Android?
9. Can we export all our data, at any time, in a standard format, at no charge?
10. What happens to our data, and in what format, if we leave?
11. Who will set the system up, train our staff and support us after go-live?
12. Can you work with AI assistants, and how is that permission controlled?

Thank you. We will treat your answers in confidence.

[Your name], [role], [club name]

METHOD AND LIMITS

How we did it

We read the public website of every club we could on the England Golf, Scottish Golf, Wales Golf and Golf Ireland (Northern Ireland) lists: 2,154 websites from 2,741 clubs, on 24 and 25 October 2026. Nobody was contacted and no form was sent.

587 clubs aren't in the figures: 174 don't own a course, 159 list no website, we couldn't read 212, 22 now point somewhere else, and 20 ask not to be read.

A website shows what a club offers, not every system behind it, and tools that load late can be missed. Treat the figures as floors, and as counts of websites, not contracts. We checked 40 clubs again from scratch, found 1.5% of values wrong, and fixed the rules behind them first.

For the 11 systems we read only what each supplier publishes, in October 2026: its website, documentation, app store pages, company records and trade press. Suppliers often offer customers more than they publish, so where we found nothing, we give the question to ask.

Albatross makes Capture, a CRM for golf clubs, so we want club systems to be open. No supplier paid or asked to appear. If we have something wrong, tell us at james@albatross.digital and we will correct it.

ABOUT ALBATROSS

Who wrote this

Albatross is golf marketing for clubs with more opportunity than in-house resource. We help clubs with their brand, website, campaigns and content, and we built Capture, the connected CRM and communications tools behind the next step.

We wrote this report because clubs keep asking us the same question: will this system work with everything else we use? If you'd like a second pair of eyes on supplier answers or a contract, we'll read them with you.

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