

Alford Ace of Clubs Wins DBS Junior Award

North East gem Alford proved it was the ace of clubs when it won the Dunfermline Building Society Junior Club of the Year Award announced at the Scottish Golf Dinner, hosted at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow, on Friday night (28 March).

The awards launched last year - part of Dunfermline Building Society's £100,000 sponsorship agreement with the Scottish Golf Union – were designed to reward clubs for their efforts in promoting junior golf and encouraging more juniors into the game.

Alford successfully staved off competition from 50 other clubs across Scotland to take the inaugural title. With the standard of entries being extremely high in its very first year, the Scottish Golf panellists had the difficult task of short-listing just six clubs, all of whom had representatives at the Dinner for the announcement.

Alford's pro-active approach to increasing accessibility for juniors into the game and strong management of their junior section saw them increase their target membership, improve practice facilities after achieving Awards for All Funding and successfully attract sponsorship income to boost their programmes. The club's award winning potential was further demonstrated through its innovative and long term planning, nurturing strong links in the community, as well as boasting the first golfer, 13 year old Ryan Gordon, to progress through every step of the clubgolf pathway to be successfully selected to the SGU Academy in Grampian in 2007. In addition, the club piloted and continues to provide Girls only coaching, which has led to an 80% increase in this membership group in 2007.

Graeme Dalziel, CEO of Dunfermline Building Society said, "Alford Golf Club are extremely worthy recipients of this award and have demonstrated their ability and desire to promote golf to youngsters in their community.

"They have set a great example to other clubs and this award is recognition of the hard work carried out by their club and volunteers and will hopefully inspire other clubs to follow their example of best practice. Congratulations to Alford and to all of the clubs who have entered the awards this year, who have set a very high standard for others to follow in years to come."

Clubgolf Project Manager Torquil McInroy who was on the panel added, "The response to the awards this year was extremely encouraging, and I would like to congratulate all the clubs that put themselves forward on their commitment to junior golf. This year's finalists have set the benchmark, which I hope will provide encouragement to others looking to increase junior activities and develop golf within their local communities. Alford is an excellent example of a club setting and achieving their own targets, and through their success have secured a healthy future for their club."

Alford's Head Coach Neil Cobban and Junior Convenor Graeme Gill, who received the cheque for £1,000 to contribute to their junior programmes, said after the presentation, "We are absolutely delighted to win this award which is recognition of a lot of hard work and we would like to thank our club members, volunteer coaches and sponsors for their support. Our thanks also go to Audra Booth (ClubGolf Regional manager) and Andrew

Locke (PGA Professional) who have supported us throughout the development of our junior coaching programme.

“This is a great springboard for us to continue to deliver great coaching and improved facilities and to continue to encourage more youngsters into the game.”

The five runners up from Inverurie, Reay, West Kilbride, Greenock Whinhill and Turnhouse received prizes of £300 each for their junior sections.
