



By Appointment to  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Information Technology Services  
Technology Services Group  
Newcastle upon Tyne



## Case study: Close House

Telecoms solution to cover multiple business units on one operating system

Hundreds of metres of voice & data cabling along with broadband to provide seamless connectivity and control Sage 200 software providing business intelligence, HR module and seamless integration

24/7 monitoring - through SystemCare - to protect the business from data loss or downtime

# Total IT Solutions

Nothing in your technology environment exists in isolation. Many customers choose to work with TSG thanks to our comprehensive capabilities across all areas of IT services and support. From telecoms to infrastructure, business applications to 24/7 system monitoring, we believe that delivering effective solutions and business efficiency is all about ensuring that all of the elements of your IT mix are working in perfect harmony.



## The customer

**Close House was built in 1779 in a beautiful rural setting just outside of Newcastle upon Tyne. It has an interesting history including being used during World War II as a Nursing Training College and years later becoming part of Newcastle University.**

In 2004, local businessman and founder of Sage software Graham Wylie purchased Close House and has over the years developed the grounds considerably, adding a second golf course along with state of the art golf facilities including clubhouse and restaurant.



With two internationally recognised 18-hole golf courses, one of which was voted among the top 100 courses in England, along with Lee Westwood as the official attached golf tour professional, Close House is truly a unique golf and leisure destination based in the North East.

Every development within the grounds is setup as a separate enterprise, with business units including the pavilion [for back office staff], club house and driving range.

## TSG AND CLOSE HOUSE

### The customer objectives

**Close House wanted to create a luxury golf destination.**

**Having efficient IT working in the background would be vital in creating an outstanding environment for guests and golfers alike.**

While it was important for Close House to maintain separate business units, they also all needed to work in harmony with each other, with high level connectivity across the 400 acre estate.



# CLOSE HOUSE

TSG was welcomed on board as Close House's trusted IT partner. Due to the extensive developments in the grounds, Close House was a blank canvas in terms of its network structure and looked to TSG experts to provide sound advice on the latest technologies to help the golf destination make efficiencies and create a well-balanced IT strategy for future growth.

Close House had been using Sage Line 50 which up until recently fulfilled all requirements and integrated well with third party hospitality software. They now required deeper reporting functionality and other business intelligence tools to help improve customer satisfaction - all of which Sage Line 50 could no longer provide.

Aside from the reporting element, Close House needed the new accountancy software to be scalable along with prerequisites including;

- Accommodate continual business growth
- Integrate seamlessly with existing third party hospitality software
- Handle increasing customer/supplier transactions and invoicing
- Include a payroll module with straightforward processes

**“ We worked closely with the team at TSG to create a system that would work reliably in the background ”**

Providing guests with around-the-clock service and access to facilities meant resilient hardware was vital in handling the multitudes of data passed through the network on a daily basis, keeping Close House operational and above all providing the desired 'unforgettable experience' for every guest.

**" Sage 200 has really made a difference in the way we approach most of our decision making."**

John Glendinning, Golf General Manager at Close House explains, "We welcome hundreds of guests at Close House every week and put our trust in technology to help provide everyone with a luxurious experience to keep them coming back to visit us. We worked closely with the team at TSG to create a system that would work reliably in the background and be simple for our staff to use."



Situated in a beautiful yet fairly remote area, Close House struggled with relatively slow broadband connection speeds. With various changes in the business including the increase in staff and guests, along with the EPOS and booking systems becoming more cloud-based, Close House had gradually added to the demands on its bandwidth, causing extremely sluggish connections.

## The TSG Solution

### Powerful Accounts Application

**Close House had undeniably outgrown Sage 50, yet its seamless integration with third party hospitality software kept Sage software as the front runner for the company's accounting solution.**

Based on this, TSG recommended Close House make the upgrade to Sage 200, a natural progression from Sage Line 50 for any growing business.



Lee Westwood is the official attached golf tour professional

Sage 200 is a powerful and flexible modular solution delivering valuable business intelligence and reporting, enabling the management team at Close House to make strategic decisions.

John adds, "Having Sage 200 has really made a difference in the way we approach most of our decision making. We can justify the things we do to push the business forward and then report on them to see the real value."

### Robust Connectivity

With regards to broadband connection at Close House, TSG specialists took into consideration both the data internet speed and voice networks to identify the best method of bringing them together to provide a more resilient setup.

TSG deployed fibre links throughout the site to create a full fibre backbone network. This essentially provides the business with a seamless connection for both its data and voice over one common cabling infrastructure. The cabling stretches hundreds of metres around the perimeter of the grounds and beneath both golf courses.

Acting as Close House's central nervous system, the structured cabling covers the multiple business units inside the grounds from the pavilion [where back office staff are based], to the clubhouse and driving range. All of the data traffic from each business runs through this system, allowing staff from any of the businesses to easily work remotely from any location, at any time within the grounds.



## Sophisticated Telephony

TSG installed a Mitel telephone system, with a Mitel MXE 3300 controller to operate all handsets. What's unique about this Mitel system is that it looks after the multiple businesses within the grounds, bringing them together under one operating system to allow simple communication from site to site.

**“ We've massively improved internal communications with the use of the mobile handsets. ”**

The main reception is fitted with an IP Windows Operator Console so that inbound calls are channelled centrally. Using the computer system, reception staff can easily transfer calls through to staff at any location on site through their mobile handsets.

## Calls and Lines

Close House also took advantage of TSG's Lines and Minutes to provide a complete end to end telecoms solution.

Benefitting from a direct relationship with BT Openreach, TSG is extremely competitive on pricing, and with an end to end solution TSG add real value in providing fault diagnostics [TSG can test ADSL, hardware and lines all at the same time].

## Essential Security and Protection Maintenance

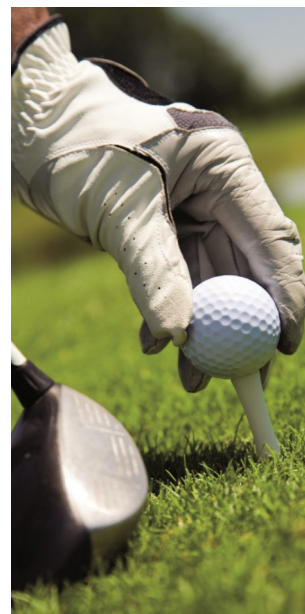
To protect the Close House system in its entirety, TSG installed a SonicWALL firewall along with Sophos anti-virus software to keep the network free from harmful content and protect against malware, spyware and viruses.

Close House also wrapped their entire network-infrastructure and applications with TSG SystemCare to complete its IT solution. SystemCare provides Close House with remote and onsite support seven days a week, a perfect solution for a business providing guests with around the clock service. Any potential threats to the network are identified and fixed before they have chance to affect Close House's performance.

## The benefits to Close House

**Close House relies on TSG to look after and support its central IT system including hardware, broadband, telecoms and accountancy software.**

Having one supplier to contact for fundamental elements of their IT system is a great comfort to the business, with John adding, “Working with TSG on developing our technology has been invaluable in helping us to achieve goals. We've massively improved internal communications with the use of the mobile handsets. It's great knowing that we can just quickly call



someone to ask a question or transfer a call without having to search the grounds for them! SystemCare has already delivered on its promises in helping us to operate day to day without disruption. With two internationally recognised golf courses we need every aspect of our system to work with us in providing an exceptional experience, and I think that's what we've achieved with the technology TSG has put in place."

## The Future for TSG & Close House

### **TSG is project managing alongside BT the installation of fibre cabling which will link up Close House to the nearby exchange in Wylam.**

The new cabling system will allow Close House to take advantage of up to date technology including 100Mb direct to the Internet, SIP trunks [phone circuits delivered virtually over the business's Internet connection] for telephone calls, and improve security systems throughout the grounds linking direct to live monitoring and CCTV. None of this technology is available through their current ADSL system.

**" SystemCare has already delivered on its promises in helping us to operate day to day without disruption."**

As part of the cabling project TSG will separate the connectivity; with business critical traffic channelled down a leased line and guest traffic including Wi-Fi access routed through the original ADSL. Not only will this improve bandwidth performance, the original ADSL will provide Close House with a failover solution should they experience any issues.

In theory, traditional lines will handle inbound calls, with outgoing calls made using the SIP trunks to provide Close House with extra capacity and improve their routes of communication.

