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Julian Small, founder and director at Smallworld IT

**Company name:**

Blacknest Golf & Country Club

**Industry:**

Leisure

**Company website:**

[blacknestcountryclub.co.uk](http://blacknestcountryclub.co.uk)

**Geographic region:**

Hampshire, UK

## It's a Hole-in-One for WiFi at Blacknest Golf & Country Club

### SUMMARY

Widespread locations such as golf courses can present some significant WiFi challenges. However, Blacknest Golf and Country Club have not only overcome this hurdle, everyone on site can now experience excellent wireless connectivity, right to the farthest edge or even when there are hundreds of simultaneous users. This has been made possible by Smallworld IT, who specified and installed a new WiFi network based on NETGEAR wireless access points and managed switches.

### BACKGROUND

Located in Hampshire, in England, right in the heart of Jane Austen country, Blacknest Golf & Country Club is a beautifully presented place to visit, whether for a round of golf, socialize in the clubhouse, or eat and drink in one of several hospitality choices. Customers can also indulge in some retail therapy in the shop or spa treatments, sleep in a luxurious hotel, or even rent the venue for special events.

### CHALLENGE

Typical of a golf and country club, the facilities are spread across a large site in the rural area of Alton, covering over 100 acres. Having such a spread-out location and many users with devices to support brings some substantial WiFi connectivity challenges. Imagine these scenarios: at any time, there could be hospitality and retail staff trying to process payments and wedding guests attempting to post photos of the big day on social media. The DJ for the evening reception might want to stream music. And of course, hundreds of golfers showing off their best round ever.

Similarly, a business professional could be trying to respond to an urgent email while taking a quick break during a session at the driving range. Administration, Course Superintendent or greenkeeper and other staff need fast and consistent WiFi to ensure the smooth running of the business. In addition, since Blacknest is located in a poor cellular coverage area, WiFi-enabled voice is the best option for phone users. All these add up to multiple wireless connectivity demands, many of which are simultaneous.





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So, there came the point when Blacknest’s network – which had been added to over time using various WiFi products – was beginning to experience some limitations. The decision was taken to upgrade the existing network, so Blacknest contacted IT, WiFi and networking specialists, Smallworld IT.

Covering London, Guildford, Surrey and Hampshire, Smallworld IT provides its clients with a one-stop-shop for all their IT services, Managed IT Support, Cyber Security and networking requirements, including design, build, installation and support. The company is also a long-standing NETGEAR partner.

## SOLUTION

After evaluating the golf club’s requirements, Smallworld IT recommended a new WiFi system based on NETGEAR WAX620 and WAX610Y wireless access points. These make the most of the new WiFi 6 standard, which can support more users with higher bandwidth at any one time. Julian Small, founder and director at Smallworld IT, takes up the story: “As well as the quality of the NETGEAR equipment, our support team particularly like the Insight portal, allowing us to manage multiple devices via an app, from anywhere in the world.”

“So if a customer has an issue, we can log in to Insight, see what’s happening and take action to remediate the problem. For a small monthly fee, customers don’t have to worry about their network management because we take care of everything for them.”

“Something else I personally like about these wireless access points is that they are beautifully crafted devices. Unlike some other products, they are attractive to look at and fit well to a location like Blacknest, where they will often be visible.” In addition, these devices can support high-density user traffic, which is essential for occasions such as weddings, where there may be hundreds of guests in a single location.

In addition, Smallworld IT made sure that the new system could support virtual local area networks (VLANs), which keeps

administration, employee, visitor, and payment systems traffic securely separated from each other. This was achieved by configuring VLANs from nine NETGEAR managed switches. WiFi 6 also includes extra security features compared to previous standards. So, in conjunction with an enterprise-class firewall, safety and security are paramount.

## INSTALLATION

Julian continues, “A wireless survey was conducted by NETGEAR, and this proved instrumental in the plans for the network replacement. Once the survey was completed, we could run data cables to the most appropriate locations and install the 15 NETGEAR WAX620 access points and four WAX610Y outdoor points, which between them serve on average 140 endpoints daily.”

First, however, Smallworld IT set up the network in its own offices. Each device was unboxed and – with the help of the Insight portal – scanned, named and connected, then packed away again, ready for installation. This process means that Smallworld IT not only know everything works, time on site and customer disruption is minimized.

## RESULTS

Installation took place in the spring of 2022, with no issues, simply the benefits of having significantly improved WiFi quality, right out to the farthest hole, with the bonus of additional security. Julian concludes, “The good news is that this customer does not have to worry about the wireless infrastructure from now on because we are maintaining it for them via the Insight portal. We can even handle firmware updates and troubleshoot remotely, should there ever be any problems to reduce the risk of downtime.”

So, whether staff are making sure that everything is running smoothly, customers are shopping, or golfers are posting photos of their holes-in-one, everyone at Blacknest Golf and Country Club can expect a great WiFi experience.