

WHITSTABLE & SEASALTER GOLF CLUB
GOLF COURSE POLICY DOCUMENT 2017-2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy document sets out details of the management of the golf course at Whitstable&Seasalter Golf Club. It has been approved by the Board and posted in the Clubhouse for the benefit of all members.

The policy will be followed strictly and any "major" changes will not be introduced without full consultation with the Board. Major changes will include removal or construction of bunkers and restyling/reconstruction of green/teeing grounds.

This document will be reviewed on a regular basis and covers the period 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2020..

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Greens Management Group (G.M.G) – is responsible for the management of the golf course, including finance, machinery and personnel; will meet regularly and not less frequently than twice a year (once in the Spring before Golf Week and once in the Autumn around or just after Course Maintenance Week); will prepare a schedule of course improvements planned for 2017-2020. This G.M.G works alongside the Greens Committee that meet approximately every two months which covers the day-to-day issues concerned with the presentation and works taking place on the course. The composition of this Group will be ;Club President ,Chairman of Greens Committee ,Head Greenkeeper ,Secretary ,Finance Director.

The Club Secretary and/or the Chairman of Greens Committee will present a Golf Course report at meetings of the General Committee.

The Head Greenkeeper will attend meetings and advise the Greens Management Group. The Head Greenkeeper will also be available attend meetings with suppliers/contractors and supervise them whilst working on club premises. Input into the budget for the requirements for the coming year is also requested.

The Secretary will maintain management control, monitor agreed policies and ensure that correct management practices are followed. He will also be in charge of discipline following procedures laid down by the Club.

The Treasurer will monitor expenditure to ensure spending is within the agreed budget.

The Head Greenkeeper will be responsible for the implementation of this policy in all its aspects – i.e. preparing work schedules; maintaining machinery; planning and long term budgeting; maintaining schedules and records; allocation of daily tasks; adhering to Club's health and safety policy; application of fertilisers and chemicals and their safe storage; conservation. He will liaise with the Secretary/Greens Director on any problem areas.

3. RESOURCES

3.1 Staff: The agreed staff level is:-

Head Greenkeeper;

One Assistant Greenkeeper

There is a commitment to training and education of greens staff who are all encouraged to obtain qualifications in Greenkeeping to the maximum of their individual abilities. Staffs are also encouraged to become members of B.I.G.A and attend discussion groups and seminars organised by that Association. Members of the greens staff will be encouraged to obtain further qualifications necessary to enhance their progress within the green staff structure.

3.2 Financial

The Board is committed to the allocation of sufficient funds to achieve the policies set out in this document.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of 2017 (the year of the production of this document) until 2020 are that this golf course should continue to be recognised as one of the best maintained and enjoyable courses in the area. The standard will be achieved for the major part of the year. It is accepted that the same high standards cannot be maintained during the winter months. It is to be maintained in excellent condition for the enjoyment of members of all handicaps and their guests.

5. TIMING OF WORK ON THE COURSE

It will be the aim of the Head Greenkeeper, in regular discussions with the Secretary, to plan this work well in advance so that it is done with the minimum disruption of the golf programme and members can be advised of any unavoidable disruption.

6. THE COURSE

6.1 Greens

The greens are of original push up construction and are predominately London Clay with poor drainage capability. The exceptions are the double 5th/6th green which has a shingle base along with part of the 8th green.

Annual meadow grass (poaannua) used to be the predominate species ,although due to the austere management practised there is now significant and increasing amounts of bent grass (agrostis) and even some fescue (festuca) to be found ,along with some unsightly rye grass (loliumperrenne).

The greens are now managed in an ecologically sound and sustainable manner designed to encourage the finer grasses to the detriment of the poaannua. This management will also improve the permeability and health of the rootzone thus providing better playing conditions for as much of the year as possible.

The aeration programme consists of vertidrainning in the early autumn and deep slit tining when appropriate .Light verticutting is practised on a weekly basis during the main growing season. Fertilisation is kept to a minimum with organic nitrogen/potash used in spring and summer.No phosphates are used. Iron and seaweed along with wetting agent are applied as a spray during the main growing season with an iron solution used during the winter months.

Top dressing is applied to greens in spring and summer and after vertidrainning in the autumn .Top dressing used is Fendress.

The greens are cut to a length of between 4.5 and 6mm dependant on season.

6.2 Temporary Greens

Temporary greens are for use when the main greens are unfit due to waterlogging. They are not frost greens. They are also brought into use when top dressing is being applied to the main greens

These greens are cut to a length of 6mm when in use ,and for the rest of the year are maintained at 11mm.

6.3 Surrounds & Approaches

Surrounds and approaches are maintained at a height of cut of 11mm.They are aerated as per the greens and are mown three times a week during the main growing season. Cuttings are boxed off..

6.4 Tees

The tees are maintained at a height of cut of 11mm and mown twice weekly in the growing season. The grass tees will operate throughout the main playing season and as far into the off season as possible while there is sufficient growth for recovery. Tee mats will be used in the winter period..The winter tee mats will be regularly brushed and the slots cleared. Weedkilling of the grass tees is carried out annually .Divotting is an ongoing operation. Cuttings are boxed off. Aeration includes vertidrainning and slitting.

The white tees are removed from play during November (no later than 1st December) and put back into use during late March (no later than 1st April).Both dates are dependant on weather conditions at the time.

6.5 Fairways

Fairways are maintained at a height of cut of 14mm .They are aerated by the vertidrain machine in the autumn and by slit tining subsequently .Weedkilling is carried out in early summer. They are divotted in spring and autumn .There is a single fairway cut around the main and temporary greens.

6.6 Semi Rough

Semi rough is maintained at a height of 50 mm .Management is similar to that of the fairways.

6.7 Rough

The rough is maintained at a height of 100mm .The uncut rough is left untouched to encourage a diversity of natural habitats for plants and wildlife..

6.8 Wear Management

Wear management becomes necessary when foot & trolley routes become worn, leading to inferior playing conditions. This is usually during the off season when growth is not sufficient to counteract wear. White lines are the preferable method of control with hoops; then ropes as a last resort.

6.9 Drainage and ditches

All surface water outfall drainage systems to be monitored on a regular basis so as to ensure satisfactory discharge.

6.10 Irrigation

The Club has an automatic watering system which covers the greens, tees and also the fairways immediately in front of the 5th and 8th greens due to their shingle base. A minimum watering policy is strictly adhered to. Hand held hosing is practised when necessary in prolonged dry periods. Watering is only carried out to keep the turf alive and to sustain the turf with enough vigour to counteract daily wear and tear in the growing season. The pop up sprinklers deliver the minimum amount of water to keep the turf healthy but are inefficient in windy conditions hence the need for topping up with hand held hosing. Over watering is the cardinal sin of greenkeeping. In the long term ,it results in an increase of poaannua to the detriment of the finer grasses and the health of the rootzone. .The club now has its own borehole for irrigation water.

6.11 Bunkers

Bunkers are normally raked every other day ,more often if necessary ,i.e for competitions. In the growing season ,they are flymo'd and edges on a fortnightly basis .Topping up with sand is carried out as required.

6.12 Water Hazards

See 6.9 .Hand weeding of banks is carried out mainly in the winter period ,but also when necessary during the growing season .Indigenous growth is untouched to give character and a natural look to the dykes.

6.13 Boundary Walls & Fencing

Fences are monitored for damage and repaired when necessary

6.14 Pathways

Pathways are monitored to ensure that they remain smooth and not health and safety hazards.

6.15 Environmental Areas.

Apart from the dykes we have a small area to the left of the 7th hole which is not treated with herbicide.

7. TROLLEYS

When the course is very wet it may become necessary to restrict or stop trolley usage. Initially this will involve the electric ride on hire buggies and the individual ride on buggies, then the heavier electric battery trolleys and then finally the lighter pull/push trolleys .. If conditions deteriorate sufficiently, it may be necessary to implement a carry-only policy. Closing the course is a last resort to protect the course. All these events will be advised to the members via the notice board at the entry to the course and the telephone answerphone on a daily basis by the greenkeepers and the office..

8. CLOSING THE COURSE

The course may be closed on the authority of the Head Greenkeeper or, in his absence, the Greens Director or the Secretary or the Assistant Greenkeeper, when weather conditions demand the damage to the course would result if play was permitted. Such conditions would exist if the greens were waterlogged, if the course was flooded or affected by frost or snow. The relevant Competition Secretary and Greens Director will be informed if course closure affects a Club competition. In the event of the need to use temporary greens during a Ladies' or Gentlemen's Competition the appropriate Competition Secretary or their nominated representative will be informed prior to the commencement of the competition.

The course may be closed by the Secretary, Green Director or a member of the Committee supervising a competition if he considers that the course has become unsuitable or dangerous for play.

Notice of a decision to close the course and time of next inspection will be recorded on the clubs answer-phone and the course notice-board which is located by the pathway from the car park to the first tee..

9. GREEN STAFF AND MEMBERS

9.1 Work on the course

The Green staff will be vigilant and ensure that they do not delay play unreasonably. Nevertheless Green Staff have to get through their work. All player are therefor asked to give consideration to them by not stopping their work unreasonably, particularly at the beginning of the day, and to realise that this is in their own interest to do so, Social golf will only be allowed to start from the 3rd tee after 8.30am.

9.2 Complaints

Members and visitors may not complain about the conduct of a member of staff nor about the state of the course to any member of the Green Staff. Any complaint must be made to the Secretary/Greens Director who will investigate the matter, together with the Head Greenkeeper. If they cannot deal with the complaint themselves, the matter will be submitted to the Greens Management Group or the Board.

10 MACHINERY

The Head Greenkeeper will provide a 5 year rolling plan of machinery replacements, additions, repairs and renewals for consideration, amendment and approval by the Greens Management Group and ultimately the Board for incorporation into the Club's financial plan.

The Head Greenkeeper has responsibility to keep himself up-to-date with developments in golf course machinery and to bring his recommendations to the notice of the Greens Management Group He is also responsible for the maintenance for all machinery – routine maintenance and major servicing, etc. He will recognise the investment that has been made and ensure that all machinery is used with care.

11 IRRIGATION

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible to encourage deeper rooting grasses. However, in almost every season there are times when rainfall is insufficient to sustain grass growth and needs to be supplemented. Water is also needed on demand to wash in wetting agent and other treatments. A guaranteed water source is provided by way of a borehole (built in November 2016) to supply the golf course. It can be supplemented as per the mains supply as below.

11.1 Water Supply
South Easter Water

12 CONSERVATION

The golf course is managed in a manner that is sensitive to the fauna and flora that are found within the boundaries of the Club. We have numerous areas of various heights of cut across the course which act as wildlife corridors. Minimal fertiliser is used on the course. .Regular consultation with agronomists and Kent Wildlife Trust assist this process.

13 PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Notwithstanding the complete confidence the Board has in the competence and technical knowledge of the Head Greenkeeper, it is the Club's policy to seek expert opinion as and when necessary.

No alteration to the architecture of the course may be undertaken without the approval of the Board.

A qualified tree surgeon will be employed to fell or prune any mature tree.

Health and Safety Issues will be addressed following consultation with an appointed Health and Safety Officer.

14 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Green Committee and all Greens staff are to ensure that they are familiar with and comply with the clubs current Health and Safety Policy Statement.

THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REVIEWED EACH YEAR DURING THE PERIOD 2017 TO 2020 AT A TIME TO BE DETERMINED BY THE GREENS MANAGEMENT GROUP.

This document is published on the club website for members information.

MAY 2017