

**CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board held, in committee, in Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2006 at 3.40 p.m.

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor G Robinson	(Chairman)
Councillor Mrs M Chambers	(until 5.30 p.m.)
Councillor Mrs J Cochrane	
Councillor B Hanvey	(from 4.00 p.m.)
Councillor M Henderson	
Councillor J Spratt	
Councillor J White	(until 5.30 p.m.)

**IN ATTENDANCE:-**

Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Leisure Services, Director of Technical & Environmental Services, Operational Services Manager, PR & Marketing Manager, Golf Club Catering Manager, Acting Business Manager and Members' Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:-**

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Alderman Mrs Rice, Councillor Jeffers and Councillor Hanvey who would be arriving late to the meeting.

**GCB/2006/07 : MINUTES**

Tabled:- Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Advisory Meeting dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2006 (copy previously circulated)

A verbal report was made by the Steering Committee.

Noted.

**GCB/2006/08 : REGISTER DETAILING LIST OF EQUIPMENT**

In response to a query from Councillor Henderson, the Operational Manager advised Members that a register detailing a list of the equipment stored in the Golf Club was being compiled and would be tabled at the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager will table a register detailing the equipment stored in the Golf Club for the next meeting of the Board.

### **REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER**

#### **GCB/2006/09 : INCOME**

The Operational Services Manager drew Members' attention to the breakdown of the current income, including course usage and membership breakdown, which was tabled in his report.

Noted.

#### **GCB/2006/10 : TRADING ACCOUNTS**

The Operational Services Manager referred to the breakdown of the current trading position and an end of year projection included in his report and drew Members attention to the end of year overall trading position which projected a £1,935.21 under spend.

In addition, he had also included a breakdown of the miscellaneous code and a proposed apportionment of the telephone costs for Members information.

Councillor Mrs Chambers stated that the staffing issues needed to be looked at again from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006.

Noted.

#### **GCB/2006/11 : CAPITAL EXPENDITURE UPDATE – GOLF COURSE**

The Operational Services Manager outlined that the Council had received the final certificate for the contractor in relation to this project on 6 January 2006 amounting to £39,255.55 including VAT. The Consultants had confirmed that this brought the total contract amount to £1,088,661.43, representing a saving of £8,249.70 on the adjusted tender sum of £1,096,911.19. He advised that negotiations were now taking place with the Council's consultant, Kirk McClure and Morton, as to their final invoice for fees on the contract. The total approved expenditure for the Golf Course was £1,129,716.00 and the total expenditure to date is £1,120,475.00.

Noted.

## **GCB/2006/12 : CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - CLUBHOUSE**

The Operational Services Manager referred to the summary of the above in his report, which shows that, for the Clubhouse, the total approved expenditure to date is £1,694,093.10 and the total estimated final account would be £1,676,849.00.

He stated that it was important to note that outstanding works were still on going but it was expected that the estimated final account for the clubhouse would come in below the total approved expenditure figure of £1,694,093.10.

He drew Members attention to the Business Plan prepared in 2004/05, which showed capital expenditure of £50,000 in 2006/07 for the refurbishment of one of the remaining 6 holes on the old Course. He clarified that the Council were completing 1 hole per year and detailed costings would be provided at a later date.

The Operational Services Manager suggested that Members take a tour of the new course to look at the topography of the land, which was totally different to the existing course.

The Chief Executive stated that it was the Council's long-term aim to provide a full PGA course for the ratepayers of Castlereagh and it was proposed that while work was being carried out to complete the hole, a temporary tee and green would be constructed for play.

The Operational Services Manager referred to Members' concerns in relation to the costs involved, but stated that, in his view, this was the cheapest option. He reported that work would have to be carried out in a step-by-step fashion, but could commence once the ground had dried out.

In response to a query from Councillor Robinson regarding the putting green, the Officer outlined that this had now been completed and had been included in the final cost.

Councillor Chambers referred to the IT equipment and the Officer explained that approval had been sought from the Technical & Environmental Services Committee, although the actual ordering had been carried out by the IT Section.

Following discussion, it was

**RESOLVED:-** That, Members approve, in principle, capital expenditure up to a maximum of £50,000 at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club for the refurbishment of one

hole and that the Operational Services Manager provide detailed costings and timing implications for a future meeting of the Board.

Councillor Hanvey entered the meeting at 4.00 p.m.

### **GCB/2006/13 : GOLF CLUB ENTRANCE**

The Operational Services Manager drew Members' attention to the two concept entrance options supplied by the Council's architects for the Clubhouse, Ferguson McIlveen.

Members discussed this matter in detail and agreed that there was a need for a sign that would be visual from both directions of the road with adequate lighting.

The Operational Services Manager referred to the gate barrier and commented that he had envisaged an electronic barrier similar to that at the David Lloyd Centre, however the Chief Executive responded that this type of barrier had a tendency to break down on occasions.

Members felt that the Option 1 drawing was the most suitable, but they preferred a less elaborate design, which would be illuminated from the ground and agreed that Council staff could carry out the necessary planting.

The Operational Services Manager also advised of the necessity to display a sign at the entrance to the Club advertising that there is "pay and play" facility.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Members considered that Option 1 was the most preferred option, however they agreed that the sign should be less elaborate than the one set out in the concept plans. The Operational Services Manager is instructed to obtain costings for signs of the type consisting of two stone walls with inset marble plaques, illuminated from the ground for a future meeting of the Board.
- (b) The Operational Services Manager to obtain costings for associated planting by Council staff for a future meeting of the Board.
- (c) Furthermore, he is to obtain costings for the provision of electronic gates for a future meeting of the Board.

### **GCB/2006/14 : FACILITIES FOR JUNIORS**

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that the Golf Club had a Junior Section, a Junior Committee and Junior Competition programme and he felt that more could be done to facilitate them within the Clubhouse. One possibility under consideration was to extend Meeting Room No 3, currently being used as the Member's Room to include the waiting area for the restaurant. This would provide a larger Member's Room which could be used by both adults and juniors, perhaps with a temporary partition and he had included sketch proposals in his report. He added that it would cost approximately £3,000 to remove the wall and erect a glass panel to make the necessary modifications.

Members discussed the various options available and considered using the Conference room as a Members' Room facility by moving the television and plaques downstairs and removing a few of the tables and chairs.

However, following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, there would be no further consideration of this issue unless the General Committee raised the matter during the course of their discussions.

#### **GCB/2006/15 : 2006/07 FEES**

The Operational Services Manager referred to the proposed new green fees for 2006/07 and welcomed Members' comments.

The Chief Executive confirmed that these had been included in the Council's estimates and had now been circulated to members for their information. He indicated that although the Captain had commented on the new fees, no complaints had been received to date.

Councillor Robinson sought information relating to the estimates for membership subscriptions that the Club had already received, information on the monies currently received, and the amounts anticipated in the future. In addition, that the Officers obtain a breakdown of the monies paid for by the Golf Club in the last year.

The Operations Manager circulated a breakdown of the information requested for May 2006, which also included the estimated expenditure in 2006/2007.

In response to a query from Councillor Spratt, the Chief Executive confirmed that the catering income was being included in the catering figures.

Members then discussed the hospitality budget and the Director of Finance & Leisure Services commented that he was trying to ascertain how much was an acceptable amount to allocate for hospitality costs.

The Chief Executive stated that he had tried to reconcile this issue with the Auditor but stated that it had to be run like a GUI Club as they operated separately from the Council.

RESOLVED:- That the proposed new green fees for the 2006/07 financial year be approved.

#### **GCB/2006/16 : DRAFT MARKETING PLAN**

The Chief Executive informed Members that although there was insufficient time to consider the draft marketing plan, the PR & Marketing Officer required approval to advertise and promote the Golf Club.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Members of the Board meet during the interval of the March Council Meeting to discuss the draft marketing plan, and that, if necessary, a special meeting of the Board could be convened to look at this issue.

#### **GCB/2006/17 : DIRECTIONAL ROAD SIGNAGE**

The Operational Services Manager reported that the Council's Corporate Marketing Service had progressed this matter with Roads Service and referred to the copies of the correspondence attached to his report.

Members disputed the content of the Roads Service correspondence and referred to the locations of the directional signage promoting Streamvale Open Farm.

Following further discussion, Members agreed that an additional directional sign was required on the Gransha Road.

RESOLVED:- That, the Chairman of the Board write to the Divisional Manager, Eastern Division of the Roads Service with regard to this matter and requesting a directional sign on the Gransha Road.

#### **GCB/2006/18 : CLUB APPLICATION FORM**

The Operational Services Manager advised that the current Club application form had been amended to enable easier confirmation of age and identity.

The Chief Executive reiterated the need to be mindful of the dates when juniors reached the dates were they ceased to be classified as “juniors”.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the amended application be adopted with an inclusion to the wording to read “birth certificate or other...”

### **GCB/2006/19 : COURSE RULES**

The Operational Services Manager circulated the first draft of the proposed Rules for the Course including a draft dress code, and welcomed comments in relation to the best way to progress this matter.

Councillor Henderson read out the proposal to state in the draft dress code that.. “in accordance with GUI regulations – football tops, denim/jeans, tracksuits will not be allowed...” and in response to Members’ suggestions, it was agreed that the words “dress shorts” be omitted from the wording.

Furthermore that the draft dress code include the wording that “no shirts and tops are to be taken off”.

Councillor Henderson commented that it was important to erect a sign at the Golf Club to notify the public/members that the dress code was being changed to comply with GUI ruling.

The Operational Services Manager advised that he would like to erect a sign towards the Clubhouse stipulating the course rules, including the dress code.

RESOLVED:- That, the draft dress code be approved, subject to the aforementioned changes, and subject to appropriate signage being erected at the Golf Club notifying users that a dress code is being introduced.

### **GCB/2006/20 : PROPOSALS FOR REDUCING AND RECYCLING WASTE AT THE FACILITY**

The Operational Services Manager referred to an audit of waste at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club carried out by the Council’s Waste Management Section and indicated that the purchase of a compactor would reduce the collection by half, and would pay for itself within the first year.

Councillor White commented that it was important for the Council to be seen recycling, and Councillor Henderson suggested that it might be cheaper if the collection operation was carried out in house.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Catering Manager look at this issue again, the potential for recycling and the costs involved, and report back to a future meeting of the Board.

**GCB/2006/21 : STREET LIGHTING**

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers bring back the reply from Street Lighting Eastern Division once it has been received.

**GCB/2006/22 : ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SHUT DOWN OF THE FACILITY**

Members were advised that the Council's Client Services Manager had reported this matter to the Technical and Environmental Services Committee in February and March 2006 and the reports were included the Operational Services Manager's report.

The Operational Services Manager stated that the Council had arranged for an independent report to be carried out by an independent surveyor, but added that the Consultants had been satisfied that this situation would not re-occur. He advised that a contacts list was now displayed in the Golf Club should an emergency situation arise, and employees were aware that the first point of contact would be the M & E Engineer / Minor Works staff.

He referred to the incident in question and informed Members that this had been serious and extremely complicated, and could only be repaired by the contractor.

Members expressed their concerns that this incident should not have occurred in a new building.

Councillor Hanvey asked if there was a commissioning period when the building was still the responsibility of the contractor. The Officer confirmed that there was a defects liability period of one year, which was now coming to an end.

Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the report to be carried out by an independent surveyor be tabled at a special meeting of the Board, to be convened when the report had been received.

### **GCB/2006/23 : CONTRACT FOR SERVICES - GOLF PROFESSIONAL**

The Operational Services Manager referred to the changes to the contract for the services of the golf professional, which had been suggested at the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Advisory Committee on 25 January 2006 and had been attached to his report for Members information. However, he advised that the Golf Professional had expressed concern at the contract stipulation for 12 months, which left him with a feeling of uncertainty.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:-

- (a) That the 12 months clause be removed from the contract and amended to read under annual review
- (b) That, approval be given for the incentive percentage increase from 2.5% to 3.0% on all income in recognition of the removal of the right to sell confectionary of the new Clubhouse, in recognition that this clause allows the Council to sell confectionary at the Clubhouse currently through vending machines resulting in an income well in excess of the total increase in the incentive payment.

### **GCB/2006/24 : CLOSING OF GATES**

In response to a query from Councillor Robinson, the Operational Services Manager outlined that the current procedure was that the last Council employee or representative to leave the facility locks the entrance gates. This was likely to be a member of the Restaurant staff due to the current opening times.

The Catering Manager added that staff were reluctant to lock the gates, as the lock was located on the inside of the gate, therefore he had advised them to carry it out using 2 Members.

Following a request from Councillor Robinson, it was

RESOLVED:- That, staff be notified immediately that the last members of staff/representatives leaving the premises are responsible for closing the gate and securing the facility.

### **GCB/2006/25 : AGENCY RATES**

The Operational Services Manager drew Members' attention to a comparison of agency rates with full time Council employees for the 2005/06 financial year.

This information clearly showed that the use of agency staff had resulted in significant savings for the Operational Services Unit. He outlined that agency staff were being employed in the interim until the Club was affiliated with the GUI to ascertain if there would be any increase in duties as a result of the affiliation and he would be bringing a full analysis to a future meeting of the Board. In response to a query from Members, he clarified that the agency staff referred to 1 part time cleaner post and one administration post.

Members referred to the Receptionist post and asked who was carrying out the duties currently. The Operational Services Manager responded that, in the absence of the temporary Administration Assistant on sick leave, the civic centre staff were assisting in duties as and when required on a temporary basis.

Councillor Spratt asked if the civic centre staff could not carry out these duties on a daily basis. The Operational Services Manager stated that they were only deployed to carry out specific essential tasks, with other tasks not being covered due to staffing restraints within the service unit, and in line with Council procedures on covering leave. He outlined that he was presently trying to establish the specific needs and demands for the reception/administrative duties at the Golf Clubhouse, which was the reason why a job description had not been drawn up.

The Chief Executive reiterated that the Secretary/Manager post had not been filled.

Councillor Henderson enquired why the Golf Professional could not perform the Receptionist/Shop duties, and he queried the difference between the Receptionist and Secretary/Manager post.

Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers provide a breakdown of the hierarchy/staffing structure and outline the tiered system for responsibilities, along with a list of the staff currently employed, what their duties consist of, hours of employment, how many posts are permanent and casual, the staffing costs involved, and details of the responsibilities of the Golf Professional and Administrator/Receptionist for the next meeting of the Board.

## **GCB/2006/26 : MEMBERSHIP OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE**

The Operational Services Manager asked Members to consider the Membership of this Committee, and outlined that the relevant clause from the Club Constitution was included in his report.

Councillor Robinson reiterated that the General Committee could not deal with issues that were the responsibility of the Golf Club Board and that all decisions, including financial expenditure, made by the General Committee would have to be ultimately ratified by the Board.

The Chief Executive assured Members that the constitution of the General Committee had been set up to ensure that the Council was in the majority.

Following discussion referring to the make-up of the Committee, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the General Committee be set up to include 4 Councillors and 2 Council Officers, namely:- Councillors Henderson, Chambers, Cochrane, Spratt and White, and David Foster, Auditor, and Mr Billy Torrens, Parks Section Manager.
- (b) Councillor White to be appointed Chairman of the General Committee
- (c) Should any of the Councillors on the General Committee be unable to attend a meeting of the General Committee, that they contact any of the 3 remaining Members of the Golf Club Board to act as a substitute.

#### **GCB/2006/27 : UPDATE ON AFFILIATION TO THE GUI**

The Operational Services Manager referred to the minute of a recent meeting with the Gilnahirk Golf Club, which was included in his report. He advised that they had had to call an AGM to pass resolutions to dissolve their club.

Following discussion, Councillor White suggested that General Committee Members could bring back reports on the AGM to the Board, and in the interim, he will come back to the Operational Services Manager with a date for a meeting of the General Committee.

At this point, Councillors Chambers and White left the meeting at 5.30 p.m.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **GCB/2006/28 : CORPORATE CATERING**

Councillor Hanvey referred to the Council's catering service and asked if costs could be individually apportioned out to each facility. However, in response, the

Catering Manager responded that the Council's Corporate Catering was based at the Ice Bowl.

Noted.

**GCB/2006/29 : TRADING ACCOUNTS FOR CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB RESTAURANT** (copy previously circulated)

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services outlined the trading accounts for Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Restaurant and referred to the substantial deficit.

He indicated that the Officers had met to discuss the major areas of spend and identify areas of underachievement. He tabled, for Members' information, an action plan, prepared to improve financial performance. However, he expressed his concern that the restaurant was not meeting its targets, and he advised the Board that he felt it should now be considering options, ie expressions of interest from the private sector.

Councillor Spratt commented that he was a great supporter of the restaurant and felt that there were other ways that it could be promoted, such as encouraging outside companies to use its facilities. He referred to a recent function at the Golf Club, organised by Sun Alliance, which had been so successful that they were planning to re-use the facility.

The Director went on to state that the Local Government Auditor would expect the Board to be taking some form of radical action in order to reduce or abate the current ongoing losses being sustained by the restaurant.

Councillor Cochrane referred to the installation of the EPOS system and suggested looking at the labour costs on a man-hourly basis, as staffing schedules could be adjusted as patterns emerged and were identified.

Councillor Robinson also commented that the bar staff could double up in their duties as waiters, as was the case with other licensed premises.

The Golf Club Catering Manager stated that there was a need to have a designated bar person to reduce fraud and error, but he assured Members that staff who were sent home early were only paid for the hours they had worked.

Councillor Hanvey commented that, in his view, the lack of signage did not attract new customers to the facility and he suggested that a restaurant review in the press was one avenue the Council could explore.

In response to his query about advanced bookings for Mother's Day, the Catering Manager replied that the Golf Club was fully booked for lunch on Mother's Day.

Furthermore, Officers were currently producing a brochure to promote the restaurant along with a business strategy.

He added that he was currently recruiting staff and a sous chef was due to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April. However, he referred to the lack of frontline staff and indicated that it was also his objective to compile a “pool of casual staff” to call upon.

Councillor Robinson stated that there would be merit in trawling internally for casual staff, and the Director of Finance & Leisure Services agreed to look into this matter.

Councillor Robinson concurred with Members’ support for the restaurant but stated that decisive action was required and changes were needed to the staffing structure.

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services further advised Members that Officers were trying to develop corporate catering for the Council’s other facilities to take advantage of economies of scale.

The Catering Manager also stated that he would be redeploying staff in other facilities, as and when required.

The Director of Technical & Environmental Services stated that, in his view, the whole facility needed to be marketed as a single unit to ensure that the focus was taken away from just a Golf Club, but that the Council were providing an overall package.

The Catering Officers agreed that it could be sold as part of a training package, which would capitalise on the golfing facilities with a view to providing corporate deals per day.

Members wished to emphasise that their comments did not reflect upon the staff who provided an excellent product.

Following consideration, Members agreed that it be

**RESOLVED:-** That the restaurant continue to run in-house, but that radical changes must be made to costs over the next few months, in particular to wages costs, hours worked, and that a detailed structure be developed in respect of staff.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 6.05 p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**