

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held, in committee, in Castlereagh Hills Golf Club on Friday, 17th November 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor G Robinson (in the chair)
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor Mrs J Cochrane
Councillor B Hanvey
Councillor M Henderson (until 11.25 a.m.)
Councillor T Jeffers (from 11.15 a.m.)
Councillor J Spratt (from 10.30 a.m.)
Councillor J White

IN ATTENDANCE:- Operational Services Manager, Business Manager,
PR & Marketing Manager and Assistant Members'
Services Officer

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of the Acting
General Manager Leisure & Marketing and the Senior
Manager Leisure & Marketing.

GCB/2006/210 : MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Tabled:- Minutes of the Golf Club Board meeting held on 20th October 2006 (copy previously circulated).

Following a proposal from Councillor Cochrane, which was seconded by Councillor Chambers it was

RESOLVED:- That, the minutes of the 20th October 2006 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

GCB/2006/211 : MEMBERSHIP EXIT FORMS
(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/173 refers)

The Chairman referred Members to an exit form, which had been received from a member of the Club who was leaving due to ill health, and following his request, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be instructed to write to the aforementioned member, on behalf of the Golf Club Board, wishing her a speedy recovery and hoping that they see her back at the Golf Club soon.

GCB/2006/212 : CUSTOMER COMMENT CARDS

(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/177 refers)

The Chairman circulated copies of the customer comment cards received from the Restaurant Suggestion Box and was pleased with the positive comments contained therein.

He added that, both he and the Mayor, had dined at the Golf Club Restaurant the previous night and had been extremely impressed by the high standard of the food and service, and he therefore asked that it be

RESOLVED:- That, the Business Manager be instructed to convey the positive comments contained in the comment cards, to the kitchen and waiting staff in the restaurant.

GCB/2006/213 : ROAD SERVICE SIGNAGE

(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/196 refers)

The Operational Services Manager informed Members that, although he had written to the Roads Service, he was of the view that the signs had not been erected as yet.

Noted.

GCB/2006/214 : USE OF THE MEMBERS' ROOM FOR CHRISTMAS BOOKINGS

(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/206 refers)

The Operational Services Manager commented that he had written to the Secretary of the Golf Club informing him that if the Club wished to have exclusive use of the Members' Room in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year, that they would need to book the use of the room in advance.

Noted.

GCB/2006/215 : CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE LIONS' CLUB

Councillor Henderson referred to correspondence received from the Lions' Club requesting the use of the facility to host a Club Day to benefit the Mayor's Charity.

Following a request from the PR & Marketing Manager, Councillor Henderson agreed to forward her a copy of the letter in order that she could follow it up.

Noted.

VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE PR & MARKETING MANAGER

GCB/2006/216: GOLFING SOCIETY PROMOTION DAY

The PR & Marketing Manager reported that, in order to progress the promotional event to encourage Golfing Society bookings, she was seeking authorisation to employ the services of a casual Promotions Assistant at a cost of £165.00.

Members discussed that if there was enough interest, an open day event should be well organised with light refreshments offered to those in attendance and golfing buggies being made available to transport people viewing the golf course.

Councillor Hanvey suggested that the Board should also give consideration to the production of a promotional DVD to promote the Golf Club. Members concurred that although there was merit in this idea, it should be considered next Spring/early Summer.

Councillor Henderson asked the Officers to consider writing to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, as Castlereagh Hills was the only 18-hole golf course in the inner city area. Furthermore, he felt that Belfast hotels should also be targeted by the PR & Marketing Manager to encourage Golfing Day promotions in line with their own hotel promotions.

The PR & Marketing Manager responded that, as the Council was a member of the NI Visitors Convention, she would ascertain if they could arrange a special promotion to link Castlereagh Hills Golf Club with their hotel members.

Following discussion, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the PR & Marketing Manager be instructed to use the services of a casual Promotions Assistant to progress golfing day bookings, at a cost of

£165.00, funding to be allocated from the Operational Services Manager's budget.

Further to the response from the promotion, that a date for an Open Day event be organised, with light refreshments being offered and buggies being made available to transport visitors around the golf course.

Officers be instructed to bring back the relevant costings to the next meeting of the Board.

- (b) the PR & Marketing Manager to clarify the costs involved in producing a promotional DVD to promote the Golf Club and report back to the Board.
- (c) the PR & Marketing Manager be instructed to contact the NI Visitors' Convention to clarify if Castlereagh Hills Golf Club can be linked in with their inner city hotels with a view to offering specific Golfing Day promotions to their guests.

GCB/2006/217 : UPDATE ON PR & MARKETING ACTIVITIES FROM JANUARY – MARCH 2007

The PR & Marketing Manager advised that she would be bringing an updated report to the December meeting of the Board, as the new Senior Manager Leisure & Marketing would have an input into its content.

Noted.

GCB/2006/218 : CUSTOMER COMMENT CARDS – COUNCIL FACILITIES

The PR & Marketing Manager circulated draft Customer Comment cards in relation to all the Council's leisure facilities, for Members' consideration.

She outlined that the Chief Executive had agreed to allocate the £155 expenditure required to print the cards, from the Corporate Plan budget.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Members approve the Customer Comment cards as circulated by the PR & Marketing Manager with the following amendments:-

- Omit "Leisure" from "Leisure Services"
- "Ice Bowl" should read "Dundonald International Ice Bowl"
- wording of "Castlereagh Leisure Services" should now read "Castlereagh Borough Council" and the wording of this statement to be printed in italics

REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

GCB/2006/219 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager referred Members to the trading accounts circulated with her report. She indicated that the monthly deficit was reducing gradually but expressed her disappointment at the drop in food sales income levels.

The Chairman, however, felt that the trading accounts did not provide a true reflection, as the restaurant's staffing structure had since been changed.

Councillor Cochrane stated that the figures also did not take into account any seasonal variations, and the months of April/May would have been peak periods for the Golf Club.

Noted.

GCB/2006/220 : CHRISTMAS BOOKINGS

The Business Manager referred to the number of Christmas bookings received by the Golf Club restaurant to date.

She highlighted her concerns in relation to the inadequacy of the lighting along the driveway.

The Operational Services Manager stated that he recalled that expenditure had been allocated for lighting provision in the estimates process.

Councillor Henderson referred to a previous Technical & Environmental Services meeting in which he reiterated that he had proposed that any under spend was to be used for lighting and illumination purposes at the Golf Club entrance.

The Chairman requested detailed costings for lighting provision and recommended that this work be carried out and allocated to the Operational Services Manager's budget.

Councillor Chambers also suggested that the Board decorate a Christmas tree near the Club entrance to promote the theme of Christmas, as well as arranging for a decorated tree to be situated inside the Clubhouse.

However, the Operational Services Manager responded that this would necessitate outside cabling which would be extremely expensive to implement.

Members discussed this matter and Councillor Hanvey suggested that the Officers should look into the possibility of obtaining sponsorship towards the decoration of a Christmas tree at the facility.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the Operational Services Manager report back to the next meeting with the relevant costings for lighting/illumination at the entrance to the Golf Club and along the driveway.
- (b) the PR & Marketing Manager, in liaison with Councillor Chambers, look into the possibility of decorating a Christmas tree in the grounds of the Golf Club, near the entrance.

Furthermore, that they visit Hillmount Nursery following the meeting to suggest that they consider sponsorship of a decorated tree at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club.

GCB /2006/221 : ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

The Operational Services Manager expressed his concern at the Golf Club expenditure in relation to electricity costs and informed Members that he had requested a complete review and audit of all electricity consumption. He added, however, that he felt that a high percentage of the costs related to the electricity needed to activate the sewerage pumping system.

Discussion then ensued regarding alternative energy sources and the Operational Services Manager stated that when the Golf Club project was initially discussed, the Capital Projects Officer at that time had brought a number of options to the Committee but these had proved extremely expensive. He felt that this matter merited the attendance of the Council's new Capital Projects Officer and the M & E Engineer at the next meeting of the Board to present detailed combined heating reports, and the associated costs involved.

However, he stated that should the sewerage pumping system be found to be the reason for this extensive energy consumption, it would be a difficult situation to resolve.

Councillor Hanvey asked if the Members would consider wind turbines and it was agreed that this would be considered in the Officers' report for the next meeting.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager will arrange for the M&E Engineer and Capital Projects Officer to prepare a report for the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/222 : TELEPHONE CHARGES

Members expressed their concern in relation to the telephone charges.

The Operational Services Manager stated that computer connection charges and the provision of an ISDN line linked to the Civic Centre had contributed to the expenditure.

RESOLVED:- That, Officers be instructed to bring a breakdown of the telephone charges to the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/223 : STATIONERY COSTS

The Operational Services Manager informed Members that, to date, the purchase of all stationery had come out of his budget and that it was proposed that the actual expenditure by the restaurant be transferred to the appropriate restaurant code.

The Business Manager stated that there were currently 2 budgets in operation for the purchase of stationery for the Golf Club.

The PR & Marketing Manager indicated that these costs did not include marketing printing expenditure.

Noted.

GCB/2006/224 : BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT

The Business Manager advised Members that the budget variance report highlighted adverse variances over £1k.

Members discussed the charges applied to credit card transactions and Councillor Chambers proposed that the Board implement a minimum payment charge of £10.00 for credit card transactions.

The PR & Marketing Manager stated that she had queried credit card charges before and had been advised that there were no charges applicable to Switch transactions.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Officers be advised to bring back further information to the next meeting of the Board in order that Members can give more consideration to the issue.

GCB/2006/225 : WEEKLY CASH SALES ANALYSIS

The Business Manager informed Members that the new upgraded system was being installed which would provide more detailed information.

She referred to the need to generate greater income, but would continue to monitor average transaction figures.

Noted.

GCB/2006/226 : MAN HOUR COSTS

The Chairman asked that Officers ensure that any requirements for agency staff be tabled at the Board meeting, prior to their implementation.

The Business Manager reiterated that the use of agency staff was restricted to maintain the present status quo. She advised that it was her intention to obtain information from the Operational Services Department's tender for agency staff to gain comparative costs for Members' information.

The Chairman commented that agency staff should only be used to cover annual leave and not provide sickness cover, but he was pleased to note that staffing costs had now been reduced over recent months.

Noted.

At this point in the proceedings, Councillor Jeffers arrived at 11.15 a.m.

GCB/2006/227 : PROPOSED MENU & COSTINGS

The Chairman enquired when the new proposed menu would be taking effect.

The Business Manager stated that the restaurant staff had total ownership of the new menu and were keen to have it implemented as soon as possible. However, she assured Members that she would arrange for all catering staff to be trained to familiarise them with the menu content, prior to its introduction.

The PR & Marketing Manager suggested that, because of the Club's licensing restrictions, Members should consider the introduction of a "tapas" type menu.

Members discussed this matter in detail and it was agreed that the Officers would liaise with the Chefs to organise an appropriate "tapas" menu, which would be open to everyone using the restaurant. The Officers will then bring back the relevant costings to the next meeting of the Board.

The Business Manager then referred to the costs of the Children's Menu, which had been altered slightly.

Councillor Spratt asked if there was a separate menu for the Golfers and following discussion, Members agreed that the Golfers Fry should be reduced by £1 to £3.50. They requested that a letter should be circulated to all members notifying them of the change in price to the Golfer's Fry and the introduction of a new tapas menu.

Councillor White asked that scampi should be included on the menu as it was an excellent seller and Members agreed that the chefs should be notified to alternate it on the menu, every other day, as the "Catch of the Day".

Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Members approve the introduction of the new menu and that the Catering staff be instructed to implement it as soon as possible. Furthermore, that Officers ensure that kitchen staff are fully trained and familiarised with its preparation and content, prior to its introduction.
- (b) The Golfer's Fry be reduced by £1 to £3.50, and the Business Manager to ascertain how the catering staff cook the fry, in response to a request from Councillor Chambers, and report back to the next meeting.
- (c) The Marketing Manager be authorised to issue a Christmas promotional letter to all members of the Golf Club informing them of the reduction in price of the Golfer's Fry and the introduction of the new tapas menu. The final draft to be forwarded to the Chairman for his approval, prior to distribution.
- (d) Officers to speak to the Catering Staff with regard to alternating "scampi", every other day, as the "Catch of the Day".
- (e) The PR & Marketing Manager, Business Manager and Chefs liaise to compile an appropriate tapas menu, and the Business Manager to bring

back the relevant costings and suggested menu to the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/228 : CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

The Business Manager referred Members to her analysis of opening times in relation to other Golf Clubs re: Christmas opening hours.

Following a proposal from Councillor Hanvey, which was seconded by Councillor Chambers, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club will close on Christmas Day, but will be open for play on Boxing Day. The restaurant will be closed Christmas Day and Boxing Day. This information to be included in the letter being circulated to each Members with regard to the changes to the menu, as agreed in Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/227.

GCB/2006/229 : ROTATION OF BAR STOCK

The Business Manager referred Members to her report and outlined that she was establishing a policy whereby this situation would not re-occur. However, following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- that any out-of-date stock is sold off to staff using a closed bid system, which will go some way to recovering income against the original cost.

GCB/2006/230 : PAYMENT FOR ALARM CALL-OUTS

The Business Manager referred Members to her report and indicated that she had sought advice from the Human Resources Manager in relation to this matter but had been advised that they were currently looking at a policy under single status.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Members authorise payments to staff who are called out to an alarm activation at a rate of 3 hours at time and a half.

In future, Officers be instructed to record such call-outs and bring this information to the Board on that particular month.

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

GCB/2006/231 : ISSUE OF COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

The Operational Services Manager informed Members that the total number of complimentary tickets outlined in his report was incorrect and should read 106.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be authorised to issue a maximum number of 110 complimentary tickets to include 20 tickets to the Mayor's Charity and 24 to Members of the Board (a total of 4 tickets per Member).

GCB/2006/232 : MINUTE OF THE LAST GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 2 AUGUST 2006

Noted.

GCB/2006/233 : BUGGY HIRE

The Operational Services Manager reported that buggy hire costs were currently being monitored and Officers would cease their use, once they start to lose revenue.

In response to Members' queries, he advised that the Golf Club retained the buggies on its premises but only paid the Company for those times that they were in use, therefore they could be used on the Golfing Promotion Day.

Noted.

GCB/2006/234 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

The Operational Services Manager drew Members' attention to the breakdown of Membership table, attached to his report.

The Chairman referred to a Member of the former Gilnahirk Golf Club who had missed out on the £150 discounted fee by one day and asked that this matter be urgently reviewed.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be authorised to urgently review this matter.

GCB/2006/235 : DRINKS SALES

Noted.

GCB/2006/236 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

The Operational Services Manager outlined that no golfing lessons had been taken during the month of October; therefore there were no figures to report.

Noted.

GCB/2006/237 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING GOLF COURSE

Members were informed that no Council staff had availed of the use of the golf course since the beginning of September.

Noted.

GCB/2006/238 : RESTAURANT WINDOWS - GRILLS

Members were notified that the restaurant window grills had now been fastened more securely to prevent potential accidents.

Noted.

GCB/2006/239 : ACCESS BETWEEN HOLES 7 & 8

The Operational Services Manager advised that these works would be carried out as soon as possible and had been placed on the Winter Works Programme, displayed on the Club Notice Board.

Noted.

GCB/2006/240 : CONDITION OF GREENS

The Operational Service Manager drew Members' to the details outlined in this report.

Noted.

GCB/2006/241 : 2007/08 FEES

The Operational Services Manager stated that the proposed new green fees for 2006/07 had been agreed, in principle, at the last General Committee Meeting.

He suggested that Members give consideration to a proposed Special Offer in which anyone wishing to join the Club would pay the joining fee in December 2006 and play for free until April 2007.

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board approve that the new green fees for 2006/07 be adopted, and authorise the Operational Services Manager to implement the proposed Special Offer outlined above and that the Marketing Manager include the information in the Christmas promotional letter.

GCB/2006/242 : MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN

The Operational Services Manager circulated a breakdown of the membership information in a postcode chart format.

Following consideration, Members asked that it be

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager elaborate on the “other/unknown” section of the chart to provide further information in relation to the postcode origination of these 64 members.

CORRESPONDENCE

GCB/2006/243 : FORMAL DISSOLUTION OF GILNAHIRK GOLF CLUB

The Operational Services Manager advised that he had now formally written to the relevant agencies and the Secretaries of the Golf Club and the Ladies’ Section informing them that Gilnahirk Golf Club had now officially dissolved and that the Club was now known as Castlereagh Hills Golf Club and affiliated with the GUI.

Noted.

GCB/2006/244 : CHANGE OF SIGNAGE AT GOLF CLUB ENTRANCE

The Operational Services Manager outlined that the Capital Projects Officer had proposed a change of signage to the Golf Club entrance and had forwarded some proposals, which he displayed for Members’ consideration.

Members discussed the design submitted by the Capital Projects Officer, and following consideration it was

RESOLVED:- That, the PR & Marketing Manager would liaise with the Graphic Designer and bring back further examples of designs to the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/245 : DATE OF THE NEXT GOLF BOARD MEETING

RESOLVED:- That, the date of the next Golf Board meeting be held on Friday, 8th December 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 12.10 p.m.

Chairman

Chief Executive