

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board held, in committee, at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club on Friday, 20th October 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor Mrs J Cochrane (in the chair)
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor T Jeffers (from 10.15 a.m.)
Councillor G Robinson
Councillor J Spratt (until 11.20 a.m.)
Councillor J White

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

In light of the fact that Councillor Robinson was feeling unwell, Members agreed that Councillor Cochrane should chair the meeting.

At this point, the Councillor Spratt referred to correspondence he had received and Members agreed to discuss the matter "Staff in Committee."

Councillor Jeffers arrived to the meeting, at this point in the proceedings.

GCB/2006/173 : MEMBERSHIP EXIT FORMS

Members perused 3 membership exit forms, which had been received by the Golf Club and asked that the Operational Services Manager respond thanking them for their comments. Furthermore, that he reply to the former member who had referred to the Council's rates advising him that Castlereagh Borough Council offered the most competitive rates in Northern Ireland despite not receiving EU subsidies.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager will respond to each of the 3 former members thanking them for their comments, as outlined above.

GCB/2006/174 : GILNAHIRK GOLF CLUB COUNCIL – RESCHEDULE OF AGM

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended a meeting with Gilnahirk Golf Club Council, along with the Operational Services Manager, and a further AGM had been recalled which was taking place on the 23rd October at 7.00 p.m. He stated that the amended constitution was being tabled for signing and this would hopefully bring closure to this situation.

The Operational Services Manager referred to the changes to the constitution and advised that he would email these to all Members of the Board with the amendments highlighted for their information.

The Chairman stated that he would ensure that all the necessary paperwork for signature was complete and would ascertain who had authority to sign the constitution, prior to the meeting on the 23rd October.

The Operational Services Manager commented that it was his understanding that the Chairman of the Meeting and the Secretary for the Club had authority to sign the constitution but he would confirm this and notify the Chairman of the Board accordingly.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager confirm which of the Club members of Gilnahirk Golf Club have the authority to sign the constitution and inform the Chairman of the Board accordingly.

GCB/2006/175 : CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB BOARD MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board dated 18th August & 15th September 2006 (copy previously circulated).

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, all previous minutes of the Golf Club Board will be forwarded to the Board Members prior to their inclusion on the November Council Agenda.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

**GCB/2006/176 : MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN
(Minute Ref No: GCB /2006/129 refers)**

Councillor Robinson reiterated his request for a breakdown of Club membership by postcode.

During the course of the meeting, the Operational Services Manager obtained this information from the Golf Club database and circulated a percentage breakdown of the figures by postcode.

Following a further request from Councillor Robinson, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be instructed to extract further information from the postcode statistics, highlighting how many Club members reside in the Castlereagh and Greater Belfast areas.

**GCB/2006/177 : CUSTOMER COMMENT CARDS
(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/133 refers)**

The Acting General Manager advised Members that customer comment cards had been reissued and placed on the restaurant tables to be placed in the Suggestion Box located at the door, exiting the restaurant.

Noted.

GCB/2006/178 : GRATUITY & TIPS

The Business Manager referred Members to the HM Customs & Excise guidance document on gratuities and tips attached to her report.

She indicated that the restaurant currently had a 10% service charge on its menu and she felt that this should be removed.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the 10% service charge facility be removed from the Golf Club restaurant menu and that staff be informed that they can retain any tips/gratuities, but it is their responsibility to notify the Inland Revenue.

At this point of the meeting, Councillor Spratt left at 11.20 a.m.

**GCB/2006/179 : ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INSPECTION
(Minute Ref No: GCB/2006/137 refers)**

The Business Manager informed Members that monthly/weekly/daily cleaning schedules were now in place.

Councillor Cochrane asked that Officers ensure that there are 5/10/15 minute cleaning tasks suitably displayed to ensure that cleaning rotas are carried out when the Head Chef/Catering Manager is not present.

Noted.

VERBAL UPDATE FROM MARKETING & PR MANAGER

GCB/2006/180 : PROMOTION EVENT - GOLFING SOCIETY BOOKINGS

The PR & Marketing Manager reported that letters had been prepared in relation to the event to promote Golfing Society Bookings and were now ready for issue. She indicated that although the marketing budget had been capped at £8.5k, she sought permission to send these mailers out at a cost of £70.

The Operational Services Manager expressed concern that any expenditure for marketing or other matters which was being paid from his budget, would have a detrimental impact on his targets.

The PR & Marketing Manager referred to the amount of time that was required to organise this task and advised Members that she had a Promotions Assistant, who was employed on a casual basis and could be used for this purpose. However, Councillor Robinson suggested that further consideration of this matter be deferred until Members are in a position to ascertain the take-up of this event.

Members agreed that a sales-orientated employee should organise this event, and that the expenditure to fund the event should be costed to the Golf Board.

Following discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED:- That, the mailing invitations to promote Golfing Society Bookings be issued by the Marketing Department, as soon as possible, giving them a week to reply. Once this deadline has passed, that the Marketing Department be authorised to chase up those Societies who have failed to respond, by telephone.

When the final numbers participating in the Golfing Society promotion have been confirmed, the PR & Marketing Manager will update Members on the level of response, and in the interim, she will bring to the next meeting a report detailing the PR & Marketing activities from January to March 2007.

GCB/2006/181 : SIGNAGE

The PR & Marketing Manager asked if Members would consider a separate budget for signage for the next financial year.

The Operational Services Manager expressed his concern that any expenditure taken out of his budget would impact on his departmental targets.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

GCB/2006/182 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager advised Members that she was endeavouring to ensure that the trading accounts provided a true reflection of the current month's figures and she outlined the trading accounts for the period 1st April 2006 – 30th September 2006.

Councillor Robinson expressed his concern at the amount of expenditure spent on cleaning materials. However, the Business Manager responded that this amount had been due to a backlog of invoices, which had been processed through the current month.

Councillor Robinson asked that Officers make staff aware of the urgency in processing invoices, to which the Business Manager stated that a process was now in place to resolve this matter.

The Acting General Manager stated that the regular buying pattern, which had now been introduced, had also improved trading figures.

Noted.

GCB/2006/183 : BUDGET VARIANCE REPORT

The Business Manager referred to adverse variances on the trading accounts, for Members' information.

She advised Members that additional agency staff were no longer employed and only being used to sustain the status quo.

Noted.

GCB/2006/184 : WEEKLY CASH SALES ANALYSIS

The Business Manager referred to the food sales figures and was pleased to point out that, since the introduction of the new menu, the average sales transaction had increased in income.

Noted.

GCB/2006/185 : MAN-HOUR COSTS

The Business Manager referred Members to an amended man-hour costing report and advised that she was trying to separate agency staff costs from contracted/casual wage costs.

She referred to the August figures for man-hours and outlined the reasons for the higher costs, which were as a result of a 5 week month and holiday remuneration paid out to casual staff. Furthermore, a number of restaurant staff were on holiday during August, therefore casual staff worked additional hours to cover the staffing shortfall.

Councillor Chambers asked if it was possible to evaluate the cost of agency staff against the cost of employing casual staff to ascertain the cost per hour and provide comparative figures.

The Operational Services Manager stated that he had looked at this issue in the past, in relation to his Section, and had found that it was cheaper to use agency staff to cover posts.

The Acting General Manager, however, reiterated that one of the Catering Consultant's key recommendations was to employ the same casual staff to avoid inconsistency and to increase a greater feeling of morale and ownership, which did not happen with agency staff.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers will ascertain the costs for employing casual staff and agency staff and bring these back to the next meeting for comparative purposes.

At this point in the proceedings, the Chairman asked that the Board go into "Staff in Committee".

GCB/2006/187 : CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

The Business Manager advised that, in view of potential bookings, it was necessary to consider the Club's opening times over the Christmas period.

Councillor Cochrane asked if any events had been lined up for New Year's Eve, to which the Officer responded that there had been nothing organised. However,

she advised that she would look at the possibility of themed nights for the forthcoming year, in liaison with the PR & Marketing Manager.

The Acting General Manager recommended that the Restaurant be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, although the golf course would be open on Boxing Day.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- that, the Business Manager be instructed to clarify what other golf courses were operating on Boxing Day with regards to catering arrangements and to report back to the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/188 : RECRUITMENT OF VACANT POSITIONS

The Business Manager informed Members that the positions of Commis Chef and Kitchen Porter were currently vacant and she wished to obtain approval to advertise them in the November recruitment drive, as this would bring the staffing levels up to full complement.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- that, the Business Manager be instructed to advertise the positions of Commis Chef and Kitchen Porter in the November recruitment drive and also be approved to advertise for additional casual waiting staff in light of potential Christmas bookings.

ACTING GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

GCB/2006/189 : REPORT FROM THE CATERING CONSULTANT (Deferred from September)

The Acting General Manager reiterated that Members had agreed to continue to run the existing Sunday menu at its last meeting.

She stated that the Christmas menu promotional leaflet had now been issued and she circulated a copy for Members' information.

Councillor Cochrane suggested that the Board consider a restaurant review in the DSD's professional publication, "Social Life", which would be carried out at no cost to the Council. Members agreed that this would be worthwhile and that Councillor Cochrane should liaise with the Business Manager to make a suitable arrangement, now that the new menu was in place.

The Acting General Manager circulated a list of the top 20 sellers in the Restaurant to Members, which included food and beverages.

The Business Manager advised that the EPOS contractor was presently working on an upgraded system and was hoped that, in liaison with the Councillor Cochrane, the system could be refined to enable food and alcohol to be recorded separately.

She further explained that the current system for recording sales needed to be refined. The miscellaneous button was currently being used for recording items, which are not detailed on the system.

The Acting General Manager then referred Members to the proposed lunch-dinner menu, which was in keeping with the Consultant's report.

The Business Manager advised that the menus had not been costed as yet, and any food choices, which did not provide the necessary 60% gross profit, would be omitted from the menu.

Members discussed the menu and asked that the following amendments be made:-

- Vegetable Soup to be added to the menu, in addition to the Soup of the Day
- Chicken liver pate to be served with toast and not oatcakes
- A Chocolate dessert option to be added to the list of desserts
- A Cheeseboard to be added to the list of desserts, to be described as a Selection of Cheeses rather than detailing specific cheese brands, and staff to be made conscious of the portion sizes served.

The Acting General Manager advised Members that the children's menu was being finalised.

The Business Manager again reiterated that because no specific button had been designated for children's meals, it was being classed under miscellaneous sales, however this would be refined in the future.

She referred to the Golfers Menu which was available in the Members' Room from 12.00 – 9.30 p.m.

Members expressed concern that there may be preparation issues because of the extensive menu choice, however the Acting General Manager indicated that several of the existing specials had now been integrated into this new menu.

Councillor Chambers stated that the “specials” were perceived as better value and she felt that these should remain as a separate part of the menu.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED: - That,

- (a) The Business Manager be instructed to bring back the gross profit margins in relation to the costings for the new menu options and to include the amendments to the menu as requested above.
- (b) The Acting General Manager be instructed to bring back the Children’s and Golfers’ menu selections to the next Board Meeting
- (c) In the interim, kitchen staff to be made aware that any diner wishing to order from the old gastro-menu should prepare their meal, as requested.
- (d) The Acting General Manager to ensure that kitchen staff are made aware of the need to exercise control in relation to portion sizes of the selection of cheeses served with the cheeseboard.
- (f) The Business Manager be instructed to arrange for the contractor of the EPOS system, in liaison with Councillor Cochrane in relation to a suitable date to install and provide training and upgrade to the back office system.
- (g) Officers to look at a system whereby the sales of alcohol and food are separated from the best sellers list.

GCB/2006/190 : PRIVATE FUNCTIONS

The Acting General Manager circulated suggested corporate catering menus, recommended by the Catering Consultant.

The Business Manager stated that she had costed these menus for gross profit margins, but the pricing structure for the cold buffet and Golf Society menu were not meeting the requisite targets.

The Operational Services Manager reiterated the need to offer a reasonably priced Golfers menu to encourage membership numbers.

Councillor Robinson stated that once Gilnahirk Golf Club had signed up to the constitution, the Board would look at the various issues, including the Members’ Room situation again.

The Business Manager then referred to the private function that had taken place on the 7th October and, as previously requested, brought forward the overall figures for consideration.

She stated that following examination of the income levels, the break-even figure for private functions was 60 persons or more, subject to minimum food sales of £8.50 per person. Therefore anyone wishing to book a private exclusive function would have to apply this ratio.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That the Business Manager will bring back the gross profit margin figures for the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/191 : TERMS & CONDITIONS OF USE FOR PRIVATE FUNCTIONS

The Acting General Manager highlighted 3 changes in the terms of conditions that were circulated for Members' information.

In response to a query from Councillor Cochrane, the Officer stated that the Council could apply for 12 variations per year for occasional entertainments licences.

She further requested Members' approval to apply a deposit to private functions against breakages etc. in keeping with other facilities.

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board agree with the Terms and Conditions of use for private functions, with the aforementioned amendments, and that the Acting General Manager will bring further details for the next meeting of the Board.

GCB/2006/192 : RESTAURANT WINDOWS – GRILLS

Councillor White asked if the Officers could arrange for the grills on the restaurant window to be secured more permanently as he feared that they were not childproof.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager will ensure that the restaurant window grills are fastened more securely to prevent potential accidents.

GCB/2006/193 : HOSPITALITY BUDGET

Councillor Chambers referred to the Ice Bowl's hospitality budget, which was allocated to its Chairman and proposed that Officers look at a similar arrangement for the Golf Club Board Chairman.

She continued on to say that the Golf Board Chairman carried out numerous duties outside the Committee and his involvement in various business projects and exploration of business avenues would ultimately benefit the Golf Club.

The Acting General Manager advised that she had already asked the Director of Finance & Leisure Services for a hospitality budget to cover lunch expenses for Board meetings on the basis that they usually continued through the lunch period.

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers will consider a reasonable amount which would be allocated to the Chairman of the Golf Club Board for hospitality purposes, to promote the Golf Club and ultimately benefit the facility financially.

OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT

GCB/2006/194 : ISSUE OF COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to his report and, following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Chairman of the Golf Club Board would receive 20 tickets, and each of the Board Members would receive 4 tickets for business use. These tickets would be used for hospitality purposes and not for Members' personal use.

Furthermore, that it be agreed that the maximum number of complimentary tickets to be issued per year will now be increased to 96, instead of 72 as outlined in the Officer's report.

GCB/2006/195 : MINUTES OF LAST GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that these were not yet available for perusal and pointed out that there had been no representation from the Ladies' Section of the Committee in attendance.

He stated that he would raise the matter of recording of the minutes at the Gilnahirk Golf Club AGM, which would also be attended by Councillors Robinson and White.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, this matter would be raised at the next meeting of the General Committee, as Members were of the view that it was important to have a proper record of the minutes of the General Committee, prepared promptly. Therefore, they would recommend that, at future meetings, a Committee Clerk from the Members' Services Section be in attendance to service the General Committee.

GCB/2006/196 : ROAD SERVICE SIGNAGE

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to his report in relation to tourist signage.

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers be permitted to instruct Roads Service to provide and erect the signs at the locations indicated in their drawings, to costs of approx £1,078 to be covered by the marketing budget.

GCB/2006/197 : BUGGY HIRE

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to the financial update attached to his report, in relation to buggy hire.

He advised that although the total number of buggies had been reduced by 2, the Golf Club were still receiving sufficient income from the buggy hire. However, he anticipated that this number would be reduced even further as the weather deteriorated over the winter months.

Noted.

GCB/2006/198 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to the breakdown of the Golf Club Membership, which currently stood at 362 as opposed to that which was estimated at 420, and which showed a potential income of £56k.

He commented that once the General Committee was up and running, this matter could be referred to them for their recommendations on redressing this shortfall.

Noted.

GCB/2006/199 : DRINKS SALES

Members were informed that due to the recently low uptake, the sales of Coca Cola from the Ranger Huts had been suspended for the winter period.

RESOLVED:- That, retrospective approval be given for the Officers to suspend the sales of Coca-Cola for the winter period because of the poor volume of sales.

GCB/2006/200 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to the financial breakdown attached to his report.

Noted.

GCB/2006/201 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING COURSE

A breakdown of Council Members and Officers using the course was attached to the Operational Services Manager's report for Members' information.

Noted.

GCB/2006/202 : 2007/08 FEES

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that he was recommending that there would be no increase in green fees because of the poor uptake in membership. However, he advised that Members may wish to review the pricing structure before the estimates were agreed for the next financial year.

He reported that there was a proposed slight increase in Juniors' fees, but these were still very competitive in comparison to other Clubs, and membership uptake had been excellent.

The Operational Services Manager further advised that, because of the fact that the Club fees were well down because of the shortfall in membership numbers, the General Committee would need to be informed that the Club would need to keep tight financial control on its expenditure.

Members discussed the Officers' proposed breakdown of fees and, following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the green fees for 2007/08 as outlined in the Operational Services Manager's report be agreed. However, this matter be raised at the next meeting of the General Committee and highlighted to their members that the Council were not proposing to increase its green fees, except for a slight increase in Juniors' fees.

GCB/2006/203 : STAFF ANALYSIS FOR THE GOLF COURSE AND CLUBHOUSE

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to his report and the staff organisational chart and job description for an Administrative Officer attached therein.

He recommended that the administrative post, which was currently being covered through a Recruitment agency, be filled on a permanent full-time basis. He advised Members that financial provision for this post was already included in the current budget and the need for the post had been established over an 18-month trial period.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Board grants approval for the current full-time Administrative Officer's post to be made permanent, and authorises the Human Resources Department to commence recruitment of the post, in accordance with the Council's recruitment procedures.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2006/204 : RECOUPMENT CLAIM BY GILNAHIRK GOLF CLUB

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that the Director of Finance & Leisure Services had received a claims invoice from Gilnahirk Golf Club for the sum of £2,230.85 in relation to the costs for Presidents Day, less the fees from the day.

He stated that the Club were seeking approval to recoup this amount, and he advised that the Club wanted new financial arrangements to be put in place, but felt that this matter should be deferred for discussion at the Gilnahirk Club EGM.

He referred Members to the amount listed in the invoice for payment for the staff gratuity and expressed concern that the Council had not paid this expenditure for the previous year.

Councillor White reiterated that once the Golf Club was allocated its own finances, it could pay out expenditure as it deemed necessary.

RESOLVED:- That, approval be authorised for the Director of Finance & Leisure Services to reimburse the Gilnahirk Golf Club for the claim invoice received in relation to the £2,230.85 costs accrued from Presidents Day.

GCB/2006/205 : CUSTOMER COMMENT CARD - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Following consideration of a completed customer comment card which had been placed in the Suggestion Box, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers arrange for a letter to be sent to the customer concerned thanking him for his comments, which would be duly taken on board.

GCB/2006/206 : USE OF THE MEMBERS' ROOM FOR CHRISTMAS BOOKINGS

The Operational Services Manager stated that additional income could be generated for the facility if the Members' Room was used for Christmas bookings when not in use.

Following consideration, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Members of the Golf Club Board agree to the use of the Members' Room for Christmas bookings when not in use. However, that this matter should be raised at the General Committee, as they should be informed that if they require use of the room, it must be booked beforehand.

GCB/2006/207 : ACCESS BETWEEN HOLES 7 & 8

Councillor White asked if Officers could investigate the access between holes 7 and 8, as the stream at this location was impossible to navigate.

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be instructed to put this matter on his Winter Works Programme and ensure that the work is carried out by Council staff.

GCB/2006/208 : WINTER WORKS PROGRAMME

The Operational Services Manager informed Members that the Winter Programme of Works would be displayed on the notice board to inform Club Members of forthcoming maintenance works.

Noted.

GCB/2006/209 : CONDITION OF GREENS

Councillor White expressed his concern at the condition of the aprons to the greens.

The Operational Services Manager was of the opinion that the Councils' own machinery may be causing this problem, but would ensure that the Parks Manager would try to address this matter.

Councillor White suggested that signs should be erected around the course asking players to repair their pitch marks.

The Operational Services Manager stated that this was a valid point and indicated that because of the municipal nature of the course, there were a lot of new players who needed to be educated of this requirement. He stated that the Rangers who were present on the course could advise new players and, following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Parks Manager would address the condition of the aprons to the greens

Furthermore, that the Operational Services Manager would advise the Rangers to educate new players to repair their pitch marks to try to alleviate the problem of the greens.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 2.05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE