

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held, in committee, in the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club on Friday, 16th February 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor G Robinson (in the chair from 10.25 am)
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor J Cochrane (in the chair until 10.25 am)
Councillor T Jeffers (left at 12 noon)
Councillor J White

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

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors Hanvey and Henderson, the Director of Finance and Leisure Services, the Acting General Manager and Councillor Robinson who would be arriving late to the meeting

In the absence of Councillor Robinson, Councillor Cochrane took the chair.

GCB/2007/23 : MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2007 (copy previously circulated)

Proposed by Councillor Chambers, seconded by Councillor White and

RESOLVED:- that Members of the Board approve that the Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 19th January 2007 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

GCB/2007/24 : GOLF CLUB SECRETARY/MANAGER (Minute no. GCB/2007/02 refers)

Members expressed concern as to whether the post of Golf Club Secretary/Manager would lead to a top heavy management structure and were also concerned that some of the duties would overlap with the duties of other

personnel such as the golf professional and the head chef. The General Manager Marketing & Leisure pointed out that the Board had at its last meeting agreed to go ahead with internal recruitment of the post. He indicated that from 1st March 2007 the golf club facility would be handed over to Leisure Services with a Service Level Agreement with Technical Services and he stated that direct management responsibilities previously undertaken by the Operational Services Manager and the Business Manager would then be undertaken by the Secretary/Manager who would report to the General Manager Leisure & Marketing. The Operational Services Manager stated that the new management structure was similar to that in most other golf clubs.

RESOLVED: that further discussion on the matter be deferred until later in the meeting when the Board would be considering the report by the General Manager Leisure & Marketing.

(Councillor Robinson arrived at 10.20 am and replaced Councillor Cochrane as Chair)

CS/2007/25 : MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

It was noted that the new Secretary/Manager would be managing a golf club with 300 members rather than the membership rate of other golf clubs of about 1,100 members. Members discussed the option of removing the joining fee as a means of increasing membership. The Operational Services Manager reported that in the previous year approximately 60 new members had joined the club at a joining fee of £250 each, bringing in total revenue of approximately £15,000. He stated that, if the club were to drop the joining fee, there should be a business plan in place that would indicate that it could achieve substantially more than 60 new members by doing so. He also pointed out that waiving the joining fee could have an adverse impact on current members who had already paid the fee. The Acting Marketing & PR Manager suggested that waiving the joining fee could be acceptable to other members if it were introduced for a specified period as part of a promotional marketing drive to increase membership.

The Operational Services Manager pointed out that, when the golf club opened, there was a great surge of interest and the joining fee was in fact a means of limiting membership. There was a problem now in that other local golf clubs had dropped their joining fees in order to encourage membership take-up. The Manager also made the point that, while private golf clubs could achieve a membership rate of 1,100, the Council had to ensure that the course was open to the public and, in order to do so, membership would have to be restricted to a maximum of 600 - 700 members.

Councillor Robinson suggested that the Board should meet with the Golf Professional to discuss his ideas for increasing membership.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED that the Acting Marketing & PR Manager be asked to bring a report back to the Board on options for increasing membership including dropping the joining fee.

REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

GCB/2007/26 : TRADING ACCOUNTS

Trading Accounts for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st January 2007 were tabled (copy previously circulated). The Business Manager reported that, compared to the same period last year, the deficit for the month of January had been reduced by £7,000. She stated that, while wage costs had been cut by £3,000, sales figures had dropped even more by £10,000.

In response to a query from Councillor Cochrane, the Business Manager stated that the restaurant had not devised a special menu for Valentine's Day. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing referred to the need to be more proactive in marketing the restaurant and in planning for events such as Valentine's Day and Mothering Sunday.

The Operational Services Manager reported on the golf course accounts. He identified the main problem as being that membership fees and subscriptions had not matched budget expectations. He referred to the fact that the Board had decided to speed up the upgrading of holes to two per year and hoped that this would make the course more attractive to experienced golfers.

Noted.

GCB/2007/27 : MAN HOUR COSTS

Man hour costs for the restaurant for the period 1st April 2006 to 31st January 2007 were tabled (copy previously circulated). The Business Manager reported that a chef was off on long term sick and that cuts had been made to the floor staff. She also advised that kitchen staff were being encouraged to use up their annual leave during quieter times of the year.

Noted.

GCB/2007/28 : GREASE TRAP SERVICE AGREEMENT CONTRACT.

The Business Manager reported that Cater Waste Products Ltd had submitted a quotation for a total of £160 per annum to cover four visits at regular intervals to carry out a greasetrap maintenance service (copy correspondence previously

circulated). She advised that the bill would be payable at £40 per service plus VAT.

RESOLVED that the Board approve the renewal of the Service Agreement Contract with Cater Waste Products Ltd.

GCB/2007/29 : SERVICE CONTRACT – KITCHEN EQUIPMENT

The Business Manager sought the Board's approval to progress the provision of a Planned Maintenance Service Contract in relation to the kitchen equipment. She advised that the equipment was now out of warranty and no provision for call out and repair was currently in place.

The Business Manager tabled two quotations from CES and WS Gardiner & Sons Ltd (copies previously circulated). She recommended that approval be given to the quotation received from CES on the basis that, whilst this quotation was in the sum of £784 plus VAT as opposed to the quote from WS Gardiner & Sons of £780 plus VAT, it covered two comprehensive service checks per annum whereas Gardiner would carry out one. The Manager also pointed out that, if two service checks per annum were carried out, the number of call outs required should be minimal.

The Members noted that, if the CES quotation were accepted, special labour rates would apply as follows:

Call out charge	£26.00 + VAT Mon – Fri 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Labour	£29.00 + VAT per hour (for each ½ hour segment)
Out of hours call outs	1½ x £29.00 per hour for min. of 4 hours

RESOLVED that the quotation of £784 plus VAT received from CES in respect of a service contract for maintenance of kitchen equipment be accepted.

REPORT OF THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

GCB/2007/30 : MINUTES OF THE CASTLREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB GENERAL COMMITTEE

The Operational Services Manager tabled minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club General Committee held on 24 January 2007 (copy previously circulated).

The Manager reported that the AGM would be held on 10th March 2007. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that the General Committee were now holding a competition on the day of the AGM and a pre-AGM half an hour before the AGM. Councillor Chambers expressed some concern that, by holding the pre-AGM just before the AGM, the same people would attend both.

Councillor Robinson however felt that the competition could be effective in attracting other members to attend.

Noted.

GCB/2007/31 : BUGGY HIRE

The Operational Services Manager reported that buggy hire had been suspended during the month of January.

Noted.

GCB/2007/32 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

The Operational Services Manager presented the Board with an update on membership numbers detailing new and departing members. He reported that the membership had dropped from 346 at April 2006 to 345 at end January 2007 compared with an estimated total of 420.

Members discussed the advantages of asking departing members to pay a retainer in order to maintain their membership for life. They also discussed introducing a clause whereby new members paying by direct debit would be required to give three months' notice of termination of their membership.

RESOLVED that officers bring back a report to the Board on the options of dropping the joining fee for a promotional period, introducing a three month notice requirement for cancellation of membership and giving departing members the option of paying a retainer fee.

GCB/2007/33 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

The Operational Services Manager reported that there had been no lessons taken during January and so no breakdown had been included in this month's report. He indicated that the Golf Professional believed that this had been due to inclement weather during the month.

Noted.

GCB/2007/34 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE COURSE

The Operational Services Manager reported that no Council staff had availed of the course since the beginning of September 2006. He indicated that the Golf Professional believed that, since the introduction of the staff rate, any staff that had continued to play had been accompanied by a member as this was a cheaper option.

Noted.

GCB/2007/35 : RECOUPMENT OF GOLF CLUB EXPENSES

The Operational Services Manager reported that an expense claim from the Men's Club had been made for £4,295.04 plus VAT and that the Executive Treasurer had agreed the amounts on the claim to the related receipts and checked the calculation of the total amount.

He reported that, at its January meeting, the General Committee had agreed to bring to the Board's attention an expense item in the sum of £200.74 relating to the purchase of Christmas ballot prizes from Tesco that included some chocolates but was mostly for alcohol.

After discussion it was RESOLVED:

- (a) The bill in the sum of £200.74 relating to the purchase of chocolates and alcohol as Christmas ballot prizes should not be covered by the Council on the basis that it would not be acceptable to the Local Government Auditor.
- (b) That it be recommended that any future ballot organised by the Golf Club should be self-financing.
- (c) That the claim from the Men's Club amounting to £4,094.34, after the ballot prizes claim of £200.70 had been deducted, should be paid.

GCB/2007/36 : ESTIMATED EXPENSES FOR APRIL 2007 TO MARCH 2008

The Operational Services Manager reported that, at its meeting in January, the General Committee had accepted a budget for 2007/08 in the sum of £14,638 and detailed the breakdown of the budget (copy previously circulated). He pointed out that Golf Club expenditure could not exceed income so there would be no financial implications for the Council.

RESOLVED that the expenditure budget for 2007/08 in the sum of £14,638 be adopted.

GCB/2007/37 : JUVENILE MEMBERSHIP

The Operational Services Manager reported that the General Committee had recommended that the Club should introduce a new category of juvenile membership. After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that officers be asked to research the issue of juvenile membership including numbers of juvenile members in other clubs, rates for juvenile membership and the views of GUI and that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

REPORT FROM ACTING MARKETING & PR MANAGER

GCB/2007/38 : SIGNAGE

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager tabled quotes for new signage and A3 poster display for the entrance doors to the golf club reception and restaurant as follows:

Window graphics – reception & restaurant entrance	£160 plus VAT
2 x A3 poster display kit – reception (including installation)	£115
2 x A3 poster display kit – restaurant entrance (including installation)	£115
New restaurant sign at foot of stairs	£65 plus VAT

In response to a query by Councillor Robinson regarding an illuminated sign, the Operational Services Manager advised that the Parks Manager was going to install lights behind the sign over the Golf Club entrance door.

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager reminded members that they had agreed to postpone the signage at the front entrance gate but had agreed to proceed with preparatory paperwork. She indicated that there could be a problem in installing an illuminated sign both from a planning point of view and because of technical problems. The Board considered that it was important to install some signage at the entrance and the Acting Marketing & PR Manager circulated graphics that had been prepared for a temporary sign that would not be illuminated.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the quotes for the signage and poster displays at the reception and restaurant entrance as detailed above be accepted.
- (b) that officers be authorised to proceed with installation of a temporary, unilluminated sign at the golf club entrance and investigate the possibility of installing uplighters around the sign.

GCB/2007/39 : ADVERTISING

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager requested the Board's approval to place three advertisements in Tee to Green during the summer period to promote golf society packages. She advised that the cost for advertising was £168 per issue for a quarter page, full colour advert and that graphic design was £35 per hour.

Councillor White suggested that it would be more effective to place the advertisement ahead of the summer season in March/April.

RESOLVED that the Board approve the insertion of three advertisements in Tee to Green, as detailed above, in March/April 2007.

GCB/2007/40 : GOLF SOCIETY BOOKINGS

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager tabled a report on golf society bookings for the period from 1st February 2007 to end November 2007.

Members enquired as to progress with regard to maintenance and upgrading of the course. In response to Members' queries, the Operational Services Manager stated that the original design of the course was that all paths would be dust paths. He reported however that part of the path to the course had been tarmaced because of water damage and that the remainder of the path to the first tee was being kerbed with concrete edges. It was noted that the Honorary Secretary was keen to have this path tarmaced to the first tee. The Operational Services Manager reported that this would cost in the region of £2,000 to £3,000.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the golf society bookings for the period 1st February 2007 to end November 2007 be noted.
- (b) that officers update the Board on maintenance of bunkers at its next meeting.
- (c) that officer obtain quotes for tarmacing the path to the first tee and discuss with the Director of Finance & Leisure Services whether there was monies in the budget to carry out the work.

GCB/2007/41 : FIXTURE CARDS

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager sought approval for the design and printing of ladies' and men's fixture cards for the 2007/08 golfing season. She reported that cost involved was £35 for graphic design amendments and that the cards would be printed in house.

The Manager also tabled fixture listings for the ladies' 07/08 golfing season and indicated that the men's fixture listings would follow in due course

RESOLVED

- (a) that approval be given to design and printing of ladies' and men's fixture cards for the 2007/08 golfing season at a cost of £35 for graphic design amendments with cards being printed in house.
- (b) that the ladies' fixture listing for the 07/08 golfing season be noted.

GCB/2007/42 : PRICING LEAFLETS

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager requested approval for the design and print of new pricing leaflets for 2007/08 at a cost of £35 for graphic design amendments and £90 for a print of 3,000 copies.

RESOLVED: that approval be given for the design and print of pricing leaflets for 2007/08 in the sum of £35 for graphic design amendments plus £90 for a print run of 3,000 copies.

GCB/2007/43 : PENGUIN STAND

The Acting Marketing & PR Manger sought approval for the design and print of one new penguin stand to promote the golf course and restaurant at a cost of £70 approximately for the graphic design plus £130 for printing. She advised that the stand could be displayed at shopping centre promotions organised by DIIB and the leisure centres and across CBC community and leisure venues.

RESOLVED that officers be asked to obtain additional quotes from Alexander Boyd and Graham & Heslip for the design and print of a penguin stand.

GCB/2007/44 : EVENTS CALENDAR

RESOLVED: that, following the AGM, an events calendar be compiled after consultation with golf club members.

GCB/2007/45 : NEWTOWNBREDA LIONS

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager reported that Newtownbreda Lions had confirmed that they would rely on the golf club to promote the competition to its club members. She stated that the Lions had invited their sponsors to take part in the competition but Members were advised that very few companies normally accepted. It was reported that last year the Lions had secured £900 sponsorship from local companies.

RESOLVED that the Board ask the Administration Manager to discuss with the Mayor the option of combining the Newtownbreda Lions competition with the Mayor's Charity Cup.

GCB/2007/46 : CUSTOMER COMMENT CARD

Members considered a request to approve a generic leisure customer comment card and noted that this was separate from the restaurant comment card.

RESOLVED: that approval be given to artwork for the generic leisure comment card.

GCB/2007/47 : BT PHONEBOOK

The Acting Marketing & PR Manager advised Members on the listings in the new BT phone book that had been updated in August 2006.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, LEISURE & MARKETING

GCB/2007/48 : ACTION PLAN

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing presented for Members' consideration an Action Plan detailing the various options available for the golf club and restaurant; proposed new restaurant opening hours; flow chart detailing staffing structure; and Secretary/Manager job description (copies previously circulated). He also tabled a manpower analysis for the restaurant and a spreadsheet detailing man-hour levels for both the kitchen and the restaurant.

The General Manager indicated that the post of Secretary/Manager had been agreed and would be trawled shortly. He reminded Members that the Board had also agreed that the Club would come within the remit of the Leisure Services Department with a Service Level Agreement with Technical & Environmental Services and it had also been agreed to upgrade two holes per year over a period of 3 years and to upgrade the entrance of the golf club.

The General Manager identified marketing opportunities for the club. Some discussion ensued regarding the difficulties and restrictions imposed by the fact that the Club only had a restaurant licence. Members considered that the costs of obtaining a full licence would be prohibitive and the Operational Services Manager advised that it was unlikely that the club could obtain a club licence, as these were restricted to private clubs only.

(Councillor Jeffers left the meeting at 12.00 noon)

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that officers be asked to research and cost licensing options.
- (b) that officers be asked to consider options for improving/updating the restaurant including introducing appropriate screening and updating and renewing the décor.
- (b) that adjustments to the restaurant menu be approved so that lunch time customers could be turned around more quickly; that the core items on the menu be retained, and that different menus for Friday and Saturday evenings and on Sundays be implemented.
- (c) that live musical accompaniment be provided on the last Sunday of each month and on special occasions, e.g. Mothering Sunday.
- (d) that officers progress with all necessary marketing initiatives to advertise the facilities including additional signage in neighbouring or appropriate fields.
- (e) That officers implement with immediate effect the staffing structures as tabled in the Action Plan, Staff Structure Flow Chart and Option 1 – Limited Opening.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2007/49 : INDOOR BOWLING

The Chair reported that correspondence had been received from the Honorary Secretary requesting that golfing members be allowed to use the restaurant for an indoors bowls match

RESOLVED: that officers be asked to obtain additional information about the Bowling Club's requirements to enable the Board to take a decision on the matter.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 12.35 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE