

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, 19th January 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor G Robinson (in the chair)

Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor B Hanvey
Councillor M Henderson
Councillor T Jeffers (from 11.10 a.m.)
Councillor J Spratt (from 10.50 a.m.)
Councillor J White

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

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillor Cochrane, the Director of Technical & Environmental Services, and Councillors Jeffers and Spratt who would be arriving late to the meeting

At this point in the proceedings, the Chairman wished to thank the Chief Executive for his attendance at the meeting.

GCB/2007/01 : MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2006 (copy previously circulated)

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing asked if the Chairman would suspend the adoption of the minutes of the last meeting until later on in the meeting and, in the interim, if the Board would grant permission to withhold Minute Nos: GCB/2006/258 and GCB/2006/264 until the minutes were ratified.

RESOLVED:- That, the adoption of the minutes of the previous Golf Club Board meeting held on 8th December 2006 be suspended until later in the meeting and, in the interim, that Minute Nos: GCB/2006/258 and GCB/2006/264 be withheld.

GCB/2007/02 : REPORT FROM THE ACTING GENERAL MANAGER

The Acting General Manager circulated her report and Members took a few minutes to peruse the content.

The Chief Executive explained that he had asked the Acting General Manager to look at the operation of the Golf Club and prepare a report on her findings and he thanked her for her assistance. He stated that a more detailed report would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

He went on to state that, as and from 1st March 2007, the Golf Board would come under one directorate (Leisure Services) and the Technical & Environmental Services Department would be carrying out the maintenance work at the Golf Club under a Service Level Agreement. He indicated that there would be a proper administrative structure put in place that would also address the issue of marketing and a cross-departmental Officers' Working Group had been set up to look at the various issues involved and prepare an Action Plan. It was intended that the Working Group would meet over the next few weeks and bring its proposals for the way forward to the next meeting of the Golf Club Board.

The Chief Executive then referred to the need to change the parkland greens to USGA greens within the next few years as it affected the game of golf for visiting societies. He stated that, although the Estimates contained financial provision for one hole, he felt that the Board should give consideration to converting two holes on the course during 2007/08.

He then referred to the detailed work required to address the issues of the Golf Club restaurant and the need to encourage the Golf Club to make greater use of the facilities and organise its own functions. However, he wished to add that officers were open to any suggestions from Board Members in relation to these issues.

The General Manager Marketing & Leisure stated that he would be drawing up various proposals and would include the relevant costing and staffing options, as requested by Councillor Henderson.

The Operational Services Manager further added that in relation to the SLA with the Technical & Environmental Services Department, he felt that the Council should consider the possibility of a dual pricing policy.

The Chief Executive agreed with these comments and stated that he would speak to the Director of Technical & Environmental Services in relation to commercial rates for in-house operations.

Members and Officers shared the view that, although the practice of carrying out the work in-house would have consequences in relation to time restraints, it would generate a feeling of ownership of the course.

Councillor White asked if the Chief Executive could also obtain the proposed costings to carry out the greens work for Members' information.

Councillor Harvey asked if the proposed new managerial post would have autonomy for management of the course, as this function was currently being carried out cross-departmental and created no proper direction. He added his concerns in relation to the Golf Club members and their need to play a strategic role in the Club.

He further suggested that the Board might consider the provision of transport facilities for functions, in light of the location of the Club and its lack of proximity to public transport.

The Chief Executive, at this point, clarified that the proposed new Secretary/Manager of the Club would have full responsibility for managing the Golf Club facility and would report to the Golf Club Board through his/her Director.

He referred to Councillor Harvey's suggestion in relation to transport provision and stated that this was not normal practice in a Golf Club as the likes of Rockmount and other Clubs which were also situated in rural locations did not provide transport facilities.

The Acting General Manager stated that she had approached Value Cabs in relation to the provision of a pre-paid phone at the Clubhouse which would prove beneficial during functions and would provide the company with their sole business.

Councillor Robinson referred to the recent introduction of the new "Tapas Menu" and was disappointed to note that it had not generated an increase in bar sales, as anticipated.

Councillor White stated that the existing Members' Room was not conducive for a comfortable setting for Club Members and did not create a suitable ambience. He added that, in most other private clubs, there was usually a pool table and dartboard located in the Members' Room.

The Operational Services Manager stated that the Gilnahirk Club had monies remaining from the takeover of the previous Club and he was trying to encourage Members to use this funding to create the type of Members' Room they wanted.

Councillor Robinson felt that this matter would be worth raising at the next Golf Club General Committee meeting.

The Acting General Manager concurred that there was a need to encourage more Club Members to use the facility to retain membership.

At this point in the proceedings, Councillor Spratt entered the meeting at 10.50 a.m.

Councillor Chambers stated that, in her view, the Members' Room should be separated from the Restaurant as was the case with other Golf Clubs.

Councillor White referred to a forthcoming competition in May in which 30 teams would be participating and needed to be accommodated and he asked how Officers proposed to facilitate them.

The Acting Manager referred to the Ante area, and suggested that this could be better utilised if comfortable sofas were installed with magazines available for members to peruse.

The Operational Services Manager felt that it was up to the Club Members to advise the Board how they wished to proceed in relation to the Members' Room and forward their suggestions to the General Committee.

The Acting General Manager asked if there was anything that could hinder the Council's Officers/Officials to set up Committees themselves, and Councillor Robinson advised that the PR & Marketing Department were already looking at this possibility.

The Acting General Manager went on to express her disappointment that, despite attending a very beneficial meeting with the Ladies Club and the Golf Club Secretary, she had, to date, received no feedback from either Club since.

Following discussion, in relation to encouraging suggestions and proposals from Club Members, the Board felt that it would be beneficial to invite Club Members to attend a meeting prior to the AGM, and suggested that the third week in February would be suitable to convene a meeting.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing referred to the recommendations within the Acting General Manager's report but the Chairman stated that the Board required further information and Officers' recommendations before it could make any further decisions.

Councillor Jeffers entered the meeting at 11.10 a.m.

Councillor Robinson asked that Officers compile a list of all the issues to be dealt with at the meeting with the Club Members, for the next meeting of the Board.

Members discussed the points which had arisen from the Officers' report, but the Acting General Manager clarified that she had only drawn attention to those areas which required monitoring.

The Chief Executive also stated that the Health & Safety Officer had brought several matters to his attention and these had now been progressed.

Councillor Robinson referred to the current staff car parking arrangements and asked that Officers notify all staff to ensure that they park at the front of the facility with immediate effect.

Following agreement by Members, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the Golf Club Board approve the following measures as outlined in the General Manager's Action Plan, namely:-
 - Officers be authorised to implement internal trawling recruitment procedures for the post of Golf Club Secretary/Manager
 - Officers be authorised to carry out a review of opening hours of the restaurant and give consideration to the subsequent staffing and costing implications
 - Officers be instructed to prepare a Business Plan to commence 1st April 2007 which will outline all costs, proposals, timescales and objectives, and will work in support of the Action Plan
 - Officers to carry out a consultation of staff, following further discussion of the above measures
 - In the interim 6 months, that the recommendations outlined within the Action Plan be implemented with the support of cross-departmental staff
 - Officers be authorised to change two of the Golf Course holes to USGA standard during 2007/08.
- (b) Letters to be prepared to Golf Club Members inviting them to a meeting to be arranged in the third week of February to seek their suggestions and views in relation to the Club, prior to the AGM
- (c) Officers prepare a list of all the issues to be discussed at the Club Members' meeting to be brought to the next meeting of the Board
- (d) Officers to be instructed to defer the signage issues, with the exception of the illumination, but to ensure that the proposals for the new sign are included in the Business Plan

- (e) Staff to be instructed that the current car parking arrangements are changed with immediate effect and that all staff cars should be parked at the front car park of the facility.

At this point, the Chief Executive left the meeting.

REPORT FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

GCB/2007/03 : PROVISIONAL TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager referred to the current month's overspend in relation to salaries and wages which was due to the fact that the Review Officer's salary had been charged to the Restaurant budget.

She also expressed her disappointment at the food sales figures and stated that, despite a large number of provisional Christmas bookings being made, there had been quite a few cancellations and they had cited the costs of the meals and lack of entertainment as reasons for cancellation. However she hoped that the appointment of a new Manager would co-ordinate the events calendar for this coming year.

The Business Manager also referred to the fact that there was no budget for waste disposal and provision for this should be included in the Estimates for 2007/08.

Members discussed the issues highlighted by the officer and agreed that it was important that the Council implemented an internal commercial rate for waste disposal in-house and it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Operational Services Manager be instructed to include the provision of an internal commercial waste disposal rate for in-house work in his report for the next meeting of the Technical & Environmental Services Committee, on behalf of the Golf Club Board.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2007/04 : GOLF CLUB EXPENSES

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services informed Members that he was trying to implement new procedures in relation to Golf Club expenses as the budget that had been initially agreed had been £17,952 but the actual projection figure was £13,715.

The Director stated that, prior to bringing forward the budget for the year, he would discuss the matter with the Club Treasurer, who would then report this

matter at the next General Committee meeting to enable the figures to be included in the Estimates.

He advised that both he and the Operational Services Manager, in liaison with the Council's auditor, were trying to stand by the Council Minutes and make up the financial difference, if possible, but he reiterated that the membership total would fall short of the amount of expenses agreed.

He further advised that, upon recoupment of this expenditure, the Council may be able to claim back the VAT on expenses and he was currently investigating if this was a feasibility.

The Operational Services Manager then circulated the projections for the club membership income, which was currently estimated to be £13,715 with a projected spend of £14,638, and he therefore pointed out the potential of an overspend amounting to £923 if the final invoice was paid in full. The officer continued that, if the Council were able to claim back the VAT, this would ensure that the Council would not be over budget.

Councillor Robinson stated that the Council had already agreed the price increases with the Club and the Director advised that the various budget headings had also now been agreed.

The Operational Services Manager stated that it had been confirmed to the Club on numerous occasions that £50 would be charged per Member and £30 for Junior Members and that the final amount available for the Club to spend would depend on the total number of Members.

RESOLVED:- That, the Director of Finance & Leisure Services be instructed to ascertain if VAT can be recouped from Golf Club expenses.

REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER LEISURE & MARKETING

GCB/2007/05 : COUNCIL'S CHARITY POLICY

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised Members that at the last meeting of the Board he had been asked to draft a Charity policy but, following extensive minutes searches, the Council did not seem to have a definite policy in relation to charity events other than the Mayor's charity and he tabled his report for Members' information.

Councillor Spratt felt that it was wrong to exclude other charities as they carried out excellent work throughout Northern Ireland and any event would attract business to the facility.

The Operational Services Manager commented that it was his understanding that there was a Technical & Environmental Services Committee minute in effect which stated that only events benefiting the Mayor's Charity could be held at the Golf Club.

The Chairman advised that the Golf Club Board could amend this minute if required and make the Technical & Environmental Services Committee aware of any change.

Members discussed the General Principles outlined in the Officer's report and, following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the draft Charity Policy as circulated by the General Manager Leisure & Marketing be accepted by the Board with the following amendments:-

- Point 4 – This should be left to the Golf Club Board's discretion and Members shall designate whether an event should be charged at the charity rate or otherwise.
- Point 6 - This will be amended to permit collection and fund raising on the Golf Club premises
- Point 8 - To include the provision that all costs are covered to ensure that the facility does not incur staffing overtime costs.
- Points 11 & 12 - delete

GCB/2007/06 : OFFICERS' REPORTS

At this point in the proceedings, the Chairman referred to the number of reports which had been tabled by Officers at today's meeting and stated that it was unacceptable that Members did not have an opportunity to peruse them prior to the meeting.

He asked that, in future, Officers ensure that their reports are received by Members at least 2-3 days in advance.

RESOLVED:- That, with the exception of the financial reports, Officers be instructed to forward their reports to Board Members at least 2-3 days prior to the date of the meeting.

GCB/2007/07 : NEWTOWNBREDA LIONS

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager reported that the Golf Club had been approached by Newtownbreda Lions who wished to hold an event in June which would benefit the Mayor's charity. However, she was concerned that this could clash with the Mayor's Charity Golf Day, which was still to be organised.

Following discussion, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers continue negotiations with Newtownbreda Lions Club with a view to combining both events to benefit the Mayor's charity.

GCB/2007/08 : CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL SPEED NETWORKING EVENT

The Business Manager advised that she had received a request for exclusive use of the restaurant for the above event which was being held on Tuesday 6 February 2007 from 6.00 – 9.30 pm. She stated that a Tuesday evening was not normally a busy night and walk-in diners could still be accommodated.

Councillor Robinson suggested that the Members' Room or Antechamber could be used to facilitate walk-in diners on the night.

After discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that exclusive use be approved in relation to this event with walk-in diners being accommodated in the Members' Room.

GCB/2007/09 : "REACH OUT" MAGAZINE

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing recommended that the Board advertise in the "Reach Out" magazine at a cost of £350 per issue and he informed Members that there were 6 editions issued annually with a circulation network of approximately 8.5k readers.

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services suggested that the Council take out a corporate advertisement for all of its leisure facilities in the back page of the magazine as this would represent excellent value. He therefore sought approval to contact the Leisure Services and Leisure Park Board Committees in relation to this advertisement.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that the funding for this advertisement would be paid out of the Leisure Services and Ice Bowl budgets in the interim until the Council had allocated a separate budget for advertising.

RESOLVED:- That, the Director of Finance & Leisure Services be authorised to approach the Leisure Services and Leisure Park Board Committees with a view to taking out a back page advertisement in the "Reach Out" magazine promoting all of the Council's leisure facilities for a total of three issues at a total cost of £1,050.

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

GCB/2007/10 : MINUTES OF THE LAST GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2006

Noted.

GCB/2007/11 : BUGGY HIRE

The Operational Services Manager reported that buggy hire was suspended for the month of December.

Noted.

GCB/2007/12 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Members perused the updated table showing the breakdown of membership numbers.

Noted.

GCB/2007/13 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

There had been no lessons taken during December and therefore no breakdown figures were included in the report.

Noted.

GCB/2007/14 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE GOLF COURSE

Members were informed that no Council staff had used the course since the beginning of September.

Noted.

GCB/2007/15 : TELEPHONE CHARGES

The Operational Services Manager referred Members to his report and stated that he would bring a more detailed report to the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) that, the Operational Services Manager be instructed to bring a more detailed breakdown of the telephone charges.
- (b) that Officers ensure that the Golf Club numbers advertised in the BT phonebook are changed to the correct telephone numbers.

GCB/2007/16 : RECOUPMENT OF GOLF CLUB EXPENSES

The Operational Services Manager circulated for Members' information the expenses claim documentation from the Club's Executive Treasurer amounting to £4,295 including VAT.

The Director of Finance & Leisure Services stated that any items in relation to expenses and subsistence would be tabled at the Board for approval.

The Chairman advised that the expenses claim should be paid, on the proviso that all the relevant checks had been carried out.

The Director reiterated that the claim would be processed through the legislative procedures.

RESOLVED:- That, this matter would be referred to the next meeting of the General Committee.

GCB/2007/17 : RE-ALLOCATION OF OVERHEAD & MANAGEMENT COSTS

The Chairman asked if the overhead and management costs outlined in the Officer's report were a true and accurate account of the expenditure costs.

The Operational Services Manager responded that they were an estimated reallocation to the restaurant and he continued that, although the total amount had been included in the current year's budget, he was proposing a reallocation of costs in the 2007/08 financial year.

After some discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the matter of budget reallocation of the restaurant overheads should be deferred until the restructuring action plan had been implemented.

At this point, the Chairman wished to congratulate the Operational Services Manager, on behalf of the Board, for keeping within such a tight budget. However he felt that this matter could not be resolved until the new restructuring Action Plan had been implemented.

Noted.

GCB/2007/18 : MEMBERSHIP REVIEW OF THE FORMER GILNAHIRK GOLF CLUB

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that the cut-off date of 31st March 2004 and the names of those Members eligible for the discounted joining

fee had been provided by Gilnahirk Golf Club. The Chairman asked Officers to write to each of the disputing former members of the Gilnahirk Golf Club informing them of this fact but he requested that he be given a copy of the draft letter prior to it being posted out.

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers prepare a letter to the former members of the Gilnahirk Golf Club, who had disputed their joining fee charges, informing them that the names of those members eligible for discount and the cut-off date applicable had been supplied by Gilnahirk Golf Club.

Furthermore, Officers ensure that the Chairman is given a copy of the draft letter prior to it being posted out.

GCB/2007/19 : FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

The Operational Services Manager advised Members that he had referred the FOI request applicant to the EGM informing him that as Gilnahirk Golf Club had been a private Golf Club at that time, the Council did not have access to the minutes of their meetings.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2007/20 : SMOKING POLICY

Councillor Spratt informed Member that, at the recent Strategy Day, he had caught sight of people smoking inside the Clubhouse building. He referred to the Council's No Smoking policy and asked that a "No Smoking" sign be displayed on the front door of the Clubhouse and that enforcement action be taken on anyone breaching the policy.

RESOLVED:- That, a "No Smoking" sign be displayed on the front door of the Clubhouse and that enforcement action would be taken on anyone breaching the Council's "No Smoking" policy.

GCB/2007/21 : DATE OF AGM

The Operational Services Manager informed Members that the Golf Club had suggested that the date of the AGM should be 10th March 2007 at 12.00 p.m. although this date had yet to be agreed by the General Committee.

Members concurred that a designated date and time for the AGM had still to be agreed by the General Committee. In addition, Members requested an open forum meeting be held prior to the AGM to inform all new Club Members of the processes involved in the AGM.

RESOLVED: that the Golf Club Committee confirm the date of the AGM and that an open forum meeting be held prior to the AGM.

GCB/2007/22 : MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Tabled;- Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 8th December 2006 (copies previously circulated).

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- that, the minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 8th December 2006 be approved as a true and accurate record of the proceedings. However progress on Resolution Nos: GCB/2006/258 and GCB/2006/264 be deferred in the interim, in light of the Action Plan discussion earlier in the meeting.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE