

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

PRESENT:- Councillor Mrs J Cochrane (in the chair)
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor B Hanvey
Councillor T Jeffers (from 10.50 am)
Councillor J Spratt
Councillor J White

IN ATTENDANCE:- Acting Director of Leisure Services, General
Manager of Leisure & Marketing, Operational
Services Manager, Parks Section Manager, Acting
Marketing & PR Manager and Assistant Members'
Section Officer

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillors
Robinson and Henderson.

GCB/2007/50 : MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board held on 19th February 2007 (copy previously circulated).

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

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

GCB/2007/51 : PRE-AGM MEETING

The Acting Director referred to the pre-AGM Meeting, which had been well attended by Club members. She stated that she had advised those in attendance of the revised opening hours of the restaurant, but had given an assurance that Golfing Societies/events etc. would be accommodated on the proviso that she was notified beforehand to make the necessary staffing arrangements etc.

Councillor White added that the pre-meeting had provided an excellent forum for the Club Membership to air their views and give Officers an opportunity to

respond to their questions, and he was extremely pleased that the turnout had included both new and former Members.

The Acting Director concluded that she had agreed, at that meeting, that Officers would meet with the Club Membership on a quarterly or six-monthly basis.

Noted.

UPDATE FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER

GCB/2007/52 : SUMMARY OF PROVISIONAL TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager referred Members to the summary of provisional Trading Accounts attached to her report, and took them through the nett costs of the facility to Period 11.

She informed Members that the salaries & wages accounts for the current month were below budget, however the revised opening hours of the restaurant would not impact on the figures until next month.

The Business Manager then compared the restaurant income figures for the week following the introduction of the revised opening hours, with those of the income generated from the week before when the old opening times were in effect. She noted that the income following the introduction of the new hours had doubled, and stated that the "Early Bird" special was proving popular.

She stressed that although costs were being reduced, there was a need to increase income levels. She then compared the facility to other Golf Clubs and stated that although the gross profit margins on food sales could be improved upon, the figures were in keeping with other Golf Club restaurants.

She referred to the gross profit margins for bar sales and stated that she would, in liaison with the Acting Director, give this matter further consideration and would check with the GPL re: alcohol sales at other Golf Clubs.

The Acting Director asked her to ensure that the Golf Club was being charged at a commercial rate, and not at a Club rate.

The General Manager of Marketing & Leisure, in response to a query from Councillor Spratt, advised that there were two stocktaking-monitoring systems now in place and all staff were supplied with a card to access the tills.

The Business Manager confirmed that only the Supervisors could carry out voids to transactions/ carry out refunds/miscellaneous sales etc. and the rotas were drawn up to ensure that a Supervisor was always on duty.

The General Manager stated that Officers were endeavouring to attract Golfing Societies to the facility, but it was difficult as they usually planned events a year in advance.

RESOLVED:- That, the Business Manager, in liaison with the Acting Director, will contact the GPL to ascertain the prices of alcohol sales in other Golf Clubs and to ensure that Castlereagh Hills is being charged at a commercial rate and not at a Club rate.

GCB/2007/53 : SUMMARY OF TRADING ACCOUNTS – GOLF COURSE

The Operational Services Manager circulated on up-to-date summary of trading accounts in relation to the Golf Course.

He stated that the Golf Course was projecting £4k over budget due to the necessary purchase of a control panel for the Golf Club restaurant (at a cost of £1,230.00).

He referred to the marketing budget, in which Members had agreed at the last Board meeting to spend the remaining restaurant budget on marketing, if required.

The Acting Director indicated that, since the last meeting, £2,800 had been committed to the marketing budget, therefore the Golf Club would be approx £6k over budget.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR

GCB/2007/54 : PURCHASE OF A MICROPHONE TO USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GOLF CLUB SOUND SYSTEM

Following discussion, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That, approval be given for the purchase of a wireless hand-held microphone from Arrow Systems at a cost of £180.00 + vat, and in the interim, the Acting Director and the Operational Services Manager be instructed to look again at the Golf Club trading accounts.

GCB/2007/55 : LOCATION FOR DISPLAY OF PROPOSED CAPTAINS BOARDS

The Acting Director informed Members that the general feedback received from the pre-AGM meeting reflected that the facility lacked the ambience of a Golf Club, and Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That, approval be given for the display of the 2 Captains Boards and 1 Presidents Board in the ante-area, beside the restaurant.

GCB/2007/56 : SAMPLES OF PROPOSED CAPTAINS BOARDS

The Acting Director referred to the former Gilnahirk Captains Boards, which were made from mahogany, and she showed Members a light oak sample, which was more in keeping with the décor of the facility.

Members discussed the design and, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Officers be authorised to purchase 2 Captains Boards and 1 Presidents Board in a light oak surround with a black inset and the names to be engraved in gilding.

GCB/2007/57 : PHOTOGRAPHS IN MEMBERS' CORRIDOR

The Acting Director informed Members that past photographs associated with the Club had since been re-framed and were now being displayed in the Members' Corridor, which would add to the ambience of the Golf Club.

Noted.

GCB/2007/58 : EXPENSES OF THE LADIES' SECTION

The Acting Director referred Members to her report and the copies of receipts submitted by the Ladies Section.

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board approves the reimbursement of the Club, with regard to the receipts for £237.50 and £50.00 received, as detailed in the Director's report.

GCB/2007/59 : NEXT MEETING OF THE CASTLEREAGH HILLS GENERAL COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:- That, Councillor White will liaise with Members' Services to arrange a date for the next meeting of the Castlereagh Hills General Committee.

GCB/2007/60 : REQUEST FROM THE PSNI

The Acting Director referred to a request from the PSNI re: supporting a fund raising event for Cystic Fibrosis, due to be held in May 2007 and she outlined the background to the event.

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

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board approve the donation of two prizes, namely:- tickets for a 4 x ball game of golf and a complimentary £25 voucher for a meal at the Golf Club Restaurant.

Councillor Chambers offered the tickets for the 4 x ball game of golf from her personal allocation as a Board member.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Jeffers arrived at 10.50 a.m.

GCB/2007/61 : BALLOT PRIZE – MAYOR’S BOWLING CHARITY EVENT

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board grants approval for tickets for a 4x ball game of golf and a voucher for a complimentary meal for 2 at the Golf Club restaurant to be donated to the ballot being held at the Mayor’s Bowling Charity event.

GCB/2007/62 : REQUEST FROM MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager outlined the background to this request and reported that a similar event had been held last year and nearly 100 players had participated.

The Acting Director reiterated that the organisers were seeking complimentary rounds of golf for those involved who were not members of the Golf Club.

The Operational Services Manager added that the charity had been charged at a society rate for the event.

Councillor Spratt felt it was a worthwhile cause and provided an excellent PR exercise for the Golf Club.

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers be given approval to donate 3 complimentary tickets, to be issued from Councillor Jeffers’ personal allocation of tickets as a Board Member.

GCB/2007/63 : TRADE WASTE COLLECTION

The Acting Director referred Members to the content of her report and a lengthy discussion ensued.

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

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) this matter should be referred to the Chief Executive to be taken up with the Technical & Environmental Services Department to investigate if their in-house service can be provided at the same rate as Wilson Waste.

(b) Officers to investigate if a 17.5 vat charge has been applied to the costs in relation to the waste removal of foodstuffs, and if so, to process the recoupment of the monies involved.

GCB/2007/64 : STAFF TRAINING REQUEST

Members were informed that the Kitchen Porter had been granted permission to attend the NVQ course in catering on the basis that the Council would pay for the course, but the time for attendance would be taken in the employee's own time. However, the Corporate Catering Cook who was currently attending the same course, had been permitted to attend as part of her contracted hours.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board grant approval to the Kitchen Porter to attend the aforementioned course during their contracted hours.

Furthermore, that this agreement be reviewed each year, in the event that staffing circumstances would change in the future.

GCB/2007/65 : MINUTES OF THE LAST GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tabled:- Draft minutes from the Castlereagh Hills General Committee meeting held on 3rd March 2007 (copy previously circulated).

Noted.

GCB/2007/66 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Members were informed that the current total membership at the end of February 2007 was 349.

Noted.

GCB/2007/67 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

Members were informed that the Golf Professional had conducted no lessons since the beginning of October.

Noted.

GCB/2007/68 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE COURSE

The Acting Director drew Members' attention to her report and following a proposal from Councillor White, which was seconded by Councillor Spratt, it was

RESOLVED:- That, a new "Playing with Member" rate would be introduced for Council staff using the course, which will be charged at the same amount as the juvenile rate.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

GCB/2007/69 : CONVERSION OF GARAGE

The Acting Director referred Members to the details outlined in her supplementary report and previous discussions with the Operational Services Manager in relation to a proposal to convert the garage to provide toilet and changing facilities for pay and play members and visiting Golfing Societies.

Lengthy discussion then ensued on the matter, and Members agreed to adjourn for several minutes to enable a site visit to be held to view the garage premises.

Following the site visit, Councillor White stated that, in his view the space was adequate for changing facilities but another toilet cubicle would be required. He went on to add that Officers would need to check the requisite regulations, but it would be an excellent facility to use before the Clubhouse opened each morning, which would be at minimal expense to the Council, whilst enhancing the facility.

He then referred to the provision of changing lockers and the fact that they were provided at the Ice Bowl through a private supplier.

The General Manager confirmed that the Ice Bowl had experienced no problems to date with this particular arrangement.

However, Councillor Chambers wished to state that she was opposed to this suggested change, as Castlereagh Hills was a municipal golf course and she felt that people using the facility on a pay and play basis should be entitled to receive swipe cards.

The Acting Director expressed her concerns in relation to the storage of the golfing buggies.

The Operational Services Manager referred to the former Golfing Professional Shop location, which had been earmarked for demolition, but could have its doorway altered to accommodate the buggies. He referred to discussions with the MP for the area and the Planning Service to remove planning conditions with regard to these premises, but was unsure at what stage negotiations had been reached. However, he stated that he would arrange for an update on the situation from the Council's Planning Officer, for the next meeting of the Board.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Acting Director would obtain a full specification for the proposed changes to the garage to accommodate changing facilities and the relevant costings for the next meeting of the Golf Club Board.

GCB/2007/70 : PRESENTATION OF SAMPLE ADVERTISING VIDEO BY GENERAL MANAGER – MARKETING & LEISURE RE: STENA HSS

The General Manager presented a short advertising video, which was currently being played in loop format on the Stena HSS ferry routes, and directed at its 3m customers.

He reported that the Council could buy an advert lasting 60 seconds over a 2-year contract, and the spin-off would be that it would receive a DVD of 10 minutes, which would be Council-owned and could be played at each of its leisure facilities.

He went on to state that he had contacted some of the Council's partners and they had shown interest in participating in the scheme. Therefore, the costs of the advertisement at £3k over 2 years would be split between the interested parties. However, in addition to any decision made by the Golf Board, he commented that he would have to table the matter again at the next Leisure Park Board meeting.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) The General Manager be instructed to ascertain how many times the advertisement video would be played during a 24 hour period.
- (b) The General Manager to be authorised by the Board to progress the advertisement video to a maximum of £500 per year this year and for £500 for the following year.

GCB/2007/71 : COSTS FOR HONOURS BOARDS

The Acting Director referred Members to the costs supplied for the Boards by the Minor Works Department and indicated that the General Committee had asked for the Presidents board to be slightly smaller than the Captains Boards.

Members agreed that only one column, twice the width of the column shown in the diagram, was required for the Presidents' Board, and agreed it should be the same size as the Captains Boards.

Members then discussed the quotations and who would be responsible for the costs of the boards.

Councillor White felt that the Council should provide the boards and the Club should pay for the lettering each year.

Councillor Spratt asked if the Officers would obtain a further quotation from Gilmour Signs for comparative purposes.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Officers be instructed to obtain a further quotation from Gilmour Signs for comparative purposes
- (b) the Council will supply the Captains' and Presidents Boards and the costs will be paid from the current financial year's budget.
- (c) the Golf Club be instructed to provide the lettering for the boards and charge the costings to their account.

GCB/2007/72 : ADMIN POST CASUAL COVER

RESOLVED:- That, approval be given for an advertisement to recruit a casual pool of administrative cover, at no ongoing cost to the Council, and providing reserve members of staff that can be called upon, when required.

GCB/2007/73 : SERVICE CONTRACT FROM ANCHOR

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, approval be given for a service contract with Anchor Data in respect of the till system at a cost of £935.07.

GCB/2007/74 : HOSPITALITY FOR FRED DALY

The Acting Director referred Members to her report in which the Club were seeking approval to provide hospitality in relation to a Fred Daly Junior Match on 1st April 2007. She stated that although the Golf Club would finance the event, approval was required from the Board in advance of the match.

RESOLVED:- That, approval be granted for the provision of hospitality by the Golf Club in respect of the Fred Daly Junior Match being held on 1st April 2007, subject to confirmation that adequate funds remain in the budget.

GCB/2007/75 : INCREASED OPENING HOURS

The Acting Director referred to her report, which detailed the level of business last year on St Patrick's Day and asked if Members wished to increase the opening hours for that Bank Holiday, as well as Easter Monday and Tuesday.

Following a proposal from Councillor Spratt, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) the Golf Club Restaurant be authorised to extend its opening hours on the St Patrick's Day and Easter Monday/Tuesday bank holidays, in order to maximise passing trade on those days.
- (b) Officers monitor restaurant income levels following extended opening hours on St Patricks Day and Easter Monday/Tuesday.
- (c) The Acting PR & Marketing Manager to arrange for the display of the appropriate signage to inform the public that the restaurant has increased its opening hours on these three bank holidays.

GCB/2007/76 : INFORMATION REGARDING INDOOR BOWLING MATCH

The Acting Director stated that this matter had been raised at the last General Committee Meeting and further information had been received in which the Golf Club had agreed to supply floor mats, which would be removed at the end of the event, and they had agreed to purchase sandwiches and refreshments from the Club restaurant.

The General Manager of Leisure & Marketing advised that, if necessary, to comply with legislation, the restaurant could serve stew/soup in addition to the provision of sandwiches.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers be instructed to inform Mr Gibson that the Golf Club Board has approved, in principle, the indoor bowling match to be held at the facility on 5th April 2007 at no charge to the Golf Club except for the catering costs.

Furthermore, that in the interim, Officers will liaise with the Catering Supervisors in the Golf Club Restaurant and ensure that catering costs include the provision for staffing costs.

GCB/2007/77 : PROVISION FOR LOCKING THE ENTRANCE GATE

The Acting Director informed Members that she was seeking approval to investigate the original arrangement before the restaurant opened, whereby a person was appointed to lock up the gate each evening at a cost of £2,500 p.a. (payment of 1 hour per lock-up).

The Operational Services Manager indicated that the Park Rangers would be able to carry out this function during the months of July and August.

The Acting Director responded that she would ensure that this duty was included in their Service Level Agreement.

RESOLVED:- That, the Golf Club Board approve provision for locking the entrance gate, in principle, and the Acting Director, in liaison with the Operational Services Manager, will look at further options and bring back their findings to a future meeting of the Board.

REPORT FROM THE ACTING PR & MARKETING MANAGER

GCB/2007/78 : ENTRANCE SIGNAGE

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager informed Members that the actual cost of the new entrance sign had been £255 and was due to be erected in the next few days.

Noted.

GB/2007/79 : EARLY BIRD BANNER

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager advised that the “Early Bird Special” banner was due to be displayed at the Golf Club entrance later that day.

Noted.

GCB/2007/80 : ONLINE RESTAURANT RESERVATION SERVICE - WWW.5PM.CO.UK

Councillor Cochrane stated that this service was now not relevant to the Golf Club, but should the restaurant opening hours be increased, it could be reviewed in the future.

Noted.

GCB/2007/81 : COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager circulated a price analysis of competing golf clubs for Members’ information and indicated that most Golf Clubs were waiving their joining fee.

Councillor White stated that the joining fee amount had been an issue of concern raised at the Golf Club’s pre-AGM meeting.

Following lengthy discussion on the matter, Members agreed to approve a promotion which would waive the Club’s joining fee until 1 June 2007.

The Acting Director suggested that consideration could be given to the holding of a competition, which would be run alongside this campaign to promote the offer.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) From 1st April to 1st June 2007, the juvenile's annual fee will be reduced to £220, with no joining fee, however the joining fee will increase to £60 following the 1st June.
- (b) From 1st April to 1st June 2007, the other categories will not have to pay a joining fee on the proviso that they pay their fees up front, however it will increase to £60 following the 1st June 2007.
- (c) The Golf Club Board will carry out a review of the Golf Club prices once this campaign has ended on the 1st June 2007.

GCB/2007/82 : CAPTAINS' PHOTOGRAPHS

The Acting PR & Marketing Manager informed Members that the photographs of the men and ladies captains had now been taken.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2007/83 : GOLF COURSE DRAINAGE

The Acting Director informed Members that at the pre-AGM meeting, Golf Club Members had requested that the Council spend the monies that had originally been set aside for their upgrade of the greens, to be used towards improving the drainage of the course, as this was more of an immediate problem.

Councillor White commented that one of the main problems was that all of the golf course drainage ditches had been blocked and required cleaning out.

He also referred to the new tees that had been introduced, and stated that, in his view, the older ones had performed better.

The General Manager of Leisure & Marketing stated that it would be beneficial to rectify the drainage of the course this year and to spend the monies on upgrading the greens in the following year.

Councillor Spratt suggested that the Council should consider employing the services of a local farm contractor to clear out the existing ditches, as there should be some field ditches currently within the course which would help to alleviate some of the drainage problems inexpensively.

Councillor White stated that, at the Golf Club AGM, Mr Jim Eager who was a Club member, and a greenkeeper for Belfast City Council, had offered to walk the course and give his opinion.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Officers be instructed to spend the monies allocated for the upgrade of the greens, to resolve the drainage issues, and bring back a report on the matter for a future meeting of the Board.

GCB/2007/84 : BREAKDOWN - BT TELEPHONE CHARGES

The Operational Services Manager circulated a breakdown of BT telephone lines and charges for the information of the Members.

RESOLVED:- That, this information be tabled on the agenda of the next Board meeting for further discussion.

As there was no further discussion, the meeting concluded at 1.10 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE