

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held, in committee, at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club on Friday, 21st December 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:- Alderman J White
Councillor Mrs M Chambers
Councillor Mrs J Cochrane (from 10.25 a.m)
Councillor B Hanvey
Councillor M Henderson (in the chair)
Councillor J Spratt

IN ATTENDANCE:- Director of Leisure Services, General Manager
Marketing & Leisure, PR & Marketing Manager, Golf
Club Secretary/Manager, Parks Section Manager,
Business Manager and Assistant Members' Services
Officer

APOLOGIES:- Apologies were recorded on behalf of Councillor
Jeffers and Councillor Drysdale

Before the meeting commenced, Councillor Henderson wished to welcome back the Director of Leisure Services, on behalf of the Golf Club Board Members, following the recent death of her father.

GCB/2007/352 : MINUTES

Tabled:- Minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 16 November 2007 (copy enclosed)

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 16 November 2007 be accepted as a true and accurate account of the proceedings that took place.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

GCB/2007/353 : BLUE SEAL GAS FRYER (Minute Ref No: GCB/2007/324 refers)

Members were informed that the blue seal gas fryer had now been replaced and was in operation.

Noted.

GCB/2007/354 TARMACING OF PATH TO FIRST TEE (Minute Ref No: GCB/2007/346 refers)

The Business Manager reported that the Golf Club had now paid their half of the invoice for the tarmacing work to the path and the Golfers were delighted with the finished works.

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

GCB/2007/355 : FINANCIAL TRADING ACCOUNTS

The Business Manager referred Members to the financial trading accounts for November 2007, which had been circulated for their information.

The Director commented that there were a number of issues in relation to overspends in the kitchen, however Officers were making reasonable efforts to recover the costs.

The Business Manager reported that membership fee income figures were behind budget due to the "no joining fee" promotion that took place earlier in the year. She stated that the Board needed to be mindful of the need to increase membership numbers and to continue to monitor exit forms to identify reasons for people leaving the Club.

Councillor Henderson suggested that the budgets that had been set in the first instance may have been too optimistic and therefore unrealistic.

Alderman White felt that with the recent improvements, word would spread about the excellent condition of the course and subsequently membership numbers would increase.

The Business Manager referred to the pay and play income figures and stated that these were similar to last year's levels, which was a positive note, but she reiterated that the Council would have to control expenditure in the areas, which could be restricted.

In response to a query from Alderman White, the Director responded that arrangements were in place for the Golfers' £50 contribution to be paid to the Golf Club at the beginning of the year, which would enable them to plan financially for the year ahead.

Alderman White referred to funds raised by the Golf Club in addition to the £50 contribution and felt that the Council should have no say in how the Club spent this expenditure.

Councillor Henderson responded that although the Golf Club could spend these monies as they sought fit, they were still obliged to inform the General Committee of the expenditure in accordance with the Local Government Auditor's fiscal policy.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Cochrane arrived at 10.25 a.m.

The Director stated that there were two elements in the Golf Club's income stream, firstly, the Golfers' £50 contribution, which was collected by the Council who were accountable for the monies and had no discretionary powers in relation to how it was spent. However, with regard to competition fees, fundraising income and donations raised, the Golf Club could set up a separate account which they could manage themselves, but she stated that this would be an overspend associated with the Golf Club.

She went on to state that the Golf Club could not assume that the Council would pay any shortfall in expenditure, as the Auditor had only sanctioned the monies under the Council's control, namely the £50 Members' contributions.

The Director stated that she would check the Club's financial agreement but stated that organisations such as Bowling Leagues and Ice Skating Clubs at the DIIB had their own separate bank accounts and she felt that this could also apply to the Golf Club.

Councillor Hanvey asked if the Golf Club was showing an overspend at the end of the financial year. The Business Manager responded that although the Golf Club would record an overspend this year, it would be much less than the previous year's figure.

Noted.

GCB/2007/356 : SECURITY

The General Manager expressed concern that staff, normally female, carried out the locking up of the premises at the weekend, and with the lack of mobile phone coverage in the area, he felt there was a potential security risk for the staff involved. He went on to highlight his concerns at staff having to react to alarm call outs at such a remote facility.

The Secretary/Golf Club Manager commented that she had also received a number of concerns from female members of staff with regard to this practice.

Councillor Spratt stated that, in his experience, the appointment of a security firm may not necessarily address security issues and there may be times when the Golf Club premises would not be locked at the requisite time. He suggested that Officers ascertain if there was a local resident who would be willing to close the premises at an agreed time.

Councillor Chambers referred to the lack of lighting at the Club entrance and stated that better lighting would address some of the security risks as well as highlighting the entrance to the Golf Club premises from the road.

Councillor Hanvey referred to the numerous facilities owned by the Council and whilst he sympathised with the staff's concerns, he felt that the Council should consider security from a holistic approach. He stated that the Council currently had a piecemeal approach using different security firm providers which was more expensive than using one sole supplier.

Members agreed that the matter needed to be addressed from a collective perspective.

The Director referred to a recent Management Team meeting in which the issues of security/cash collections/key holding and alarm call-outs had been raised. She informed Members that the General Manager had been tasked with currently looking at the matter of security from a holistic basis, as there was merit in using one security company from an economy of scale. However, she referred to the urgent matter of alarm call-outs, as she was also concerned about the vulnerability of members of staff carrying out this task.

The General Manager reiterated that he was looking at security provision for 5 Leisure facility sites and would be preparing a tender document.

The Director then referred to Members' concerns in relation to the provision of better lighting at the entrance and felt that there may be Planning Service issues.

She further suggested that Members consider the planting of two trees at the Golf Club opening to create an "entrance" effect.

Councillor Spratt proposed that the Officers source quotations for the installation of remote controlled gates, as he commented that they were in operation at the Council Offices and meant that staff did not have to vacate their cars. This proposal was seconded by Alderman White.

The Business Manager advised that Officers would have to source a fail active operational system.

The Parks Section Manager also suggested introducing more planting at the entrance to the Golf Club to make it more appealing to passers by.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That, Officers be authorised to arrange for the introduction of an alarm response service at the Golf Club but that the Director raise the issue of a collective approach to security at the next meeting of the Management Team.

Furthermore, that Officers also be instructed to source quotations for a fail active remote controlled gate system for the golf club entrance which would cease the necessity for staff to vacate their vehicles to lock up the premises and obtain quotations for improved lighting along the drive and at the entrance to the facility.

**GCB/2007/357 : SNAGGING LIST
(Minute Ref No: GCB/2007/345 refers)**

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager reported that the back kitchen floor had now been replaced and that the replacement works to the balcony and doors were ongoing.

Noted.

GCB/2007/358 : WINE SUPPLIER

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager stated that the new wine supplier had now been appointed and there had been a noted increase in wine sales.

Noted.

GCB/2007/359 : CURTAINS

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager reported that the new curtains and blinds were now in place although there had been a slight problem with the blinds, which had since been rectified.

Members agreed that the new window dressings added to the ambiance of the facility.

Noted.

GCB/2007/360 : GUI INFORMATION NIGHT

Members were informed that the GUI night held following the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony had been very successful and it was hoped that this would be progressed as an annual event.

Councillor Henderson wished to thank the PR & Marketing Manager, on behalf of the players, for her assistance in organising the event.

Noted.

GCB/2007/361 : STAFF GATHERING

Members were informed that the staff gathering would be held on the 9th January 2008 at 3.00 p.m. and Councillor Henderson invited Board Members to come along, if they were able to attend.

The Parks Section Manager agreed to ensure that grounds maintenance staff would receive an invitation.

Noted.

GCB/2007/362 : STAFF UPDATE

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager reported that the Facility Supervisor and Commis Chef were due to commence employment.

She referred to the recent recruitment drive at the Ice Bowl, which had successfully resulted in a number of casual appointments.

Noted.

GCB/2007/363 : UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS BOOKINGS

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager stated that the last of the Christmas Nights was due to finish on 21st December 2007 and she had received excellent feedback from those in attendance.

She referred to the forthcoming New Years Eve event and stated that 120 bookings had been received to date.

Members were informed that on Friday, 13th December there had been a power cut, but that staff had dealt with the situation admirably and an alternative venue had been promptly located for a number of diners. She stated that Officers were in the process of investigating if a claim could be made as the Golf Club had suffered a loss of income from food, drink sales and the DJ/Band costs incurred.

Councillor Henderson wished to thank the staff for the way they had handled the situation. However, he advised that although the Golf Club could not claim from Northern Ireland Electricity or the Council's own insurers, Officers should check if it would be worth pursuing a refund through a 3rd party from the Small Claims Court.

Councillor Chambers then referred to the Council's Christmas dinner and stated that the standards of food served and service had been excellent.

Councillor Henderson asked that Officers pass on the Board's thanks to the floor staff involved during that event.

The Director then paid tribute to the Golf Club Secretary/Manager who had worked tirelessly since she took up her position and deserved credit for her efforts. Members concurred with her comments and thanked the Officer for her assistance.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Officers check if it was worth pursuing compensation for the recent power cut and the income lost as a result, through the small claims court.
- (b) Officers pass on the thanks of the Golf Club Board to the Golf Club restaurant staff for their prompt reaction to the recent power cut during one of the Christmas Nights.
- (c) Officers pass on the thanks of the Members to the restaurant staff for the standard and service of the food served during the Council Christmas Dinner.

GCB/2007/364 : BUGGY HIRE

Noted.

GCB/2007/365 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

Noted.

GCB/2007/366 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS

Noted.

GCB/2007/367 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE COURSE

Noted.

GCB/2007/368 : RECORD OF ALARM CALL-OUTS

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager reported that there had been no call-outs since the last meeting of the Board and that Zone 60 had been checked and was being monitored.

Noted.

GCB/2007/369 : COMMENT CARDS

The comment cards were circulated for Members' information and contained excellent comments in relation to the Golf Club restaurant.

Noted.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GCB/2007/370 : ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH INSPECTION

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager referred to a recent Environmental Health inspection and reported that, although the results had been satisfactory, the kitchen would be revisited in six weeks time as the Environmental Health Inspector had indicated that areas of the kitchen required re-decoration. She stated that the costs for the work would come out of the buildings budget.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- that, Officers would arrange for the re-decoration of the kitchen, where required, to comply with the recent Environmental Health inspection and the costs to be made payable from the buildings budget.

GCB/2007/371 : SEWERAGE PROBLEMS

The General Manager reported that the Golf Club's sewerage system had backed up and the M&E Engineer had indicated that emergency action was urgently required. He sought permission to replace the pump as there was no service level agreement in place to maintain it and he outlined the costs involved in obtaining a service level agreement and purchasing a new pump. He further suggested reconditioning the old pump and holding this as a spare as its failure would mean the closure of the facility.

Councillor Hanvey enquired if there were any Officers designated to oversee plant maintenance as part of a rolling routine maintenance programme.

The General Manager stated that he had spoken with the M&E Engineer but there was no employee in the Council with the knowledge to service pumps of this nature.

He went on to state that a Works Schedule was in place to cover maintenance of the Council's other Leisure facilities, but a maintenance programme had not yet been set up for this specific area of the Golf Club. Weekly in-house checks to ensure that the pump was running effectively were carried out by staff but he suggested that there was a requirement for an outside contractor to be brought in to unblock the pump and arrange for them to come in on a 6-monthly basis to degrease the pipe. He alerted Members to the fact that both the repair of the

existing pump, the reconditioning of the old pump and the maintenance contracts required had not been budgeted for and would lead to an overspend in the associated cost codes. Provision would be made in the next FY estimates.

The Director felt that the problem stemmed with the grease trap as waste water was not being broken down sufficiently and she reported that this issue was currently being investigated. She went on to add that Officers were going back to Scott Wilson as the general consensus was that the design of the waste water system had been inadequate to service the facility.

RESOLVED:- That, an outside contractor be organised to unblock the pump and provide a preventative maintenance contract and, in the interim, Officers liaise with Leisure Plant Staff with a view to organising weekly in-house checks to ensure that the pump continues to work effectively.

Additionally, Officers are authorised to replace the sewage pump (at a cost of approximately £1350 + VAT) and recondition the old one for future emergency use.

Members noted the likely overspend in the budget associated with the repair of the existing pump, the reconditioning of the old pump and the maintenance contracts.

GCB/2007/372 : SAND SLITTING

The Parks Section Manager stated that the contractors were currently off site due to the inclement weather.

He referred to reasonably favourable comments received from the golfers in relation to the improvements.

He added that as the majority of the contract work had been completed, the Board had previously agreed that the excess could be used on the 12th fairway, however there were small localised areas of the course which had been highlighted by the golfers as requiring further work.

Councillor Chambers concurred that if problems with the course had been identified, Officers should arrange for the work to be carried out as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:- that, the areas of the course which required further drainage should be identified and works carried out to rectify the problem as soon as possible, and the expenditure to be used from the 10% excess funding set aside for the sand slitting works.

GCB/2007/373 : PLANTING

The Parks Section Manager referred to the costs for carrying out the sample planting and stated that there would be no additional costs, as the monies would be absorbed into the budget.

Councillor Chambers congratulated Officers on the high standard of planting.

Noted.

GCB/2007/374 : SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOLF CLUB BOARD

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- that, the Members' Services Section would liaise with the Chairman to arrange a Special Meeting of the Golf Club Board during the last week in January to discuss Membership Options, Wind Turbine and the Business case for the full drinks licence.

GCB/2007/375 : WIND TURBINE ANALYSIS AT LOUGH MOSS CENTRE

The General Manager referred to the previous night's Council Meeting in relation to the wind turbine analysis at Lough Moss Centre and felt that it would be prudent to include the Golf Club in the analysis.

Following agreement, it was

RESOLVED:- that, the Officers be instructed to conduct a wind analysis at the Golf Club to enable any future application of a wind turbine.

GCB/2007/376 : EXPRESSION OF THANKS

At this point, the Members of the Golf Club Board expressed their thanks to the Staff and Officers of the Golf Club and wished them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

RESOLVED:- That, the Officers pass on the thanks of the Golf Club Board to all Staff and Officers of the Golf Club and wish them all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 11.35 a.m.

SIGNED:-

Chairman

Chief Executive