

## **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, 15 August 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

### **PRESENT:-**

**ALDERMAN:** J White

**COUNCILLORS:** Councillor D Drysdale (in the chair)  
Councillor M Chambers  
Councillor J Cochrane  
Councillor B Harvey  
Councillor M Henderson (in 11.40 am)  
Councillor T Jeffers (out 11.35 am)

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

### **GCB/2008/217 : MINUTES OF CASTLEREAGH HILL GOLF CLUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2008 (copy previously circulated)**

Proposed by Alderman White, seconded by Councillor Cochrane and

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 18 July 2008 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

#### **GCB/2008/218 : MICROCACHE (Minute No GCB/2008/205 refers)**

In response to a query by Alderman White, the Director of Leisure Services confirmed that the upgrading of the microcache system was proceeding. The General Manager Leisure & Marketing expressed some concerns about the level of training being proposed by the suppliers. Officers undertook to keep Members updated on progress.

Noted.

## **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES**

### **GCB/2008/219 : BUSINESS PLAN FOR CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB**

Members consider the 2008/2009 Business Plan for the club (copy previously circulated). The Director of Leisure Services reminded Members that the leisure strategy had been approved at the Board meeting in June 2008 (Minute No. GCB/2008/132 refers). She reported that the Business Plan had been drafted in keeping with the Leisure Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan, whilst trying to identify this year's objectives for the facility. She stated that, in addition to this Business Plan, the Sports Development Strategy was also being tabled as part of the report and the theme of the strategy was reflected throughout the Business Plan.

The Director also advised that the business plans for all of the Council's leisure facilities would have a common layout and approach to business planning and theme.

Alderman White welcomed the Business Plan and proposed that it be adopted.

RESOLVED: that the Board adopted the 2008/09 Business Plan for the golf club.

### **GCB/2008/220 : SPORTS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Board considered the Council's Sports Development Strategy for 2008-2011 (copy previously circulated). The Director of Leisure Services advised that historically there had not been a structured framework formally adopted to develop the range of sporting activities across the Borough and beyond. She stated that the strategy had been developed to try and harmonise the development of a variety of sporting disciplines along with identifying the wider needs of the sporting fraternity.

The Director advised that the strategy had been developed to accommodate the needs of all the facilities with the Leisure Department and would therefore be taken to each of the respective boards and committees for approval and adoption.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the Board adopt the Sports Development Strategy for 2008-2011.

- (b) that the Board recognise the efforts of all the staff involved in drafting the Sports Development Strategy and thank them for their contribution.
- (c) that the Sports Development Strategy be also copied to the CSDA for information.

**GCB/2008/221 : UPDATE ON ORMEAU GOLF CLUB**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that a meeting had taken place between representatives of Ormeau and Castlereagh Hills Golf Clubs. She advised however that the anticipated disruption to the Ormeau course would no longer take place as the pipe laying would be underground.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/222 : FINANCIAL TRADING ACCOUNTS**

The Business Manager referred Members to the financial trading accounts for the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club and Restaurant (copy previously circulated). She reported that in the year to date, the net cost of the facility was over the estimated profiled budget and that this was largely due to a shortfall in estimated income figures. The restaurant income for July had been below budget despite the fact that comments from customers had been extremely positive. It was felt that poor weather conditions and/or the downturn in the economy could have contributed to this underachievement.

The Business Manager also reported a drop in income from members' subscriptions. Members felt that a factor affecting take-up of membership was that, as the Club did not have a full drinks licence, players could not enjoy a casual drink after their round of golf. Members also referred to the lack of facilities within the Club house for members.

The Director of Leisure Services advised that many of the issues raised were addressed in the Business Plan and were being progressed.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/223 : LADIES SECTION**

Members were reminded of a request to the Board at its meeting in July by the Lady Captain for two honorary life memberships (minutes no GCB/2008/164 refers). The Director of Leisure Services reported that, as requested by the Board, the Lady Captain would be submitting a review to support the two proposals at the Board's meeting in September 2008.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/224 : REVIEW**

The Director of Leisure Services advised that Kevin Markham, author of “Hooked” which was to be published in early 2008, was writing a book on all 18 hole golf courses in Ireland. She stated that he had recently visited Castlereagh Hills Golf Club and had played a round of golf and his comment would be available on his blog: [www.golfcoursesireland.blogspot.com](http://www.golfcoursesireland.blogspot.com) .

Noted.

**GCB/2008/225 : BUGGY AND TROLLEY HIRE**

Members received details of year to date income regarding buggy and trolley hire for the months of year to date (copy previously circulated).

Noted

**GCB/2008/226 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS**

Members received a breakdown of membership numbers for the year to date (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

**GCB/2008/227 : JUNIOR GOLF SCHOOL**

Members received an update for July 2008 on attendance at the Junior Golf School (copy previously circulated).

Noted.

**GCB/2008/228 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS**

Members received a breakdown of golf lessons for the year to date (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

**GCB/2008/229 : RECORD OF ALARM CALL OUTS**

Members received a breakdown of the number of alarm call outs for the year to date (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

**GCB/2008/230 : COMMENT & THANK YOU CARDS**

Members noted that one comment card had been received for July (copy previously circulated).

Noted.

**GBC/2008/231 : PROPOSED EVENTS PLAN**

A proposed events plan, which had been approved by the General Committee, had been previously circulated.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/232 : RETAIL FACILITY AND CURRENT MERCHANDISE**

The Director of Leisure Services referred to the retail facility available on the ground floor of the clubhouse and advised that, while this had previously operated independently, with the microcache system now in place it would be possible for the Council to operate an accountable system for retail sale. Members were asked to consider the transfer of stock from the Golf Professional (detailed inventory and valuation to be secured) and the upgrade of the stock

The Director advised that at present the Golf Professional was operating the sale of his own stock (value approximately £2K) and that this was made up of basic accessories. She indicated that it was anticipated that the level of stock in the shop would include club crested clothing, shoes and hire clubs. She also advised that it was possible to establish an account with a golf retail store which would be in keeping with fiscal policy.

The Director reported that turnover was expected to be around £15k per annum with a GPM of around 35-40%. She advised that a stock control system would be established and the microcache system would be used to itemise and record sales. The Director indicated that the cost of upgrading stock would be approximately £3K and, while no financial provision was in place for this expenditure, the sale of goods with a GPM of 35-40% would recoup the initial outlay.

Alderman White pointed out that most clubs had a dedicated area used as a retail outlet. The Chairperson also stated that a retail outlet would be another means of improving facilities and promoting the club.

It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that an independent valuation of the Golf Professional's stock be obtained prior to purchase.
- (b) that stock then be upgraded to a level that would be commensurate with the facility.
- (c) that Members note that no provision had been made in the current estimates but that income would offset the initial outlay.

**GCB/2008/233 : INDOOR PUTTING STUDIO**

The Director of Leisure Services reported on a proposal to obtain a putting analysis machine and putting green which would be located in one half of the conference room, allowing the other half to remain in use.

She pointed out that the golf course had a limited practice area that was used for junior coaching and short game lessons and facilities for giving adult lessons were restricted to early in the morning using the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway. She advised that an indoor putting studio would allow an additional coaching service for members and visitors. It would be the first indoor putting studio in Northern Ireland and would attract new customers to the facility. Also, as the machine and putting green were transportable, it could be relocated on a temporary basis at local schools, other leisure facilities and at private facilities thereby generating an additional line of income.

The Director reported that the Tomi Putting System and accessories would cost £2,832 plus VAT. If approved, it could be installed within 4 weeks with launch scheduled for mid to end September in order to facilitate winter coaching. She indicated that it was anticipated that lessons would be marketed at £15 per half hour which would generate £2,340 per annum and with the possibility of further income from additional individual lessons, as part of a promotion or from hiring the putting facility out to golf societies and companies. . The Director advised that no financial provision was currently available for the purchase but it was considered that the capital outlay could be recouped within a short time frame.

The Director advised that the Council's Leisure Services Department had secured a new sponsorship arrangement with Britvic and she would discuss with them opportunities for supporting the launch of the indoor putting facility.

Members noted that there was a similar facility available in Southern Ireland. The Chairperson enquired whether it would be useful to visit that facility to see it in operation but Members considered that this would not be necessary or cost effective.

RESOLVED: that the Board approve the purchase of the Tomi Putting System and accessories at a cost of £2,832 plus VAT.

## REPORT FROM THE ACTING MARKETING MANAGER

### GCB/2008/234 : INDOOR PUTTING STUDIO – MARKETING STRATEGY

The Acting Marketing Manager reported that, subject to the Board approving the indoor putting studio, it was proposed to implement the following marketing strategy to promote this innovative concept which was the first of its kind in Northern Ireland:

- **New Member Promotion**

To encourage new membership during the off-peak months, anyone joining between December 08-March 09 would receive 1 complimentary ½ hour lesson in the Indoor Putting Studio and 1 complimentary ½ hour lesson on the course with the golf professional.

- **Press Launch**

To officially launch the studio, club members, GUI societies and the press would be formally invited to a hospitality evening where they would have the opportunity to obtain further details and trial the new activity.

- **Advertising**

To promote the new activity, it was proposed to advertise the following publications:

Tee to Green	Series of 6 adverts £196 per advert – ¼ page Sept, Oct, Feb, March, April, May
Carryduff Focus	£132 – full page
BT8	£195 – full page

Graphic design      £35 per hour

- **Radio Giveaway**

It was proposed to run a radio giveaway competition with Cool FM at a cost of approximately £800 which would include the production of a short advert and on-air plugs by the chosen DJ. The giveaway prize would be 2 free ½ hour lessons per day in the putting studio for the winner and a friend for a period of 5 days.

- **Print & Distribution**

Production of promotional posters and flyers, posters to be displayed in leisure and community venues and flyers to be distributed to local

businesses, sports clubs, churches and GUI societies. Estimated costs were:

Production of flyers and posters	£500
Production of penguin stand	£225

The Acting Marketing Manager advised that the estimated cost of the marketing strategy as outlined above was £3,283.

Councillor Jeffers recalled that in previous years the club had held a Mayor's Golf Competition. He referred to the success of the recent Sportmen's Dinner and suggested that the Mayor's Golf Competition should be reinstated followed by an evening dinner.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board approve the marketing strategy as detailed above with the exception of the radio giveaway competition with Cool FM
- (b) that officers be asked to investigate advertising costs and listener profiles for other local stations including Citibeat, U105 and Downtown Radio and report back to the Board retrospectively.
- (c) That officers investigate identifying an appropriate local celebrity to assist in the launch of the Putting Studio
- (d) that, in order to measure the effectiveness of advertising activities, consideration be given to providing a complimentary ½ hour lesson to anyone producing a copy of the advertisement/flyer promoting the facility
- (e) That officers be asked to add a Mayor's Golf Competition and Dinner into the events calendar

#### **GCB/2008/235 : GOLF LESSONS**

The Acting Marketing Manager advised that, to promote adult and junior golfing lessons within outreach venues throughout the winter months, it was proposed to implement the following marketing campaign in conjunction with the Council's Sports Development Officer:

- **Promotional Stands**  
Promotional stands to be set up in the Ice Bowl and 3 leisure centres to distribute leaflets and provide an information service

- **Estimate Costs**

Production of flyers and posters	£500
Production of penguin stand	£225
- **Posters**

Promotion posters to be displayed within schools, leisure and community venues.

The Acting Marketing Manager advised that the estimated cost of the marketing strategy as outlined above was £725.

RESOLVED: that the Board approve the marketing strategy to promote golfing lessons at outreach venues throughout the winter months, as detailed above, at an estimated cost of £725.

### **GCB/2008/236 : 15 MONTHS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR THE PRICE OF 12 MONTHS**

The Acting Marketing Manager reported that, in order to encourage new members to join the club in the winter months and to coincide promotions with the start of other clubs' membership year, it was proposed to offer potential new members the opportunity to join the club in January and receive 15 months membership for the price of 12. She indicated that the promotion would be marketed as a potential Christmas gift along with golfing lessons throughout November.

The Manager advised that the promotion would continue until March 2009 on a pro-rata basis, i.e. 14 months for the price of 12 and 13 months for the price of 12.

Proposed marketing activities were as follows:

- **Shopping Centre Promotions:**
  - Forestsides Shopping Centre
  - Connswater Shopping Centre
  - Ards Shopping Centre
  - Cost: Approximately £100
- **Door to Door Distribution:**
  - Distribution of promotional literature to 35,000 households in Castlereagh
  - Leaflet production (36K) - £400
  - Distribution - £1,102
- **Leaflet and Poster Distribution:**

Distribution of leaflets and posters to local businesses, churches, community and leisure facilities.

The Acting Manager advised that the estimated cost of the marketing strategy as detailed would be £1,602.

RESOLVED: that the Board approve the marketing strategy as outlined above at an estimated cost of £1,602 but that officers be asked to commence the marketing of the reduced membership package from October in order to maximise uptake.

### **GCB/2008/237 : PENSIONERS' PACKAGE**

The Acting Marketing Manager reported that the following advertisements would be placed to promote the pensioners' special of a round of golf and lunch every Tuesday and Thursday:

- Community Telegraph (East & South) ¼ page - £375
- Reach Full page - £300

The Manager also advised that the promotion could be advertised in the Castlereagh Leisure brochure and within previously outlined adverts in Tee to Green, BT8 and Carryduff Focus.

Councillor Hanvey suggested that personal contact should be made with retirement associations within the borough to promote the package.

RESOLVED: that the Board approve the marketing strategy for the pensioners' golf and lunch special as detailed above at an estimated cost of £675.

### **GCB/2008/238 : CASTLEREAGH LEISURE BROCHURE**

The Acting Marketing Manager advised that a new Castlereagh leisure brochure was currently being designed to promote classes and activities commencing in September within each of the leisure facilities. She reported that the brochure would contain 8 pages and would be distributed to 35,000 homes in Castlereagh and beyond.

The Manager advised that the cost of designing and distributing the brochure would be split between the 5 leisure facilities and Breathe Fitness and that it could also be used to promote the putting studio and golf lessons. She advised that the estimated cost per leisure centre was £600.

RESOLVED: that the Board approve inclusion in the Castlereagh Leisure Brochure details regarding the putting studio and golfing lessons at an estimated cost of £600.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **GCB/2008/239 : PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that the General Committee had been able to obtain public liability insurance on behalf of the golf club and that this was an annual policy which would cover all events being held.

Noted.

#### **GCB/2008/240 : DRESS CODE**

The Chairperson referred to inappropriate or unacceptable clothing being worn on the course and enquired whether the existing dress code could be tightened up. The Director of Leisure Services advised that the dress code was one of the issues identified in the Business Plan. In response to a request by the Chairperson, she indicated that she would ask the Secretary/Manager to ensure that the code was brought to players' attention and enforced where appropriate.

Noted.

(Councillor Jeffers left the meeting at 11.35 am)  
(Councillor Henderson arrived at 11.40 am)

#### **GCB/2008/241 : MEMBERS PLAY OFF THE SECOND TEE**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that, at the General Committee's recent meeting, lengthy discussion had ensued regarding the impact of the new tee on members. She reported that members had voiced concern that well established and proficient golfers were having to play from the new tee box when in fact the original problem had been largely due to the less accurate pay and play members. She advised that members felt that, over recent years, there had been a strong correlation between misdirected golf balls and the nuisance to adjacent properties on Manns Road. She stated that members felt that they should be given the opportunity to continue using the original tee box and that only pay and play members should use the new tee box.

The Director of Leisure Services presented to the Board a series of options for resolving the issues at the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole. After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Henderson, seconded by Councillor Chambers and

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board accept option 1 presented by the Director of Leisure Services which included removal of temporary tee and retention of original tee box; removal of established trees in the middle of the fairway; erection of 30 foot fence for length of the fairway on the right hand side; bunker or water feature on the lower side of the gate on the right hand side; and relocation of shrubs and plants to right hand side of fairway.
- (b) that, until at least the removal of established trees in the middle of the fairway and the erection of a 30 foot fence for length of the fairway on option 1 could be implemented, the temporary tee would continue in place.
- (c) that the Planning Officer be consulted regarding whether further planning permission would be required in respect of fencing proposals.
- (d) that officers be authorised to move as quickly as possible regarding the removal of trees in the centre of the course and that, if health and safety issues required the closure of the hole to carry out this work, that it be scheduled at an appropriate time.
- (e) that the Golf Professional be asked to advise on the appropriate location for the proposed additional bunker/water feature on the right hand side of the fairway
- (f) that, as it was not possible to consult the General Committee which would not be meeting again until October, that the Board's proposals be put to the General Committee's officers and members of the Greens Committee and their input be requested.

**REPORT FROM THE PARKS MANAGER**

**GB/2008/242 : COURSE IMPROVEMENT**

The Parks Manager referred to the Board's request at its July meeting for further details in relation to the potential development of the golf course. He tabled drawings of the proposed development works and reported that these would include:

- **New combined tees for 8 and 3**  
To be constructed behind the existing tees would create a par 5 hole of 491 yards.
- **New 12<sup>th</sup> hole**  
Construction of a new green behind the existing green and a new set of tees behind the existing tees to create a par 5 hole of 515 yards.

- **Artificial Winter Tees**  
To construct artificial winter tees connected to the proposed new tees to provide par 5 golf at these locations while the new tees are growing in and subsequently revert to winter use.
- **Sprinkler System to be Connected into Existing Ring Main**

In response to Members' queries, the Golf Professional was consulted and Members were advised that the specified lengths for Par 5 holes were over 480 yds for men and over 380 yds for ladies.

The Parks Manager advised that it was envisaged that play would be able to continue on the course without disturbance from construction. He also indicated that, taking into account the time for sward to consolidate, it was estimated that it would be approaching two years before the new tees and green would be available for tournament and optimum play. He advised that there may however be exceptional occasions when the new surfaces could be made available.

The Manager reported time scales for the improvement works as follows:

Dec/January 2008	Draw up specification and tender documents
30 January 2009	Tender advert
27 February 2009	Tenders back
	Tender report
20 March 2009	CHBC Board report/meeting
2 April 2009	Pre-contracts meeting
20 April 2009	Commencement (10 week contract period)
27 June 2009	Completion (12 months maintenance period)

The Manager reported that estimates costs for the project were as follows;

Tees	£ 67,500.00
Winter artificial tees	£ 5,000.00
Green	£ 44,000.00
Sprinklers	<u>£ 10,000.00</u>
 Total	 £126,500.00

The Operational Services Manager suggested that the original options and specifications could be used as a starting point for the proposed improvement works.

After discussion it was proposed by councillor Chambers, seconded by Councillor Henderson and

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board approve the following course improvements:
- Construction of combined 8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tees with artificial mats
  - The extension of 12<sup>th</sup> tee and artificial mat
  - Construction of new green behind the existing 12<sup>th</sup> hole
  - Sprinkler systems
- (b) that both design and build of the improvement works be included in the tendering process
- (c) that officers investigate whether it would be cost effective to include the proposed works to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee in the tenders for the other improvement works but that works to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee be given priority.

#### **STAFF IN COMMITTEE**

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 1.30 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE