

## **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, 20 June 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

### **PRESENT:-**

**ALDERMAN:** J White

**COUNCILLORS:** Councillor D Drysdale (in the chair)  
Councillor M Chambers (in at 11.20 am)  
Councillor J Cochrane  
Councillor B Harvey  
Councillor M Henderson (in at 10.25 am)  
Councillor G Robinson (in at 11.10 am)  
Councillor J Spratt (in at 11.10 am)

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

### **GCB/2008/158 : APPOINTMENT OF GOLF PROFESSIONAL**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that interviews had been held for the position of Golf Professional and the successful candidate, Mr Roy Skillen, had been appointed to the post. Councillor Cochrane advised that a local resident had expressed concerns to her about the recruitment process. The Director advised that the process had been fair and transparent.

Noted.

### **GCB/2008/159 : MINUTES OF CASTLEREAGH HILL GOLF CLUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2008 (copy previously circulated)**

Proposed by Alderman White, seconded by Councillor Harvey and

**RESOLVED:-** that the minutes of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held on 16 May 2008 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

### **GCB/2008/160 : COURSE MAINTENANCE (Minute No GCB/2008/134 refers)**

The Parks Manager reported that the urgent sand slitting works to the course were ongoing but that there had been problems with the weather, in that it had been too wet in April and then too dry in May. He advised that, with a good spell of rainfall to germinate the grass, the improvements to the course would become evident.

The Operational Services Manager advised that an overseeder had been purchased and that it would now be possible to carry out overseeding on a more regular basis.

Noted.

### **GCB/2008/161 : TROLLEYS (Minute no. GCB/2008/138 refers)**

In response to a query by Alderman White, the Golf Club Secretary/Manager confirmed that the Club had taken delivery of 16 new trolleys.

She also reported that, following problems with the hired buggies on the course, no hire charges for the past month had been levied.

Noted.

(Councillor Henderson came in at 10.25 am)

### **GCB/2008/162 : HONORARY POSITIONS (Minute No GCB/2008/126 refers)**

The Chairperson reported that he had received a letter from the Golf Club General Committee's Honorary Secretary dated 13 June 2008 requesting that consideration be given to extending honorary life membership of the club to the outgoing President.

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members that the Club's constitution specified criteria for provision of life membership and that one of these could be public service.

After discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Henderson, seconded by Alderman White and

**RESOLVED:** that honorary life membership be offered to the outgoing Club President on the basis of his many years of public service as a Councillor, Alderman and Mayor in Castlereagh Borough Council.

**GCB/2008/163 : DRAFT MINUTES OF GOLF CLUB GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING OF 6 JUNE 2008 (copy previously circulated)**

Noted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**GCB/2008/164 : HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP (Minute No GCGC/2008/79 refers)**

In response to a query by Councillor Cochrane regarding a proposal by the Committee to put forward two lady members for non-playing life membership, the Club Manager/Secretary advised that the Lady Captain had indicated that she would be bringing further information on the matter to the August meeting.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/165 : SPORTSMAN'S DINNER (Minute No GCGC/2008/76 refers)**

In response to a query by Councillor Drysdale, the Club Manager/Secretary confirmed that the issue of an outstanding cheque had now been resolved.

**REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES**

**GCB/2008/166 : 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 the facility was behind the profiled budget up to the end of Period 2. The officer then answered Members' queries with regard to individual cost details.

Noted.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE TRADING ACCOUNTS**

**STAFF IN COMMITTEE**

(Councillor Cochrane left at 10.50 am)

**STAFF OUT OF COMMITTEE**

**GBC/2008/168 : GOLF CLUB INSURANCE**

The Director of Leisure Services advised Members regarding efforts to obtain bespoke insurance cover for the Golf Club. A memo from the Director of Administration & Community Services had been previously circulated providing details of an insurance quotation including exclusions and conditions. Members were advised that the annual premium was £6,847.74 but that there would be a rebate of £1,618.20 under the Council's main insurance policy, meaning that the net annual cost of the Golf Club policy would be £5,2329.54 + IPT. The Director confirmed that funds were available in the insurance budget to meet the additional cover.

The Director of Leisure Services indicated that she had sought clarification on a number of matters. She confirmed that, where a claim was made in relation to contents of lockers, the Council would be liable for the excess. She advised that she was still seeking further information on loss of licence and whether this referred to entertainments or drinks licences and she also wished to confirm that the Club's current alarm system satisfied the insurance company's requirements.

RESOLVED: that the Board agreed to proceed with the bespoke insurance policy for the Golf Club.

(Councillors Robinson and Spratt arrived at 11.10 am)

#### **GCB/2008/169 : DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AT MANNS ROAD**

The Director of Leisure Services reminded Members of previous incidents of damage caused by misdirected golf balls to property at Manns Road and she advised that these incidents had been covered by the Council's insurers. She advised that a recent incident occurred whereby the owner's car had been damaged and the insurers had indicated that they were not willing to cover the damage due to the fact that they felt that the Council had taken all reasonable steps to address the problem.

The Director asked Members to consider making an ex gratia payment to the residents but emphasised that this should not be taken as an admission of liability.

The Operational Services Manager reported that, following a meeting with RPS regarding the ongoing problems of stray golf balls crossing Manns Road, a site meeting had been held with the Course Designer. At this time the Designer advised on creating a forward tee location on the right hand side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> fairway, which would create a par 3 hole for use by pay and play golfers. The Operational Services Manager referred to the proposed extension to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes from par 4 to par 5 and suggested that these would ensure that the course remained challenging.

The Director of Leisure Services suggested that one option would be to make the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole Par 3 for casual players but maintain it as Par 4 for competitions. She also advised that the General Committee would be consulted regarding the proposals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole

The Operational Services Manager reported that the reduction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole from a par 4 to a par 3 would require some levelling works and, as advised by the Course Designer, the erection of a catchment fence on the right hand side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> fairway for health and safety reasons. In response to a query, he advised that the costs of this work would be met within current budgets.

Alderman White stated that he would like to see details of all the proposals being considered for the course so that the Board could plan for the future.

Councillor Spratt suggested that, if an ex gratia payment were being made, officers should take advice from the Council's solicitors to ensure that it was not seen as an admission of liability and that it would not establish a precedent for other incidents.

After discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that an ex gratia payment be made to the occupant of the property at Manns Road ensuring that it did not set a precedent and was not seen as an admission of liability
- (b) That officers proceed with arrangements to relocate the tee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole for pay and play golfers
- (c) that officers report back to the Board regarding proposals to extend the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes

#### **GCB/2008/170 : PROBATION – PAYMENT IN LIEU OF NOTICE**

The Director of Leisure Services reported that previously, where a member of staff was not contracted beyond their period of probation, a payment in lieu of notice was made amounting to two months' wages, giving rise to a financial burden on the facility concerned. She advised that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had now agreed that, where a staff member was not contracted beyond the period of probation, payment in lieu of notice would be for a period of one week only and this would apply across the whole Council and not just within leisure services.

Noted.

(Councillor Chambers arrived at 11.20 am)

## **REPORT FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER, LEISURE & MARKETING**

### **GCB/2008/171 : TEE BOX SIGNAGE**

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that he had met with the Acting PR & Marketing Manager and a volunteer member of the golf club to discuss sale of sponsorship of the tee boxes

He sought retrospective approval from the Board for a discount to be given to sponsors who paid in full for a two-year sponsorship period and also for a Sponsors' Day to be held later in the year. He advised that the discounted rate would be £850 (incl VAT) which, in real terms, was a reduction by the Council of £115.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board approve a discounted sponsorship rate of £850 (incl VAT) for those companies paying in full for two years' sponsorship of the tee boxes
- (b) that the Board approve a Sponsors' Day to be held later in the year and to include a free four ball and light lunch and wine.

### **GCB/2008/172 : ORMEAU GOLF CLUB**

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing reported that Ormeau Golf Club was to close for 6 months to enable a drain to be laid through the course. He advised that he proposed to meet with Ormeau Golf Club's Council to ascertain if they would wish to use Castlereagh Hills Golf Club during that period. He advised that they could play their matches on Sunday and so maintain their integrity as a club.

Alderman White advised that an appropriate membership rate should be charged to members of Ormeau Golf Club for the period during which they used the Club's facilities.

RESOLVED: that the Board agree to offer Ormeau Golf Club the use of facilities at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club whilst its course was undergoing extensive drainage works and that a temporary pro rata membership fee be charged.

## **REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY/MANAGER**

**GCB/2008/173 : MICROCACHE SWIPE CARD SYSTEM**

The Secretary/Manager reported that, following some IT problems, the microcache swipe card system was now working and members were being furnished with their new cards/welcome packs.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/174 : GOLF SCHOOL**

The Secretary/Manager reported that a sign advertising the golf school had been erected and the golf professional had been in contact with 20+ schools in the area that had agreed to distribute flyers to their pupils.

Councillor Chambers referred to her recent attendance at a presentation of prizes at Newtownbreda High School and she advised that 38 pupils in the school were playing golf and taking part in competitions with other schools.

Noted.

**STAFF IN COMMITTEE**

**STAFF OUT OF COMMITTEE**

**GCB/2008/176 : INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING BOOKINGS**

The Secretary/Manager reported that, due to confirmed bookings requiring sole use of the restaurant, it had been decided to close the restaurant on the following dates:

- Wednesday 18 June (Barbeque being hosted by Castlereagh Enterprises for approx 100 people)
- Saturday 21 June (President's Day)

She advised that these bookings would produce a greater income than the restaurant's normal business.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/177 : PROMOTIONS**

The Secretary/Manager reported that, in line with a current promotion, members who introduced a friend to the club were entitled to a pro rata restaurant voucher relating to the type of membership taken out. She advised that this promotion

was only available if the new member paid in full at the time of joining. She stated that she recently had complaints from two members who felt this to be unfair as they had introduced a friend but had not been able to avail of the promotion as their friend had taken out a direct debit. She recommended that vouchers should be honoured to members once their guest/friend had stayed with the club for the year.

The Secretary/Manager also referred to the members' guest rate for pay and play, which at weekends was £15.00 instead of the normal rate of £20.00. She advised that the discounted rate during the week was £13.50, which was only £1.50 less than the normal rate of £15.00. She recommended that the Board approve a pro rata reduction in the discounted pay and play rate for members' guest during the week.

The Secretary/Manager also suggested that, as the course was quiet on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, the Board might consider introducing a £25 package for pensioners, i.e. £10 for a round of golf, £5 buggy hire and £10 restaurant meal.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the promotion providing members with a pro rata restaurant voucher if they introduced a friend to the club who paid the membership fee in full should be extended to those members who introduced friends paying by direct debit with the voucher being honoured once the friend had stayed with the club for a year.
- (b) That a pro rata reduction be introduced for members' guest rate for pay and play during the week equivalent to the reduction currently available at weekends.
- (c) That a £25 package be introduced for pensioners playing on a Tuesday and Thursday mornings giving them a round of golf, buggy hire and a meal in the restaurant.

**GCB/2008/178 : UPDATE ON LATE OPENING – THURSDAYS & SUNDAYS**

The Secretary/Manager reported that the club had commenced late openings on Thursdays and Sundays on a trial basis. She advised that so far business had been slow but that the trial was still in its early stages and promotion of the late openings was ongoing. She undertook to keep the Board advised of progress.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/179 : POWER OUTAGE ACTION PLAN**

The Secretary/Manager reported NIE had advised that there would be a power cut in the area on Monday 16 June 2008. She advised that the restaurant had closed but that reception had remained open for golfers and manual receipts were processed. A copy of the action plan for dealing with all matters arising due to the power cut had been previously circulated.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/180 : BUGGY AND TROLLEY HIRE**

The Secretary/Manager updated Members on buggy and trolley hire for the months of year to date (copy previously circulated).

Noted.

**GCB/2008/181 : UPDATE ON MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS**

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

Noted.

**GCB/2008/182 : GOLF PROFESSIONAL LESSONS**

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

Noted.

**GCB/2008/183 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE COURSE**

Members received a breakdown of the number of Council staff using the course for the year to date (copy previously circulated)

Noted.

**GCB/2008/184 : 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/2008/185 : COMMENT & THANK YOU CARDS**

The Secretary/Manager reported that no comment cards had been received in May.

Noted.

## **REPORT FROM THE ACTING MARKETING AND PR MANAGER**

### **GCB/2008/186 : CHRISTMAS MENUS**

Members were advised that the Christmas and New Year menus were currently being devised for 2008. They were also notified of proposed marketing activities to be implemented from July onwards to promote the Christmas packages, as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Date</b>
Road side banner	Available from last year	July
Promotional brochures A4 folded to A5	Graphic design = £70 Print of 40,000 = £1,065	July
Mail shot to local businesses and GUI societies	Postage	July/August
Mail shot to club members	Postage	August
Door to door distribution in the Castlereagh area based on delivery of 35,000	£1,030.71	August/September
Posters for distribution in community and leisure facilities	£50	August

RESOLVED: that approval be given to the marketing expenditure as detailed above to promote Christmas and New Year packages.

## **REPORT FROM THE PARKS MANAGER**

### **GB/2008/187 : COURSE MAINTENANCE**

The Parks Manager reported on progress in relation to sand slit works. He also advised that discussions had taken place with Mr J Eager regarding Operational Services Unit's proposed improvements to the course, including:

#### Fairways

- The fairways to be reduced in width
- Fairways to be shaped, taking into account the topography of the landscape
- Fairways to commence at a distance of approx 50 yds from the tees

- Par 3 holes to have no fairway cut except one stripe from the green to the tee

#### Rough

- Height of cut to be increased
- Semi rough to be brought closer to the greens
- Semi rough to start closer to the tees to improve definition

#### Green Approaches

- Semi rough to come right up to the green
- Each green to have its own character dependent on the manner of mowing in the approaches

#### General

- Winter tee platforms to be used December-February
- Ropes and stakes to be used in all traffic areas during the winter period

The Parks Manager advised that these works would be carried out on an incremental basis and within the existing budget.

Councillor Spratt referred to weed growth and some untidiness around the club house and enquired about levels of maintenance staff and working patterns. The Parks Manager explained that in recent weeks priority had been given to the sand slit work and the manual irrigation of fairways and greens. He further pointed out that the problems referred to by Councillor Spratt had now been addressed through the provision of additional agency staff.

After discussion it was

#### RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board agree to the proposed developments for profiling and improving the course
- (b) that staff be instructed to prioritise care and maintenance of the areas adjacent to the club house

#### **GCB/2008/188 : IRRIGATION OF THE SIX PARKLAND GREENS**

The Parks Manager reported that the course's irrigation system serviced the USGA greens and tees but that the recent dry spell had highlighted the need to connect the parkland greens up to the new system. This would mean that watering would take place at night enabling a better uptake of water and not interfering with play during the day.

The Manager advised that a ring main had been installed around the course during construction and it was proposed to connect this system to what remained of the old system around the individual greens. He advised that a quote had been obtained from Drilling and Pumping Supplies Ltd, who had installed the new system and were the sole suppliers in Northern Ireland, as follows:

Supply and install pipe work and fittings to link 6 greens to new system  
Supply and install 300 metres signal cable, 6 solenoid valves and fittings  
to make the old greens fit into the automatic control system  
Total cost = £7,985.00

RESOLVED: That the Board accept the quotation in the sum of £7,985 from Drilling and Pumping Supplies Ltd to upgrade and extend the irrigation system as detailed above.

#### **GCB/2008/189 : DISPLAY NOTICES ON GATES**

The Parks Manager reported that the Honorary Secretary of the General Committee had been advised that members had been playing golf at 9.00 pm. The Manager confirmed that it was normal procedure for the gates to be closed at dusk and, accordingly, the closing times varied. It had been suggested that a notice be displayed at the entrance indicating that the gates would be locked at a specific time.

RESOLVED: that the Board authorise officers to procure suitable signage to be displayed at the entrance gates advising of closing times.

#### **GCB/2008/190 : TARMACING OF PATHWAY**

The Parks Manager advised that the pathway from the 1<sup>st</sup> green and 9<sup>th</sup> tee to Mann's Road crossing was the main path connecting both sides of the course. He indicated that it had been constructed with stone and dust and that this type of pathway required regular maintenance. He advised that the General Committee had considered this matter and felt that the construction of a tarmac path would improve the aesthetics of the course. The Treasurer had proposed that, if there was any under spend at the end of the financial year, it should be allocated to these improvement works.

RESOLVED: that officers be asked to source estimates for the tarmacing of the pathway from the 1<sup>st</sup> tee and 9<sup>th</sup> green up to the Mann's Road crossing.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **GCB/2008/191 : RESTAURANT CLOSURES IN JULY**

The Secretary/Manager advised that the restaurant would be closing early on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2008, closed on 12 July 2008 and would be open from 10 am to 5 pm on 13 July 2008.

Noted.

**GCB/2008/192 : GREASE TRAP**

The Secretary/Manager advised that problems were continuing with the grease trap and it was proposed to replace it entirely. She advised that the current system was a grease converter and not an actual grease trap. She stated that the current converter was managed with chemicals and the replacement trap would not require these. She indicated that the replacements costs of the trap could be done within budget and would not incur additional costs once installed.

Noted.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE