

CASTLEREAGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the proceedings of the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting held, in committee, in Castlereagh Hills Golf Club on Friday, 19 August 2011, at 10.00 am

ALDERMEN: M Henderson MBE (from 10.30 am)
S Duncan (in the Chair)
G Robinson (from 10.28 am)

COUNCILLORS: M Chambers
D Drysdale (from 10.15 am)
C Hall (from 10.20 am)
B Hanvey
T Morrow
J Spratt (until 11.50 am)
J White (until 10.30 am)

IN ATTENDANCE:- Chief Executive, General Manager Leisure & Marketing, Operational Services Manager, Parks Manager and Members' Services Officer

APOLOGIES: Councillor Sandford and Director of Leisure Services

GCB/2011/172 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Noted.

GCB/2011/173 : MINUTES OF SPECIAL CASTLEREAGH HILL GOLF CLUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2011 & CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2011 (copies previously circulated)

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Special Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting of 26 May 2011 and Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Board meeting of 17 June 2011 be adopted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

GCB/2011/174 : REFURBISHMENT OF THE TOILET BLOCK (Minute GCB/2011/140 refers)

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised that the refurbishment of the toilet block at the Golf Club had now been completed.

Noted.

**GCB/2011/175 : REQUEST FOR HONORARY HOUSE MEMBERSHIP
(Minute GCB/2011/152 refers)**

This matter was still ongoing and an update would be brought to a future meeting of the Golf Club Board.

Noted.

**REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES
(copy previously circulated)**

REPORT FROM THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES MANAGER

GCB/2011/176 : FINANCIAL TRADING ACCOUNTS – OPERATIONAL SERVICES

The Parks Manager tabled the financial accounts for Members' consideration and advised that the income and expenditure figures were coming in within budget.

Noted.

GCB/2011/177 : REVIEW OF WORK COMPLETED ON THE COURSE THROUGHOUT THE PREVIOUS MONTH

The Parks Manager informed Members that the new 12th green had been fully operational since early July. The old green had subsequently been dismantled and the turf, root zone and drainage stone re-used elsewhere on the golf course.

Noted.

GCB/2011/178 : ANTICIPATED IMPROVEMENTS / WORKS FOR THE FORTHCOMING MONTHS

The Parks Manager reported on anticipated improvements/works for the forthcoming months as follows:

- Spray fairways with sulphate of iron and nitrogen feed
- Heavy scarification on greens

Noted.

GCB/2011/179 : COURSE CLOSURE DURING THE MONTH

Members were pleased to note that there had been no course closures to report since the previous Golf Club Board meeting in June.

Noted.

GCB/2011/180 : COMPLAINTS / RESPONSES / COMPLIMENTS

The Parks Manager advised that no complaints had been received in relation to the golf course during the month of July.

Members acknowledged the work put in by the greens staff to maintain the golf course in such an excellent condition.

Councillor Chambers complimented the floral displays and the Chairman commended the excellent appearance of the Golf Club entrance.

The Parks Manager thanked Members for their kind comments and advised he would pass on the Golf Club Board's thanks to the staff involved.

Noted.

GCB/2011/181 : COMMUNICATION / WORKS CONDUCTED IN LIAISON WITH THE GREENS COMMITTEE

To date, there had been no communication/works conducted in liaison with the Greens Committee.

Noted.

GCB/2011/182 : UPDATE ON INCIDENT – HAMILTON SHED

The Parks Manager outlined details of a recent incident in which a member of the Golf Club staff had challenged 3 intruders who had driven in to the Hamilton Shed and were in the process of stealing a van, a Gator and a trailer. He went on to state that this was the first time that an incident of this nature had happened whilst Golf Club staff were on duty.

(Councillor Drysdale entered the meeting at 10.15 am).

Members discussed the matter at length and the Chief Executive advised that a review of security procedures was being undertaken by both Council and the PSNI. This review would consider the issues of personal alarms, security at the Golf Club yard, provision of CCTV, etc.

Members unanimously praised the efforts of the employee involved who had acted in the best interests of the Council.

The Chief Executive and the Chairman informed Members that as the employee was on duty at the Golf Club that morning, they were intending to meet with him after the meeting.

(Councillor Hall entered the meeting at 10.20 am).

RESOLVED:- That, a letter would be forwarded by the OSU Manager to the employee concerned, on behalf of the Golf Club Board, following the recent incident at Hamilton Shed.

REPORT FROM THE CAPITAL PROJECTS OFFICER

GCB/2011/183 : CAPITAL PROJECTS – PAR 5, 8th & 12th

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing confirmed that a completed Operations & Maintenance manual, including a Health & Safety file, had now been received.

Noted.

GCB/2011/184 : NEW FEATURE ENTRANCE

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing confirmed that a completed Operations & Maintenance manual, including a Health & Safety file, had now been received.

Noted.

GCB/2011/185 : COURSE DRAINAGE, MAIN DRAINAGE AND SAND SLITTING

The Parks Manager confirmed that the contractor had successfully completed the first stage of the course drainage and main drainage. Sand slitting had commenced on 6 August 2011 and was estimated to last for 6 weeks, weather permitting.

Approval was sought to suspend works on Friday, 26 August to host a long-standing charity booking.

RESOLVED: That, approval be granted for the drainage and sand slitting works at the golf course to be suspended to enable the full golf course to host a charity event on 26th August 2011.

GCB/2011/186 : FORTHCOMING PATH IMPROVEMENT AND ASSOCIATED WORKS TENDER

Tenders were advertised in the local press on 5 August 2011, with a return date of 2 September, at which time the Tender Review Panel would assess the tenders and report back to the September meeting of the Golf Club Board with a recommendation to appoint a contractor.

Noted.

REPORT FROM LEISURE SERVICES

GCB/2011/187 : FINANCIAL TRADING ACCOUNTS

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing tabled the financial trading accounts for Period 4 (July) and pointed out that the accounts showed favourable variances.

Councillor Spratt felt that the trading accounts were not an accurate portrayal of the variances and he expressed his concern that £26k had come out of the corporate legal budget instead of the Golf Club Board's budget. He reiterated that the Council's legal budget was allocated to cover legal costs throughout the Council and was not specifically for the use of the Golf Club Board. He referred to the appointment of the Consultant to look at the 2nd hole and sought an explanation why he had been instructed to review the whole course, as he felt that this action had been totally unnecessary at this stage.

Councillor Chambers concurred and suggested that the Council's legal budget should be apportioned to each of the Directorate so that they would have to justify all expenditure towards legal expenses.

(Alderman Robinson arrived at the meeting at 10.28 am).

The Chief Executive referred to the difficulty in anticipating legal requirements, but he advised that Officers would take Members' comments on board and report back on the matter.

(Alderman Henderson arrived at the meeting at 10.30 am).

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing stated that the Consultant had originally been tasked by the solicitor to address the alleged risks on the 2nd hole, which initially involved shortening the hole to a Par 3. As a result of shortening

the hole it was necessary for him to look at the whole course to see if compensating works elsewhere could be found to maintain the course challenge. It was whilst conducting this work that he raised further safety concerns and it would have been negligent of him not to have raised these issues with the Council and this had been reported to the Board.

Alderman Robinson asked if the two Par 5 holes would compensate a shortening of the 2nd hole, to which the Officer responded that they would go some way towards this however it did not detract from the fact that there were now two Par 3 holes, back to back which was far from an ideal situation.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing went on to state that with regard to the legal budget, capital provision had been made for the course rectification works which included the associated legal expenses. At this stage it was not possible to allocate the legal expenses to the capital budget, but this was the intention and then to seek full recovery through legal action.

(The Mayor, Councillor White, retired from the meeting at 10.30 am).

Members were advised that there was an overspend in the salaries & wages accounts due to the Course Ranger having to monitor the 2nd hole and the necessity to provide holiday cover, which had been absorbed.

The General Manager stated that there had been a significant rise in pay and play income during the month. In response to a question from Alderman Robinson as to why this had happened, the General Manager stated that he believed this could be attributed to the excellent work of the Golf Club Secretary Manager and the Golf Professional in promoting the facility; the packages with the Golf Club Restaurant which had been put in place; and also the excellent condition of the golf course. He reminded Members that the current drainage works and closure of the back nine will present a different picture next month however hopefully this is a short term pain for long term gain.

Alderman Robinson asked how the wages overspend would be absorbed.

The General Manager responded that those budgets which had overspends would be accommodated through favourable variance in income elsewhere such as pay and play which had overachieved. Furthermore, although the additional Course Ranger was no longer monitoring the 2nd hole, he would be required to monitor impact of the new fence, once it was erected. Any legal challenge would seek to recover all costs including those associated with monitoring the 2nd hole.

Councillor Morrow wished to congratulate the staff involved for the excellent condition of the course and the hard work put in place by Officers to generate an increase in income, especially in light of the current economic climate.

The General Manager commended the excellence of the Golf Club staff and he reiterated that the problems with the 2nd hole had been a legacy issue which Officers were endeavouring to resolve.

RESOLVED:- That, Officers will take on board Members' concerns and review the Council's legal budget and will report back on the various options.

GCB/2011/188 : UPDATE ON WORK WITH CLUB REGARDING OPTION OF OPERATING UNDER A CLUB LICENCE

The Chief Executive advised Members that in line with previous Board approval, Officers had met with representatives of the Club, GUI and ILGU to discuss the issue of the Club licence. It had been agreed that the Club would submit a three year 'Business Plan' to support their proposals for funding arrangements. The Director of Leisure Services and Director of Finance had met with the Club in July offering support in relation to supporting their preparation of a Business Plan. Officers had subsequently reminded the Club of their obligation to furnish the Golf Club Board with the financial forecast, in keeping with the existing agreement.

Alderman Robinson suggested that there may be merit in writing to the former President of the Golf Club updating him on the situation.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Spratt, seconded by Councillor Chambers and unanimously agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Officers write to the Golf Club requesting that an acceptable three year Business Plan regarding the option of the current Club operating under a Licence must be approved by the Golf Club Board by 1st December 2011.
- (b) The Club be also advised that if the three year Business Plan has not been approved and a new Constitution and terms of a Licence agreed by 1st December 2011, then the Council will implement procedures to disband the Club and invite Expressions of Interest in relation to the formation of a new Golf Club
- (b) Officers write to the former President of the Golf Club to update him in relation to the matter.

GCB/2011/189 : POWER SUPPLY TO CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB

A response from NIE had been received in relation to the difficulties experienced by the Golf Club in relation to the interruption of power supply. NIE outlined that various works had been undertaken in the area which had impacted on the facility's power supply but the problem had now been resolved as the works had been completed.

RESOLVED:- That Officers continue to monitor the power supply, from a user perspective and if necessary, further representation be made to NIE.

GCB/2011/190 : UPDATE ON COURSE RECTIFICATION WORKS

Members were advised that the nuisance of golf balls leaving the course adjacent to the 2nd hole had continued despite the original claim of nuisance to one adjacent property (No. 15) being successfully addressed and abated. At that time there had been the threat of an interim injunction and, upon seeking legal advice, an independent expert had been engaged.

During his review, the independent expert had identified other areas of the course and whilst he had recommended a wide range of works, in-house risk assessments had been completed and specific works had been carried out to reduce the risk. Ultimately, the long-term remedial works would need to be progressed through litigation with the original course designers.

However, a nuisance had since developed to different properties adjacent to the 2nd hole resulting in an incident in which a stray ball had damaged a roof tile, but which had been repaired by the Council at minimal cost.

In an attempt to abate the nuisance to this particular property, there had been a proposal to further move the temporary tee box and shorten the hole to 130m par 3. In so doing, there was a need identified to install a net to protect another property adjacent to the second fairway. Before the tee box could be further moved, the safety net must be in place. Work was underway to erect the net and consultation had taken place with the occupants, however they had since objected to the size and location of the safety net. Following a site meeting with the residents on 5 August 2011 to discuss the objections to the net and also the direct implication of the fact that without the net, the tee box could not be re-located, the Director had received two letters from the residents requesting that the hole be closed until the matter was addressed. The Director of Leisure had issued an immediate reply outlining the position of the Council, the works completed to date and the efforts undertaken in the wake of recent events.

Following the site visit, the Independent Expert had now confirmed that a re-configured net could be installed of a similar dimension, but in an adjacent location. A further site meeting was held with the Golf Club Board Chairman, and Vice-Chairman on 9 August 2011 and a proposal outlined to the adjacent

residents objecting to the original net. They subsequently accepted the proposed reconfiguration of the net.

A 'without prejudice' meeting had also recently been held with the consultants, RPS, who had managed the design of the course extension, but a resolution to the flawed design, to the Council's satisfaction, had not been achieved.

The General Manager Leisure & Marketing advised the members of the stages throughout the process which could lead to a court hearing and an outline of associated costs.

The Chief Executive suggested that he would meet with the Director of Leisure Services and the Council's Solicitors to ascertain an assessment of the current situation and an approximate breakdown of the potential costs of each stage, which would enable the Golf Club Board to assess the risks.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Morrow, seconded by Councillor Spratt, and

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Members note the receipt of the two letters from the Mann's Road residents detailing complaints concerning the 2nd hole;
- (b) Reconfiguration of the planned net be granted retrospective approval;
- (c) Members note the details of the incident regarding the damaged roof tile to the adjacent property and the unplanned expenditure in carrying out this repair;
- (d) Approval be granted for the anticipated overspend in respect of the associated works in addressing the nuisance;
- (e) Officers be authorised to contact the Council's Solicitors to clarify the current situation and obtain an approximate breakdown of potential legal costs; and
- (f) Officers continue to monitor the situation following the erection of the new fence to ascertain if this measure resolves the nuisance of golf balls leaving the 2nd hole.

GCB/2011/191 : INSURANCE CLAIM

Members were notified of an overspend on the Miscellaneous Cost Code due to an insurance claim for damage to a resident's car at 15 Manns Road in 2010.

This claim had been subsequently settled and amounted to £322.25 which was under the Council's insurance excess amount of £500.

RESOLVED:- That, retrospective approval be granted for the payment of £322.25 in relation to damage to a resident's car at 15 Manns Road in 2010.

GCB/2011/192 : SPORTS MATTERS

Members referred to the Officer's report regarding the recent approval of the new Leisure Services Strategy, in particular the specific references to the Sport Matters – Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019.

RESOLVED:- That, approval be granted for the issue of a letter to SOLACE, reflecting the content of the Leisure Strategy for Castlereagh Borough Council.

(Alderman Robinson temporarily left the meeting at 11.35 am).

GCB/2011/193 : CASTLEREAGH HILLS GOLF CLUB FACILITY PLAN 2011-2012

The Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Facility Plan 2011-2012 had been previously circulated for Members' information.

Alderman Henderson welcomed the plan and paid tribute to the amount of time and work that Officers had undertaken to prepare the Plan.

Following a proposal from Alderman Henderson, which was seconded by Alderman Duncan, it was

RESOLVED:- That, the Castlereagh Hills Golf Club Facility Business Plans 2011-2012 be approved.

GCB/2011/194 : CATERING ARRANGEMENTS – EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Two applicants had successfully met the criteria following the advertisement for Expressions of Interest to provide catering and hospitality services at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club. They had subsequently been asked to forward a copy of their respective business plans by 2nd September 2011 for review and consideration.

Councillor Spratt proposed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Alderman Henderson and Councillor Hanvey sit on the assessment panel with Officers to review and consider the business plans, which was seconded by Councillor Drysdale.

RESOLVED:- That, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Alderman Henderson and Councillor Hanvey comprise the Assessment Panel with officers to review and consider the business plans submitted by the two applicants who had met the criteria, following the recent advertisement in the press for Expressions of Interest to provide catering and hospitality services at Castlereagh Hills Golf Club.

GCB/2011/195 : SPORT NI GRANT

Members were advised that, in liaison with the Club and assistance from the Economic Development Officer and Grants Officer, it was hoped that an application for funding to Sport NI would be submitted.

Permission was being sought to permit the Secretary Manager to make proactive decisions and agree rates in line with this grant due to the quick turn around from application open and close dates, as there was a strong likelihood that the grant application would be successful.

RESOLVED:- That, the Secretary/Manager be authorised to progress the application for a Sport NI grant and agree rates, with retrospective approval from Members.

(Alderman Robinson re-entered the meeting at 11.43 am).

GCB/2011/196 : RECEIPT OF FRAUDULENT CHEQUE

A fraudulent cheque to the value of £360 had been accepted by the Clubhouse for the sale of golf balls. This was the action of a high profile fraudster who had targeted 12 other Golf Clubs across the province.

Following on from the incident, Golf Club staff had completed statements with the PSNI, and CCTV footage had been passed on. The fraudster had now been identified and the PSNI were preparing a case against him. A claim could not be made against the Council insurance so in the event that the equipment is not recoverable, the Board will be asked to write-off the loss.

A follow-up investigation was being conducted in the hope that Council procedures could be reviewed to prevent a reoccurrence of similar incidents and Members would be kept updated in relation to the progress.

Noted.

GCB/2011/197 : EAGLES NEST ON THE HILLS – MEAL DEAL PARTNERSHIP

Members were advised that the restaurant had remained open during the holiday period and feedback had, in general, been very positive.

A Summer Meal Deal package to boost income on a Tuesday and Thursday had been introduced which had been very successful and to date 159 of these deals had been sold.

Noted.

GCB/2011/198 : EVENTS CALENDAR/PLANS

Due to the temporary lease situation, Eagles Nest Restaurant had not progressed marketing or secured many contracts with companies. However, it was envisaged that the Business Plans submitted during the Expressions of Interest process would address these measures and that the Golf Club facility would benefit from a marketing drive once the successful restaurateur had been appointed.

Noted.

GCB/2011/199 : GOLF EVENTS CALENDAR/CLUB COMMUNICATION

- Juvenile Development

The Golf Club Secretary/Manager and Golf Professional, in association with the Juvenile Convenor, had progressed a structured development plan for the Juvenile Section of the Club and correspondence had now been distributed enclosing the list of events.

The events, to date, had been well received and supported.

- Ladies Club

The Ladies Section, under the guidance of the Lady Vice-Captain, had worked hard to ensure that the 3 female juvenile members had received a handicap. A successful golfing event had been held on 30 July 2011 which had attracted many visitors and competitors and had raised approximately £600.

- Events Committee

It had been agreed that the Events Committee would remain in place and would meet in September to plan for the 2012 Events Calendar.

- Welcome Letters

Both sections of the Club had now forwarded Officers an informative Introduction Letter for inclusion in the welcome pack for New Members.

Noted.

GCB/2011/200 : ALARM CALL-OUTS

There was one call-out in July 2011.

Noted.

GCB/2011/201 : CLUBHOUSE COMPLAINTS, RESPONSES & COMPLIMENTS

Compliments had been received via e-mail and thank you cards to both the Parks and Clubhouse staff from the Lady Captain following her Captain's Day.

Noted.

GCB/2011/202 : REQUESTS FOR COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS

In line with current procedures, a number of complimentary tickets had been issued and details were circulated relating to complimentary tickets issued in excess of the agreed in-house authorisation of two tickets.

RESOLVED:- That, Officers ensure that future details of requests for complimentary tickets from Elected Representatives clarify the reason for their issue and what they are being used for.

GCB/2011/203 : CHGC MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Noted.

GCB/2011/204 : REVIEW EXIT FORMS

Noted.

GCB/2011/205 : BUGGY & TROLLEY HIRE

Noted.

GCB/2011/206 : NUMBER OF STAFF USING THE COURSE

Noted.

REPORT FROM THE GOLF PROFESSIONAL

GCB/2011/207 : CASTLEREAGH CHALLENGE CUP – FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2011 – EVENT REVIEW

The Golf Professional advised that, despite adverse weather conditions, this event had been extremely successful and many of the Club Members had supported the event and assisted the Golf Professional and Club staff during the day.

He updated Members on the sponsorship which had been secured and the organisations which had supported the workstations.

The Golf Professional sought approval for continued delivery of tri-golf sessions within the schools to secure the support of this annual event and the Club Juvenile Development Programme.

Alderman Robinson referred to the golf studio and asked that the Capital Projects Officer expedite its progress.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (a) Members approve the continued delivery of tri-golf sessions within the schools to secure the support of this annual event and the Club Juvenile Development Programme.
- (b) The Capital Projects Officer expedites the golf studio work.

(Councillor Spratt retired from the meeting at 11.50 am.)

GCB/2011/208 : JUVENILE DEVELOPMENT – GIRLS

Presently there were 2 girls in the Juvenile Club and it was proposed that next year's Development Programme would try to increase this number. This was a key objective within the Sport NI grant application and retrospective approval had already been sought to permit the Golf Professional to progress a membership package/offer to develop this section of the Club.

RESOLVED:- That Members approve Golf Professional to progress a membership package/offer to develop Girls section of the Club

GCB/2011/209 : PREVIOUS MONTH - LESSONS PROGRAMME/INCOME REVIEW

Noted.

GCB/2011/210 : LADIES COACHING/IGLU COACHING

The ladies coaching courses had been well attended with additional courses now scheduled for September. To date, 9 Ladies Coaching sessions had been delivered by the Golf Professional this season.

The Golf Professional stated that due to the success of this programme, consideration was being given to the introduction of a Beginners Coaching Session for Men.

Noted.

GCB/2011/211 : JUVENILE SUMMER PROGRAMME

Members were advised that presently there were 42 juvenile summer members and 48 juvenile members.

The Golf Professional sought permission to offer the 42 juvenile summer members a package as full member at a cost of £60.00 for a 6 month membership until the end of March 2012, which would enable them to avail of a GUI handicap.

Following discussion, Members agreed that it be

RESOLVED:- That, approval be granted for a 6-monthly membership, at a cost of £60.00, to be offered to the 42 summer juvenile members until the end of March 2012.

The Golf Club to be awarded £15.00 from each membership (ie. payable on a pro-rata basis) on the proviso that they pay the GUI fees to enable each of the summer juvenile members to obtain a GUI handicap.

GCB/2011/212 : CSAW – OVER 60'S GOLF LESSONS AND MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE

During May and June, 30 people availed of the CSAW lottery-funded package. It was hoped that the Golf Club would be included in this funding opportunity for the coming year and a request to increase the package and additional funding was hopeful.

Members were advised that the commitment and delivery of this project had secured £2,250 income to the Golf Club and an addition £300 for catering provision supplied by Eagles Nest.

Noted.

As there was no further business, the meeting concluded at 12.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE