



Rushmere Golf Club
Course Management Policy Document

Overview.

The purpose of this policy document is to set out details of the Management of the Golf Course at Rushmere Golf Club (RGC), which has been approved by the Management Committee and made freely available to all members to keep them well informed.

This is to be used as a working document, but designed to stand the test of time. Any future revisions must be approved by the Committee after due consideration. Where necessary, expert opinion should be obtained internally and externally.

*Many of the problems inherent in golf course management were addressed by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R&A) in its publication 'The Way Forward' issued in 1998. One of its key recommendations was that **Clubs should formulate and publish their own course management policy document, working to a five-year plan at least.** This approach has been strongly endorsed by both the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) and the English Golf Union (EGU).*

*To ensure such long-term policy is put into effect, it is essential therefore, that this **Course Management Policy Document** should be drawn up, and approved by the Management Committee. The aim of this policy document is to set out guidelines for the sympathetic and proper management of Rushmere Golf Course and all its grounds/associated lands to ensure implementation of a structured and clear forward plan for the ongoing improvement and enjoyment of members and visitors to Rushmere Golf Course.*



The History of Rushmere Common.

Some 4500 years ago the first Neolithic people moved into East Anglia, settled and cleared areas of the "wild wood" for agriculture. Where the trees had been growing on the acid sands the nutrient levels soon became depleted and the land was left for domestic and wild grazing. The grazing prevented the regeneration of tree cover and encouraged the growth of heathers and acid grasses. Many species, particularly invertebrates such as solitary wasps, parasitic bees and silver studded blue butterfly evolved to make use of this habitat of a tight grazed sward with areas of bare ground which quickly warm up on sunny days.

While wool and mutton were valuable crops and labour costs were low, heath land grazing was economic and continued. Other crops were taken from the heath, heather and bracken was cut for bedding and thatch, gorse and turf was taken for fuel, those trees that did survive the grazing were collected for construction materials and fire wood, sand and gravel were dug for construction. Sheep were often folded overnight on adjacent arable fields where their dung would improve the fertility of the soil. All these activities mirrored the effects of grazing, trees were prevented from regenerating and nutrients were continuously exported from the heath, creating conditions in which the heath land flora could thrive. Heath land products became so vital to the survival of village communities that the right to take from the heath became regulated and rigidly defined as Common Rights, a very complex branch of law.

When sheep grazing became uneconomic most other heath land management ceased and the only regular management would have been in the form of rabbit grazing and burning. Many of the village heaths have a history of annual gorse fires, with a block of gorse scrub being set on fire each bonfire night. This would create areas of acid grass and young gorse for small scale sheep and goat grazing and would prevent gorse becoming the dominant vegetation on a site. Old gorse stands are very easily set alight and this practice might also have reduced the risk of accidental summer fires.

It is probable that what is now Rushmere Heath existed as some form of common land as far back as the Middle Ages. We know that in 1763 and again in 1766 the common was used for public execution.

The common has been used by the Army on many occasions and as far back as 1804, Sir James Craig had 11,000 men under arms on the common. The boundary of the common has been slowly eroded over the years, although the Commoners have often shown great courage and determination in resisting encroachment. For at least two hundred years, the ownership of the soil was claimed by one of the local Manors. The commoners resisted the claims of the Lord of the Manor, the Marquis of Bristol, and he tried to prosecute some of the Commoners. A prominent champion of the commoners' rights was a character named Nathaniel Abblit. In 1861, he had a stone tablet erected on the outside of his cottage, setting out the rights of the Commoners. The tablet can still be seen today on the wall of the Baptist Chapel. The first Commoners Committee was formed in 1881, mainly to resist the claims of the Marquis of Bristol. In 1895, the first Ipswich Golf Club was formed and an agreement was made between the Commoners Committee and the Club. The Club agreed to pay £30.00 a year for the Commoners non-interference and co-operation. This agreement was terminated when the Club transferred to Purdis Heath, but shortly afterwards, in 1927, the Rushmere Golf Club was formed. Although the ownership of the Common has been the subject of much debate over many years, in 1958 the title was purchased by Mr. Hugh Law, Chairman of the Commoners Committee, for £500.00. He then sold it to the Commoners for the same price. The title is held in trust by the Trustees and the conduct of the Commoners' affairs is regulated by the Trust Deed. In 1967 the common was registered as a common under the Commons Registration Act. After that time, all commoners' rights not registered by individual commoners were lost.

- **Course Description.**

Golf has been played on Rushmere Heath since the late 1800s when it was the home of the Ipswich Golf Club. In 1927 when the majority of the members elected to move to nearby privately owned land, a public appeal and donations from founder members enabled Rushmere Golf Club to be formed.

The heath is a fine natural golf course situated just on the outskirts of Ipswich. Most holes are bounded by gorse and there are many fine old oak trees providing not only natural habitat for birds and other wildlife but demanding care and accuracy from many of the tees. The course is over 6200 yards and enjoys the space and hole by hole separation afforded by the expanse of the heath. Over 400 acres of Rushmere Heath is registered common land, administered by a committee and, in addition to the 15 holes rented from the commoners, the club privately owns 17 acres which constitute the 3rd, 4th and (part of the) 5th holes. (See attached map)

The clubhouse, formerly an old junior school building, was bought by the club in 1928 and has been extended over the years into the spacious and welcoming venue enjoyed by members and visitors today. Rushmere has earned the reputation of being a fiercely competitive members club with a very strong playing presence in its Men's, Ladies, Junior and Veteran sections. The nature of the course demands accuracy and good course management skills and this probably explains the high number of below 5 handicap members ever present at Rushmere Golf Club.

There is no finer golfing country anywhere and Rushmere provides a splendid test for tiger and rabbit alike. Above all the club is welcoming, plays host to many top competitions and charity events and offers a great golfing experience to visitors, societies or any player looking for a true golfing challenge.

- **RGC Roles & Responsibilities.**

General.

The management of the course involves a wide range of people and it is essential, therefore, that their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined at the outset.

The Management Committee.

The Management Committee is responsible for the overall direction and control of the Club, including forward policy, plans, financial control, course maintenance, course standards and improvements, recommending any significant course changes, the submission of annual budgets, as well as long term capital expenditure plans and projects. They will meet regularly and keep minutes, which will be available for the next Committee meeting.

The Management Committee and General Manager should establish management controls to ensure that the policies laid down are implemented, and that the years Course Budget and Capital Expenditure Program are monitored, including any major variations approved by the Committee. They are also responsible for ensuring that, whenever possible, the course is available for play by Members, guests, visitors and Societies.

The Greens Committee and Head Green Keeper.

The Greens Committee in conjunction with the Head Green Keeper is responsible for the implementation of this Policy in all its aspects, which includes but is not limited to:

- Planning maintenance schedules in relation to fixture lists and societies.
- Liaising with the Management Committee Chairman on any problem areas.
- Machinery maintenance and repair.
- Planning and preparation of annual and long term budgets in respect of course management.
- Attending all Management Committee meetings and reporting on agenda items.
- Maintenance schedules and records relating to machinery and staff.
- Personnel – Effective man management skills, training, discipline, allocation of daily tasks, and staff performance appraisals.

- Implementation of the Club's Health and Safety policy.
- Purchase and storage of fertilizers, dressings, pesticides, fungicides and chemicals.
- Storage and safety of all equipment and materials.
- Ecology.
- Green staff holiday planning. (In conjunction with the General Manager)

- **Resources.**

Staff.

The agreed staffing level includes the following:

- Head Green Keeper
- Green Keepers – 2

The Management Committee shall undertake an annual salary review for all staff.

- **Finance.**

The Committee is committed to the allocation of sufficient RGC funds to achieve the policies set out in this document.

- **Green keeping facilities.**

Green keeper bungalow.

- Kitchen/Diner
- Office (Head Green Keeper)
- Single toilet, Urinals, & shower
- Drying Room

Green keeper's utilities.

- 20ft container
- Petrol Pump.
- Bunded diesel tank with barrier protection.
- Tractor Sheds (Three main doors and Open Space).
- Workshop (Storage of all mechanical tools)
- 1st Garage (Storage small Iseki & Bunker Rake).
- 2nd Garage (Storage for Two Buggies).
- 3rd Garage (Storage Toro MDE).
- Locker Shed for Members.
- Open Shed for Top Dressing Storage
- Green Porta Cabin (Storage of Chemical and Gardening Equipment).
- Pump House for Irrigation.
- Irrigation Tank for storage of water.
- Wash Down area in front of pump house.

- **Machinery and Equipment.**

The Greens Committee regards the provision of the necessary machinery and equipment as an essential pre-requisite in achieving the policies set out in this document. To ensure this, a rolling five-year lease plan for the most used equipment with 'Toro' is in place and the plan is submitted for the Management Committees approval as part of the annual budget cycle. There are some less intensively used machinery owned by the club which is maintained by Green staff and is reviewed annually. Additionally, as part of the annual depreciation exercise, all equipment will be reviewed and disposals made as necessary.

- **Training.**

Training is an essential element in achieving well-trained and motivated staff. RGC is committed to help and encourage training and education through approved colleges. All permanent green staff are encouraged to obtain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ's) in Green-keeping to the maximum of their individual abilities. Staff are also encouraged to become members of BIGGA, and to attend discussion groups organised by the Association.

- **Objective.**

The objectives will necessarily alter as year's progress. The objective is that RGC golf course should retain its position as one of the best maintained and enjoyable courses in Suffolk. The aim is to achieve good playing conditions all year around, taking into account weather conditions. It is to be maintained in excellent condition for the enjoyment of members of all handicaps and visitors. Visitors are welcome provided they satisfy the Club Professionals criteria of smart dress, suitable equipment and appropriate behaviour.

- **Timing of Work on the Course.**

General.

Much essential work has to be completed before a certain time each day and within certain timescales during the year. Moreover, there are times when play on the course will have to be restricted to allow the green staff to 'set up the course' for special events. As far as possible these restrictions will be kept to an absolute minimum.

During winter months a policy of closing individual holes may occasionally be adopted, in order to permit uninterrupted essential work to be carried out. Any such program will be notified to Members well in advance.

It will be a priority of the Head Green-keeper to plan essential course work, including the Winter Program well in advance. Members will be kept informed via email and notice board, of any essential work and restrictions on play. The co-operation and understanding of Members will, however, be required if the Club is to maintain the present high standards, as well as seeking to achieve longer-term improvements. Green staff shall have priority on the course ahead of competitions commencing prior to 9am.

The course may be closed ahead of a limited number of published major events.

Hours of Work.

The Green-staff work 7am – 4pm all year, when and where appropriate this may be flexible.

The above hours can be different depending upon available light, RGC golf competition needs and work required at any given time.

All staff are rostered for weekend and public holiday working, at the appropriate overtime rates (salaried staff maybe credited with lieu hours where additional time worked). Records of weekend attendance need to be maintained. In each playing season events will be identified and agreed when all members of the green staff will be required to work.

- **The Course**

General.

The course is laid out on soil structures ranging from sand through loamy humus and gravel generally overlaying free draining sandy substructure. Compaction has occurred in many areas around the course, especially around greens and on walkways to the next tee. The agreed policy will be to relieve compaction by intense aeration program to avoid further compaction in the winter months when the grass has stopped growing, this can be done by restricting the use of buggies and trolleys and diverting traffic. Any such restrictions will only be imposed when it is deemed absolutely necessary.

Buggies.

RGC has a comprehensive Buggy policy available from the General Manager or Club Professional.

Essential points.

- Golf Buggy users must not be under the influence of alcoholic drinks or drugs.
- Only persons aged 18 years and over that hold a current provisional or full driving licence for either a motor cycle or car may drive the Golf Buggy.
- You must familiarise yourself with the controls of the Golf Buggy before moving off.
- The Club has a duty of care to all users of the Golf Courses. The topography of certain areas of the courses is such that caution and prudence must be shown by the user of the Golf Buggy. It is also necessary for the Club to provide adequately safe means of access for all golfers including those given permission to use Golf Buggies. Moreover, the Club has to ensure the safety of golfers who do not wish to use Golf Buggies, but who might be at risk from the careless use of a Golf Buggy or from a Golf Buggy which is mechanically defective.

Competition Play.

During Competition Play, a Golf Buggy may only be used by Members and Visitors who have been authorised to do so by the Club General Manager or Professional. Rushmere Golf Club requires Members and Visitors to provide documental proof that a Golf Buggy is required.

- **Tees.**

Good maintenance of teeing grounds is essential. A rolling program of renovation and levelling will be maintained. Cutting to a height no lower than 11mm, tining, scarifying and fertilizing are all undertaken on a programed basis.

The day-to-day maintenance of the teeing grounds is part of the overall strategy, and routine duties must include: -

- Movement of tee markers twice a week and rotation of teeing areas for seeding during the growing season.
- Emptying of rubbish bins twice a week
- Repairing of any major damage, coupled with the removal of old divots
- Minimum twice weekly cutting of all tees at appropriate heights, ensuring care is taken not to scalp the sloping edges of the tees
- Trimming of the stone tee markers
- Regular inspection and spot spraying for weeds
- Aeration and scarification
- Overseeing without inclusion of ryegrass
- Artificial tee mats to be swept on a regular basis to be kept free from clogging.

These duties are of course dependent on time of year and growing conditions.

- **Fairways.**

The fairways have shown marked improvement in recent years following annual verti-draining and scarifying. There are still a number of areas, however, where there is only poor growing medium. A continued program of verti-draining, deep tining, slit tining and scarification will be maintained to effect improvement to both drainage and growth to improve the quality of the grass, discourage poa annua and encourage fescues. Stripping and patching of worn areas, where recovery will not occur naturally due to excessive wear and/or compaction, particularly on bunker shoulders and areas of high traffic density, is essential and should be undertaken as necessary.

Similarly, those fairways where small hollows and depressions have occurred which result in lush grass and unfair lies must be levelled to maintain fairway height which in turn assists in eliminating attractive areas for worms. Spot and/or boom spraying for weed and other infestation is to be undertaken at least

annually to ensure the best quality and consistency of surface. Cutting to a height between 12mm and 15mm is to be continued.

The use of fertilizers and dressings on fairways is not normally necessary. A policy of regular scarification and aeration is carried out throughout the year.

With the increase in winter play, it is essential that measures be taken to protect fairways during this period.

- **Surrounds & Approaches.**

To prevent the green surrounds and approaches from being infested with poor quality grasses, they will receive a similar aeration and feed treatment program as the greens. The presentation of the surrounds of greens, tees and approaches, has a marked visual impact on the course. A surround will be formed of approximately one tees machine width around each green. This will merge into first rough cut to protect high spots and prevent scalping.

The aim is to have large approaches (25-30 yards) where possible. Traffic around the approaches will be controlled by white lines or strips to force people away from these areas. The approaches will then merge into the fairways.

Careful cutting of the surrounds is essential to avoid scalping and achieve an even surface. It is also essential that sprinkler heads be maintained in full working order, to ensure uniform water coverage.

- **Rough.**

Semi rough will normally be cut to a height in the region of 25 – 35mm. This should enable the ball to remain visible, yet slowing it down. Rough will be cut to a height in the region of 65 – 100mm. Other areas of rough, identified as being well off-line, will be left in their natural state, for ecological and practical reasons.

- **Greens.**

Annual meadow grass is the predominant species on all greens. The long term policy is to reduce this gradually and encourage fine bent and fescue grasses to develop and thrive. This objective cannot be achieved quickly whilst still maintaining greens in a good state for play. This long term objective can be achieved by a continual program of aeration to create conditions, which encourage healthy bacterial activity, which in turn breaks down the thatch layer and encourages the deeper rooting species of grasses. Consistent over seeding throughout the year is also essential and it is policy to utilize only bent/fescue seed.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper, and depends on their reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming events, the state of the soil etc. During spells of good growing weather, the effective height of cut should be no lower than 3 - 4mm, rising to 5mm during winter months.

Grooming, scarification and verti-cutting will be undertaken throughout the summer, together with the use of tining to encourage moisture penetration and the deeper rooting grasses.

Judicious use of the automatic irrigation system, coupled with some hand watering with or without the use of wetting agents, is essential in relation to the prevailing climatic conditions and soil moisture content.

Watering should not, however, be used as a means of creating artificial holding conditions for balls being played into greens, which is contrary to policy. Similarly, hand watering is used solely to alleviate stress and prevent the risk of dieback in hot, dry or drought conditions.

A structured program of aeration throughout the year, using a combination of verti-draining, tining (slit, core and pencil) and scarification, is essential to reduce compaction and the build-up of thatch. Similarly, to assist with the maintenance of fast and true putting surfaces, regular top dressing is crucial during the growing season.

- **Bunkers and Hazards.**

This is an area that has required and will continue to require considerable improvement and upgrading over recent winter programs. The major areas of concern were differing sand consistency, sand compaction and poor or ineffective drainage particularly in the deep and low lying bunkers.

A sustained program of refurbishment will be continued.

The bunkers at RGC have seen many changes over the years.

Improvement plans are ongoing and the aim is to provide a consistent style and improve their playability. The bunkers should be stone free and free draining with banks and slopes that are as easy as possible to maintain. The maintenance of the bunkers is an ongoing task, but we must endeavour to provide a consistent depth of sand and tidy edges and banks.

The definition of bunker margins must be maintained so that golfers are in no doubt as to whether or not they are in the hazard. Bunker fringes should be edged and trimmed to a height that will permit a ball to be gathered into the hazard. Regular harrowing and deep raking is essential to maintain a consistent depth of sand. Each bunker is to have its own rake – rakes should be placed inside bunkers, with the heads in the sand, which reduces the chance of them being struck by a ball to a minimum.

Future renovation and construction of bunkers is to include a bunker liner. This will prevent sand contamination and the issue of stones being introduced to the sand following washouts.

All new/newly refurbished bunkers will be hand raked only.

- **Heather Gorse Broom and Other Natural Habitats.**

Areas of gorse on the course are to be pruned back on a regular basis. The re-introduction of Gorse/Heather throughout the course should be carried out so as not to impact on playing areas and in conjunction with approval from the Rushmere Commoners Committee.

- **The Practice Ground.**

The Club's practice facilities have been adequate and every opportunity will be examined to improve them.

The Club provides practice facilities to the left of the 9th fairway. There is a practice bunker and tee mats.

There is also a practice green/chipping and two practice/warm up nets beside the club house.

The care of the practice areas is the responsibility of the Greens Committee/Head Green-keeper and proper communication needs to be maintained with the Professional in connection with the practice facility to ensure it is continually fit for purpose.

- **Paths and Tracks.**

The policy of the club is to provide safe and maintainable pathways for the golfers where and when appropriate and in liaison with the Rushmere Commoners Committee.

These paths should include drainage gullies or some form of surface drainage. They should be wide enough for golf buggies, but it is not the club's policy presently to provide a complete route around the course for buggies. The access routes around the course for green staff should be also be usable for emergency vehicles.

All paths should be regularly inspected and repaired and renewed where necessary.

- **Temporary Greens.**

It is the Club's policy only to have temporary greens when *absolutely necessary*. Ongoing work programs will reduce the need to use temporary greens.

It is the responsibility of the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper or, in his absence, the Senior Green-keeper on duty, to decide on a day to day basis, the need for temporary greens to be brought into use. Considerations are:

- Is the normal green too soft to take foot traffic or waterlogged
- In frosty weather would footmarks damage the top crusty surface
- If the normal green is being worked on intensively, a temporary green may be brought into use in order that the work may proceed more quickly, with greater productivity.

- **Fertilisation and Chemicals.**

The policy is to keep the use of fertilizers and chemicals to a minimum due to regulations by regulatory bodies. Organic nitrogen based fertilizers will be used with small quantities of iron and potash. Phosphates will only be used in exceptional circumstances, to assist with regeneration.

All fertilisation and chemical usage is subject to continual review by various governing bodies.

- **Top Dressing.**

Top Dressings applied to greens will take place as often as possible throughout the playing season and follow the little and often principal during March to end of October. Major dressings in the spring and autumn following verti-draining or hollow tining will be needed. Ideally this would be placed in the diary for the 3rd week of March. Total dressings on greens approximate up to 100 tonnes per year, comprising of various components. Top dressings are also applied to tees, surrounds and selected fairway areas. These quantities may vary slightly from year to year dependent on weather conditions and the golfing calendar. Top dressings will be brushed in immediately after application.

- **Closing the Course**

The Course may be closed on the authority of the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper or, in his absence, the Senior Green-keeper on duty or an authorized member of the Greens Committee or General Manager (Health and Safety officer) when unusual weather conditions have occurred and damage to the Course would result if play were permitted. Such conditions would exist if the greens were waterlogged, if the course was flooded and during severe frost or snow.

During a competition the Course may be closed by the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper or, in his absence, the Senior Green-keeper on duty or an authorized member of the Greens Committee or the General Manager (Health and Safety officer), if they consider that the course has become unsuitable for play due to any reason such as flooding, thunder/lightning, fog, snow, or any other reason. The Greens Committee will ensure that competitors are made aware of this advice.

This advice is designed to be of help and guidance. RGC is not liable for any damage or injury caused by the following of this advice.

A decision to reopen the Course may be taken at any time after an inspection by an authorized person, who will ensure this it is safe to resume play. An authorized person would include the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper or, in his absence, the Senior Green-keeper on duty or an authorized member of the Greens Committee or the General Manager.

The course will remain closed until a thorough inspection has been made by an authorised person.

The following signals will be used to announce decisions:

- **One prolonged klaxon blast (repeated) close of play.**
- **Two short klaxon blasts (repeated) resumption of play.**

When play is suspended, if the players in a match or group are between the play of two holes, they shall not resume play until a resumption of play has been signalled. If they are in the process of playing a hole, they shall discontinue play immediately and shall not thereafter resume play until a resumption of play has been signalled. If a player fails to discontinue play immediately, they shall be disqualified unless circumstances warrant waiving such penalty as provided in Rule 33-7.

On the signal for suspension of play being given Competitors, Caddies and Spectators should proceed to the nearest shelter or vacate the course.

However, if the suspension is due to the proximity of an Electric Storm, golfers or caddies should leave clubs well away from where they are sheltering. They should NOT walk or shelter under trees, stand on high ground, shelter in any building with a metal roof, put up an umbrella, use a mobile phone. They should keep as low as possible, if necessary crouching in the nearest bunker.

Competitors and Caddies sheltering in the Clubhouse, will be informed that play will be resumed shortly, and will be given sufficient time from this notification, to reach the point on the golf course where they were when play was suspended. When Competitors and Caddies have been given chance to get back to where they were when play was suspended, the klaxon will be sounded (two short blasts).

No competitor shall resume play until the two klaxon blasts have been blown. Failure to comply (Rule 6-8b) shall lead to the Competitor being disqualified.

- **Green Staff and Members.**

Work on the Course.

The increase in the popularity of golf, coupled with earlier retirement, has resulted in members and visitors playing more and wishing to play earlier. The golfer of today is much more aware of the quality and presentation of courses, and demands constant improvements in the playing surfaces on a year around basis. The Green Staff are faced with ever increasing levels of compaction, wear and tear and the need to work without inconveniencing the golfer.

Improved mechanization has assisted the Green-keeper to carry out most tasks quickly and efficiently, but inevitably there are conflicts between the Green-keeper and the golfer. The staff is aware that the course is there for the benefit and enjoyment of member and visitors, and work programs are planned accordingly.

To achieve the best possible balance:

- Start early enough to prepare the course by working ahead of the golfers
- Course closures are planned well in advance to ensure that a full course is available

This has the added advantage of increased productivity, as staff can work without interruption. Additionally, other closures are necessary when preparing for major Club competitions and/or major open events.

Our green staff takes great pride in their professional workmanship and their presentation of the course.

Golfers can help with a little thought and by the following:

- ***ALWAYS REPAIR ANYTHING YOU SEE, EVEN IF YOU DID NOT DO IT YOURSELF.***
- ***Please repair pitch marks; this is continuing problem, particularly after weekend play.***
- ***Please rake bunkers.***
- ***Always enter the bunker from the lowest point of entry (do not walk into bunker from the steep face.)***
- ***Please replace bunker rakes.***
- ***Please replace divots.***
- ***Please use seed mix to fill divots on tees where available.***
- ***Push the sand towards the bunker faces; do not pull it to the rear. It is no excuse if there is no rake available, a club can always be used.***
- ***Rakes should be replaced inside bunkers, with the heads in the sand, which reduces the chance of them being struck by a ball to a minimum.***
- ***Whilst not all replaced divots take, a high percentage do and thus helps the course recover more quickly.***
- ***Pick up any litter, take it and discard it in the nearest bin.***
- ***Follow trolley direction signs and avoid areas where 'Hoops' are placed to avoid unnecessary damage to the course.***
- ***Buggies, Electric and Pull Trolleys. Do not take them on to tees, greens, green approaches and surrounds, and between bunkers and greens.***

- **Complaints.**

Members and visitors may not, under any circumstances, complain about the conduct of the greens staff, nor about the state of the Course, to any member of the green staff.

Any complaint must be made to the General Manager who will investigate the matter. If they cannot deal with the complaint themselves, the matter will be submitted to the Greens Committee then Management Committee if deemed necessary.

- **Machinery.**

The policy of the Club is to purchase or lease, maintain and replace when necessary the best, and most appropriate, range of machinery and equipment for the upkeep of the course.

The Club has invested in a range of specialist machinery and equipment to ensure the continuing high standards of course maintenance. It is essential therefore, that the General manager, in consultation with the Management Committee, maintains a rolling 5-year capital plan of machinery replacements, additions, repairs and renewals for consideration, updated annually, and final approval by the Management Committee, and for incorporation into the Club's financial plan.

The Head Green keeper has a responsibility to keep himself up to date with developments in golf course machinery, and to bring his recommendations to the notice of the Greens Committee, including competitive quotations for acquisition and disposal of machinery.

The Head Green keeper is also responsible for the maintenance of all machinery in all its aspects, including all health and safety requirements as well as records of use, preventative maintenance, major servicing, adjustments etc. He will recognise the heavy investment that has been made out of Club funds, and prudently preserve these investments. The Head Keeper is responsible for keeping records of all machinery maintenance and repairs. The club will supply a computer to aid this task. It is in the Club's financial interest that repairs and maintenance are completed 'in house' where possible and only on the clubs owned machinery.

- **Irrigation.**

General

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible to encourage deeper rooting grasses to predominate. However, almost every season there are times when rainfall is insufficient to sustain grass growth and needs to be supplemented. Water is also needed on demand to wash in fertilisers and other treatments. Therefore, a guaranteed source is essential for the maintenance of a golf course.

Water Supply.

The irrigation system is fed from a tank located behind the chipping/putting green. The header tank is itself fed off mains water supply.

The System

The irrigation system is inspected and pressurised in March/April when the danger of frost is past and is drained down in October/November. There are approximately 80 sprinkler heads on the Course. The sprinkler heads are Rainbird geared heads – 4 heads to a green delivering 25 gallons/minute. Further technical data can be obtained from the Head Green Keeper.

- **Financial Control.**

Long term budgeting.

In September each year the Head Green-keeper, will produce a list of machinery, showing performance and notes on any problems that have shown up during the year. This will lead to a definitive spending budget for the next financial year for replacements and repairs, which should be in line with the 5 year rolling budgets. These will then be discussed by the Greens Committee and presented to the Management Committee.

Additionally, the Treasurer/Head Green-keeper, will produce a budget for purchase of fertilisers, chemicals and dressings for the next year.

The Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper must not incur any expenditure, unless it is within budget. If any expenditure is required urgently in excess of budget, it must be authorised by the Management Committee.

A continual review of actual expenditure, compared with budget, will be maintained and the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper asked to explain any significant differences. This information will

be distributed to all Management Committee Members as a part of the monthly financial information report prepared by the Treasurer.

- **Ecology.**

RGC contains a mixture of parkland and natural heathland within the perimeter of the course. It is an important part of the Policy to preserve the natural habitat of birds, animals and flora on the Course. Woodland maintenance will be carried out in such a way that it has as little an impact on the natural habitat as possible and encourage wildlife.

Trees that affect the Course, particularly when overhanging teeing grounds, preventing the growth of grass or heather, or the safety of golfers by obscuring visibility for playing shots safely, may need to be lopped or removed. This work has to be implemented under the control of the Greens Committee Chairman/Head Green-keeper. The Committee, must approve the felling of any trees with the approval of the Rushmere Commoners Committee.

An annual action plan is to be approved by the Committee for silver birch/oak clearance throughout the course. The annual diary and action plan will be in line with sound ecology is as follows for RGC: -

1. Approved tree felling to be undertaken during the period October to February only.
2. Any gorse pruning to be undertaken during the period October to February only.
3. Open fires to take place in designated area and only when wind direction is away from main road and Hospital.
4. No hunting dogs allowed on the course at any time.
5. No falconry hawks to be flown on the course at any time.
6. Action may also be taken as required to eradicate Ragwort from the course.
7. In appropriate areas Heather & Gorse will be re-introduced and protected during its early growth and with approval of the Rushmere Commoners Committee where applicable.
8. Review of litter bins and their effectiveness should always be on the agenda to ensure litter is controlled as effectively as possible.

- **Professional Advice.**

Notwithstanding the complete confidence the Committee has in the competence and technical knowledge of the Head Green-keeper; RGC will seek the professional opinion of a qualified Agronomist when and where appropriate.

- **Course alterations.**

Significant alterations may only be made to the architecture of the Course with the approval of the Committee after consultation with appropriate experts, Rushmere commoners association and the consideration of comments received from all stakeholders

- **Health and Safety.**

The General Manager is the Clubs Health and Safety Officer, and co-ordinates all Health and Safety issues throughout the Club.

RGC maintains a Health and Safety policy, which shall be distributed to all members of the green keeping staff, together with a comprehensive risk assessment policy. The Greens Committee/Head Green keeper is responsible for maintaining and updating the Club's policies relating to green keeping issues. Safe systems of work should be undertaken at all times. Risk assessments and method statements should be used and updated as appropriate in line with the general Health and Safety policy of RGC.

The Club's Health and Safety Consultant Advisor shall make at least one visit per year, and produce a written report on any matters affecting Greens Health and Safety. This will be considered by the Greens Committee/Head Green-keeper and Committee to draw up a suitable action plan.

All accidents and/or incidents must be reported to officials as soon as possible, for recording into the Clubs accident/incident book.

Players have a responsibility for the Health and Safety of themselves and others whilst on the course.

Guidelines are currently under review.

- **Web Site**

RGC is committed to provide comprehensive details of the course via the Club's web site and mobile app.

❖ Appendices

General Course set up and Guidelines.

The importance of presenting the course at its best at all times cannot be overstated. There are agreed standards for all areas of the course. These practical general set up and guideline notes are attached for adoption alongside the course policy document.

All below is in addition to the general agronomy policy and course maintenance work that takes place at various points throughout the year as contained in the main body of the policy document.

Summer Weekly Cutting Regime.

	Days to complete.
Greens	7
Tees/Tee banks	3-4*
Approaches/Collars	2*
Fairways	2-3*
Semi Rough	1-2*
Rough	2-3*
Greenside banks	1-2*
Practice area	1*
Bunker faces/banks/surrounds	2-3*

* Denotes variable days' subject to conditions/workload.

Cutting Heights

Greens 3.5 - 5mm, Tees 11mm, Tee Banks 28mm, Approaches/Collars 12mm Fairways 12-15mm, Semi

Rough 28 -35mm

Rough 75 -100mm

Greenside Banks 28mm Bunker faces/banks/surrounds 28mm

All of the above dependant on weather & ground conditions.

All grass clippings to be discarded well away from any areas of play and in line with current ecological standards.

Clubhouse areas to be tidied on a weekly basis, dependant on work load.

- **Additional notes agreed:**

Greens – cut daily. Heights to range between 3.5mm – 5 mm during full competition season depending on nature of competition & conditions. During winter months' height of cut to be raised to 5mm. The greens iron is designed to complement the management practices and will be used at the Greens Committee Chairman's discretion.

Brushes on mowers to be used as and when needed, taking into account growth and disease pressure. Additional verti-cutting at discretion of Greens Committee Chairman subject to conditions & competitions. Always ensure different directions of cut day by day. Always ensure when holes changed the board and appropriate tools are used & bow to tie flag.

Tees – Always check direction of cut. Never pile grass clippings. When appropriate keep tee markers 6-7 paces apart, never full tee width & ensure correctly aligned. Tee markers to be moved twice a week. Use correct divot seed, ryegrass on par 3 tees only.

Fairways – Alternate angle cutting suits the style of course, striping of fairways to be carried out to remove uneven growth. Divot seed not to include ryegrass on fairways.

Bunkers – Bunkers raked as often as possible depending on competitions and weather conditions. When raking do not smooth edges of turf with sand. Check rakes. Remove stones disturbed when raking. Remove grass clippings caused by strimming/mowing. Occasionally, bunkers will be deemed GUR following adverse weather.

Changing holes – Holes to be changed before any medal competition and also on Fridays, depending on comp schedule. Try to follow the 6 Red/yellow/white positions, but not strict if conditions dictate. Position carefully in light of weather conditions E.g.; wet – high points; very windy/dry – avoid severe slopes. Apply golfing common sense!!!

Practice Areas – To be cut in accordance with Greens schedule & look presentable at all times.

Bins/Ball Washers – Topped up twice weekly. Bins to be emptied twice weekly.

General Tidiness – Weeding to be undertaken on all areas regularly – keep eye on benches/gardens/tees/steps/fairways/semi in particular. Where GUR is needed, use it.

Aim to reduce GUR areas with good quality repairs at all times and continued upkeep until GUR growth is fully established.

- **Set Up General Guidelines.**

Ideally, the course would be 'set-up' every day but budget and staff levels do not allow this. Best practice should accommodate this aspect of course presentation as often as is practicable, and this may entail producing a list of priority areas and operations. It is good practice to produce a daily/weekly checklist of set-up procedure (as above), so that all staff are aware of their responsibilities on this front and to enable the Greens Committee Chairman to ensure these are being attained during the regular course inspection. This checklist may incorporate the following guidelines.

Teeing ground

- Position tee markers so play is correctly aligned to the centre of the landing area on the fairway. It is vital that the tee markers are set properly to the designated landing area as the alignment of the tee and its mowing may not necessarily achieve this
- On par 3 holes the position of the tee markers should complement the day's hole position
- Tee markers should be placed to a width which minimises the chances of players teeing up in front of the markers. Generally, the narrower the width used on any day increases the options for spreading wear.
- Tee markers should be placed so as not to risk hitting markers to forward teeing grounds
- The tee markers should be placed in accordance with the Rules of Golf
- Consider any obstruction to the preferred line of flight off the tee, e.g. tree branches, and accommodate the right and left-handed golfer.

- **Fairways.**

- Mow to agreed patterns. This may relate to design and grass species, as well as equipment available. Avoid straight lines to fairway edges, but also avoid an overly contoured cut

- Mow to agreed widths. This may also relate to hole design but standard of play should also be a consideration, providing wider landing areas for the poorer standard of golfer. This should bear in mind the siting of such from each teeing ground. Fairway width can vary from 25 to 40 metres and the difficulty of each hole should be taken into account when deciding on width delineation

- Present a tidy surface for play as resources allow. This should take into account the need to sweep or drag fairways to lift old divots, other debris and dew.

More specific issues may be considered for tournament set-up, such as:

- Mowing narrower fairways, say to 22 to 32 metres in width. Mowing heights to be employed during the event should be established far enough in advance so as not to show any discolouration or scalping

- Divot filling of fairways as often as possible. Check for any areas of ground under repair that may need marking.

- **Semi-rough.**

- Mow to agreed widths. The width of the first cut should, preferably, be standard but variance to this may relate to hole design, standard of play and degree of difficulty of the hole

- Semi-rough width must be uniform throughout the course. The height of the cut to remain standard throughout the course.

- Mow to agreed patterns. This may relate to equipment available and the band of semi-rough cut should follow the shape of the fairway edge

- Present a tidy surface for play as resources allow, and this aspect will contribute to the decision on graded rough.

Tournament set-up may bring other considerations into your plans, such as:

- Specific mowing heights and widths of graded rough, to be agreed far enough in advance to achieve the objective

- There may be specific requirements for encompassing any and all bunkers

- There may be a requirement to cut semi-rough in the same direction, i.e. tee to green or vice-versa.

- **Collars/aprons.**

- Mow to agreed height

- Mow to an agreed width which should be maintained around the entire outline of the green.

This is a principle that should be adopted for green surround mowing as a whole, though the apron may vary in depth depending on the length of the approach shot into the green. A deeper apron may be cut for longer approach shots, e.g. perhaps out to as much as 5m, with a narrower apron (to collar width) for short approach shots

- Mow to agreed grading. The mowing pattern of the collar/extended green surround will depend on the design of the green complexity and machinery/resources available. The mowing direction around green side bunkers should be determined

- This mowing criteria may be considered as part of tournament preparation. An outside authority may require a different set-up to that usually employed and an adequate preparation period for any such alterations must be agreed.

- **Bunkers.**

- Ideally, bunkers should be raked daily in advance of play

- Sand in bunker faces should be shallow enough to prevent plugging yet sufficient enough to ensure the ball remains in the bunker

- Keep grass on the bunker perimeter tidy to enable clear definition of the hazard boundary.

- Sweep sand off bunker faces to allow grass growth.

- Check levels of sand in bunkers to prevent an excess of or heavily compressed sand

- Any new sand required in bunkers should be added well enough in advance of the event to allow for suitable consolidation

- Bunker rakes should be available at all bunkers and be positioned inside bunkers in a position least likely to interfere with play

- The grass on the banks and around the edges of bunkers should be mown in accordance with design and course layout.

- **Putting surfaces.**

- Mow to agreed height
- Mow to designated dimensions. Putting surfaces can be prone to 'green creep' if not regularly monitored.
- If the type of machinery changes, i.e. from triplex to pedestrian mowers or vice versa, then care must be taken to ensure that bench setting compensates for the actual finished cut; this ensures consistency of finish whichever type of machine is employed on any particular day
- Pace of the green should be the optimum related to prevailing conditions but smoothness should never be sacrificed for speed. Consistency of pace between greens is more important than the pace of any one surface
- A desirable putting surface is firm, not hard and will accept a well-struck iron shot and deal differently with a poor strike or a shot from the rough.
- Many factors affect the selection of good hole positions, but the primary objective is to reward a good shot and the following points should be considered:

1. Take into account, where appropriate, the design of the hole as it was intended to be played and the effect of predicted weather.
2. If rain is likely, holes should not be cut where water would accumulate.
3. The hole should be positioned within the green to accommodate the required approach shot, i.e. deeper in the green and farther from its sides for a long iron than for a short pitch shot.
4. Generally, the hole should be positioned at least four paces from any edge of the green. If a bunker is close to the edge, or if the ground slopes away from the edge, the distance should be greater, especially if the shot is more than a pitch.
5. The ground 60–90 cm around the hole should be as level as possible. In no case should holes be positioned within three paces of a very severe slope or ridge. If the design of the green dictates that the hole be positioned on a slope, the hole should be cut vertically, not with the slope.
6. Consider the condition of nearby turf, especially taking care to avoid old hole plugs which have not completely healed.
7. There should be a balanced selection of hole positions for the entire course were possible, with respect to left, right, central, front and back positions.
8. The member of the green staff who cuts the holes must make sure that the Rules of Golf are observed, i.e. the hole must be 108 mm in diameter (its outer diameter must not exceed this measurement) and at least 101.6 mm deep. If a lining is used, it must be sunk at least 25.4 mm below the putting green surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so.

- ❖ The practice putting green should perform in a similar fashion to those on the course.

For tournament set-up other issues may also need to be considered, such as:

- Advance identification of which level areas are likely to be in use for the tournament and a request that these are reserved for the event.
- Cutting daily in the late afternoon as the grass is usually drier and therefore less likely to clump
- Divot filling to be carried out as often as possible.
- The tee markers should be moved to positions relevant to weather conditions for the day and the length and shape of the hole. If possible the tee positions should not vary to such an extent as to significantly alter the length of the course.
- The possible reservation of certain areas of the green for hole locations.
- The skill level of those playing should always be considered when preparing the greens in relation to pace and firmness.
- The condition of the putting greens at the end of the tournament should be as similar as possible to how they were during the practice rounds.
- For a tournament played over several days, the course should be kept in balance daily as to the degree of difficulty. One form of balanced daily treatment is to select six quite difficult hole positions, six which are moderately difficult and six which are relatively easy.
- Try to keep a balance of using the left and the right of the green and vary as much as possible the number of paces from the front edge of the green.
- For tournaments lasting more than a day, including practice days, anticipate the players' walking routes. Position holes for early rounds so that good hole positions for later rounds will not be spoiled by players leaving the green.
- In match play, a hole position may, if necessary, be changed during a round, provided that in each match the players play with the holes in the same position. In stroke play, Rule 33- 2b requires that all competitors in a single round play with each hole in the same position, other than when it is impossible for a damaged hole to be repaired so that it conforms with the Definition (see also the Note to Rule 33-2b)
- When 36 holes are played in one day, it is customary for hole positions not to be changed between rounds, but there is no Rule to prohibit changing them. If they are changed, all players should be informed.



Rushmere golf course aerial view 2007 (RGC owned shaded area, 3rd, 4th and part of 5th holes)

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