

ROWLANDS CASTLE GOLF CLUB

GOLF COURSE POLICY DOCUMENT

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy document is to set out details of the management of the golf course at Rowlands Castle Golf Club (RCGC), which have been approved by the Management Committee and submitted to members for their comments and subsequent approval. The policy will be strictly pursued and any future proposed changes will not be introduced without full consultation with the Management Committee and members.

2. Objectives

The objectives will necessarily alter in detail over time, however the main objective is to provide members with year round golf playing off grass tees and to the main greens, to ensure that maintenance of the Course is cost effective by eliminating high maintenance areas lying within the “in play” areas of the course, and that design aspects and the set-up of the Course should not contribute to slow play.

Whilst the Course is not, and has no pretensions to become, a Championship Course, the Green Committee will continue to seek to improve the standard of the course whilst recognizing that players of a wide range of abilities are members, and also to balance the degree of difficulty of the two sides of the course.

The Green Committee will ensure that the course is maintained in excellent condition for the enjoyment of members of all handicaps, their guests and visitors who satisfy the criteria laid down by the Management Committee (i.e. in possession of a recognised handicap certificate).

The policies pursued for the course will seek to comply with best environmental practice wherever possible.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Management Committee is responsible for the management of RCGC in all its aspects.

The Green Committee is responsible for the detailed management of the golf course, including financial, personnel, machinery and general maintenance of the course. It is also responsible for maintaining a rolling 10 year financial and operational plan, which is subject to approval by the Management Committee.

The Head Greenkeeper attends and advises the Green Committee.

The Secretary/Manager will:

- establish management controls that monitor the policies set by committees and notify them of variations from budget;
- co-ordinate the fixture list with the Head Greenkeeper, giving consideration to work on the course and will communicate any alterations, and
- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Green Staff, including disciplinary matters.

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for the implementation of this policy in all its aspects:

- Planning of maintenance schedules in relation to fixture lists.
- Liaison with the Secretary/Manager on any problem areas.
- Machinery maintenance and replacement policies and schedules

- Planning and long term budgeting.
- Schedules and records.
- Personnel education, training and discipline.
- Allocation of daily tasks in compliance with the Club's Health and Safety Policy.
- Storage and safety of chemicals, fertilisers and fuels.
- Maintaining Health & Safety documentation and procedures for areas under his control
- Ecology and environmental planning

4. Resources

4.1 *Staff*

The agreed staffing level includes the following:

Head Greenkeeper

Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Greenkeepers x 3

Trainee/Assistant Greenkeepers x 2

Casual labourers up to the value of the budgeted figure.

There is a commitment to the training and education of green staff who are all encouraged to obtain NVQs in Sports Turf Management to the maximum of their individual abilities.

4.2 *Financial*

The Management Committee is committed to the allocation of sufficient RCGC resources to achieve the policies set out in this document within the overall constraints of the budget approved by the Finance Committee.

5. Timing of Major Work on the Course

Timing of the major spring and autumn maintenance will take priority over the fixtures programme and will be communicated well in advance through the Club diary. Major project work will be communicated to the members in advance including the need for temporary hole closures, and will where possible avoid the main playing season. Where disruption is unavoidable the project plans will include anticipated timetables for such disruption to enable members to take this into account.

6. The Course

The course is formed on a mixture of clay and flint with occasional areas of chalk. These soil conditions cannot themselves stand up to wet conditions and are prone to water logging in some areas, which are all adversely affected by heavy traffic, particularly golf trolleys using the same pathways. Compacting has occurred in many areas around the course, especially on and around greens and on walkways to the next tee. The policy being pursued is to relieve compaction by intense aeration programmes and to avoid further compaction by routing players around vulnerable areas and by banning trolleys and buggies when weather conditions dictate.

The height of cut will be determined by the Head Greenkeeper or his deputy and will be dependent on the prevailing growing conditions, and the nature of forthcoming competitions.

Where significant project work is planned, the Green Committee and the Head Greenkeeper will have recourse to professional advice if they wish it within the constraints of the Green budget.

6.1 *Greens*

Annual meadow grass is the predominant species on all greens. The policy is to reduce this gradually and slowly introduce and encourage bents to dominate. Long term the objective can be achieved by continual programmes of aeration to create conditions for healthy bacterial activity to break down thatch and encourage deeper rooting species of grass.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper and depends on his reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming competitions and the state of the soil. During spells of good growing weather the normal height of cut is 4mm to 5mm.

Grooming and verti-cutting will be applied to greens throughout the summer together with pencil tining to encourage moisture penetration and the deeper rooting grasses.

A policy of minimum irrigation will be followed and any dry patches will be treated with a wetting agent and hand watered.

The autumn and winter treatment of greens can include hollow tining, verti-draining, slit tining, deep tining and scarifying, together with the application of appropriate mixtures of dressing.

Hole positions will normally be changed twice per week.

A number of greens are in need of re-profiling to aid drainage. Where this is intended to take place, the project will be planned and displayed for the members to see, and any periods of closure made known in advance.

6.2 *Tees*

Tining, scarifying and fertilising are all carried out on a programme basis. Normal cutting height will be 10mm. During the summer months there will be an ongoing divoting programme. The long-term objective is to provide year round play from grass tees by a programme of enlargement, leveling and soil and grass improvement. Where necessary, project work will be undertaken to re-build or re-work tees to improve their year-round playability.

6.3 *Fairways*

Fairways will normally be cut to a height of 15mm in Summer and 20mm during winter months. They will be verti-drained, deep tined, slit tined and scarified in order to improve the quality of the grass, discourage poa annua and encourage bents and fescues. Certain fairways will continue to have compost and top dressing applied to build up soil levels. Regular over-seeding will be carried out to encourage the development of hardier types of grass.

6.4 *Surrounds and Approaches*

Normal cutting height will be around 10mm and these areas will receive regular top dressing. These areas will be adapted from time to time to reflect the requirements of definition of the course.

6.5 *Rough*

Semi rough will be cut no lower than 30mm and rough no lower than 63mm. It is the policy of the Club to allow grasses in “out of play” areas to grow and seed before cutting, and to take action to discourage the current dominance in some areas of broad-leaved grasses that make ball finding difficult.

6.6 *Irrigation*

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible in order to encourage deeper rooting grasses to predominate. However, it is recognised that during periods of drought it will be necessary to irrigate in order to sustain growth. It will remain the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper to determine the amount of water applied to each area of the Course. A contract is in place with a reputable company to charge and check the system in the spring and drain down in autumn.

6.7 *Bunkers*

Bunkers will be raked daily by the green staff using a combination of mechanical and manual means. A rake will be provided for each bunker, two in larger ones, and all players will be expected to rake pitch and foot marks. The rake will be replaced by placing the head in the sand, and the handle out of the bunker aligned in the direction of the incoming shot. Rakes should not be left entirely in the bunker.

6.8 *Drainage and Ditches*

At RCGC the dispersal of surface water is of paramount importance. A programme of drainage has been undertaken and will continue if further areas become prone to water logging. Ditches will be kept clear of leaves and debris and those close to “in play” areas will have their banks cut at least twice per year.

6.9 *Temporary Greens*

It is the firm intention that temporary greens will only be used as follows:

When the weather is frosty;

If abnormally wet conditions prevail, or

If the normal green is being worked on intensively a temporary green may be brought into use in order that work might proceed more quickly and with greater productivity.

7. Course Closure and Trolley/Buggy Restrictions

The Head Greenkeeper, or in his absence the Duty Greenkeeper, may close the course when unusual weather conditions have occurred and damage to the course would result if play were permitted. The Head Greenkeeper shall have the authority to restrict the use of buggies and trolleys if the weather conditions are such that the course would suffer damage if they were used. Individual “ride-on” buggies are treated the same as the full size buggies.

When frost is in evidence no buggies will be allowed before 8.00 am or until the Course has been assessed. However, the greenstaff will endeavour to reach a decision as early as possible and communicate this to the Pro Shop.

During a competition the course may be closed by the Secretary/Manager or an authorised member of the Committee supervising a competition, if they consider that the greens have become unsuitable for play or if weather conditions might put golfers at risk.

In winter a decision to close the course will not be rescinded for the rest of the day. When temporary greens are in use due to frost they will remain so for the remainder of the day **only** if a competition has already begun. At all other times the Head Greenkeeper or Duty Greenkeeper will decide when they can be moved back to the main greens.

8. Green Staff and Members

8.1 *Work on the Course*

The Green Staff shall have priority on the course at all times to complete their immediate tasks. The Green Staff have been instructed to apply commonsense to this ruling and to take the first sensible opportunity to stand aside and allow golfers to play. If for any reason the Green Staff are unaware of golfers waiting to play, the golfers should shout "FORE" to alert staff to their presence, but should not necessarily expect the green staff to immediately stand aside as this may not be practical depending on the nature of the work being carried out. Golfers may only play up when instructed to do so by the Green Staff.

8.2 *Complaints*

Members, guests and visitors may not complain about the conduct of a member of staff nor about the state of the course to any member of the Green Staff. Any complaint must be made to the Secretary/Manager or Head Greenkeeper, who will investigate the matter. If they cannot deal with the complaint, the matter will be submitted to the Committee.

9. Machinery

The Head Greenkeeper will produce a rolling plan of machinery replacements, additions, repairs and renewals for consideration, amendment and final approval by the Green and Management Committees. The Head Greenkeeper has a responsibility to keep himself up to date with developments in golf course machinery and bring his recommendations to the notice of the Green Committee. He is responsible for the maintenance of all machinery paying particular attention to major servicing and preventative maintenance. He is also responsible for the compilation and maintenance of all Health & Safety documentation related to equipment used by the Greenstaff.

10. Agronomy

The Head Greenkeeper will have recourse to the Club's agronomist as and when the need arises.

11. Financial Control

The Head Greenkeeper will produce an expenditure budget for machinery, running costs and overheads in August of each year. These will be discussed and approved by the Green Committee prior to being submitted into the overall budget.

The Secretary/Manager will provide monthly performance figures covering the Green budget to the Green Committee.

The Green Committee will prepare and maintain a 10 year rolling financial plan to cover all aspects of funding of the Golf Course. In terms of funding, this will be 1 year firm and committed, a further 4 years agreed in principle, and a further 5 years projection of funding

needs. This plan will be submitted annually to the Finance and Management Committees for ratification.

12. Woodland Management

The management of the Woodland areas of the course will be done in such a manner as to encourage the development of quality specimens of native broad-leaved trees that add character to the course. The long-term policy will be to remove *leylandii* (prone to disease), poplars (damaging to the infrastructure of the drainage and irrigation of the course), eucalyptus (non-native messy trees) and other species that do not meet the policy, but to replace where appropriate with suitable species.

Full consideration will be given to ecological implications, and the Club will comply with all requirements for surveys to establish the presence of protected animals or plants before carrying out any works. Where possible and practical, all opportunities to create attractive environments for wildlife through any woodland work will be taken.

The green staff will adopt a policy of thinning or clearing thorn and scrub areas along the edges of woodland areas to open out the woodland and provide better air movement, which will help to prevent the establishment and spread of disease, and to help cool the course in periods of high temperatures. This will also help to create a more attractive environment for members.

The green staff will apply a policy of thinning trees where they are growing too close together. Where trees impinge on the natural shot-line they will be trimmed and shaped if possible to enable them to continue to grow, but if they present a threat to the quality of the grass, or will continue to grow into the shot-line then they will be removed and where appropriate replaced.

There are occasions when trees need to be maintained and even felled. This work will be implemented under the control of the Head Greenkeeper but will always be presented to the Green Committee for prior approval. The advice or opinion of the retained agronomist will be considered in all instances, and where necessary specialist advice may be sought.

Tree planting will only take place with the approval of the Green Committee and under the supervision of the Head Greenkeeper. It is the intention that trees that are planted should be predominantly native species.

The Green Committee will seek to have a full arborological assessment carried out to assist in long-term planning of woodland works, and will have the option of advice from a qualified arborist as and when appropriate.

12. Ecology

It is an important part of the policy to preserve the natural habitat of birds, animals and flora on the course. Certain animals, such as rabbits and moles damage the course and have to be culled. Snakes, including adders, smooth snakes and grass snakes are found on the course. They are protected species and must not be harmed.

Areas of the course that are designated as “natural” will be cut once per year after the flowers and grasses have seeded.