



DONCASTER GOLF CLUB **COURSE POLICY DOCUMENT**

Doncaster Golf Club

Doncaster Golf Club has the following brand values:

- Warm and welcoming
- Traditional yet forward thinking
- Quality

The Committee and members of Doncaster Golf Club require that these brand values are adhered to in all strategic, policy and procedural matters.

Introduction

The purpose of the course policy document is to set out the policy for maintaining and developing the golf course and its surrounds. The document has been prepared by the Greens Sub Committee and approved by the Committee. The Chair of Greens is responsible for delivering the requirements set out in this policy and ensuring that any proposed changes are submitted to the Committee for approval.

Background

The Club moved to its current location in 1909 on land that the renowned course architect, Alistair MacKenzie, described as “having more the character of the real seaside links among the sand dunes than any inland course I am acquainted with”. The original character of the course was therefore heavily influenced by the sandy nature of the ground conditions leading to heathland characteristics that produce hard and dry conditions in the summer and is very free draining. Heathland also tends to support plants such as heathers, gorse and heathland grasses and to be punctuated by scattered trees such as silver birch. Obviously much has been done to develop the golf course into its current state, including the use of surrounding farmland to accommodate the changes resulting from the motorway. The use of new technology and working practices has also enabled much improvement. However, a large part of the course remains in its original position and this dictates the nature and style of course that we aspire to achieve.

Objectives

- To produce a heathland style course with fescue dominated fairways and rough consisting of a mix of heather and fine fescues.
- To provide the members with year-round golf playing off grass tees and on the main greens in the winter months providing it is not to the detriment of the long-term health and condition of the course.
- To provide a course which is capable of attracting County, Regional and possibly National events

Roles & Responsibilities

The delivery of this policy is the responsibility of the Chair of Greens who reports to the Main Committee.

The responsibility falls into two distinct areas:

1. Course Maintenance

This relates to the day to day maintenance of the course which is led and managed by the Head Greenkeeper who will refer to the Chair of Greens whenever support or direction is required. The role of the Chair of Greens and the Greens Sub Committee is to provide a conduit of communication and information between the Main Committee, the membership and the Head Greenkeeper

2. Course Development

This relates to the wider development of the course and includes such as:

- Preparation of the Course Development Plan
- Major changes to the course
- The presentation and aesthetics of the course
- Woodland management

This responsibility is led by the Chair of Greens who will work in conjunction with the Course Architect and also appoint a team of members to work with which may differ from the Greens Sub Committee, all of whom have appropriate interest and experience under this area of responsibility.

Resources**Staffing levels**

- A minimum of 5 qualified staff are required, this should be supplemented by less qualified staff when workloads demand and finances allow.

- Appropriate Training Courses and Continuing Professional Development initiatives should be provided to improve the staff qualifications and satisfy legal requirements.
- Membership for the Head Greenkeeper of the British & International Greenkeepers Association shall be paid for by the Club.

Financial

- An annual budget for both course maintenance and course development shall be agreed with the Committee by the Chair of Greens in conjunction with Head Greenkeeper.
- A timed rolling plan for the replacement and addition of machinery will be implemented in line with the club's policy on asset depreciation.

Timing of Major Work on the Course

Major work on the course will be carried out as soon as the main golfing season finishes. This allows maximum recovery prior to the on-coming season.

Two weeks will be set aside each year for aeration. Subject to the weather, the first week will be in April and the second at the beginning of October.

Minor aeration will be carried out as often as required in the playing season but with the aim to cause minimal disruption to playing surface.

The Head Greenkeeper will plan the timings as far in advance as possible so competitions and visiting parties will not be disrupted by the maintenance programme.

THE GOLF COURSE

Greens

Objective

To provide, in the main golfing season, true, firm, fast surfaces that will hold a well-struck shot played from a closely mown area.

To be achieved by:

- Aeration programme: annual hollow tining, regular out of season verti draining, scarifying, verticutting and brushing in the playing season.
- Fertilisers will be applied to produce a healthy sward and not promote lush soft growth. Top dressing with Mansfield 35 sand shall be applied regularly; amendments may be added as required.
- Cutting height is to be at a height that produces a good speed but without detriment to plant health. 3mm – 6mm as a guide but may vary for “special” competitions.
- Use of vibrating rollers can be used to increase speed as desired.
- Over seeding with bent grasses until the greens are at a stage to allow the successful introduction of fine fescues to improve sward composition.

- The removal or pruning of trees will be carried out to promote the healthy growth of selected woodland and also to promote the circulation of air and light needed to produce the desired quality of greens, tees and fairways.

Minimal use will be made of temporary greens. The occasions when greens cannot be played and thereby necessitating the use of temporary greens include:

- When the surface thaws and the ground below is frozen.
- When it has rained, snowed or snow melt has occurred on frozen greens.
- When they are completely saturated.
- When covered in snow with no snow on the rest of the course.
- When they are not accessible due to flooding or very wet conditions.

In view of the above, there will not be a requirement to prepare temporary greens of a quality higher than closely mown fairway grass.

However, in the event of any major work or conditions that will render a green out of operation for a sustained period, a temporary green will be created and maintained at a level as near to regular green condition as possible in the circumstances.

Hole positions will be changed at least twice per week and more often for competitions

Tees

Objective

To provide a firm, level surface during the main golfing season and to play from grass tees as much as is possible through the off season.

To be achieved by:

- Cutting height during main season 10mm – 12mm.
- Aeration, divotting, overseeding and fertiliser to be used as required.
- Regular moving of tee markers.
- In winter the use of areas of tees not used in summer.
- Consideration will be given to the use of mats where appropriate to minimise the wear of the teeing areas.

Fairways

Objective

To achieve a fairway that will satisfy the requirements as set out in the objectives of this policy.

To be achieved by:

- Range of cutting height 14mm – 18mm
- Aeration programme and timings to be planned to minimise disruption to playing time and will be clearly communicated to members

- Shaping and approximate width of fairways to be compatible with single row irrigation.
- Special preparation for major competitions may include divoting but in the main this will be carried out by members using divot bags
- Irrigation to be at a minimum so as not to produce lush growth

Surrounds and Approaches

An apron to the green will be prepared measuring 6 feet in width extending to 12 ft at the approach to the green. The apron will be cut at a height of 10 – 12mm.

There will then be a further cut at fairway height which will extend a further 10 ft from the edge of the green. From there onwards there will be a band of semi rough and then rough as appropriate to the characteristics of the hole.

Rough & Semi-Rough

The cutting heights for semi rough are to be 30- 32mm and 60-70mm for rough.

Ecological rough grass cutting regimes will vary depending on growth with the aim to produce thin and wispy fescue dominated rough through timed cutting and removal.

Where possible, scarifying to aid this and to promote heather growth will be carried out.

Grass under woodland areas adjacent to fairways are to be kept closely mown where possible

Lower branches of trees adjacent to fairways are to be trimmed as appropriate

Heather

Areas of heather will be maintained in such a way to promote its growth. Regular cutting to prevent leggy plants and the use of gramicides to reduce grass competition will be employed.

Golfers will be requested not to take trolleys or buggies into the heather at anytime

Irrigation

Objective

Water is a precious resource and golf courses are encouraged to only use what is absolutely necessary. To this end, water usage will be kept to the minimum required in order to maintain playing surfaces as set out earlier in this document.

Water is drawn from the pond alongside the 12th green and this source can be topped up with water from the adjacent Mother Drain. Steps will be taken to maintain and, where practical, increase the volume of water held in this irrigation pond. Abstraction from the Mother Drain is monitored to ensure the Club does not exceed the licensed

volume granted by the Environment Agency. This licensed volume can be reduced or, during very dry periods, halted.

Actions taken to optimise the use of irrigation include:

- To prioritise areas to receive water.
- To irrigate at night when evapo-transpiration is low.
- To regularly maintain irrigation equipment and consider improvements in irrigation technology to ensure efficient and effective application of water.
- To utilise regular aeration to ensure that water applied effectively penetrates into the soil.

The irrigation system will be drained down at the end of the season and prepared for use once the frosts have finished so it is ready for the golfing season.

Woodland/Water Bodies

Woodland Management Policy

A planned woodland management programme including the thinning of woodland areas will be implemented with the objective of satisfying the following criteria:

- Satisfying our environmental responsibilities
- Creating the desired standard of tees, fairways and greens
- The promotion of healthy growth of selected existing trees
- The protection of the playing characteristics of the course
- All new planting will be species that are associated with heathland

Water Bodies

Buffer zones will be created in order to prevent chemicals leaching into the water body and to provide good habitats for wildlife. Testing of water used for irrigation will be carried out to ensure corrective action where required

A maintenance programme will be planned and carried out including weed clearance and dredging as appropriate.

Ditches and Drainage

Regular mowing and cleaning of ditches will be undertaken to allow water to flow back as much as possible to the irrigation reservoir for self-sustainability.

Bunkers

Sand to be used is Levenseat LV13 to a consolidated depth to prevent golfers hitting the blinder bunker liner.

Bunkers will be raked a minimum of three times a week.

The condition of bunkers relies mainly on the behaviour of players and all steps will be taken to encourage proper raking at all times

Rakes are to be left inside the bunkers with the handle on the bunker lip and head as far in as possible.

Public Rights of Way

Warning signs along pathways for golfers and the public will be maintained as per Health and Safety policies.

Instructional notices will be erected and maintained which identify to both golfers and users of public footpaths/bridleways areas of potential danger.

GENERAL POLICY AREAS

Communication with Members/Visitors

Minutes of Greens Sub Committee meetings will be posted to members after each Main Committee Meeting

Members will be informed on greens matters via the Club's newsletter, electronic messaging and notices within the clubhouse.

Health & Safety

All activities will comply with the Club's Health & Safety Policy.

It is the responsibility of the HGK to ensure that all greens staff members are aware of potential risks and the measures in place to mitigate against such risks.

Greens Staff have priority when working on the course. Where possible, work will be planned to minimise interaction with golfers.

Use of Trolleys and Ride on Buggies

In the event of conditions creating a need to prevent the use of buggies, the use of the website, notices, telephone message and social media will be employed to notify members.

Trolley/buggy bans will be reviewed regularly and only applied for safety purposes or to prevent damage to the course. When the "Buggy" entry gate is closed no buggies are to enter the course.

No ride on buggies are allowed across the ditch line short of the 12th green due to the proximity of the ponds

Course Closure

A decision to close the course due to adverse weather conditions which put the condition of the course and safety of golfers at risk can be made by the following personnel:

Head Greenkeeper or their deputy
Professional
Chair of Greens

Fog Policy

When the second bunker on the first fairway is not visible from the first tee, then golf is suspended. If the fog worsens after golfers have commenced their game, then play will also be suspended.

A sign on the first tee will state when the course is closed due to fog.

Agronomy

The Head Greenkeeper can call in the Sports Turf Research Institute if required. If a difference of opinion is held between the Greens Chairman and the Head Greenkeeper then the STRI will be used as a consultant

Ecology

Golf courses are encouraged to show concern and awareness for environmental issues, and be positive contributors to ecology and the environment. It is assumed that members will support this aims. This policy therefore includes using the course attributes to encourage a bio diversity that will allow a habitat and wildlife, that do not cause harm to playing surfaces, to flourish. The Club will comply with all associated legislation and, where appropriate, will seek advice from expert bodies.