

**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 proposed significant changes will not be introduced without full consultation with the Management Committee. Minor amendments will take place from time to time as and when agreed by the Course, Competitions and Handicap Committee (CCHC).

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 CCHC will continue to seek to improve the standard of the course whilst recognising 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 Staff 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 set out 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 CCHC 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 CCHC.

The General 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 Green Keeper, giving consideration to work on the course, requirements for closure to allow preparation for key events, and will communicate any alterations and be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Green Keeping Staff, including disciplinary matters.

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

- Planning of maintenance schedules in relation to fixture lists.
- Liaison with the General Manager on any problem areas.
- Machinery maintenance and replacement policies and schedules
- Planning and long term budgeting. (5 to 10 years)
- Schedules and records.
- Personnel education, training and discipline.
- Allocation of daily tasks in compliance with the Club's Health and Safety Policy.
- Safe storage and use 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 Green Keeper

First Assistant Green Keepers x 2

Assistant Green Keepers 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 a Diploma in Sports Turf Management or a suitable vocational qualification to the maximum of their individual abilities.

##### 4.2 *Financial*

The Management Committee with the advice and guidance of the General Manager 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. In principle, major works will take place in the early Autumn/Winter months, while the Spring maintenance will be undertaken to a level necessary determined by the state of the course and weather conditions at the time. The golf playing diary (Societies and major Competitions) needs to be compiled while accepting the demands of maintaining, preparing and presenting the course.

#### 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. Compaction 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 CCHC and the Head Greenkeeper will have recourse to professional advice if they wish it within the constraints of the Green budget.

#### Glossary –

- Greens – Putting surface
- Tees – Teeing ground only
- Apron – Approach to Greens and immediate surrounds of Greens
- Fairway – Short grass playing surface not greens or apron
- Semi- Rough - 1<sup>st</sup> cut from the fairway
- Rough - 2<sup>nd</sup> cut from the fairway
- Ecological Areas – remainder of course beyond the rough not woodland

#### 6.1 *Greens*

The greens are a mix of *Poa Annua* and Bent. The long term objective is to sustain this. It 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 will vary from 3.5mm to 4mm. winter height shall be 5mm to 6mm. Both these heights are entirely dependent upon conditions.

Top dressing 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 programmed 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 18mm during winter months. They will be verti-drained and verti-cut in order to improve the quality of the grass, discourage poa annua and encourage bents and fescues. Certain fairways may need 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 *Aprons*  
Normal cutting height will be around 8mm 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 *Semi Rough*  
Semi Rough will be cut no lower than 32mm to ensure clear indication of where the fairway finishes. This will also promote and maintain good course definition.
- 6.6 *Rough*  
The Rough will be cut no lower than 65mm to promote and maintain course definition.
- 6.7 *Ecological Areas*  
It is the policy of the Club to allow grasses in “out of play” areas beyond the *Rough* 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. Where possible and appropriate the Ecological *Areas* of grass beyond the rough should be cut to a length and width that enhances the opportunity for faster play. In general these area will only be fully cut once in late summer. (These can be viewed on appendix A held in the General Managers office)
- 6.8 *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.
- 6.9 *Bunkers*

The Green Staff will regularly rake bunkers. 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. The Head Greenkeeper will establish a programme of re-profiling bunkers to limit unplayable situations. . Where flint is a major problem, the Head Greenkeeper will consider options for preventing the flint from coming to the surface.

#### 6.10 *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. However growth in ditches should be monitored and where lack of cutting might contribute to slow play additional clearing might be required. (In play ditches can be viewed in appendix B held in the General Managers office)

#### 6.11 *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 bought into use in order that work might proceed more quickly and with greater productivity.

### 7. The Practice Ground

7.1 The Practice Ground (PG) is a club facility situated within the boundaries of the course and bordered on three sides by the fairways of holes 12, 16 and 18. The far end is bordered by woodland. There are effective natural barriers of trees and long grass between the PG and the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> fairways.

7.2 The facility includes a practice chipping and putting green and a practice bunker.

7.3 In 2018 a set of six practice bays were constructed at the southeastern end of the PG.

7.4 The PG and its facilities will be maintained to a standard that enables effective practice for the use of the members and for the professional to teach students.

7.5 The PG should be dynamically risk assessed and where necessary action taken to limit risk.

7.6 The grass will be cut to a length that enables the collection of practice balls. The collection will be managed by the professional and will take place in consultation with the Green Staff at a time and frequency that enables Green Keepers to carry out grass cutting and necessary maintenance of the facility.

7.7 From time to time the facility will be closed to carry out such maintenance and cutting. Members may not use the facility when it is closed for maintenance.

7.8 Rules for use of the facility will be posted, displayed and reviewed by the CCHC.

## 8. 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 until the Course has been assessed. However, the greenstaff will endeavour to reach a decision as early as possible and communicate this to the General Manager and the members by the best means possible. During a competition the General Manager, deputy or an authorised member of the Committee supervising a competition may close the course, 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 Green Keeper or Duty Greenkeeper will decide when they can be moved back to the main greens.

## 9. Green Staff and Members

### 9.1 *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. The Green staff may put a temporary green in play if this does not contravene rules of competitions.

### 9.2 *Complaints*

Members, guests and visitors should make any complaint to the General Manager, but may not do so directly to Green staff. The general manager, if necessary will investigate and resolve the complaint. If unable to do so the complaint may be brought to the GCHC.

## 10. Machinery

The Head Greenkeeper will produce a rolling plan of machinery replacements, additions, repairs and renewals for consideration, amendment and final approval by the GCHC and Management Committee. 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 CCHC. 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.

#### 11. Agronomy

The Head Greenkeeper will have recourse to Professional advice as and when the need arises.

#### 12. 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 GCHC prior to being submitted into the overall budget.

The General Manager will provide monthly performance figures covering the Green budget to the CCHC.

The CCHC will prepare and maintain a 5 to 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.

#### 13. 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 Green Keeper and where significant trees require cutting or felling the Head Green Keeper will notify CCHC before action is taken. This does not include emergency action relating necessary cutting or felling to ensure the safety of members, staff and the public at our boundaries or using public footpaths.

Tree planting will only take place with the approval of the CCHC and under the supervision of the Head Greenkeeper. It is the intention that trees that are planted should be predominantly native species, however bearing in mind the impact of climate change variety options may change.

The CCHC will, as necessary, seek arborological assessments to assist with long-term planning of woodland development and works. Where appropriate this may be supported by course architects.

#### 14. Water Management

- RCGC invested in fairway watering in 1998 and during dry periods this has ensured long term damage to playing surfaces has been limited.
- It is the policy of RCGC to manage water judiciously with the primary aim of ensuring the best playing surfaces possible on fairways and greens.
- During extreme dry periods fairway watering will be used recognising that continued use would have significant budgetary implications.
- It is recognised that water is and will continue to be a valuable limited resource and that steps will be taken to consider and if necessary develop and deliver improved storage capabilities.

#### 15. Ecology

It is an important part of the policy to preserve and encourage 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. (see 6.7)

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