



WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WEST HERTS GOLF CLUB JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15th October, 2014

6.00 pm

West Herts Golf Club

Publication date: 7 October 2014

CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Rosy Wassell in Democracy and Governance on 01923 278375 or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

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The Committee Rooms are on the first floor of the Town Hall and a lift is available. Induction loops are available in the Committee Rooms and the Council Chamber.

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillors K Crout, D Scudder, I Sharpe and D Walford

AGENDA

PART A - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

To elect a Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 December 2013 and 7 May 2014 to be submitted and signed.

Copies of the minutes of this meeting are usually available seven working days following the meeting.

(All minutes are available on the Council's [website](#).)

4. COURSE USAGE UPDATE (Pages 9 - 10)

5. COURSE CLOSURES 2015 (Pages 11 - 12)

6. GREEN FEE RATE

7. BOOKING SCHEDULE (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the proposals in the attached briefing paper and to agree recommendations.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Pages 17 - 18)

Membership Application Review Procedure

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Agenda Item 3

WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WEST HERTS GOLF COURSE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

17 December 2013

Present: West Herts Golf Club

Jim Banks (Chair)
David Rogers
John Baldwin
Eric Woodward
Ken Connelly

Watford Borough Council

Councillor K Crout
Councillor G Derbyshire
Councillor D Walford

Gary Oliver Culture and Play Section Head
Rosy Wassell Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Jim Banks was elected as Chair; proposed by Councillor Crout and seconded by John Baldwin.

2. APOLOGIES

There was a change to the Committee for this meeting: Councillor Derbyshire replaced Councillor Sharpe.

Apologies had been received from Councillor Scudder.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2012 were agreed and signed.

Matters Arising

Palm Readers:

The Chair advised that the cost of supplying palm readers was prohibitive. It would consequently not be possible to introduce this scheme.

Cards for Users:

It had been suggested at the previous meeting that new cards could be introduced in order to differentiate between residents and non-residents. The Culture and Play Section Head explained that this system had been investigated but had been found to be economically unfeasible as the issue of differently coloured cards would equate to a bespoke service for Watford. The current practice of producing a driving licence, Council Tax form or utility bill to prove residency in Watford Borough

would be continued and a notice to remind users to bring this with them should be displayed.

The Chair said that this system had been in use for approximately 15 years. He advised that residents could book a round seven days in advance whilst non-residents booked one day prior to playing. He added that the numbers of non-resident users were diminishing.

The Culture and Play Section Head noted that, in order to comply with the conditions of use, it was necessary to provide information on residency when booking.

The Chair replied that it was possible to turn away those who were not entitled to play but that people would lend out the relevant documents to others.

The Culture and Play Section Head suggested that users could be asked to show a photo driver's licence.

Directional Signs:

Councillor Walford said that he was unsure whether Councillor Scudder had asked Three Rivers District Council whether they had any information on the removal of the direction signs. He said that he would speak to Councillor Scudder and report to the Committee.

ACTION: Councillor Walford to ask Councillor Scudder for information on the signs to the Golf Club.

4. COURSE USAGE UPDATE

The Chair said that usage by both resident and non-resident Everyone Active (EA) Pass Holders had fallen during 2013. He advised that the Head Greenkeeper had reported that the course had been closed due to snowfall for 14 days in January 2013, for a further four days in February and for an additional two days in March.

The Chair noted that usage had risen during the months of June and July due to an exceptionally hot Summer. The warm spell had, however, been followed by a very wet autumn when the numbers of players had fallen.

Replying to a question from Councillor Crout, the Chair advised that this pattern of usage had been experienced by other clubs and was not particular to the West Herts Golf Club; the statistics indicated the conditions of both the weather and the general economy.

The Culture and Play Section Head noted that for Watford residents who were not members of the club, there was only a limited time for them to play; he asked for information on membership of the club.

The Chair responded that there had been a significant increase in membership when the EA card had first been introduced. He advised that the allocation for seven-day membership was currently full but that there were vacancies for those who wished to take up the restricted 'five day membership'. The Chair further

advised that most 'five day' members were waiting for the chance to upgrade to seven-day membership.

David Rogers explained that this was currently a general trend for most clubs.

The Culture and Play Section Head suggested that the Council and the club could co-operate in a joint initiative to fill vacancies for five day members and that cross marketing could increase club membership. He added that discussions could be held to evolve a general fitness / golf package.

In reply to a question from David Rogers, the Culture and Play Section Head said that SLM, the club and the Council could explore options available for advertising.

The Chair agreed that this would be wise and that he would refer the suggestion to the Golf Club Committee for discussion.

ACTION: The Golf Club Committee to progress marketing initiatives

The Chair informed the meeting that whilst the past 12 months been relatively poor in trading terms, reserves had been built up over previous years and the club was consequently financially sound.

Referring to the table of usage of EA Pass Holders, Councillor Crout asked why the year 2011 had yielded such good results.

The Chair replied that the weather had been exceptional that year; weather was the determining factor in course usage.

In reply to a question from the Culture and Play Section Head, Eric Woodward advised that income from the bar had also decreased during the previous year.

The Chair said that whilst some income had been derived from hiring out the bar, this was also less than in previous years.

5. COURSE CLOSURES 2014

The meeting noted that there would be 15 dates on which special events would affect access to the course.

Councillor Crout noted that the game organised by the Watford Observer was not on the list.

The Chair advised that this game would take place but that it would not impinge on availability for the public or for club members.

Ken Connelly explained that in 2013, for the first time, there had been no game organised by the newspaper; there was no specific reason for this decision. He advised that it was probable that a game organised by the Observer would be held in September or October 2014.

The Chair noted that it had been intended that the annual meeting take place during either September or October but that this had not been arranged for 2013.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer explained that there had been no spaces on the calendar during either September or October when all Councillors on the current committee would have been available to attend.

ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to email Ken Connelly with suggested dates.

6. GREEN FEE RATES 2014

Councillor Derbyshire said that it would be better to make small regular increases to the fees than to have a major increase after a number of years.

The Chair advised that there had been no increases since 2012. In response to a question from Councillor Crout he said that whilst a rise in fees had not been agreed, an increase of £1.00 had been suggested for midweek games with a proportional increase at the weekend.

Members agreed that this would be wise.

The Chair proposed that these increases start on 1 April 2014.

Following a question from the Culture and Play Section Head, the Chair agreed that the club would send a schedule of the current charges with their proposals for increases in 2014 and that a report on the matter could also be provided. He informed that there had been no increases for several years and that West Herts was only one of many clubs for whom an increase in fees had been necessary.

The meeting discussed current and proposed fees and increases.

AGREED -

1. That fees be increased by £1.00 during the week with a pro rata increase at the weekend.
2. That the club forward to the Council, a schedule of current fees and proposals for increases

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cassiobury Park Developments

David Rogers asked for details on the refurbishments planned for Cassiobury Park.

The Culture and Play Section Head advised that, following a public consultation, proposals for this initiative would be presented to Cabinet in January 2014. He explained that one of the main features of the development would be a new building situated close to the paddling pools. This would be used as a café with provision for educational facilities; there would be accommodation for the park rangers as well as improved changing rooms.

Councillor Crout added that the existing café, Cha Cha Cha, would remain and would be the subject of substantial improvements.

The Culture and Play Section Head further advised that the bandstand would be moved back to the park from its current location by the library.

Ken Connelly noted that were the Lime Walk to be restored this would affect the club.

David Rogers agreed and said that once approved this would result in greatly increased usage of those paths which crossed the golf course. He asked whether better signage would be installed.

Councillor Crout advised that most people using the paths would be families who, he believed, would take all necessary steps to comply with informational signs.

The Chair advised that it should be borne in mind that the Lime Walk was not a public footpath with a right of way across the course; users crossed the course with permission from the club.

ACTION –

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to ask the Cassiobury Park Project Officer for information regarding signage placed on footpaths across the golf course.

Chair

Watford Borough Council and West
Herts Golf Club Joint Consultative
Committee

The meeting started at 5.00 pm
and finished at 5.50 p.m.

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**WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WEST HERTS GOLF
COURSE JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

7 May 2014

Present: West Herts Golf Club

Jim Banks (Chair)
Steve Barrett (General Manager)
John Baldwin
Eric Woodward
Ken Connelly

Watford Borough Council

Councillor K Crout
Councillor D Scudder
Councillor Iain Sharpe
Councillor D Walford

Jason McKenzie Legal and Democratic Section Head
Rosy Wassell Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

8. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Jim Banks continued as Chair, as elected at the previous meeting held in December 2013.

9. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Joint Consultative Committee considered suggestions for a review procedure to be used in the event of an application for membership of the club being refused.

Councillor Sharpe MOVED that :

The meeting should be adjourned in order to agree a procedure which would offer fairness to the applicant and which would allow the Joint Consultative Committee to reach a conclusion within a reasonable length of time.

The proposal was seconded by Eric Woodward.

The Motion was CARRIED.

It was agreed that John Baldwin, on behalf of the Golf Club, and the Legal and Democratic Section Head, on behalf of Watford Borough Council, would meet to further discuss a procedure for considering requests to review membership application refusals.

RESOLVED –

that the meeting be adjourned in order to agree a procedure, offering fairness to the applicant and allowing the Joint Consultative Committee to reach a conclusion within a reasonable amount of time.

ACTION: John Baldwin and the Legal and Democratic Section Head

Chair

Watford Borough Council and West
Herts Golf Club Joint Consultative
Committee

The meeting started at 7.45 pm
and finished at 7.50 p.m.

	EVERYONE ACTIVE PASS HOLDERS												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
2014													
ACTUAL	19	38	96	107	93	110	151	106	116				836
TARGET	100	100	200	300	300	300	300	300	300	200	100	100	2600
(+/-)													
YTD ACTUAL	19	57	153	260	353	463	614	720	836	836	836		
YTD TARGET	100	200	400	700	1000	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2500	2600	2600
(+/-)													
PASS HOLDERS RESIDENTS													
2000	171	194	229	266	386	353	379	372	318	237	185	77	3167
2001	113	104	201	259	326	351	372	384	364	266	180	108	3028
2002	125	114	185	282	268	312	298	306	324	146	112	84	2556
2003	115	84	203	265	335	316	283	274	258	216	109	59	2517
2004	68	115	91	190	249	159	158	228	184	88	70	91	1691
2005	67	53	49	162	168	146	170	124	120	108	61	29	1257
2006	45	38	31	105	99	111	159	134	172	126	76	31	1127
2007	28	25	76	155	88	110	107	104	70	71	62	22	918
2008	26	31	63	92	100	93	107	144	78	106	42	33	915
2009	24	24	86	93	137	86	132	143	97	130	49	16	1017
2010	16	15	81	176	177	143	214	159	161	144	48	7	1341
2011	60	119	117	348	284	236	306	325	114	174	107	55	2245
2012	83	47	204	193	192	144	90	195	143	88	44	7	1430
2013	34	16	59	106	94	179	159	144	96	79	43	32	1041
2014	19	38	96	107	93	110	151	106	116				836
(+/-)	(44%)	137%	63%	0%	0%	(38%)	(5%)	(26%)	21%	(33%)	(33%)		
PASS HOLDERS NON RESIDENTS													
2000	6	4	11	7	12	15	31	18	9	9	5	1	128
2001	1	1	5	19	8	4	1	1	2	1	4	0	47
2002	2	3	1	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
2003	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	13	29	33	4	6	115
2004	5	5	13	25	19	11	9	33	19	14	7	9	169
2005	2	7	5	21	22	17	21	6	7	9	2	0	119
2006	0	2	0	2	1	6	14	4	3	3	3	0	38
2007	0	5	1	2	6	4	9	1	0	0	0	0	28
2008	0	5	3	2	4	7	0	0	1	1	0	0	23
2009	2	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	10
2010	0	0	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
2011	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	7	11	3	1	26
2012	3	2	10	13	11	7	12	3	3	3	1	0	68
2013	0	0	2	6	3	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	18
2014	0	2	0	12	11	0	0	0	0				

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THE CLUBHOUSE, CASSIOBURY PARK
ROUSEBARN LANE, CROXLEY GREEN
HERTS, WD3 3GG



Agenda Item 5

TELEPHONE: 01923 236484
FACSIMILE: 01923 222300

G Oliver Esq
Leisure and Community Service Manager
Watford Borough Council
Town Hall
Watford
Herts WD17 3EX

7th October 2014

Dear Gary

WEST HERTS GOLF COURSE 2015

As outlined in the Original Agreement it was agreed that the Club should be allowed to stage **special events** that would affect access to the course. These are listed below:

Events which preclude ordinary play for the Public and Club Members.

- | | | |
|----|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | 9.5.15 | WHGC Men's Spring Meeting |
| 2. | 4.7.15 | WHGC Captain's Day |
| 3. | 13.9.15 | WHGC Club Championship Qualifier |
| 4. | 20.9.15 | WHGC Finals Day |
| 5. | 4.12.15 | Christmas Grand Charity Event |

Events which will result in changed times for access by the Public and Club Members.

- | | | |
|----|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | 20.4.15 | Herts Schools Scratch Championships |
| 2. | 23.4.15 | WHGC St George's Day Meeting |
| 3. | 1.5.15 | Herts Ladies County Champs |
| 4. | 27.5.15 | EGU England Golf Captain's Comp |
| 5. | 30.5.15 | WHGC Club Day & BBQ |
| 6. | 16.8.15 | WHGC Mixed Invitation (pm only) |
| 7. | 7.9.15 | WHGC Ladies Open |
| 8. | 8.9.15 | WHGC Mid-Week Invitation (pm only) |
| 9. | 27.12.15 | WHGC Mixed Shotgun Event |

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Barrett'.

Steve Barrett
General Manager



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West Herts Golf Club JCC Briefing Paper

Purpose

The Board of West Herts Golf Club ("WHGC") is concerned about the sustained decline in the number of Watford residents who play the course as visitors. The visitor numbers have fallen from a high of 3000+ to a low in 2013 of 1041.

Like many other amateur sports in England, golf faces some serious challenges. As a result of a combination of circumstances - a challenging economy, lifestyle changes and a shifting competition and consumer landscape - the number of golf club members has declined by 30% since 2004, down from 884,000 to 675,000.

Recommendations

The Board accepts the research conclusions of both Sport England and England Golf that available leisure time and cost are two of the major factors limiting the growth in sport participation. The Board would like to introduce a number of new initiatives which the Board feels will benefit Watford residents and increase the numbers of residents and other casual golfers visiting and making use of the golf course and clubhouse facilities:

- Greater access by increasing the amount of shared access time and reducing allocated times.
- Improved access by providing booking facilities by phone and via the club web site.
- Reduced green fee rates at quieter times, with discounts up to 50%. The JCC will continue to set and review base rates and discounts will be administered by the club based on weather conditions, competitor analysis and seasonal demand.
- Launch of a flexible lifestyle membership, which is a hybrid of membership and green fee and appeals to the casual social golfer. Target date: April 2015
- Joint WHBC and WBC pre-season marketing campaign promoting visitor green fees.

These initiatives are targeted to increase the number of visitors who are Watford residents from 1041 to 1600 over two years. This increases the average daily demand from 3 to 4.5.

In order to implement these initiatives it will be necessary to agree to some changes to some of the clauses in the Joint User Agreement - or to their suspension during a pilot period of one year commencing 01.01.15 to prove the benefit case. The details of how this might be implemented are illustrated in the attached Appendix 1.

Conclusion

West Herts will be celebrating its 125th anniversary next year, a landmark few organisations - let alone golf clubs - have achieved. A long history is no guarantee of a long future. It is the capacity, willingness and flexibility to adapt to a changing commercial landscape that secures the future of any organisation.

The Board is committed to building a strong business partnership with the Council that will enable Watford residents - whether as members or visitors - to enjoy the golf course and clubhouse facilities of one of the premier golf clubs in the county.

The WHGC Board hope that the JCC will give favourable consideration to the proposals contained in this briefing paper and look forward to the committee's response.

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Appendix 1

Illustrative Booking Schedule

Monday Tuesday Wednesday

9am to 10.30am Members only (*these are generally the start times for club matches*)

Twilight green fee rates will be available April to October for circa £15 (price to TBC)

Thursday

9am to 11am Lady members only (*85% of member are unable to play*)

Twilight green fee rates will be available April to October for circa £15 (price to TBC)

Friday

9am to 10.30am members only (*these are generally the start times for club matches*)

3pm to 5pm open play

Members and visitors will utilise open play on a first arrival basis

Saturday

7am to 8am public only

8am to 10.30am members only

Sunday

7am to 8am public only

8am to 10.30am members only

All other times can be booked by members and the public up to 7 days in advance by phone through the web site or by personal visit to the pro shop. There is no way to validate the identity of the person booking and therefore the booking policy will need to provide equal access ie up to 7 days in advance.

On week end competition days being Saturdays and Sundays the course will be closed to members not in the competition (which on average is 60 % of full members) and to visitors from 7am to 3pm. Watford residents be able to play after 3 pm for a week end green fee discounted by 50%

There are currently allocated 22 Saturdays and 22 Sundays for competitions it is proposed that this could be reduced to 20 Saturdays and 20 Sundays as part of the overall package of changes.

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West Herts Golf Club Membership Application Review Procedure

Under the agreement between the Watford Borough Council (WBC) and the West Herts Golf Club (Club) which established this Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), the committee is tasked with resolving any complaint by a member of the public that his/her application for membership of the Club was dealt with unfairly and/or on unreasonable grounds.

The JCC has determined that this is the procedure that it will follow when asked to make a determination of such complaint.

1. On receipt of a request by a refused applicant (the Requestor) for the Committee to make a determination, WBC's Democratic Services Team (on behalf of the JCC) will acknowledge receipt of the request and provide the requestor with a copy of this procedure.
2. Within 14 days of the date of the acknowledgement of the request, the Requestor is required to supply full written details of the grounds of his/her complaint (e.g. that the Club failed to follow its own process, is in breach of the Equality Act 2010, has declined the application on unreasonable grounds, etc) along with copies of any documents the Requestor wishes to provide in support.
3. Upon receipt of the Requestor's grounds of complaint and documents, WBC's Democratic Services Team will write to the chair of the membership committee of the Club, providing a copy of the Requestor's grounds of complaint and documents and asking the Club to supply:-
 - a. full written details of the Requestor's original application;
 - b. the reasons for the decision to decline the Requestor's membership application;
 - c. any Club policies regarding eligibility for membership; and
 - d. any comment the Club wish to make on the Requestor's grounds of complaint.

The Club is required to supply the information requested in this paragraph within 14 days of the date of the request. WBC's Democratic Services will send a copy of the information submitted by the Club to the Requestor.

4. WBC's Democratic Services team will advise the parties of the date upon which a meeting will be convened for the JCC to consider the complaint and the written submissions of the parties. The Requestor and the Club's membership will be given a final opportunity to submit further representations and documents should they wish to do so – any final submissions must be provided at least 10 clear working days prior to the date of the meeting.
5. The members of the JCC will be sent an agenda and the written submissions of the parties at least 5 clear days before the date of the meeting
6. The JCC will consider its decision in private and will determine to deal with the complaint in one or more of the following ways:-
 1. Adjourn the meeting for additional information;

2. Dismiss the complaint;
 3. Uphold the complaint and request the Club to re-consider the application under their then current Bye Laws;
 4. Fail to reach a majority decision
-
7. Any member of the Club's membership committee or any Club member who participated in the original decision to decline the Requestor membership who is a member of the JCC will not be permitted to take part in any discussion or decision relating to the Requestor's complaint.
 8. Written notification of the decision will be sent to both the Requestor and the Club within 10 working days of the decision.
 9. The JCC has the right to make variations to these procedures in the event that it considers the circumstances of a particular matter for consideration requires such a variation.