

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

4 October 2016

Present: **West Herts Golf Club**
David Rogers (Chair)
John Baldwin
Ken Connelly
Jonathan Kaltner (General Manager)

Watford Borough Council
Councillor J Dhindsa
Councillor P Taylor
Councillor D Walford

Officers: Culture and Community Section Head
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

1 Election of a chair

David Rogers was elected chair for the meeting.

It was noted that Eric Woodward remained president of West Herts Golf Club and chair of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC).

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor Scudder and Eric Woodward.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2015 were agreed and signed.

4 Course usage update

The General Manager outlined the figures for the previous 12 months – a rolling year beginning in September 2015.

Whilst there was some variation in course usage amongst Watford residents on a month by month basis, the flexible 'Lifestyle' membership (aimed at players

seeking more accessible and affordable club arrangements) had continued to improve the number of Watford residents playing golf at West Herts Golf Club over the year. 'Lifestyle' membership had grown from 50 in 2015 to 90 in 2016, of which around 90% were Watford residents.

There followed a discussion about the membership monitoring carried out by the Golf Club. It was agreed that from January 2017, an equalities monitoring form should be included in the Club's membership forms (including renewal forms). The Culture and Play Section Head would provide the Club with a suitable example.

In addition, the Club agreed to analyse more precisely which of its members with WD postcodes lived within the borough of Watford.

Action –

1. From January 2017, an equalities monitoring form should be included in the Club's membership forms (including renewal forms).
2. The Culture and Play Section Head would provide an example of an equalities monitoring form for use by the Club.
3. West Herts Golf Club would analyse its members with WD postcodes to ascertain how many lived in the borough of Watford.

5 Course closures 2017

The course closure dates, advising when special events would be taking place in 2017, were noted. These were within the terms of the Joint User Agreement.

It was proposed that the Club should consider including a public open day in its schedule of course closures to encourage the wider participation of Watford residents.

Action –

1. West Herts Golf Club should consider an additional public open day in its schedule of course closures.

6 Green fee rate 2017

The General Manager reported that the Club was proposing an increase in the Friday green fee rate in 2017 from £26 to £30 per round. This was in response to rising demand for play on a Friday. The proposal was being put forward by the Club following research into the rates charged in comparable clubs in the surrounding area. All other rates would remain unchanged.

Councillor Dhindsa expressed his concern at the extent of the rate increase in percentage terms, which he did not support.

It was questioned whether the increase might be offset by reductions in the rates charged at other times in the week, or could be spread over two years.

It was agreed by majority that the JCC should recommend to the Club and the Council an increase in green fees on Fridays from £26 to £30.

In a separate line of enquiry, the weekend rates charged for junior players were queried. The General Manager agreed to clarify the full schedule of rates for 2017 and circulate this to the JCC.

Action –

1. An increase in green fees on Fridays from £26 to £30 should be recommended to the Club and the Council.
2. The General Manager should investigate the full schedule of rates proposed for 2017 to assess the scope for any reductions and to clarify the weekend rates charged for junior players. The schedule of rates should then be recirculated to the JCC.

7 **Booking schedule**

Following earlier discussion of the booking schedule, the JCC agreed to recommend to the Club and the Council that changes to the Joint User Agreement should be continued.

In addition, it was agreed that the changes to the Joint User Agreement should be continued unless (or until) either the Club or the Council notified the JCC that they wished to revert to the previous arrangements (or adopt alternative arrangements). This would remove the need for the JCC to recommend changes to the fee bookings every year.

Action –

1. The General Manager should send the necessary documentation to the Legal and Democratic Services Section Head in order to extend changes to fee bookings and to the Joint User Agreement. These changes should be continued unless (or until) either the Club or the Council notified the JCC that they wished to revert to the previous arrangements (or adopt alternative arrangements).

Any other business

Disciplinary Matters

Following previous discussions on the role of the JCC in regard to internal disciplinary matters concerning Club members, it was confirmed that the JCC's role was limited.

Essentially, the terms of reference of the JCC did not extend to the discipline of Club members, except in regard to consider and resolve the unreasonable refusal by the Club of an application for membership. In regard to public players, the JCC was able to consider and resolve appeals by a public player against disciplinary action by the Club. A fuller explanation had been sent to the General Manager by the Legal and Democratic Services Section Head.

Chair's overview

The Chair updated the committee on the following:

1. Jonathan Kaltner had taken over from Steve Barrett as General Manager of West Herts Golf Club in March 2016.
2. Catering operations at the Club had been brought in-house in order to improve the standard of customer service. Using TUPE arrangements, staff had been transferred across to become Club employees.
3. The Club had reported a modest £19,000 trading surplus in the financial year ending 31 December 2015.
4. A VAT refund for the Club was anticipated from HMRC.
5. There had been significant investment in the course and Club facilities in the past year. As a part of this investment and renewal process, the Club had been in discussions with West Herts College. This was aimed at involving students in catering activities as part of their course curriculum work.

It was suggested that the Club should investigate whether government training grants were available for its activities with West Herts College.

Joint User Agreement

John Baldwin noted that the Joint User Agreement was now 20 years old. A great many changes had taken place in the Club during the intervening period and it was proposed to review and possibly rewrite the agreement.

The Club was advised that the starting point for this process should be a clear, written proposal from them setting out precisely what changes were sought. Following this, agreement would need to be reached on how best to take the proposals forward, e.g., at an extraordinary JCC meeting or by establishing a working group.

Squatters

Ken Connelly reported that the Club had been experiencing difficulties with squatters in the area known as the Dell. This had both hygiene and waste disposal implications. Contact with the park's ranger service had not proved helpful. The Culture and Play Section Head advised that he would intervene to see if the problem could be resolved.

Action –

1. The Club should investigate whether government training grants were available for its activities with West Herts College.
2. The Culture and Play Section Head would speak to the park ranger service to see what assistance could be given to the Club to alleviate the squatter problem in the Dell.

Chair

The Meeting started at 5.00 pm
and finished at 6.35 pm