

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

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

Present: West Herts Golf Club

Jim Banks (Chair)  
Ross McCue (General Manager)  
Nick Rothwell  
David Rogers

Watford Borough Council

Councillor A Mortimer  
Councillor D. Walford

Caroline Roche      Sports Development Officer  
Rosy Wassell        Committee Services Officer

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Jim Banks was elected Chair for the meeting.  
He was proposed by Councillor Mortimer.

**2. APOLOGIES**

No apologies had been received.

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2010 were agreed.

There were no matters arising.

**4. COURSE USAGE UPDATE 2010**

The General Manager tabled details of the 'Everyone Active' Pass Holders and 2010 targets.

*Pass Holders Residents:*

The General Manager informed the meeting that there had been a decline in card holder usage throughout the early years of the century but that by 2008 this had begun to level out. There had been a significant increase since 2009 and it was notable that the increase in 2010 over the previous year had been almost 31.2%. This trend had continued and was confirmed in the January and February figures for the current year and was increasing exponentially. He advised that some former members had resigned and then made use of the Everyone Active Card. The Chair added that the card was a cheaper option for membership fees.

The General Manager advised that the Golf Course had been forced to close for 31 days during the year due to heavy snow falls. He explained that snow cover had caused further problems for the greens. Whilst the grass would be dormant during

the winter, it still required a degree of oxygen and preventative measures had been necessary. This had proved to be a considerable expense with a resultant increase in 11% in cost for upkeep over the previous year.

The Chair commented on the current healthy appearance of the course and noted that during the previous summer the greens had been in their best condition for many years.

The General Manager agreed that it was important to keep the greens in good condition and that the increase in costs had proved to be worthwhile. He advised that 160 tonnes of top dressing were used on the greens each year and the annual course maintenance spend was in excess of £100,000.

*Cadet Section:*

One Member enquired whether there was a significant number of young people joining the club.

The General Manager replied that there were approximately 68 cadet members aged between eight and eighteen of whom 11 had a single figure handicap and some 15 cadets had handicaps of between 10 and 30. He added that there were a further 35 members who were too young to play; they could, however, take advantage of tuition opportunities. He advised that the cadets' section was managed by volunteers and had a good infrastructure; this was, he said, a particularly vibrant section of the club.

The Chair added that one cadet had gone on the European tour whilst others had become professional players; the General Manager advised that five cadets were in the County squad.

In reply to a Member's query, the General Manager advised that there were eight girls in the cadet section and that one, a 14 year-old, was in the county squad.

The General Manager informed the meeting that entry to the cadet section was by interview where the prospective cadet was advised of the club's expectations and the high standards which were required.

## **5. COURSE CLOSURES 2010**

The General Manager tabled a list of closures and reported that there would be six days during 2011 in which ordinary play for Public and Club Members would be precluded.

Members noted that dates for closure were: 7<sup>th</sup> May, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 18<sup>th</sup> September and 25<sup>th</sup> November. The dates all corresponded with the 2010 dates.

The Chair advised that in response to the County Union, the club was providing facilities for one County event each year. This year the event would take place on 26<sup>th</sup> June.

## **6. GREEN FEE RATE 2010**

Members noted that the Green Fees had remained the same as for 2010. West Herts Golf Club did not intend to delete fees for non residents as a result of the introduction of the Everyone Active Card. The club's intention was to have the ability

to differentiate between Resident and Non Residents as per the original agreement and to use the varying LP01 and LP02 rates.

One Member noted that the green fees had stabilised; he added that it was wise to charge less during the current period of inflation and hoped that charges could remain at this level for the foreseeable future.

The Chair reported that the club's finances were stable as this situation had been anticipated and planned for. He advised that Green Fee income had decreased in 2010 and this would probably continue in 2011.

The General Manager affirmed that it was unlikely that green fees would remain the same for a fifth year and, consequently, they would in all probability rise in 2012.

A Member asked whether the club could be hired for non-golf or social events such as private parties.

The General Manager advised that this was feasible were a club member to sponsor the event. He added that there were so many internal functions that it was not always possible to accommodate non-members. The current year had been particularly busy.

The General Manager advised that catering at the club was run by a franchise; he added that the Environmental Health Officer had attended the previous day and had confirmed that all was in order.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

A Member asked for confirmation that the green fees would increase in 2012.

The General Manager confirmed that this would be the case as parity with other clubs was necessary. The Chair, however, added that this would depend on use of the Everyone Active card.

The General Manager advised that although data at the club had, of necessity, to be extracted manually, this was not a problem as the footfall was less than at the leisure centres and was consequently manageable.

The Sports Development Officer confirmed that specific data extracted from the card was requested by Watford Borough Council as part of the Leisure contract. She added that both Leisure Centres were thriving and that consequently there had been a greater take-up of the card during the previous year.

Chair

Watford Borough Council and West Herts  
Golf Club Joint Consultative Committee

The meeting started at 5.50 pm  
and finished at 6.30 p.m.