



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Burhill Golf Club

Prepared by Independent Verifier, Tony Hanson

Certified by GEO Foundation: October 2020
Valid until: October 2025

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“The management at Burhill Golf Club are continuing their sustainability journey with close management of the built environment, reducing resource consumption through the use of technology and engagement. The natural environment benefits from sympathetic habitat management reducing operational costs, whilst helping to enhance the ecological diversity and providing a beautiful golf course.”

Tony Hanson

GEO accredited Independent Verifier



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Burhill Golf Club has successfully achieved GEO Certified® status for its outstanding work to foster nature, conserve resources and support the community.

GEO Certified® is the most respected certification for golf, based on a credibly and transparently developed modern sustainability Standard of best practice.

Burhill Golf Club has:

1. Met the required certification criteria for sustainable golf operations
2. Successfully completed the official third-party verification process
3. Successfully passed the final evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd. (autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation)

GEO agreed with the conclusions of the official verification report, that, having achieved all mandatory criteria; and with specific Continual Improvement Points set for the future, Burhill Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Burhill Golf Club can therefore claim a position as a leader in advancing sustainability in golf – making important contributions in protecting nature, conserving resources and strengthening communities.

The GEO Certified® Report that follows comments on the actions undertaken against the criteria, as observed by the Independent Verifier during the assurance process.

Certification is nearly always the result of a dedicated team effort resulting in many practical and valuable social and environmental results around the golf course, maintenance facility and clubhouse. These dedication and leadership qualities are an important part of ensuring the resilience of the golf facility and the golf industry into the future and also as part of society's wider effort to pull together for people and planet.

We congratulate all involved.

Jonathan Smith
Founder and Executive Director, GEO Foundation
GEO Certification Ltd. Board Member

Kelli Jerome
Executive Director, GEO Foundation

Richard Allison
Manager, GEO Certified Facilities



Verification and Certification

Verification

The official third-party audit was carried out by an independent verifier, accredited by GEO to undertake verifications of golf facilities applying for certification.

Verification involves reviewing practices and data, using the International Voluntary Standard for Sustainable Golf Operations as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance. A detailed verification report is submitted for evaluation by GEO Certification Ltd, a subsidiary of GEO Foundation.

Certification

GEO Certification Ltd, an autonomous subsidiary of GEO Foundation [both not-for-profit entities], undertook a full review of all content submitted through the OnCourse® online platform and the report submitted by the verifier, ensuring:

- Comprehensiveness – that activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Standard
- Consistency – that the verification approach was balanced, well weighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across each theme
- Accuracy - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the golf facility to ensure statements and claims were accurate

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit founded to advocate, support and reward sustainability in and through golf. Over more than ten years, the group has worked collaboratively with dozens of golf industry associations and government and non-government organisations around the world, to help golf become a sustainability leader, striving for a net positive social and environmental impact. In addition to managing and assuring GEO Certified®, GEO Foundation also provides a suite of credible, practical programmes for golf facility management, new golf developments and golf tournaments called OnCourse®, often delivered in partnership with national golf bodies. Find out more at www.sustainable.golf

Credibility

GEO Certified® is part of the ISEAL Alliance, a group of the world's foremost credible certification systems including Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council and many others. GEO Foundation earned and retains full membership of the ISEAL Alliance global association following a rigorous evaluation against the ISEAL Codes of Credibility in Sustainability Standards and Certification. The ISEAL Codes cover standard-setting, assurance, and monitoring and evaluation. Find out more at www.isealliance.org



Verifier's Report

The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	• Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	• Water • Energy • Materials
Community	• Partnerships & Outreach • Golfing & Employment • Advocacy & Communications

Included below are the observations made by the Independent Verifier against each item in the Standard.

NATURE			
N1 Habitats and Biodiversity			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings	N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site	Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	• Burhill Golf Club are continuing to use and update the data provided initially in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey. • Additional surveys are being conducted to enhance management of the facility – most recently an

			Arboricultural Survey and Veteran Tree survey to provide data for a management programme and to identify important specimens on site. An extensive course walk and discussion was undertaken to look at the course and various projects to enhance the natural environment.
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	- The site does not contain any Statutory Designations although there is clearly an excellent knowledge of the habitat and species on site. - The course walk picked up various projects and management techniques to enhance and protect species including the Heather (<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>) regeneration project re-establishing the Surrey Heath character of the course.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	- The Course is sited on an 18th Century estate with an impressive Georgian clubhouse and associated outbuilding. - More recent historic events are recognised with rooms named after Barnes Wallis who spent some time at Burhill during World War 2.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	Turf grass areas are reviewed based on ware and anecdotal evidence to reduce the managed playing surfaces to the optimum size taking in to account playing times and aesthetics
N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	- The initial Phase 1 Habitat Survey still forms the backbone of management at Burhill Golf Club, although it has grown organically with new data and information over the past few years. - Course management mapping also provides data on wildlife activity impacting on the course. - The Heather reintroduction and advice taken on managed decline of dead and decaying trees enhance and create a more diverse range of habitats across the site.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		- Heather Management and re-introduction projects mentions above. - Sympathetic woodland management plan and veteran tree management
N2 Turfgrass			

N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	Select appropriate grass species for climate	- Turf grass species remains a combination of Poa annua and Agrostis tenuis on greens with Poa annua and Lolium perenne on Tees and Fairways. - The combination is found to provide the desired combination of quality playing surface with acceptable management intensity.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Soil management techniques adopted at Burhill Golf Club include hollow tining, slitting and topdressing to improve air flow, increase root depth, reduce compaction and maintain surface drainage.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	- A combination of knowledge allows the site to be managed with optimal inputs. - The site has course and hole mapping historic information built up over years and with a variety of climatic conditions to help understand the site risks and required interventions - Long term staff knowledge also contributes to the pool of information to help optimise inputs and head off likely problems.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Equipment maintenance and cleaning, good observation and soil management all play their part in maintaining playing surfaces.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases; Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease; Accurate pest and disease identification; Map and track pest and disease hotspots; Establish pest and disease thresholds	- Pest risk assessment are undertaken when pressures are increasing. - The ITM and knowledge of the site play key roles in allowing interventions obviating or reducing the requirement for chemical intervention.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use only legally registered and approved products; Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf	- Reviewed and confirmed the Chemical Stock Log detailing products and quantities in site. - Confirmed spray licences and discussed training - PPE and wash facilities observed and discussed - Equipment is serviced regularly and calibration checked
N3 Pollution			

Prevention			
N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site	N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations	Document procedures for emergency spill responses; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.	• Pollution Incident Response Plan is being drafted • Site maps discussed and observed during previous visit. • Buffer zones are maintained to prevent overspray.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	• Registered Waste Contractors are retained to collect and dispose of waste correctly • Waste Transfer Notes and other documentation are retained. • Waste water discharge licence observed on previous survey
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces; Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	• Washdown area has recently been upgraded to a proprietary closed loop biological treatment plant. • Discharge Licence as above • Chemical and fuel • Chemical and fuel are stored in appropriate bunded proprietary locker and tanks
N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff; Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building; Sufficient storage capacity; Impermeable flooring; Spill containment kits present; Emergency wash area; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area; Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks	• Observed storage equipment and stock and use records for hazardous materials • Spill kits on site • CIPS • Remove and dispose of the small area of soil contaminated with drips from fuel dispensing • Install containment system to catch future small overflow spills • Provide staff training on refuelling to help reduce spills
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	• Wastewater discharge Licence previously observed • Washdown area reviewed

RESOURCES

R1 Water

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
R1.1 Minimise water demand	R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	Irrigation management is designed to optimise applications based on need
R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	Conduct regular irrigation performance checks; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Ensure effective application of water to target areas; Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis	- Visual inspection, rainfall records and weather forecasts are all taken in to account to determine application volumes - The irrigation system is regularly maintained and the control system allows for control over volumes and timings which can be adjusted remotely.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	Water bills and volumes are checked regularly
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	- The Club has worked closely with the Environment Agency to create water storage with winter abstraction to help reduce flows on the River Mole. - Additional water storage is being planned to ensure water security for the coming years for the Club, and to help reduce winter runoff and river flows in winter months to reduce flood events in the local area.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf	Adjustments to the playing areas are driven by playing times and aesthetic appeal and has been reviewed over

	consumed in course maintenance	inputs	the years to provide minimal managed turfgrass without impacting the playing experience. Naturalised areas include heather regeneration projects and woodland habitat creation.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	- Energy bills and consumption are regularly reviewed - No formal energy audit has been undertaken
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	Renewable energy potential is reviewed periodically, although it is currently return on investment is marginal.
R3 Materials			
R3.1 Reduce materials demand	R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives	Undertake a review of materials consumed	- No formal waste audit has been conducted - Waste streams are separated to reduce waste to landfill - Deliveries are consolidated to reduce both packaging and deliver miles
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy	Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials	Environmental and purchasing policies we reviewed previously
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	See above
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	- Registered waste contactor is retained to collect and correctly dispose of waste - Transfer notes and other documentation is maintained.

COMMUNITY

C1 Outreach

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality	C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility		- Community use of the club facilities are encouraged together with areas of the site which are used by local stables for riding - Junior and other community golf coaching is provided and the site is Golfmark accredited.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		Staff are encouraged to volunteer for golf and non-golf events and charities
C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	Create a 'sustainability working group'	Sustainability is a recurring agenda item on the monthly Heads of Departments meeting

C2 Golfers & Employees

C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities		- Group and individual lessons are available to encourage new golfers to engage. - Awareness of the benefits of mental health are highlighted in meetings and other material.
C2.2 Be open and inclusive	C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	The Club policy is to be open and inclusive
C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	- New employees undertake an induction programme covering H&S and management procedures - Additional training is provided internally

C3 Communications

C3.1 Engage golfers and members	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions,	Information is primarily circulated via electronic newsletters and the website
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		and understanding amongst members and visitors	or achievements	• Notices are placed in and around the Clubhouse as appropriate.
	C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	• See above

Golf and Sustainability

Among all sports, golf has a particularly close relationship with the environment and communities, golf facilities can bring many benefits to people and nature - from the protection of greenspace and conservation of biodiversity; healthy recreation for all ages; local supply chains; and jobs, tourism and other forms of economic value.

Adopting a more sustainable approach is also good for golf. It's about presenting a high-quality golf course and providing a memorable experience in natural surroundings. It's about being as efficient as possible. And it's about supporting the community in a range of ways that bring increased recognition, respect and contact.

At a broader level, it's important that golf credibly demonstrates its commitment, and its social and environmental value – strengthening the sport's image and reputation for the long term.

Golf facilities that participate in OnCourse®, an international sustainability initiative assured by the non-profit GEO Foundation, are taking a comprehensive approach and striving to be leaders in the community.

Find out more at www.sustainable.golf