



GEO Certified® Report Dumbarnie Golf Links

Prepared by independent verifier Alan Johnston

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2028

“Dumbarnie Golf Links is a professionally managed golf club that takes its environmental stewardship seriously. In its relatively short history, the team has developed a strong understanding of the site’s ecological value and its wider environmental significance as part of a designated SSSI area. Following detailed discussions with the management team and a site tour with the Environmental Manager, I was particularly impressed by the club’s collaborative approach with ecological partners. Notable initiatives include enhancements to wetland biodiversity, efforts to reintroduce Corn Bunting to the area, and the identification and protection of sand dune habitats to support stable nesting and as a food source for Sand Martins. As part of the original planning approval process, the club has a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) and a Habitat Management Plan (HMP), which provide a clear framework for guiding environmental priorities in the coming years. It is important that the commitments and partnerships set out within the LEMP and HMP are formally embedded and that progress is monitored and reported to stakeholders. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of these actions and the positive contribution they will make to the site’s biodiversity and long-term ecological value.”

Alan Johnston
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Dumbarnie Golf Links 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.

Dumbarnie Golf Links 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 (CIP) set for the future and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, Dumbarnie Golf Links should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Dumbarnie Golf Links 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

Carole Kerrey
Director, Certification and Credibility,
GEO Certification Ltd.



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 – 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	General knowledge of the wildlife and habitats on the site	Dumbarnie Golf Links is an 18-hole links golf course occupying a 345-acre site that underwent complete redevelopment in 2018. The verification visit was conducted on 12 December 2025. The assessment included a thorough inspection of the facilities accompanied by James Harley, Environmental Manager, as well as meetings with Graheme Taylor, Course Manager, and a subsequent Teams call with David Scott, General Manager. During the visit, all key areas were reviewed, including the course itself, the greenkeeping compound and storage facilities, the maintenance facility, the clubhouse, and the halfway house situated at the fifth hole. The golf club operates on a visitors only basis and does not offer memberships. The course was closed for the season during the visit. The greenkeeping team has 18 permanent staff, with temporary workers added in the playing season. The greenkeeping team has quickly gained a solid grasp of the course's ecology. Their dedication is evident in ongoing survey efforts, habitat mapping, commitments to long-term monitoring and collaborations with ecology partners. The golf course features undulating terrain with steep dunes, and its greens, tees, and fairways are thoughtfully built in low areas where gorse scrub is well incorporated into the design. The landscape has been reshaped to create an environment that extends the existing dune topography into the site. The topography is characterised by undulations similar in size, shape & scale to those found within the existing SSSI.

			Scrub habitats are found in out-of-play rough areas and consist of native species such as broom, hawthorn, gorse, and blackthorn. The management of the course reflects a proactive commitment to ecological stewardship. CCIP: Please develop a current and comprehensive Habitat Management Plan that accurately represents the ecological value of the course. CCIP: Please establish an Action Plan to ensure effective implementation and ongoing maintenance of the measures detailed in both the Landscape Environmental Management Plan and the Habitat Management Plan.
	N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Identify rare, protected or endangered species found on the golf course; Understand legal responsibilities for landscape protection and special area designations, if applicable	Observed: Legal protections, including for the SSSI, are outlined in the Landscape Environmental Management Plan and Habitat Management Plan submitted to Fife Council Planning Department in May 2018 before new site development began. Bird surveys conducted for the planning application identified multiple breeding species, including several of conservation interest such as skylark, corn bunting, and lapwing. Observed: Maps delineating specific target zones for habitat management, including grasslands, designated 'out of play' roughs, and woodland areas. Observed: NatureScot's Vegetation Composition Survey & Monitoring Report. Discussed: John Deere's GPS guidance systems for spraying, designed to improve both efficiency and precision. This automated technology also helps ensure compliance with designated no-spray zones. Highlight: Dumbarnie Golf Links is collaborating with the University of St Andrews to support and promote ground nesting for the endangered Corn Bunting. Highlight: Dumbarnie Golf Links is collaborating with NatureScot on the monitoring of the Firth of Forth SSSI area.

			Highlight: In 2025, the team conducted a course-wide BioBlitz, focusing on the identification and monitoring of bird species and other wildlife present at the facility. Highlight: Efforts are underway to improve the wetland area in order to support greater biodiversity. CIP: Please review all habitat protection activities regularly. This involves holding staff briefings, monitoring buffer zones, and keeping accurate documentation, all in line with the Habitat Management Plan. CIP: Please develop informative signage for visitors and stakeholders that showcases and communicates the environmental significance of projects conducted within the wetland areas. CCIP: Please develop a map highlighting protected areas, habitats of ecological importance, and buffer zones to be displayed for reference by all greenkeeping staff.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	Discussed: The site contains areas of archaeological significance, which were identified and safeguarded during the redevelopment programme. The practice area, in particular, has been designated as a zone where excavation is not permitted. The club demonstrates proper diligence and respect for cultural, historical, and specially protected landscapes. CIP: Please consider ways to highlight the club's historical and archaeological significance, such as adding informational signage around the facility or sharing details via the club's communications and website.
N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the golf course	N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass	Monitor patterns of play to identify underutilised areas of turfgrass	Discussed: Routine reviews are conducted for managed turfgrass areas. As a links course, golf greens, tees, and fairways feature a tightly mown layer of grass, primarily consisting of non-invasive species like fescues and bents. These mown sections make up about 23% of the entire course. There is a policy of non-intervention regarding areas with trees, scrub, and rough or wildflower grassland. Highlight: Collaboration has been established with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Forty-eight sheep, known as the Flying Flock, graze

			in unmanaged areas adjacent to the facility and golf course. SNH has expressed satisfaction with the results achieved. CIP: Please document and map turfgrass and wildflower areas under development.
N1.3 Actively create and manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to create and manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf	Prioritise native species of varying size and structure when planting Prioritise native trees and shrubs when planting Prioritise native aquatic species of varying size and structure when planting Establish mowing buffer zones next to water bodies and wetlands	Observed: The April 2020 update of the Dumbarnie Links 'Landscape Environment Management Plan' (LEMP) outlines landscaping measures for the golf course. It details a planting strategy that covers the entire course environment, moving between new sandy areas, grasslands, scrubland, and riparian habitats. Discussed: Sward management options, including mowing and reusing clippings for maintenance. The club has implemented practices to safeguard wildlife and habitats by collaborating with nature and biodiversity partners and ensuring alignment with both the golf course and its surrounding environment. CCIP: As per N1.1.1 above – please review and update the actions and commitments outlined in the HMP and LEMP in 2026. CCIP: As per N1.1.2 above – please ensure that a map is displayed with all sensitive areas and buffer zones clearly marked. CIP: In accordance with the 2020 Habitat Management Plan (HMP), please establish a Habitat Management Group comprising representatives from Dumbarnie Links and designated partner organisations.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species	Follow local best practice to protect or attract endangered, protected or rare species found on site	Discussed: Partnerships established with RSPB volunteers and the University of St Andrews to coordinate surveys and support Corn Bunting reintroduction efforts. Observation: The club has constructed owl and bird boxes in the woodland area utilising repurposed pallets. A selection of dunes formed and maintained to provide Sand Martins with reliable nesting habitats. The establishment of a bug hotel in the woodland area utilises logs and repurposed wooden pallets to enhance biodiversity.

			Surveys conducted by the RSPB east of the golf course noted the presence of Linnets, Goldfinches, Skylarks, Yellowhammers, Reed Buntings, Greenfinches, Starlings, and Grey Partridge. These collaborations reflect a broader recognition of the site's ecological value and deserve commendation. Highlight: The reintroduction of the Corn Bunting to the area and the creation of sand dunes for Sand Martins have established stable nesting habitats and reliable food sources for these bird species. Highlight: Work is underway to create native wildflower areas, aiming to provide a haven that supports a wide variety of insects and other species. CIP: Please maintain ongoing connections with organisations focused on nature and biodiversity, and develop an organised approach to updating and documenting monitoring data. Keep a record of all sightings. CIP: Please seek to establish various other nesting areas from pallets and other resources. These could include introducing kestrel boxes.
N2 Turfgrass			
N2.1 Maintain optimum turfgrass and soil health	N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors	Select appropriate grass species for the climate	Discussed: The selection of turf throughout the course including greens, tees, and fairways has been carefully aligned with local climatic requirements and is highly appropriate for a links golf course on Scotland's Fife coast. Red fescues predominate on the greens, while fescue and ryegrass are the primary species used on the tees. Satisfied that the team routinely evaluates performance, taking into account the season, play conditions, and environmental factors.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition	No specific international requirement, however, identify course management and agronomic activities and look for continual improvements	The greenkeeping team adheres to an annual agronomic programme, which encompasses physical assessments and seasonal adjustments.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout	Test and monitor soil pH;	Observed: Soil sampling records and testing were reviewed on the Ana-Lync portal. I am satisfied that fertiliser application is based on soil testing, with nutrient levels managed according to the results.

	the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Follow legal requirements when timing fertiliser applications Ensure staff are fully qualified to use fertilisers Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment Regularly calibrate and test applicators	Discussed: Spraying applications are carried out using calibrated equipment, supported by detailed record-keeping Observed: Spraying equipment and PPE were present in the greenkeeping compound.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Change hole locations frequently	Discussed: Maintenance and sharpening of tools/machinery. Equipment was also observed at the greenkeeping compound and maintenance/garage facility. Discussed: Fairways and approaches are de-dewed every day to help with disease control. Discussed: Fertilisers used on the greens, tees, aprons and surrounds. Satisfied that the fertilisation programme is undertaken sensibly by a team of knowledgeable greenkeeping staff. Observed: All greenkeeping machinery, including two electric powered mowers. Highlight: A sensible and well-considered cultural and mechanical approach underpins the club's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Identify and track pest and disease hotspots, including sensitive areas Scout the course daily for early signs and symptoms Accurately diagnose to determine the cause of weeds, pests and diseases	Discussed: The quality of the playing area and monitoring the need for chemicals through sustainable management practices. Risks and hotspots are tracked through daily inspections and observations. CCIP: Please create a map of potential pest and disease hotspots, ensuring that it is accessible to all greenkeeping staff.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use legally registered and approved products; Prefer products for the specific weed, pest or disease; Follow legal requirements;	Confirmed: Presence of a chemical log. Observed: Spraying equipment, chemicals and PPE located in greenkeeping storage facility. Discussed: Chemical and product logs and stock level management. Discussed: Fertiliser movement and loading, which is undertaken on an impermeable surface.

		Ensure staff are fully qualified to use pesticides; Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	Discussed: Chemical use, rinsing protocols and applications. CCIP: Please ensure chemical logs are updated and clearly displayed for staff to reference and observe.
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 ; Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer areas next to water bodies and wetlands; Retain no-spray/no-spread buffer zones in and around ecologically sensitive areas	Discussed: Spraying operations are carefully controlled and supported by John Deere's GPS-guided machinery, which enhances precision and ensures all no-spray zones are respected. Observations during the visit showed a high standard of care in ecologically sensitive areas and near wetlands. Confirmed: An Emergency Spill Response Plan was observed, which includes pesticide training and management requirements. CCIP: Please add notification and reporting protocols to the Emergency Spill Response Plan. CCIP: Please clearly display spill response procedures and reporting to ensure a rapid response in the event of an incident.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Discussed: At the time of the visit, the clubhouse was not in operation. However, following a tour of the building and a subsequent conversation with David Scott, General Manager, I am satisfied that hazardous substances are controlled and that measures are in place to mitigate pollution risks. Wastewater discharge agreement not applicable to the site.
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Wash machinery over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Mix and load pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable, leak-free surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Observed: The modern greenkeeping facility has sufficient storage in a well-ventilated block and metal building with concrete flooring throughout. Discussed: All chemical/fertiliser stored and loading on impermeable surfaces.

N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances	List of hazardous substances, made available to authorised staff; Product and material data safety sheets; Well ventilated concrete or metal building; Impermeable, leak-free flooring; Sufficient storage capacity; Spill containment kits; Secondary containment e.g., bunds or drip trays; Emergency wash area, as per local requirements (body shower and / or eye wash station); Hazardous substances safely collected by a registered company or body ; Follow any additional legal requirements	Observed: The greenkeeping facility has sufficient storage in a well-ventilated concrete block and metal building. Observed: Fuel for greenkeeping machinery in lockable container located in greenkeeping compound. Observed: Oil drums for machinery use located on top of spill trays. Observed: Displayed list of PPE requirements specific to greenkeeping machinery tasks. Also observed emergency eye wash station. Observed: Hazardous substances in greenkeeping compound and garage area. Chemicals and hazardous substances located on or adjacent to spill trays. CCIP: Please tidy and place hazardous substances in the garage and maintenance area on the available spill trays. CCIP: Please ensure that the list of hazardous substances is visible and made available to authorised staff.
	N3.2.2 Legal compliance in the storage and handling of fuels and gases	Tank secured to a horizontal, flat, non-combustible surface; Secondary containment of fuel in the event of spills e.g. bunds and drip trays; Inspection of storage tank(s) at least quarterly, if required; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area	Observed: Diesel and petrol storage tanks located on an impermeable base, which includes protection from vehicle impact. No signs of leakage or corrosion were observed. Discussed and satisfied with fuel tank inspection regime. Discussed: Spill containment procedures. A Kingspan mechanical shut-off system with an alarm is located within the greenkeeping compound; however, the instructions and operation of the system were not clearly understood by staff or adequately signposted. A spill containment kit is not available due to the presence of the shut off system. Observed: Fire extinguishers adjacent to fuel storage. Observed, post site visit: Reviewed photographs showing a spill containment kit fitted to the wall adjacent to the fuel tanks, along with instructions for the Kingspan mechanical fuel/oil shut-off system. The system is installed as an early warning measure to prevent potential fuel or oil spillages from entering the drainage system.

			CCIP: Please ensure that staff using fuel tanks are trained and familiar with the mechanical shut-off system and the appropriate reporting protocols.
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage, treatment and discharge	Impermeable, leak-free surface; Treatment as per local requirements (oil, grease and / or clipping separation); Formal discharge agreement, if applicable	Observed: ClearWater below-ground water recycling wash-off system located on a concrete bay. The system is designed to recycle the contaminated wash-off water, reducing the facilities water pollution and wastage. The system utilises harmless microorganisms to clean polluted water from the washdown area. The clubhouse is connected to mains drainage. The greenkeeping compound and newly installed toilets are connected to a septic tank. The septic tank is emptied 2-3 times per year and confirmed inspection requirements. Confirmed: No evidence of illegal discharge or risk of contamination was identified during the visit.

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	Select appropriate grass species for the climate e.g., drought and disease tolerance; Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces; Prioritise native, drought tolerant species for landscaping and planting	Discussed: The club utilises the Toro irrigation system, which records water usage across the course and allows the use of re-set programmes for selected areas. This operates alongside a Lynx irrigation map that highlights every irrigation head on the course and flags when any unit is active. The team use weather reports from their weather station to assist in making calculated decisions on how much water is used alongside the use of the pogo data system. Observed: Turfgrass species and satisfied the greenkeeping team manage and target irrigation using their experience and Toro system course data.

R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course	Schedule irrigation based on informed assessment of soil moisture and weather forecasts; Evaluate new irrigation technologies e.g., central control, precision sprinklers etc.; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Adjust sprinklers to playing surfaces only	Discussed: Sprinkler heads are adjusted regularly, and overall system managed through Toro irrigation system. Irrigation records are reviewed regularly alongside weather reports. Satisfied that the greenkeeping team schedule irrigation based on informed assessments and weather forecasts.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record water consumption (bills, flow meter etc.); Encourage water conservation practices amongst players and staff	Discussed: The facility infrastructure is fairly new and largely maintenance-free. However, utility bills are reviewed for anomalies or indications of excessive water consumption or potential leaks. Self-closing taps are used in clubhouse showers in an effort to reduce water consumption. CIP: Please encourage water conservation efforts and consider signage to highlight good water conservation practices.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Water abstraction permit, if required; Report water consumption to environment agency, if required	Observed: The club's irrigation water is drawn from a licensed borehole, with abstraction levels monitored and recorded in line with SEPA's regulatory requirements. The bore hole feeds a central storage reservoir used for course irrigation. Confirmed: Water abstraction licence is held with SEPA. CIP: Please explore the feasibility of rainwater harvesting from building roofs to supplement existing bore hole supply.
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in golf course maintenance	Naturalise non-playing areas to reduce mowing and other energy intensive inputs	Observed: Areas left for naturalisation and from discussion with staff there has clearly been an on-going naturalisation process across the whole facility.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings	Monitor and record energy consumption (bills, meters etc.)	Discussed: The clubhouse is serviced by a gas boiler, which is also supported by the use of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP).

			Discussed: Utility bills are recorded and reviewed by the club's accountants. Observed: LED lighting with motion sensors in greenkeeping compound and clubhouse. Observed: Solar PV array on greenkeeping compound roof. CIP: Please monitor energy billing more closely to identify opportunities for reductions in consumption levels.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy	Understand the energy mix of your electricity supplier; Explore possible greener energy providers	Observed: 3 Electric charging points at clubhouse for use of staff and visitors. Observed: Newly created on course toilets fully powered by Solar PV ground array. CIP: There is scope to add more EV charging points in the future based on demand. Highlight: On course toilet on the 14th green which uses power solely generated from 8 ground based solar panels.
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	No specific international requirement, however, identify activities to reduce the demand for materials and look for continual improvements	Observed: A variety of waste and recycling bins in the greenkeeping offices and compound. Observed: waste collection skips and industrial oil collection located at greenkeeping compound. Observed: Waste receptacle area and labelled bins located adjacent to the main clubhouse. The waste is collected by Biffa. Separation and collection bins include glass, food waste, dry mixed recyclables, and cooking oil. Discussed: Waste separation bins, which during the playing season are reported to be located at each tee. Highlight: Two newly created on course drinking water fonts in a bid to reduce single use plastics. CIP: Please add signage for identifying the waste categories to be recycled. This should be located at greenkeeping compound skip.

R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	Discussed: The club prioritises local produce and suppliers. Although a formal sustainable purchasing policy is not yet in place, it is clear that the club is committed to ethical procurement and favours local suppliers. CIP: Please create and maintain a record of local suppliers and locally sourced goods. CCIP: Please develop and implement an official sustainable purchasing policy that outlines preferred criteria, such as local sourcing and responsible resource management.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity	Put in place a recycling separation system, according to local rules and availability; Clear, simple and visible bin signage; Monitor and record weight of waste for each stream e.g. invoices, bills etc.	Observed: Labelled bins in greenkeeping compound and clubhouse. Satisfied that the club manages a well-organised recycling system across its operations. Waste is separated into multiple streams with clearly marked bins. Used oil is collected by Olleco, food waste is collected by Binn Group. Observed: Monitoring of waste volumes by material, which is tracked on a portal and dashboard with contractor reports reviewed for potential waste reduction opportunities.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations	Authorised waste collector for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste, if required	Confirmed: All waste disposal practices are compliant with current regulations. Binn Group is the licensed contractor for regulated waste streams, including waste oils and electrical items. Observed: Clearly labelled waste bins were organised to avoid cross-contamination. No signs of waste mismanagement were observed during the visit.

COMMUNITY

C1 Health & Wellbeing

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Improve health and wellbeing	C1.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities	Plans in place to respond to incidents and emergencies	Discussed: The club has a formal Health and Safety policy, and an external independent audit is undertaken covering all aspects of its operations, including risk assessments.

			Observed: Health & Safety signage and PPE requirements for greenkeeping operations. Observed: Automated defibrillator located in clubhouse.
C1.2 Be open and inclusive	C1.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies	Membership policies free from discrimination across age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnic background	The club remains a visitor only venue and as such don't have membership policies. However, from discussion with staff I am satisfied that the club is open and free from discrimination. The club's General Manager is the President of the Caddie School for Soldiers programme. Veterans from the UK, U.S. and Canada are invited to the home of golf, St Andrews, where they live together for a month, and actively train to become caddies.
C1.3 Employ fairly, safely and provide career opportunities	C1.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development	Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for hiring and employment; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety	Discussed: Employment practices at the club meet all relevant legal requirements and reflect a respectful workplace culture. All staff are on formal contracts with clearly defined roles managed by the clubs HR function. Personal development and legislative training are integral parts of the club's commitment to a safe workplace and its ethos to develop and retain staff.
<u>C2 Outreach & Inclusion</u>			
C2.1 Diversify access and provide multifunctionality	C2.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility	No specific international requirement, however, identify multifunctional activities and look for continual improvements	Discussed: The collaborative work with NatureScot the RSPB and University of St Andrews. CIP: Please explore opportunities for outreach engagement, such as developing educational nature trails, forming partnerships with local schools, or hosting outreach events with RSPB volunteers that align with ongoing conservation work
C2.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C2.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes	No specific international requirement, however, identify activities to support volunteering and charity and look for continual improvements	Discussed: The club participated in local events such as beach cleans with the Fife Countryside Trust and in raising money for local good causes and charities. These charitable efforts have supported cancer charities, local food banks, and the RNLI. The total funds committed are in the region of £15,000 to £20,000. Highlight: The staff team are integral to identifying and selecting the charities the club supports, using their local knowledge to guide these decisions. This approach showcases the club's broad and meaningful contribution to the wider community.

C2.3 Establish active community partnerships	C2.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups	No specific international requirement, however, identify partnerships and community activities and look for continual improvements	Discussed: The club maintains constructive relationships with local neighbours, farmers and not for profit bodies and contributes positively to the surrounding area. Staff are encouraged to highlight and promote local good causes for charitable contributions. CIP: Please consider developing a Community Engagement Plan or similar that sets out objectives and opportunities for ongoing community partnerships and collaboration.
C3 Communications & Advocacy			
C3.1 Engage staff and golfers	C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors	Involve staff and committees in sustainability efforts; Involve golfers in sustainability efforts; Post sustainability information in the clubhouse and / or on the golf course	Discussed: The sustainability efforts of the club are led by a dedicated Environmental Officer, James, who is actively engaged in developing and implementing practices that embed sustainability across all areas of the facility. CIP: Please strengthen staff sustainability engagement by incorporating regular sustainability updates at team meetings. CIP: Please increase awareness of sustainability efforts on club's website and communications.
C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community	Share at least 3 Highlights on sustainable.golf	Discussed: Relationships have been established with the RSPB and the University of St Andrews to support Corn Bunting nesting initiatives and the ongoing development of wildflower areas.
C3.3 Follow a journey of continuous improvement	C3.3.1 Measures to help track, review and improve sustainability and climate action	Put measures in place to ensure that OnCourse can be updated annually	Discussed: Sustainability action areas are guided by the commitments set out in the Habitat Management Plan, with future plans including the establishment of a Habitat Management Group to support coordinated delivery, monitoring, and continual improvement. CIP: Please ensure that Habitat Management Plan actions are revisited annually, and that operational reviews include discussion of environmental performance.

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