



GEO Certified® Report Birchwood Park Golf & Country Club

Prepared by independent verifier Keith Duff

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2030

“Birchwood Park continues to be an impressive example of how sustainability can pervade all aspects of a golf club's operations, and I commend them for this. Clear corporate direction, enhanced by strong commitment and leadership at the site level, have resulted in continuing improvement across a wide range of on-site operations.

Particular highlights include the collection and treatment of rooftop and car park runoff water which is then used to irrigate the golf course, the installation of extensive rooftop solar panels which generate over 25% of the club's electricity needs during the summer, and the replacement of the diesel buggy fleet by electric vehicles which has saved about 2 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per annum. The Group's aim of achieving Net Zero by 2027 for its overall operations, and for every individual site, is industry-leading and laudable.

The use of the club's website to highlight its' sustainability commitment, achievements and activities is also an impressive initiative. On the golf course, in spite of exceptionally heavy usage by golfers, staff are managing the grassland and woodland/scrub roughs well, and have worked in partnership with the Woodland Trust to create 2 hectares of new woodland and shrubs which is developing satisfactorily.”

Keith Duff
(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Birchwood Park Golf & Country 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.

Birchwood Park Golf & Country 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 (CIP) set for the future and Critical CIP's (CCIPs) to be reviewed at recertification, Birchwood Park Golf & Country Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Birchwood Park Golf & Country 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

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	Broad disposition of on-site habitat areas recorded on a GIS system. Neutral grassland, woodland and scrub habitats well understood by greens staff, and managed appropriately. In addition, liaison with Kent Wildlife Trust, whose woodland nature reserve adjoins part of the site, has informed good practice woodland management on the site. Annual bird counts undertaken by local RSPB group, which includes club members.
	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	No statutory designations for wildlife or landscape features are present on the site. No Tree Preservation Orders exist on the site. No statutorily protected species present.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	No archaeological, historical or cultural designations are present on the site. Prior to the creation of the golf course the site was an old fruit nursery, and hedges within it have been retained where possible. Their historical significance is well understood and appropriate management is carried out.
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	Staff have a good appreciation of the needs and benefits of limiting turfgrass management operations to the main in-play areas, and of the wider sustainability gains this delivers. Observation of patterns of play determines any changes made, and the areas of habitat which are present are managed appropriately.
N1.3 Actively create and manage habitats for wildlife	N1.3.1 Projects to create and manage habitats in	Prioritise native species of varying size and structure when planting	2 hectares of native trees and shrubs have recently been planted, in partnership with the Woodland Trust, whose advice on establishment and management is being followed. 900 trees and 300 shrubs were planted,

	the best way for wildlife and golf	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	which will create more wildlife habitat and eventually sequester more carbon. 5 metre mowing and spraying buffer zones are defined adjacent to water bodies, and key habitat areas, and are drawn onto a course planner booklet held in the Greenkeeping Facility.
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	Recording of bird species present on the site is undertaken by the local RSPB group, which includes some club members. CIP: Please consider the possibility of identifying members with an interest in recording other wildlife species in addition to birds present on the golf course, and encouraging them to do it. Data they collect could be made known to members generally, and also supplied to local biodiversity recording databases. Scrub areas within and adjacent to woodland receive minimum intervention management, which is good practice for maintaining good woodland understorey. Brashings and woodpiles within such areas provide good habitat for a variety of animal species.
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	<i>Poa annua</i> and <i>Lolium perenne</i> are the main turfgrass species on the site, with <i>Poa</i> dominating on the greens and <i>Lolium</i> on tees, fairways and roughs. This is appropriate for the geology of the site and the high numbers of rounds which are played (80,000 p.a. in total on the 27 holes). Staff have a good understanding of the relationship between climate considerations and warm/cool season varieties, and the necessity of ensuring an appropriate fit to on-site conditions. The 9-hole course is used from time to time as a test bed for management techniques and turfgrass varieties.
	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	Comprehensive programme of aeration in place, using solid tines, hollow coring, spiking, slitting and verti-cutting, along with scarification.

	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Test and monitor soil pH; 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	Soil pH tested regularly, and organic fertilisers used wherever possible. The Club is working with a specialist agronomic consultancy to move towards greater use of foliar feeds, with application need determined by analysis of soil condition, and need. This includes an annual plan and a weekly schedule. CIP: Please strengthen the link between test results and fertiliser choice by producing short annual nutrient plans that reference test data and product decisions explicitly. Sprayers and applicators are calibrated and tested regularly, and the staff who use them are fully qualified, and use appropriate PPE.
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	Integrated Pest Management strategy in place, with good focus on use of cultural and mechanical processes as a priority. Mower blades kept sharp to reduce disease risk, with regular sharpening through the group's central facility. Mowing heights and patterns adjusted according to season, with surface moisture removed daily via switching.
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	Scouting for early signs of disease or weeds is carried out, along with hand weeding as required, and risk hotspots are well known. Disease risk hotspots are recorded on an annotated course planner booklet held in the Course Manager's Office and available to all 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; Ensure staff are fully qualified to use pesticides;	All products used are legally approved, and all staff using them are fully qualified and use appropriate PPE. Comprehensive records are held of staff training and certificates. Spray applicators are tested and calibrated regularly. There is a comprehensive recording system for chemicals in stock, along with information on what was done, by whom, where, when, and how much was used. An on-line system "Ground to control" is being developed to hold this data across all the sites in the group, and Birchwood is one of the 5 sites being used to trial it.

		Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	Leftover product in sprayers is diluted and disposed of on untreated areas of amenity grassland.
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	An emergency spill response plan covering all aspects of golf course operations, including in the maintenance facility, is in place. All greens staff have been trained and know their responsibilities in the event of any incident. Spill kits in place. Operational shower facility in place within maintenance facility. No-spray buffer zones around water courses and environmentally sensitive areas marked on course planner booklet in maintenance facility, and staff are made aware of them.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	An emergency spill response plan covering all aspects of clubhouse operations, including the swimming pool and spa, is in place. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities in the event of any incident as part of their induction training, and more specifically as required. Two grease traps in the kitchen allow for waste cooking oils and fats to be collected separately from other waste, and these are collected by their fully licensed waste contractor. The contractor also services the grease traps regularly.
	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	Machinery washed on an impermeable bunded surface feeding into a closed loop Waste 2 Water biological treatment system, with a grass clipping and oil/grease separator. This waste is stored separately and uplifted by their licensed waste contractor. Pesticides and fertilisers are mixed and loaded on the washdown pad. Pesticide containers and applicators are triple rinsed after use, in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, and the containers are stored on impermeable areas before uplift by the waste contractor. CCIP: Please improve the storage facilities for the materials supplied under the new external agronomist contract, so that they can be stored above ground on a bunded area.

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	Comprehensive list maintained of all hazardous substances, along with product and material data sheets, and hazardous waste licenses. All hazardous waste collected by fully licensed contractor. Emergency spill response plan addresses all contingencies, and all staff are aware of procedures to follow in the event of leakages. Health and safety policies and procedures in place and all staff trained as necessary. Emergency wash area in place, with shower and eye wash station. Hazardous substances stored in a well-ventilated concrete building, with impermeable leak-free flooring, and bunded against overflow. Fluids stored in racks above secondary containment units. CCIP: Please increase the availability of secondary containment units to accommodate the increased volumes of fluids which will be held as the new arrangement with the club's agronomic consultants come into force. There should be enough containment capacity to hold all fluids supplied. All chemical mixing undertaken in the Leisure Centre building as part of the swimming pool maintenance programme is done within fully enclosed and bunded spaces, using highly prescriptive procedures in order to ensure the safety of operatives and building users. All involved are fully trained, use appropriate PPE, and have access to an Emergency Bag.
	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	Diesel tank, which has integrated secondary containment and drip trays, is secured to a flat concrete surface within a building without vehicles, and hence is safe from bump risk. Tank checked annually by the tank company, and the most recent certificate was observed. In addition, the Course Manager monitors fuel levels through a phone app which uses telemetry to highlight any unexpected reduction in fuel levels. Fire extinguisher and spill kit located adjacent to the entry door to the building.
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	Highlight: An innovative water management system captures rainwater runoff from the clubhouse and leisure centre building, and also from the car park, and collects it for use as golf course irrigation water. Runoff is led to a catchment pond, from which water is pumped to the main irrigation reservoir, after passing through a reedbed system.

			Wastewater generated on-site is discharged to mains sewer, including the small volumes generated from within the maintenance facility building. Wastewater from the washdown pad at the maintenance facility goes through the closed loop biological control unit and so has no discharge to the external environment. The unit incorporates oil, grease and grass clipping segregation, with this waste being uplifted by their licensed waste contractor.
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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	Grass species selection is constrained by the site's geology and its very heavy footfall, so that <i>Poa</i> and <i>Lolium</i> have been chosen as the dominant turfgrasses. However, the higher water demands of these grasses is more than compensated for by the fact that virtually all irrigation water is derived from runoff from the main buildings and car parks. This feeds a 14,000m³ irrigation reservoir, which the club are considering expanding in the future. Irrigation is limited to greens, tees and surrounds, with the fairways and roughs being allowed to brown up in times of reduced rainfall. Ways to reduce water use as far as possible are being explored by the group across all of their sites.
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;	The irrigation system is checked monthly, serviced annually, and operates efficiently. Irrigation is restricted to tees, greens and surrounds, and the staff have a good awareness of the areas which are more vulnerable to drought stress, allowing them to focus supplementary hand watering as necessary to the most vulnerable areas.

		Adjust sprinklers to playing surfaces only	
	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	Water usage is checked monthly using the water meter in the clubhouse, and any anomalies are investigated. Water bills are also checked carefully. Push-down taps are installed in the clubhouse and ancillary buildings to reduce water use. The showers in the leisure centre/spa are air-infused to further reduce water consumption. CCIP: Please try to create a process which enables the amount of mains water used in the maintenance facility to be measured separately from the amount of mains water used in the clubhouse/leisure centre.
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	No more than 20m³ per day of borehole water is ever used to top up the irrigation reservoir (if necessary), hence no abstraction license is required, and there is no requirement for this to be reported to the regulator. All such abstractions are metered and recorded by the club. Rainwater harvesting from the clubhouse /leisure centre roof and car park means that the golf course is virtually self-sufficient in irrigation water. This is the primary source of irrigation water for the golf course. The club is currently exploring the possibility of reusing waste swimming pool water (230m³ per month) to add to the harvested water used for golf course irrigation.
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	The Course Manager has reduced the areas of managed turfgrass to what he considers most appropriate for the level of play the course receives. One electric ride-on mower has been added to the maintenance fleet, along with 2 electric utility vehicles and a hybrid fairway mower, and a vehicle strategy review is currently being undertaken. In addition, an increasing number of electric hand tools are now being used.
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.)	Energy use across the group has been audited, and a number of initiatives taken on this site. The car park lights are controlled by light sensors, and also operate on a timer which ensures they go off during the

			night. It's estimated that this saves around 1546kWh of energy every year. Optimisation technology has been installed on boilers in the clubhouse/leisure centre, to reduce consumption and thus CO² emissions. Savings of around 67,000 kWh of gas per annum are estimated, corresponding to about 12.5 tons less of CO² being emitted annually. Energy bills are reviewed and monitored as they are received, to help the process of improving efficient usage. Monthly newsletters are produced by the club and sent to all members, and are used to inform them of initiatives and encourage better conservation practices.
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	All electricity provided by the club's external supplier is on a Green Tarriff, and the group has also just moved to a Green Gas contract. The energy audit undertaken by the group led to this action. The whole Group is aiming to achieve Net Zero, both as a whole and at every one of their sites, by 2027. The club has installed a large array of solar panels, covering much of the extensive roof area of the clubhouse and leisure centre, and 26% of their summer electricity consumption is from this source. Highlight: The buggy fleet powered by petrol has been replaced by electric buggies as part of a deliberate decision to reduce CO² emissions. The estimated annual saving is 2116 kg of CO², and over 900 litres less of petrol are now used on site.
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	Installation of swimsuit spin dryers in the leisure changing rooms has led to the reduction in the number of plastic bags made available for taking wet kit home. The club has significantly reduced packaging by moving from plastic milk bottles to milk pergals, which consist of a plastic bag within a cardboard box, with both of these elements being recyclable. Plastic water bottles, which were the number one sales item in retail, have been entirely replaced by cardboard containers which are 100% recyclable and have the lowest level of carbon footprint compared to other packaging types.

			Catering and greens materials packaging is predominantly recyclable or compostable.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	The club operates within the policies set out in the Group's Sustainability Policy, which extends to cover ethical and environmental purchasing decisions. A simple visual scorecard showing how well the club is performing in terms of reductions in energy consumption and improvements in waste segregation is produced monthly and displayed on staff noticeboards. Bulk purchasing of course management materials is done whenever possible, to reduce packaging and vehicle movements. Bunker sand is sourced locally. Eco-friendly cleaning materials are used, as far as possible, in the clubhouse/leisure club areas.
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.	The club has achieved zero waste to landfill, increased recycling rates to 35%, and is working with suppliers to enhance packaging recyclability, whilst also educating staff on waste segregation. A full range of well-signed colour-coded bins for the various waste streams was observed to be in place. Organic food waste is collected separately and taken off-site for composting through anaerobic digestion. Waste cooking oil is taken off-site for recycling. The weights of food stock waste and plate waste are recorded, and the information used to inform stock control and portion control. Weights of waste uplifted are recorded by the contractor, who supplies this data to the club for monitoring and review on an ongoing basis via the contractor's portal.
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	All waste streams are uplifted by licensed contractors, with good information flows between customer and contractor. All legal requirements are being met, and the club retains copies of all invoices, transfer notes and other documentation. All waste bins for collection by the contractors are colour-coded and clearly marked, and stored in secure areas.

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	The size and extent of Birchwood Park ensures it makes a significant contribution to physical and mental health, through the two golf courses, the Trackman driving range, and the leisure club facilities. The atmosphere is very welcoming, and the range of activities available to the local community is broad. The golf courses are very popular and heavily used, with some 80,000 rounds per year, and offer an initial way in to golf as well as a facility for established golfers. A comprehensive Health & Safety Policy is in place, with clear procedures and documentation for risk assessments, staff training, incident responses and staff welfare. From my discussions with various members of staff I conclude that a good health and safety culture exists here.
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	Membership of all sections of the club (golf and leisure facilities) is open to everyone, and it is clearly popular and well-used. Access to the golf courses is available to members and visitors alike, and the facility provides a welcoming pathway into the game for beginners. Golf buggies are available for players with reduced mobility, and the clubhouse/leisure centre has been designed to be physically accessible to all. The club has an inclusive approach to formal golf, with all weekend competitions being mixed events, with playing groups being drawn. Juniors are encouraged to join, with the benefits of physical and mental well-being, character development, and social interaction being emphasised. Helping new players into golf is a key aspect of the club, with 70 players currently enrolled in their Pathway to Golf.
C1.3 Employ fairly, safely and provide career opportunities	C1.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and	Adopt an equal opportunity recruitment and hiring policy;	The club operates under the Group's ethical policies on recruitment and employment, which meet all relevant legal requirements. My interactions with various staff led me to conclude that the working environment here is good.

	professional development	Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for hiring and employment; Follow all relevant legislation and best practice for worker safety	Comprehensive risk assessments are in place, thus ensuring that those engaged in potentially hazardous activities are properly trained, and supplied with appropriate PPE where necessary. All staff are on formal contracts with clearly defined roles, hours and pay structures, and working time regulations are observed. Staff have access to sick pay, holidays and grievance procedures. There is no evidence of discrimination in hiring or role allocation, and managers demonstrated awareness of fair employment procedures.
C2 Outreach & Inclusion			
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	The facility is strongly multi-functional, offering 2 golf courses for public access, a Trackman driving range, leisure and health club activities including swimming, fitness equipment, and a range of exercise classes. In addition, facilities are available for weddings, meetings and other events. The facility is available, and well used, by the local community.
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	In excess of £10,000 per annum is raised by the golf section of the club for charitable purposes, led by The Captain. Prostate Cancer is the focus of the 2025 charity campaign. Club members provide volunteer input to club activities through membership of committees, primarily related to the playing of competition golf. Club members who are interested in ornithology work with the local RSPB group to carry out annual bird counts on the site.
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	Highlight: Every September a local school brings their business studies students to the club as part of a project they do on hospitality and customer care. They have a tour of the facilities, and the General Manager gives a presentation to the students on the subject, including the club's approach to and work on sustainability, thus giving the students an opportunity to experience how a facility such as this operates, and the issues that need to be addressed. Neighbours, the local community and other groups make good use of room booking and hospitality facilities at the club, making up about one third of the club's food and beverages business.

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	Sustainability activities at the site are driven from the top, led by the General Manager who is a passionate advocate of this. The subject is a key part of every Heads of Department meeting, and feeds down into ongoing operational decisions. Sustainability is also always on the agenda at the quarterly Staff Consultation Committee. A well-designed and well-illustrated monthly newsletter is issued electronically to all members, and includes information on sustainability actions and plans, as well as course reports. The club's website has a section dedicated to sustainability, highlighting their commitment to the philosophy and showcasing some of the many initiatives they have taken.
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	The club have shared one achievement on sustainable.golf, on tree thinning work to avoid flooding, but there are many other highlights which they could add. The club were the winner of England Golf's Sustainability Project of the Year for 2025, and have used this award to promote their sustainability work more widely, inside and outside the club.
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	Work to develop a group-wide reporting system and spreadsheet on sustainability is currently being undertaken by the Group's sustainability consultant. The intent is to produce a Group Reporting Spreadsheet, along with spreadsheets for each BGL site, and set up a process whereby OnCourse data can be input annually to populate the spreadsheets. In the meantime, OnCourse continues to be updated annually by the General Manager and Course Manager here.

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