



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report Ennis Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier Maurice J Bergin MSc FIHI

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2026
Recertification due: 2029

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Ennis Golf Club has established a strong culture of environmental stewardship, supported by committed leadership, sound governance and a clear commitment to continual improvement. The club has created an excellent foundation on which to build, and future efforts should focus on demonstrating measurable environmental outcomes, expanding biodiversity monitoring, strengthening member engagement and communicating its sustainability achievements more widely.”

*Maurice J Bergin MSc FIHI
(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Ennis 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.

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

For the certification period stated above, Ennis 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

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	An independent ecological assessment has provided the club with a comprehensive understanding of the site's habitats and biodiversity value. Management demonstrated a strong appreciation of the environmental importance of the course and its role within the wider landscape.
	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	The club demonstrated a good understanding of protected habitats and species present on the course, including breeding birds and Lesser Horseshoe Bat records. Biodiversity management is informed by the ecological survey and supporting management plans.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	Management demonstrated an awareness of protecting the natural and landscape character of the course while integrating biodiversity improvements. Environmental enhancement measures are being implemented without adversely affecting the heritage or character of the golf course.
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	The club continues to reduce intensively managed areas through the creation of additional biodiversity zones and reduced mowing regimes. The verifier identified further opportunities to review areas currently classified as maintained rough for potential inclusion as managed habitat.
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	Habitat enhancement measures, including woodland management, habitat piles, native planting and biodiversity areas, were observed throughout the course. Management confirmed that additional habitat has been created during the current certification period and further habitat enhancement is planned.

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	The biodiversity programme supports a range of protected and priority species through habitat enhancement and sensitive management practices. The verifier encourages continued species monitoring and improved interpretation of notable species for members and visitors.
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	Turf management practices are appropriate for local conditions and are focused on maintaining healthy playing surfaces while supporting environmental objectives. Management demonstrated a balanced approach between course quality and sustainability.
	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 club employs a range of cultural practices including aeration, topdressing and overseeding to maintain soil health. Annual soil testing is being introduced to further support evidence-based nutrient management.
	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	Fertiliser applications are planned and recorded as part of the club's turf management programme. Future soil analysis will provide additional data to optimise nutrient inputs and further improve resource efficiency.
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	An Integrated Pest Management approach has been implemented with emphasis on preventative cultural practices and monitoring before chemical intervention. Management demonstrated a clear commitment to reducing pesticide dependency where practical.
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	Chemical applications are undertaken within the framework of the club's Integrated Pest Management Plan and are based on identified turf management requirements. Application records are maintained and reviewed as part of normal course management.

	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; Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	Chemical storage and handling procedures were reviewed during the verification visit. Appropriate management controls are in place, with one Immediate Improvement Point identified regarding the provision of an emergency eyewash station adjacent to the chemical store. This was corrected before the report was made so is no longer an IIP
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	Operational procedures are in place to minimise pollution risks associated with course maintenance, including responsible chemical use, fuel handling and protection of sensitive habitats. Pollution prevention forms an integral part of routine course management.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Environmental management procedures support responsible waste management and pollution prevention within clubhouse operations. Opportunities remain to further improve waste segregation and sustainability messaging for members and visitors.
	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	The maintenance facility is generally well managed; however, the machinery washdown area requires upgrading to improve wastewater collection and prevent potential environmental contamination. CCIP: Pollution Prevention Improve the machinery washdown area by providing a dedicated impermeable washdown facility with appropriate drainage and wastewater collection. This will further reduce environmental risk

			and demonstrate best practice in pollution prevention for future certification cycles.
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	Hazardous substances are appropriately stored and managed in accordance with documented procedures. Chemical inventories, safety documentation and operator awareness were verified during the site visit.
	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	Fuel storage arrangements were inspected and appropriate management controls are in place to minimise environmental risk. Regular inspection and good housekeeping practices support ongoing compliance.
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	Wastewater management arrangements were reviewed during verification. The club should continue progressing improvements to the maintenance washdown area to strengthen environmental protection and demonstrate best practice. – See previous CCIP – 3.1.3

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	The club has implemented a Water Usage and Conservation Plan that promotes efficient irrigation, reduced managed areas and responsible water stewardship. Biodiversity management and reduced mowing regimes are contributing to lower irrigation demand.
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	Irrigation is focused on priority playing surfaces and is managed according to course conditions and operational requirements. The verifier recommends continued monitoring of abstraction volumes and irrigation performance to support future water efficiency improvements.
	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 conservation measures have been incorporated into clubhouse operations through routine monitoring and good operational practice. The planned installation of public refill water stations will further reduce single-use plastic bottle consumption and encourage sustainable water use.
R1.3 Source water responsibly	R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water	Water abstraction permit, if required;	The course utilises groundwater for irrigation, reducing demand on potable water supplies. The verifier supports the club's proposal to undertake regular groundwater quality monitoring and maintain records of abstraction to strengthen long-term water stewardship.

		Report water consumption to environment agency, if required	
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 expansion of biodiversity areas and reduced mowing regimes has reduced the requirement for routine maintenance operations, contributing to lower fuel consumption and supporting the club's wider environmental objectives.
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.)	An Energy Conservation Management Policy is in place and energy performance is reviewed as part of the club's environmental management programme. The club continues to identify opportunities to improve operational efficiency through ongoing investment and planned projects.
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	The installation of a 50.1 kWp solar photovoltaic system represents a significant investment in renewable energy and carbon reduction. The verifier recommends that annual generation and carbon savings are reported as part of future sustainability communications.
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	The club has adopted sustainable procurement principles that encourage the purchase of durable, environmentally responsible and locally sourced products where practical. Resource efficiency is considered within routine purchasing decisions.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	A Sustainable Procurement Policy has been implemented to support environmentally responsible purchasing and supplier selection. Management demonstrated a commitment to integrating sustainability considerations into future procurement decisions.
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.	Waste segregation systems are in place across the clubhouse and maintenance facilities. The verifier identified opportunities to further improve recycling facilities and member-facing waste separation arrangements within the clubhouse environment.

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	The club utilises authorised waste collection services and maintains documented waste management procedures. Continued recording of waste quantities and recycling performance will strengthen future environmental reporting and support continual improvement.

COMMUNITY			
<u>C1 Health & Wellbeing</u>			
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	Confirmed that these are in place.
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 promotes an inclusive and welcoming environment for members, visitors and the wider community. Management demonstrated a commitment to encouraging participation across all age groups while supporting the long-term sustainability of the club.
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	The club supports staff training and professional development through Golf Ireland and industry programmes. The verifier recommends continued investment in staff welfare facilities, recognising the important contribution of the course maintenance team to the club's environmental performance.
<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	The club provides a wide range of sporting and social activities that contribute positively to the local community. Sustainability initiatives are increasingly being integrated into the overall member experience.
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	The club benefits from strong volunteer engagement through its committee structure and member participation. The verifier identified opportunities to further involve members with specialist knowledge in biodiversity recording, habitat interpretation and environmental projects.
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	The club maintains positive relationships with Golf Ireland and local stakeholders and is developing opportunities for greater community engagement through biodiversity initiatives. Nature walks, educational events and collaboration with local environmental groups would further strengthen community involvement.
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	The club has established a sustainability webpage and biodiversity interpretation signage throughout the course. The verifier recommends expanding communications to include annual sustainability achievements, measurable performance indicators and progress against environmental objectives.
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 is actively promoting its commitment to sustainable golf through participation in GEO Certification and Golf Ireland sustainability initiatives. Continued communication of biodiversity projects and environmental improvements will further enhance public awareness.
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	The club has developed a comprehensive environmental management framework supported by documented policies and annual performance reporting. The verifier was encouraged by the Management Committee's commitment to embedding sustainability within the governance of the club and promoting continual improvement throughout future certification cycles.

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