GEO Certified® Report
High Legh Park Golf & Country Club

Prepared by independent verifier Tony Hanson

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2026
Recertification due: 2029

GEO Foundation
Sustainability in and through golf

“It is encouraging to see the commitment shown by High Legh Park Golf & Country Club towards sustainability and responsible environmental management. The club is making positive progress in managing its natural environment, using resources responsibly and maintaining good waste management practices, whilst recognising its important role within the local community.

The efforts of the management and course teams are to be commended, providing a sound foundation on which to build. I look forward to seeing how the club continues to develop and strengthen its sustainability performance over the next three years.”

Tony Hanson
(GEO accredited independent verifier)

Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that High Legh 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.

High Legh 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, High Legh Park Golf & Country Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, High Legh 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.isealalliance.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	Discussed the habitat mix and observed woodland, grass and wetland areas. The club has approximately 4 ha of woodland, 7 ha of scrub and 1 ha of open water.
	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	Barn owls and Raptors are seen across the site and habitat management programmes work to create features and habitats to maintain harbourage and prey availability. No statutory land designation was advised.
	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's history during the course walk. No designated archaeological, historic or cultural features were identified on site.
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 how patterns of play guide mowing practices. Underused areas are assessed and management practices adjusted to optimise time and resource use. Wildflower areas managed providing diverse habitat outside the playing surfaces.
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	Native planting, bird and owl boxes observed during the course walk. Discussed the links between habitats and the use of woodland material to create shelter for insects.

		Establish mowing buffer zones next to water bodies and wetlands	
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 local advice and measures for priority species, including owl boxes and retaining and managing woodland habitat.
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 grass mix on the greens and its suitability for local conditions. The recorded sward is currently 80% annual meadow-grass, 15% browntop bent and 5% creeping bent. This mix provides the required playing surface and tolerance currently but is under constant review.
	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	Discussed soil pH testing, aeration and sand topdressing. The team uses soil test results, rainfall and temperature to guide applications.
	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	Discussed application timing, spot treatment and the use of soil results to avoid overfeeding. The Club confirmed operator qualifications, and protective equipment was observed. Regular maintenance and calibration of spray equipment was discussed.
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 equipment maintenance including blade sharpening, along with moving holes and removing surface moisture. Aeration, verti-cutting and scarification help the team maintain the greens mechanically.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	**N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when**	Identify and track pest and disease hotspots, including sensitive areas	Daily scouting and the tracking of pest and disease hotspots was discussed.

	necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues	Scout the course daily for early signs and symptoms Accurately diagnose to determine the cause of weeds, pests and diseases	The team uses diagnosis and local tolerance thresholds to decide when treatment is needed along with hand weeding where practical.
	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	Discussed products used and the challenges faced through 2026 from climate change. The maintenance programme includes targeted treatment and applications based on assessment and need. Confirmed operator qualifications, protective equipment and sprayer calibration. The team takes weather, play and sensitive areas into account when timing applications.
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 spill response and the no-spray buffers around water and sensitive habitats. Observed spill kit and copies of the response plan and compliant diesel tank located on a closed loop wash pad.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	No discharge agreement required. Discussed and confirmed maintenance area and kitchen oil storage is compliant. Waste oil is stored on a bunded pallet prior to collection by a Licensed Hazardous Waste Contractor.

		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	Discussed machinery washing and the mixing and loading of products. Discussed and observed the impermeable mixing area draining to a closed loop wash pad. Containers are triple washed and stored prior to collection by waste contractor.
	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	Discussed storage, spill containment, emergency washing and hazardous waste collection. Confirmed and observed ventilated storage area, kerbed store, spill kits and a chemical inventory. Discussed secondary containment, safety data sheets, emergency washing and registered collection with the site records.
		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 fuel storage and tank located on the wash pad to ensure containment spills and drips. Fuel tanks are inspected regularly and fuel levels checked to identify unexpected losses/leaks.

	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 the closed-loop machinery wash bay, clipping and oil separation, and drainage from the clubhouse and maintenance building. No discharge license required.

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 current sward content provides a balance of playing surface and tolerance. Discussed accuracy of delivery to playing surfaces and adjusting sprinkler heads to maintain accuracy and limit overspray.
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 scheduling against soil moisture and weather forecasts, manual override and night watering. The irrigation system is serviced and maintained annually. Technology and potential upgrades are reviewed periodically.
	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 water-saving appliances and how staff and golfers are encouraged to conserve water. Player communications has been used to highlight the need for water conservation.

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 abstraction. The club currently use mains water for turf irrigation, although alternatives sources could be discussed. **CCIP: Please review opportunities for rainwater harvesting.**
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	Discussed playing areas and opportunities to reduce the area of close mown amenity grass. The club also confirmed charging its electric golf carts off peak.
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 seasonal heating controls, LED lighting and motion sensors. The club tracks consumption to help identify excess consumption.
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	Discussed the supplier's energy mix and greener tariff options. Currently the Club use standard grid supply. **CCIP: Please investigate the potential to transition to Certified Green Tariff energy.**
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	Discussed stock checks before ordering, double-sided printing and the removal of disposable cups. Grounds staff collect clippings, leaf litter and scarified material for reuse.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	**R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices**	Favour responsible, lower impact products	Discussed the purchasing policy, recycled products for the clubhouse and bulk ordering to reduce maintenance packaging. Where possible local suppliers are encouraged and consideration given to sustainability when purchasing goods
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;	Discussed separate waste bins to improve waste destinations. The Club recycled around 60% of waste coming to site in 2025.

		Clear, simple and visible bin signage; Monitor and record weight of waste for each stream e.g. invoices, bills etc.	
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	Discussed the collection of general, green and hazardous waste. The club confirmed collections of hazardous waste is undertaken by Licensed Waste Contractor.

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 risk assessments, incident response and tree safety on the course. The club described how these arrangements support safe use by golfers, staff and visitors.
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	Discussed inclusive membership and access for visitors. Accessible clubhouse facilities and mobility equipment support participation by people with limited mobility.
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 equal opportunities in recruitment, safe working practices and staff development. Training examples included manual handling, pesticide use, health and safety, and hospitality.

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	Discussed use of the clubhouse beyond golf. Comedy evenings, karaoke and breakfast with Santa bring local people and families into the facility.
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 captain's charity day for Cardiac Risk in the Young. The 2025 return records five events, two charities supported, £23,700 raised and an estimated 40 volunteer hours from members.
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 painting event with a local art business and the club's beginners' golf sessions. A follow-on Women on Par event built on work to encourage more women to play.
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 staff, committee and golfer involvement. The visit notes record sustainability posters for members and visitors. Add a recent example of golfer participation and update the corresponding workbook entries.
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 how the club shares sustainability work through social media and sustainable.golf.
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 how the club collects, reviews and updates its annual OnCourse figures. The 2025 return records water, energy, waste and community activity.

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