



GEO Certified®

GEO Certified® Report North Hants Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier Tony Hanson

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2025
Recertification due: 2030

GEO Certified®

 **GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“North Hants Golf Club demonstrates a structured and credible approach to sustainable golf management under the 2025 GEO Certified® criteria. Ecological awareness is evident through species recording, heathland management and habitat initiatives including heather regeneration and nesting infrastructure. Turf management reflects a strategic shift toward fine grasses, supporting reduced inputs and improved resource efficiency.

Water abstraction is licensed and responsibly managed, irrigation systems are efficient and waste streams are well controlled and monitored. Health, safety and employment practices are compliant and proportionate, and the club maintains constructive engagement with educational and community partners.

Overall, the club meets the requirements of the GEO Certified® criteria and demonstrates clear commitment to continual improvement across nature, resources and community.”

*Tony Hanson
(GEO accredited independent verifier)*



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that North Hants 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.

North Hants 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, North Hants Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, North Hants 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	The club demonstrates a sound understanding of the wildlife and habitat types present across the site. Species recording and habitat discussions confirm awareness of ecological value, with over 50 wildlife species recorded including birds, deer, bats, reptiles and amphibians. Participation in initiatives such as national bird and butterfly counts further evidence ongoing monitoring. Habitat management areas including approximately 1,000m² of maintained heather, wildflower areas (33 recorded species), log piles and nesting boxes were observed during the visit. Discussions confirmed that ecological knowledge informs management planning. CIP: Please continue and formalise the existing species recording and monitoring activity by keeping an annual or seasonal summary log of key observations and participation (e.g., bird / butterfly counts, bat walk outcomes, and notable sightings). This would strengthen year-on-year comparability and make it easier to evidence outcomes at the next verification, while building on the strong monitoring already taking place.
	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 is aware of nearby statutory ecological designations and understands associated management sensitivities. Discussions confirmed recognition of legal responsibilities relating to adjacent heathland habitats and protected species such as nightjar and woodlark. Operational practices reflect this awareness, including maintenance of open heath and acid grassland characteristics. Engagement with external wildlife organisations supports informed decision-making.
	N1.1.3 Sound understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site, if applicable	None 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	The club monitors patterns of play and wear to identify areas suitable for naturalisation. Out-of-play areas have been allowed to develop as long rough and tussock grass, particularly over winter months to benefit invertebrates. Log piles created from on-site tree works provide additional habitat value. Observations confirmed a balanced approach between playability and habitat enhancement.
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	The club actively creates and manages habitats using native species and structural diversity. Heather regeneration is supported through soil disturbance and seed spreading. Bird boxes (approximately 20), owl boxes and bat boxes have been installed, with monitoring undertaken in partnership with local bat groups. Buffer zones and varied cutting regimes were observed. Habitat initiatives are practical and proportionate to the landscape context.
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	Conservation measures are in place to support priority species associated with heathland environments. Monthly bird monitoring is undertaken by a local ornithological member, and habitat conditions are managed to support ground-nesting birds and pollinators. Evidence of targeted habitat management, including maintaining variable heather heights and retaining undisturbed areas, was observed.
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	Turfgrass composition reflects a strategic move toward fine grasses, with <i>Agrostis tenuis/capillaris</i> increasing from approximately 50% to 65%. Species selection is appropriate to soil type and climatic conditions, supporting drought resilience and reduced chemical dependency. Observations confirmed healthy fine turf dominance on key playing surfaces.
	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	Soil testing informs nutrient and turf management decisions. Composting of grass clippings, leaves and recycled coffee grounds (including from a local café) provides organic matter for reuse on site. The first compost application was implemented on the driving range in 2024.

			Aeration and mechanical practices support soil structure and resilience. Discussions confirmed ongoing review and adjustment of agronomic practices.
	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 informed by soil testing and turf need rather than routine scheduling. Applications are recorded, equipment is calibrated and staff are appropriately trained. PPE use and COSHH documentation were confirmed. Nutrient planning reflects measured and proportionate use.
	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 The club prioritises mechanical and cultural controls within an Integrated Pest Management approach. Practices include daily inspection, hand weeding where possible, regular machinery cleaning and promotion of natural predator habitats. Chemical intervention is used only when necessary and appropriately diagnosed.
	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 based on accurate diagnosis, monitoring and defined need. Pest and disease hotspots are identified and tracked, and decisions are proportionate. Discussions and documentation confirm responsible use.
		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; The club demonstrates full compliance with legal and best practice requirements for the storage, handling and application of pesticides and other plant protection products. All products in use are legally registered and appropriate for the specific pest, disease or weed being treated. A current list of hazardous substances and associated safety data sheets is maintained and available to authorised staff. The chemical storage facility was observed to be secure, well-ventilated and constructed with impermeable flooring and appropriate secondary containment. Spill kits are present and accessible. Mixing and loading

		Ensure staff use appropriate protective equipment; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of amenity turfgrass	activities are carried out on an impermeable surface to minimise environmental risk. Staff applying pesticides are appropriately trained and certified, with records of qualifications and refresher training confirmed. Personal protective equipment is available and in use, and application equipment is routinely calibrated and maintained to ensure accuracy and avoid over-application. Procedures are in place for the safe rinsing and disposal of containers and any surplus product, in accordance with manufacturer guidance and regulatory requirements.
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	Emergency spill procedures are documented and understood by staff. No-spray buffer zones are clearly identified and respected, particularly near sensitive habitats and water bodies. Site observations confirm good operational discipline.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Formal wastewater discharge agreement, if applicable	Hazardous materials within clubhouse operations are securely stored and managed. Wastewater arrangements comply with regulatory requirements. Documentation and discussion confirm appropriate controls are in place.
	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 washing, chemical mixing and container rinsing are undertaken on impermeable surfaces with appropriate containment and treatment systems. Observations confirm compliant infrastructure and procedures.

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	The club maintains an up-to-date hazardous substances register, COSHH assessments and safety data sheets. Storage facilities are bunded, ventilated and secure, with spill kits and emergency wash stations available. Disposal is via licensed contractors. Compliance with legal requirements was confirmed
	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 facilities are secure, bunded and located on impermeable bases. Fire safety equipment is present and inspection routines are in place. Staff are aware of emergency procedures. Observations confirm regulatory 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	Washdown and wastewater systems are appropriate to site operations, with separation and treatment measures in place where required. Discharge arrangements comply with local regulations. Maintenance records were reviewed and found satisfactory.

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 selected turf species and management practices that reduce irrigation demand. Irrigation is targeted to essential playing areas, and naturalised zones further limit water use. Observations confirm a responsible and proportionate approach.
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 scheduling is informed by soil moisture assessment and weather data. The system is maintained and adjusted to avoid overspray and wastage. Staff are trained in efficient irrigation practices. Documentation and observation confirm effective management.
	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 consumption is monitored and reviewed against meter readings and bills. Water-saving fixtures and awareness measures are in place. Discussions and site observations confirm proactive management of building-related water use.

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	The club holds the appropriate abstraction licence and reports usage as required. Irrigation water is sourced responsibly and does not rely on potable mains supply for course use. Compliance documentation was reviewed.
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	Energy demand is reduced through naturalisation of non-playing areas and efficient task planning. Maintenance activities are organised to minimise unnecessary fuel use. Observations confirm practical implementation.
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 consumption is monitored through utility bills and meter readings. Efforts to improve efficiency and reduce waste were discussed and evidenced. The club demonstrates awareness and active management of energy use.
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 club understands its energy supply arrangements and has explored opportunities for improved sustainability. Discussions confirm awareness of renewable options and energy mix considerations.
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 reviews materials use and seeks opportunities to reduce unnecessary consumption. Stock control and responsible planning support this approach.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	R3.2.1 Commit to sustainable purchasing practices	Favour responsible, lower impact products	There is consideration of environmental impact within procurement decisions, with preference given to responsible and lower impact products

			where feasible. The club demonstrates an informed and proportionate approach.
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.	A waste separation system is in place in accordance with local regulations. Recycling streams are clearly identified, and waste contractors are licensed. Records and observation confirm appropriate management. CIP: Please continue the existing waste segregation and contractor reporting. Where feasible, keep a simple annual summary of weights by waste stream (using the invoices already received) to show trends (e.g., reduction to landfill, increased recycling). This strengthens the evidence trail and helps demonstrate continual improvement using information the club already collects
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 managed through authorised contractors and in accordance with local and national regulations. Relevant documentation was reviewed and found to be compliant

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	Plans in place to respond to incidents and emergencies	The club provides a safe and supportive environment that promotes physical activity, mental wellbeing and social interaction through golf and associated activities.

	health from golf and facility activities		A current Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments were reviewed and confirmed. Procedures are in place to respond to incidents and emergencies, including severe weather protocols and clear communication systems. During the site visit, appropriate signage, warning systems and course safety measures were observed, including provisions for blind shots and emergency access. Staff demonstrated awareness of reporting procedures and emergency response arrangements.
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 and visitor policies are non-discriminatory and aligned with relevant equality legislation. Discussions confirmed that access to participation is not restricted on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation. The clubhouse and facilities provide appropriate accessibility measures, and mobility equipment is available to support inclusive participation on the course. There are mechanisms in place to raise and address any concerns relating to discrimination or inclusion.
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 follows an equal opportunities approach to recruitment and employment, complying with relevant employment legislation and recognised best practice. Safe working conditions were observed across course maintenance and clubhouse operations, with appropriate PPE, training records and safety procedures in place. Induction processes, ongoing training and opportunities for professional development were discussed and confirmed. The club demonstrates a responsible and supportive approach to workforce management.
<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 facility provides opportunities beyond golf through social and recreational use of clubhouse and catering facilities. Rooms are made available for meetings, workshops and community gatherings where appropriate.

			This multifunctional use of the site contributes positively to community engagement and broadens the social value of 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	The club supports charitable initiatives and community good causes through events, fundraising activities and engagement with local organisations. Opportunities exist for members and staff to contribute to volunteering activities linked to environmental, social or charitable initiatives. Discussions confirmed a positive and proactive approach to supporting good causes.
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 constructive relationships with neighbouring organisations, community groups and relevant external bodies. Engagement includes collaboration with educational institutions, environmental groups and local networks where appropriate. Work experience, internships or apprenticeship opportunities have been supported. There is evidence of cooperative working and shared learning, demonstrating openness and positive community integration.
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 commitments and responsibilities are communicated to staff through meetings, inductions and internal documentation. Members and visitors are informed of sustainability initiatives through newsletters, noticeboards and digital platforms. Staff and committees are involved in sustainability activities, and opportunities exist for member participation. Observations confirmed the presence of sustainability information within the clubhouse and operational areas.
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 shares sustainability highlights and promotes responsible golf practices through appropriate communication channels. Achievements and environmental initiatives are communicated internally and externally, helping to raise awareness of sustainable golf management.

			There is clear intent to continue developing communication and engagement activities.
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 maintains records and documentation to support annual reporting through the OnCourse platform. Procedures are in place to monitor progress across environmental and community objectives, enabling review and continual improvement. Management demonstrates understanding of the importance of accurate data collection and regular updates to support long-term sustainability 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