

GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



Golf Facility: The Shropshire Golf Centre

Prepared by: Tony Hanson

Date: December 2018

Executive Summary

As outlined in the initial certification, The Shropshire Golf Centre is located to the North of Telford on an area of high ground bordered by open farmland to the north south and east, Muxton to the west. The clubhouse complex is an attractive conversion of farm buildings with a car-park, maintenance buildings and floodlit driving range.

The underlying bedrock is sedimentary mudstone and sandstone formed around 300 million years ago with topsoil ranging across the site from sandy soils to heavier loams.

The facility was originally built in 1990 and provides an 18-hole main course, 18-hole short course, driving range and clubhouse with bar and function rooms. Recent expansions allow the clubhouse to cater for larger private and corporate functions including weddings receptions.

Nature

During the course walk it became apparent that the course manager, Ivan Beetlestone, has significant knowledge of the natural environment and habitats on around the site, underlined by his near 20 years working there which provides significant insight into the past projects and how they have developed over a period of time.

The club works closely with the RSPB which undertakes annual assessment of their bird boxes, recording species and ringing birds before they fledge.

The surroundings are predominantly farmland although the golf course itself occupies a position which is slightly raised from the land around it providing fantastic views of the farmland landscape and the connections and corridors provided by the course for natural habitat and ecology.

The club continues their engagement with the RSPB and will be encouraging their membership to also get involved with identifying and recording species identified on the course.

The club continues to operate a system of very limited chemical intervention preferring instead a physical intervention with a continuing programme of slitting,

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spiking, top dressing and scarifying to maintain fairways tees and greens to a required playing standard.



Species are predominantly naturalised annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) and perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), and over the years the course management team find that this combination of species allows them to maintain playing surfaces without the need for excessive chemical intervention.

Although the club operates a policy of minimal intervention system the established management practice for spraying of fertilisers and chemicals takes in to account prevailing conditions and forecasts and ensures spray buffer zones are maintained around the various watercourses on the course. Staff training and qualifications are continually monitored and updated as part of the standard management practice operated within the club.

The maintenance buildings have recently received a significant upgrade with substantial capital investment with a triple wash system for oil-water separation prior to release into watercourse, which is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis following the consultation with the Environment Agency.

Hazardous materials are contained within bunded storage areas located within the maintenance buildings, with the exception of a small amount of petrol which is stored in the maintenance yard, but still within the drainage field treated by the oil-water separators. Full records of the stock levels and use of fuels, oils pesticides and fertilisers are maintained to help identify slow leaks and for the use by the Fire and Rescue Services in the event of an incident.

Spill kits are available and accessible in the areas of operation most likely to result in accidental loss or release of hazardous materials, with environment, health and safety reviews periodically undertaken to ensure that personnel understand how to use the equipment and protect themselves and the wider environment.

Resources

Water supply for the club is provided by mains potable to the clubhouse, and maintenance areas, with irrigation taken from two reservoirs located on the course.

The reservoir supply is provided by borehole abstraction to the main reservoir with a secondary reservoir which benefits from topographical run-off to maintain its level, it is drained down periodically to refresh the water and can be siphoned to the main reservoir as required.

The club have recently undertaken a very significant capital expenditure to replace the irrigation system which had reached the end of its operational life, resulting in much improved efficiency of irrigation. This combination of reservoirs means that the club is completely self-sufficient for irrigation, protecting it from water use drought restrictions that maybe implemented by local water companies.

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The clubhouse has had some remedial work and upgrades to its water system with further projects in the pipeline which will hopefully be implemented within the next three-year period.

The club is supplied with mains grid electricity and gas with a combination of vehicles powered by diesel petrol and some hybrids.

Over the last three years the club has undertaken significant upgrades within the clubhouse with LED lighting now installed across the majority of the clubhouse. This also includes the driving range lights with future plans to review the use of LEDs for the floodlighting.

To help reduce consumption PIRs have also been installed around the clubhouse, and heating levels continue to be monitored to identify areas that could be zoned at lower levels without affecting customer comfort.

Awareness campaigns are in place to encourage responsible use of energy across the site. Staff are extremely active in this process and regularly discuss options and potential method to reduce consumption.

The club is part of a larger group of golf facilities and therefore they are subject to certain national procurement arrangements and suppliers, however, they do have the ability to buy from local suppliers for certain services and products which they exercise.

Predominantly the local procurement arrangements include local food suppliers offering fresh catering produce, equipment maintenance and servicing and bulky course supplies. Deliveries of non-perishable consumables are consolidated where possible to reduce delivery miles.

The club operates a waste and recycling policy encouraging staff and customers to separate waste to increase the quality and value to their recycling.

Community

The sustainability working group meets on a regular basis and includes key management representatives. This continues to create and encourage a questioning culture where suggestions are welcome from all the stakeholders that have clearly paid dividends.

Beginners lessons, kids golf and wider use of the facilities are encouraged including by local schools and colleges. The facilities at The Shropshire Golf Centre are ideal to create engagement and bring new players in to the sport and non-golfers to enjoy the excellent clubhouse facilities or foot golf site.

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Conclusion



I, Tony Hanson, independent accredited verifier, recommend The Shropshire Golf Centre to be awarded the GEO Certified® ecolabel again because it is a well managed golf facility that understands the close relationships required for a modern and successful golf facility.

Balancing the needs of staff and customers to create a vibrant venue for golf and events, while managing the golf course through less predictable climatic conditions, changes to the licenced chemicals available and an increasing demanding public.

In addition to this balancing act, The Shropshire Golf Centre also works to enhance the habitat and ecological diversity of the site, working with various charities and NGO's.