GEO Certified® Report
Aldwickbury Park Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier, Tony Hanson

Certified by GEO Foundation: December 2021
Valid until: December 2026

“The club has continued their journey towards sustainability with a range of activities to enhance the natural environment, optimise resource use and offer benefits to the wider community. Natural grassland areas and sympathetic management of woodland and veteran trees offer fantastic habitat linking to the wider landscape. Resource use is monitored and optimised to provide a superb golf course mindful of the potential management impacts; positive engagement provides a facility for community groups, along with the benefits created by the natural habitat improving air quality, reducing local flood risks and enhancing ecological diversity.”

Tony Hanson

GEO accredited independent verifier

Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that **Aldwickbury Park 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.

Aldwickbury Park 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 set for the future, **Aldwickbury Park Golf Club** should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, **Aldwickbury Park 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.

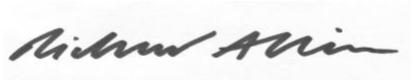
The GEO Certified® Report that follows comments on the actions undertaken against the criteria, as observed by the independent verifier during the assurance process.

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



Richard Allison
Manager, GEO Certified Facilities

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 – that 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**

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**	Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys	Reviewed maps and imagery during course walk. Habitat and habitat management observed during the course walk.

		N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	Reviewed and discussed the habitat management plan, designations and potential future projects for woodland management.
		N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	Parkland aspect maintained to reflect the setting and history of the site as the ground of a grand house.
	N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course	**N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass**	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	Course grassing plans are based on observed player landing areas and course wear and tear. Fairways are shaped to allow minimal close mowing whilst maintaining player round times.
	N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife	**N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf**	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	Management is continuing to follow the habitat management plans created 5 years ago, adapting to accommodate an increasing appetite for naturalized areas from the club membership.
	N1.4 Conserve key species	**N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species**		Veteran tree management, rough unimproved grassland, and wild flower meadows are all accommodated in areas around the site.
	N2 Turfgrass			
	N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health	**N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors**	Select appropriate grass species for climate	Turf composition reflects the development of the turf management programme, creating a quality playing surface whilst needing to adapt to the changing climate and availability of turf management products. Overseeding programmes are in place to promote the fine turf varieties offering drought and pest resilience.
		N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Good cultural practices are designed to maintain a soil structure to reduce compaction, enhance surface drainage and in grease root depth.
		N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	Discussed soil management and monitoring as part of the boarder Integrated Turf Management Programme. Management systems provide the parameters within which the turf should be maintained, optimising inputs to achieve specific objectives.

N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	**N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management**	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	Cultural practices are a key part of the management programme to help reduce pressures on turf. Equipment maintenance and cleaning reduce turf stress and disease pressure.
N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly	**N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues**	Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases; Scout the course daily for early signs of pests and disease; Accurate pest and disease identification; Map and track pest and disease hotspots; Establish pest and disease thresholds	Chemical use forms one of the tools available to the management to maintain the turf. The discussions highlighted the range of actions outlined in the turf management programme that are undertaken prior to the use of chemicals. Grounds staff monitor and report any potential signs of stress during maintenance activities, with the purpose of minimising the need to use chemical intervention. Spot and small area treatment are preferred as a targeted response to achieve a specific goal.
	N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions	Use only legally registered and approved products; Ensure staff are fully qualified and licenced to use pesticides; Regularly calibrate and test applicators; Use appropriate protective equipment; Dilute and dispose of leftover product on untreated areas of turf	Reviewed the chemical storage facility, confirmed spray licences log of stock, spill kits, PPE and wash areas. Equipment is maintained and calibrated to ensure accuracy of delivery.
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; Maintain mowing buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Maintain spraying and spreading buffer zones around water and all ecologically sensitive areas; Create a map / aerial visual reproduction, drawing etc of the course showing buffer zones and no-spray, no-spread areas.	The staff have a high level of knowledge of the actions required in the event of a spill, although the details should be formalised. Buffer zones are maintained to reduce the risk of fugitive pollutants. Reviewed the maps and site plans. CIP Formalise the Pollution Incident Response Plan in line with PPG21
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required	Reviewed waste contractor licences for the collection of hazardous waste.

	minimised from clubhouse operations	standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	Discussed waste discharge licences.
	N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations	Ensure wash areas are on impermeable, leak-free surfaces; Mixing and loading of pesticides and fertilisers over an impermeable surface; Triple rinse pesticide containers and applicators	Waste licences confirmed. Reviewed the wash down area, water recycling system, wash pad and sump. Discussed the diesel storage tanks, bunds and position.
N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances	**N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances**	Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff; Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building; Sufficient storage capacity; Impermeable flooring; Spill containment kits present; Emergency wash area; Fire extinguisher in the immediate area; Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks	Reviewed the chemical and fuel stock log. Pads, sump and bunded fuel storage all reviewed. Spill kits in place.
N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water	**N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences**	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	Discussed wastewater discharge licences. Wash bay, sump and water treatment plant observed and discussed.

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**	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	Irrigation is optimised targeting critical areas and allowing small areas to be managed and delivery to be based on assessed need.

R1.2 Maximise water efficiency	**R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course**	Conduct regular irrigation performance checks; Provide staff training on efficient irrigation practices; Ensure effective application of water to target areas; Ensure irrigation schedules are informed by weather patterns and soil moisture analysis	Staff historic site knowledge and assessment of need is the primary method to determine the need for irrigation. The system has computer controls and allows for accurate delivery. Weather forecasts and rainfall monitoring provide key data to help assess need.
	R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings	Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	Water bills and meter readings are regularly taken. Resource consumption is discussed regularly at management meetings
R1.3 Source water responsibly	**R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water**	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	Confirmed abstraction licence
R2 Energy			
R2.1 Reduce energy demand	**R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance**	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	Maintained areas are reviewed to minimise the areas of land under close management. Round times, player engagement and staff observations are the key tools to review the shape and location of close mown amenity grass.
R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency	**R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings**	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	Energy bills are reviewed and meter readings taken regularly to monitor use. New technology has been used with LED upgrades for lighting and bar fridges upgraded to newer A-rated energy efficient products.
R2.3 Source energy responsibly	**R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy**	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	Renewable energy potential is constantly reviewed.
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**	Undertake a review of materials consumed	Waste is reviewed and discussed with the club's contractor to identify methods to reduce waste to landfill. Delivery is arranged in bulk where possible to reduce both delivery mileage and packaging. Waste is separated to increase recycling rates.
R3.2 Purchase responsibly	**R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy**	Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials	The club procurement policy encourages environmental impacts to be a key consideration on purchasing decisions. Local services and produce are purchased where possible.
R3.3 Reuse and recycle	**R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity**	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	Waste separation is undertaken across all departments to increase recycling rates and quality. Separation bins observed.
R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance	**R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations**	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	Viewed waste contractor's credentials and agreement.

COMMUNITY

C1 Outreach

Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality	**C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility**		Access for new golfers is provided via lessons from the PGA Professionals on-site.

	C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	**C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes**		Staff are encouraged to engage with local organisations to offer time and fund raising.
	C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	**C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups**	Create a 'sustainability working group'	Meetings are part of the regular management meetings which contain sustainability elements as standard agenda items to underline sustainability. as a central subject.
	C2 Golfers & Employees			
	C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing	**C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities**		The benefits of the natural environment, and the benefits of golf to improve mental health are well understood. Naturalised habitat plays a key role in improving mental health, the management plan allows for sympathetic management of significant areas of the site.
	C2.2 Be open and inclusive	**C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies**	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	The club has an open and inclusive policy.
	C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities	**C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development**	Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	The club has a staff manual that takes in health and safety and training at induction and as part of the ongoing staff development programme.
	C3 Communications			
	C3.1 Engage golfers and members	**C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors**	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	The use of social media and electronic media is extensive. Course signage and staff engagement are also important methods to engage with stakeholders to underline activities and create awareness.
	C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability	**C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community**	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	The club encourages use by a number of groups from the broader community . The stakeholder engagement allows the promotion of golf as a sport, and also underlines the area of naturalised habitat and the benefits to the community.

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