

# GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



Golf Facility: Coventry Golf Club  
Prepared by: Matt Johns  
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## NATURE

### N1 Habitats & Biodiversity

<p><b>N1.1 Understand the site and surroundings</b></p>	<p><b>N1.1.1 Sound understanding of the nature and landscape value of the site</b></p>	<p><b>(Course management)</b> Map all habitats and vegetation types on the site; Regularly update landscape / biodiversity surveys</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> map(s), aerial visual reproductions, drawings etc and / or images; <b>Confirm</b> survey documents; <b>Observe</b> habitats and vegetation types</p>	<p>Original 2011 Phase 1 habitat survey compiled by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) has been used to prepare and support ongoing Ecological Management Plan also prepared by WWT. This has been updated for 2018/19 and is being implemented. Updated habitat mapping planned. Arboricultural Surveys have been completed. Good knowledge of habitats. All observed and confirmed.</p>
	<p><b>N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species</b></p>	<p><b>(Course management)</b> Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species;</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> documentation, if available, and / or images; <b>Observe</b> site(s); <b>Discuss</b> with facility representative(s) what the designation is, who the</p>	<p>No legally protected sites or landscapes. Presence of legally protected species and habitats identified and confirmed verbally and in management plan (e.g. great crested newt, common reptiles, otter, birds, bats and associated</p>

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		Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	authority is, restricted or informed management practices, other responsibilities or legal requirements etc	habitats). Records of sightings are retained and surveys recently completed of ponds (great crested newt). Course management is guided by WWT and a recently updated habitat management plan. Enhancement to ponds and great crested newt habitat is proposed.
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	<b>Observe</b> site(s) and / or feature(s); <b>Confirm</b> documentation, if available, and / or image(s); <b>Discuss</b> as above	No such designations present.
<b>N1.2 Opportunities to naturalise the course</b>	<b>N1.2.1 Measures taken to identify and minimise the required area of managed turfgrass</b>	<b>(Course / club management)</b> Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	<b>Discuss</b> how this is undertaken, i.e. GPS player tracking, visual / anecdotal, surveying players etc	Anecdotal evidence, observation and player feedback confirms area of turf grass required. Significant care is given to maintaining the quality, diversity and extent of the tree population at the course, which provide its key character and habitat connectivity through arboreal linkages. The club has an excellent track record of maintaining standing deadwood.
<b>N1.3 Actively manage habitats for wildlife</b>	<b>N1.3.1 Projects to manage habitats in the best way for wildlife and golf</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan;	<b>Confirm</b> document(s) and / or action plan(s);	Long standing ecological management plan has been established, updated and agreed with WWT. Evidence of good

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		Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	<b>Observe</b> habitat project(s) and / or view images; <b>Discuss</b> management plans if no formal written documentation	management practices have been observed with notable good examples around the course including artificial otter holt, management of riverine corridors, naturalisation of the turf nurseries, standing deadwood.
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		<i>No specific international requirements, however, <b>discuss</b> management conservation activities, as appropriate</i>	A number of priority species and habitat measures are in place, informed by WWT and management plan, together with club's own expertise. Including woodland (trees), running water, standing water, species rich grassland, standing deadwood, great crested newt, reptiles, otter, bats and birds.
<b><u>N2 Turfgrass</u></b>				
<b>N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health</b>	<b>N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological factors</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Select appropriate grass species for climate	<b>Discuss</b> how cool season or warm season varieties are informed by climate zone; <b>Observe</b> projects to transition grass species i.e. trial plots, practice areas etc;  <i>Note: 'Transitional' climates to explain justification and</i>	Excellent awareness of suitable grass species that are suitable. Recent overseeding completed in autumn and spring 2018/19 in response to drought conditions in 2018, with selection of drought tolerant species. Commitment to manage course with climate change resilience in mind.

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			<i>extent of cool season species present</i>	
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		<i>No specific international requirements, however, <b>discuss</b> course management and agronomic activities, as appropriate</i>	Good practice measures are in place.
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Soil tests and nutrient analysis	<b>Confirm</b> test / report document(s); <b>Discuss</b> the informed basis and approach to fertilisation	STRI agronomists are used to assess soil conditions and management. Principal approach is to minimise fertiliser application and only applied on fairways, greens and tees.
<b>N2.2 Prioritise cultural management</b>	<b>N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	<b>Discuss</b> the informed cultural / mechanical (non-chemical) basis and approach to turf management	Good practice is in place.
<b>N2.3 Use chemicals responsibly</b>	<b>N2.3.1 Application of chemicals only when necessary to prevent or cure defined / identified turf health issues</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Establish patterns and levels of risk for pests and diseases;	<b>Confirm</b> management policy / plan document(s); <b>Confirm</b> map(s) and / or images; <b>Discuss</b> the informed assessment of chemical	Minimal use of chemicals and only in response to key conditions. Or to support other good practice measures e.g. wetting agents helping to maximise water retention.

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		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	applications to turf i.e. preventative / curative / combination approach	
	<b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> 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	<b>Confirm</b> chemical / product log; <b>Confirm</b> applicator licences; <b>Observe</b> spraying and protective equipment; <b>Observe</b> turf areas for disposal of leftovers; <b>Discuss</b> as above	All required aspects were observed and re-confirmed.

## N3 Pollution Prevention

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<p><b>N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site</b></p>	<p><b>N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations</b></p>	<p><b>(Course management)</b> 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</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> emergency spill response plan; <b>Confirm</b> map(s) and/or images; <b>Observe</b> buffer zones and no-spray areas</p>	<p>All required elements confirmed and buffer zones and no spray areas observed to be in good condition in rough and key habitats, watercourses, standing waters.</p>
	<p><b>N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations</b></p>	<p><b>(Club management)</b> Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and waste water discharge</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> licences and / or contracts for disposal of hazardous waste; <b>Confirm</b> waste water discharge licence</p>	<p>All requirements have been confirmed.</p>

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	<p><b>N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations</b></p>	<p><b>(Course management)</b>          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</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> licences and / or contracts for disposal of hazardous waste;  <b>Confirm</b> waste water discharge licence;  <b>Observe</b> hazardous materials storage and infrastructure;  <b>Observe</b> washing and preparation areas</p>	<p>All requirements have been confirmed and appropriate infrastructure and facilities are present within the greenkeepers compound.</p>
<p><b>N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances</b></p>	<p><b>N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances</b></p>	<p><b>(Course management)</b>          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;</p>	<p><b>Confirm</b> chemical / product log, as above;  <b>Confirm</b> local authority inspection report for storage tanks, if applicable;  <b>Observe</b> hazardous materials storage and infrastructure (as above);  <b>Observe</b> emergency response and safety devices;  <b>Observe</b> washing areas (as above);  <b>Observe</b> fuel storage tanks and surroundings</p>	<p>All requirements have been confirmed and appropriate infrastructure and facilities are present within the greenkeepers compound.</p>

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		Secondary containment for fuel, either externally constructed, or integrally manufactured; Regular inspection of storage tanks		
<b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b>	<b>N3.3.1 Appropriate waste water usage and discharge licences</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Waste water discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	<b>Confirm</b> waste water discharge licence / sewerage agreement; <b>Observe</b> wash bay with impermeable surface; <b>Discuss</b> on-site treatment of waste water, as applicable	All requirements have been confirmed and appropriate infrastructure and facilities are present within the greenkeepers compound. The club utilises greywater from the adjacent Severn Trent Waste Water Treatment Works for irrigation of fairways. Use of a closed-loop system of on-site treatment of wastewater including a small reed bed.

## RESOURCES

### R1 Water

<b>R1.1 Minimise water demand</b>	<b>R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	<b>Discuss</b> irrigation policies, practices and considerations	The club continues to minimise water use through targeted sprinkler heads, drought tolerant species, focus on key
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				playing areas only or responding to unusual conditions.
<b>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</b>	<b>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> 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	<b>Confirm</b> TDR soil moisture sensor; <b>Confirm</b> irrigation software; <b>Discuss</b> irrigation hardware and maintenance	The club is in the process of procuring a soil moisture sensor to support its existing irrigation practices, which will bring further efficiency and resource savings. Irrigation is currently informed by local weather and condition of the turf. Training and awareness raising is given to all members of the course management team.
	<b>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption	<b>Confirm</b> water auditing procedures; <b>Confirm</b> internal record keeping, utility bills and invoices, data management	Records from water bills are kept for tracking total use and a formal water audit is planned for later in 2019. Water saving measures are promoted and communicated to members and staff with water saving devices fitting in a number of areas within the clubhouse.

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<b>R1.3 Source water responsibly</b>	<b>R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water</b>	<b>(Course / club management)</b> Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	<b>Confirm</b> water abstraction permit and reports to regulating authority, if applicable	Abstraction licence from the river remains valid and the club has recently completed consultation with the Environment Agency on its ongoing use. The club has not had to abstract from the river for a number of years. The club sources treated greywater from the adjacent Severn Trent Waste Water Treatment Works for course irrigation, demonstrating a high level of sustainable re-use of water.
<b><u>R2 Energy</u></b>				
<b>R2.1 Reduce energy demand</b>	<b>R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance</b>	<b>(Course management)</b> Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	<b>Observe</b> areas removed from intensive maintenance; <b>Discuss</b> areas identified for ongoing naturalisation	An inspection of the course confirmed the creation of substantial new habitat areas reducing the area of more intensive maintenance, including riverine buffers and the former turf nursery. Where feasible and from a player experience perspective, grass is also allowed to grow longer between fairways.
<b>R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency</b>	<b>R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills;	<b>Confirm</b> energy auditing procedures;	The club maintains a record and review process of energy bills. It is investing some £60,000 into projects to refurbish the insulation of the clubhouse and two

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		Categorise and track energy consumption	<b>Confirm</b> internal record keeping, utility bills and invoices, data management	on-site bungalows, which will provide a notable reduction in heating/energy loss and improved cost saving.
<b>R2.3 Source energy responsibly</b>	<b>R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	<b>Discuss</b> research into renewable energy provision / generation	The club has explored a range of on-site energy generation and continues to operate solar photovoltaic panels, generating energy for use and export to the national grid.
<b><u>R3 Materials</u></b>				
<b>R3.1 Reduce materials demand</b>	<b>R3.1.1 Products and materials selection based on necessity, including opportunities for recycled, reused and locally sourced alternatives</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Undertake a review of materials consumed	<b>Confirm</b> waste auditing procedures; <b>Discuss</b> materials and products that have been identified, reduced or eliminated	Where economically viable the club seeks to select recycled and locally sourced materials.
<b>R3.2 Purchase responsibly</b>	<b>R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Adopt a sustainable, or ethical / environmental purchasing policy to maximise the use of locally sourced goods and goods	<b>Confirm</b> policy document / statement; <b>Observe</b> specific items used or consumed	The club operates an ethical purchasing policy and seeks to maximise the use of materials and suppliers with minimal distance. The development of a suitable policy is proposed for 2019.

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		made from recycled, recyclable and certified materials		
<b>R3.3 Reuse and recycle</b>	<b>R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	<b>Confirm</b> waste auditing procedures (as above), utility bills and invoices, data management; <b>Observe</b> bins around the facility and main waste area	The club maintains records of waste collection, including all on-site segregated waste. Separate collections are maintained for containers associated with the greenkeepers compound. A waste audit is proposed for 2019.
<b>R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance</b>	<b>R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste;	<b>Confirm</b> invoices, trade waste licences, if available	All requirements have been confirmed.

## COMMUNITY

### C1 Outreach

<b>C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality</b>	<b>C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility</b>		<i>No specific international requirement, however, <b>discuss</b> activities as</i>	The club is very active in terms of activities with juniors and schools. It draws in members of the Warwickshire
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			<i>appropriate and look for continual improvements</i>	Wildlife Trust with nature walks around the course both completed and proposed. No wider recreational opportunities for non-members are possible.
<b>C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity</b>	<b>C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes</b>		<i>No specific international requirement, however, <b>discuss</b> activities as appropriate and look for continual improvements</i>	The club supports a range of charities, hosting a number of charitable events (approximately 5 per year) with support for e.g. local rotary clubs, Help for Heroes and a Golf Foundation in Nigeria.
<b>C1.3 Establish active community partnerships</b>	<b>C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with neighbours, the local community and other groups</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Create a 'sustainability working group'	<b>Confirm</b> meeting minutes and agendas, if available; <b>Discuss</b> composition and roles of group, frequency of meetings etc	The club has good relations with the wider community (e.g. through the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent Water, local charities and schools) but has reduced its communications over the last few years. It is looking to add more content to the website and increase external communication.
<b><u>C2 Golfers &amp; Employees</u></b>				
<b>C2.1 Improve health and wellbeing</b>	<b>C2.1.1 Benefits to human physical and mental health from golf and facility activities</b>		<i>No specific international requirement, however, <b>discuss</b> as appropriate</i>	The club has excellent support for its members in terms of friendship and support e.g. when recovering from illness. There is a specific social group that meets for food when individual members are unable to play golf.

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				Groups of members play on regular occasions during the week providing a strong repeatable focus for enhancement of mental and physical health benefits.
<b>C2.2 Be open and inclusive</b>	<b>C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	<b>Confirm</b> policy statement / document, if available; <b>Discuss</b> if no formal documentation	No specific policy statement has been produced, but the club is very proud of its inclusive welcoming approach for members, staff and visitors.
<b>C2.3 Employ fairly and safely, and provide career opportunities</b>	<b>C2.3.1 Ethical and legal employment, working conditions and professional development</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Follow all relevant national legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	<b>Confirm</b> employee induction procedures, health & safety, risk assessment reports, if available; <b>Discuss</b> if no formal documentation	All requirements have been confirmed.
<b><u>C3 Communications</u></b>				
<b>C3.1 Engage golfers and members</b>	<b>C3.1.1 Communications activities that raise awareness and understanding amongst members and visitors</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	<b>Confirm</b> club's website, social media activity, awareness raising materials, internal notices, on course educational signage, mailing campaigns, links with external PR agencies, other	All requirements have been confirmed.

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			awards or certifications, newspaper / magazine articles etc	
<b>C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability</b>	<b>C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community</b>	<b>(Club management)</b> Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	<b>Discuss</b> relations and partnership work with stakeholders, other businesses, suppliers / contractors, organisations, charities, educational establishments etc; open access to facilities; event hosting etc, which extend the reach and awareness of the club	Key partnerships exist with the club's supply chain and a wide audience through the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.