



GEO Certified[®]

GEO Certified[®] Report Queenwood Golf Club

Prepared by independent verifier: Matt Johns

Certified by GEO Foundation: 2024
Recertification due: 2027

GEO Certified[®]



**GEO
Foundation**
Sustainability in and through golf

“Queenwood Golf Club is a very well managed and impressive facility, with the resources available to implement best practice. It provides a high-quality clubhouse, maintenance facilities and infrastructure which exhibit many positive sustainability attributes. The sophisticated approach to water management, including the use of technology as well as personal interventions is of particular note. The challenging course blends into the natural landscape and habitat features that are used to frame and characterise each hole, complementing the quality that is evident throughout. “

Matt Johns

(GEO accredited independent verifier)



Introduction

GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that Queenwood 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.

Queenwood 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, Queenwood Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, Queenwood 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
Manager, Data and Reporting, 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 – 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



Verifier's Report

The Sustainability Agenda for golf covers the following themes and action areas:

THEMES	ACTION AREAS
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats & Biodiversity • Turfgrass management • Pollution prevention
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Energy • Materials
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	The Queenwood Golf Club (QGC) course management team is very much aware of the habitats associated with the Club land, with continuous levels of service , supporting the ability to observe

			and monitor trends in biodiversity conservation and informing course management decision making. CCIP: Please produce a habitat map of the course and other areas – ideally using the UKHAB methodology. Please also highlight priority or protected habitats and areas known or likely to be used by protected or important species.
	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	There are no legal designations at the site level for habitats or species (e.g. SSSI). Queenwood Golf Course includes habitats known to support legally protected species including common reptiles, foraging bats, nesting birds and these habitats are legally protected. The course management team are aware of these and how management needs to be scheduled and implemented to ensure the legal protections are maintained.
	N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	No known cultural or archaeological designations are present at Queenwood Golf Club. It is relatively new (early 2000s) in origins and any requirements would have been addressed at the time planning permission and construction occurred.
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	Whilst this is not completed to inform course playing surface extent, the management team are focused on striking a positive balance between high quality course design/playability and challenge, together with maximising and using natural habitats and features to achieve this.
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	Course management is based on experience and customer feedback, balanced with a positive knowledge of the sensitivities and habitats at Queenwood Golf Club. From what was discussed and observed, this is successful and respectful of the more valuable features including woodland, open water and wetland areas, scrub and species of rich grassland. CCIP: Please create a Habitat Management Plan following on from the site wide habitat mapping work highlighted in N1.1.1 above.
N1.4 Conserve key species	N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species		Practical management was discussed and, in some locations, observed during the course walkover. Positive outcomes were observed.

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	Evidence of turfgrass condition and soil monitoring was observed with a very wide range of parameters feeding into decision making across the 18-hole course. Evidence of recent and previous implementation of varying methods was observed including those associated with mowing patterns, heights, maintenance, coring, scarifying, varying tee/hole positions.
	N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition		Management of fairway grasses focusses on those which are more naturally prevalent and adapted to the local conditions.
	N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	A wide range of factors influence the application of nutrients including regular soil testing, temperature, sunlight and shade, rainfall and production of clippings.
N2.2 Prioritise mechanical maintenance	N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	The Club combines well maintained machinery with bespoke and very localised management of specific areas to minimise the need to use chemical management measures.
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	The course management team use all available and relevant data from its course monitoring activities to support decisions on when to use chemicals, seeking to minimise use wherever possible. Biosecurity controls are very good for both the course management team and members/visitors.
	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 .	All operators are BASIS trained. Equipment and PPE is in good condition, together with appropriate method statements and chemical storage, use and diluted disposal. Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present for pollution prevention and emergency response. Buffer zones are appropriate and present around non-target/sensitive habitats.

			CCIP: Please highlight buffer zones on the proposed course management and habitat maps, as per N1.3.1 above.
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.	Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present.
	N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations	Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored; Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge	Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present.
	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	Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present.
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	Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present. Double bunded fuel tank present. Septic tank present for maintenance facility. Emptied regularly by sewerage undertaker. No evidence of localised spillages or leakages.

<p>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</p>	<p>N3.3.1 Appropriate wastewater usage and discharge licences</p>	<p>Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)</p>	<p>Best practices are evident and appropriate facilities/equipment present.</p> <p>Contained closed loop washdown facility present, together with oil and grease separators. A valid discharge permit is in force and governs these activities.</p>
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<h2>RESOURCES</h2>			
<h3>R1 Water</h3>			
Objectives	Requirements	Mandatory Practices	Verifier Notes
<p>R1.1 Minimise water demand</p>	<p>R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water</p>	<p>Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only</p>	<p>The need to conserve water and optimise irrigation is very much understood and a priority. The course water management, drainage and irrigation system is highly sophisticated and combines state of the art software, hardware, and both automated and manual monitoring and intervention. The approach extends to turfgrass selection and collection/capture and reuse of water within the course.</p>
<p>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</p>	<p>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>The course water management, drainage and irrigation system is highly sophisticated and combines state of the art software, hardware, and both automated and manual monitoring and intervention. This extends to understanding where on a green there is water stress and hand watering only in those areas.</p>
	<p>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</p>	<p>Audit water use regularly; Review bills frequently and look for irregularities; Encourage water-saving practices amongst staff and visitors; Categorise and track water consumption</p>	<p>Clubhouse and Maintenance Building water use and efficiency is driven through careful monitoring of data from the water meter. Water is also collected and harvested from the building. Water efficiency best practices are promoted within the maintenance facility and clubhouse.</p>

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	Queenwood Golf Club maintains accurate records of water consumption and is open to sharing this with the Environment Agency as requested. As well as harvesting from the clubhouse, surface runoff is collected from the playing surfaces and natural water features, held within water bodies and then reused to supplement irrigation.
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	Non-playing areas are naturalised and dominated by woodland and gorse scrub, or water/wetlands. This reduces the need for intervention.
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	Significant numbers of electric and/or hybrid machinery/vehicles are in use across the club. The clubhouse uses intelligent heating management systems and is equipped with double glazed windows and energy saving devices (e.g. LED).
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	Club management team maintains monitoring of energy consumption via utility bills and meters. CCIP: Please seek to increase the share of renewable tariffs when the energy supplier / contract is renewed.
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	There are designated waste and recycling points at the Club. Turf cores, clippings, soils, and wood are all re-used. Single-use materials are being eliminated
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 seeks to source as much food as possible from local sources, alongside other raw materials. Local trades people are used where possible. CCIP: Please create a sustainable purchasing policy, outlining your commitment to favouring ethical and responsible products.

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	The Club promotes recycling and waste segregation (e.g. cardboard/glass). It has a contract with Suez to collect all materials, and separate and recycle as much as possible offsite.
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	All appropriate licences are in place.

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		Queenwood Golf Club operates as an exclusive members club and as such access is limited to members and their visitors. A number of social and multifunctional opportunities and facilities are available to members including practice area, relaxed outdoor seating, opportunities for business and other meetings, walking trails around the course and wider club land, catering and events.
C1.2 Provide for volunteering and charity	C1.2.1 Opportunities available for volunteering and support of charities and good causes		Queenwood Golf Club undertakes a wide range of volunteering and charity activities – focused on facilitating this through its staff and members as well as supporting local projects. Tournaments are held to raise funds to selected charities. Charities are also offered tee times to help raise money.
C1.3 Establish active community partnerships	C1.3.1 Positive and constructive engagement with	Create a 'sustainability working group'	The immediate community is limited in extent and no public rights of way cross Queenwood Golf Course. The engagement

	neighbours, the local community and other groups		comes from its external support of good causes and through highlighting these to its members.
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 Club promotes walking golf and its health benefits through the provision of trollies to golfers, monitoring personal rounds and providing a caddy service. During the site visit, no buggies were observed being used. Buggies are available to those that need them, and the Clubhouse is fully accessible in its design.
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 actively promotes the use of the course to women and children, also providing lessons with free equipment. Membership policies are very positive and free from discriminatory aspects, with equal opportunity monitoring and feedback mechanisms also provided.
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 extends an equal opportunity recruitment policy and evidenced best practice in terms of employment legislation and health and safety.
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 Queenwood Golf Club website is deliberately very restrained in content. This is an exclusive club where privacy and discretion is very important to members. Notwithstanding this, it also offers equal opportunity best practice in a very wide range of its other activities. Internal communications on course management, sustainability and interesting features are circulated to members, who are also encouraged to feedback on this. This is translated into specific sections in staff handbooks and training, reports to relevant golf committees and feedback on sustainability initiatives in staff meetings.
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	Through its participation in OnCourse and by seeking to attain GEO Certified, Queenwood Golf Club is aiming to share its sustainability values to a much wider audience, promoting best practice and using its potential success with this as a

			springboard to celebrate its achievements, underlining its commitment for continuous improvement.
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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