

# GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



**Golf Facility: Trump Turnberry**

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**Date: October 2017**

## Executive Summary

Trump Turnberry, with its 45 golf holes and set alongside the magnificent Ayrshire coastline, is a superb example of an international golf resort. The resort features a traditional Edwardian hotel, Spa, villas, clubhouse and maintenance sheds. First opened in 1906, the hotel has been previously managed by Starwood Hotels & Resort. Since then, the course and its facilities were purchased by The Trump Organisation in 2014 and fully renovated during 2015 / 16.

The courses at Turnberry; The Ailsa, King Robert the Bruce and the nine-hole Arran course, are dominated by valuable coastal dune and grassland habitat, boasting coastal settings, with far reaching views of the castle ruins and the Turnberry Lighthouse.

The club facilitates for 320 male golfers, 50 lady golfers and 30 junior members at present, with 70% of these being as local as 20 miles from the club. Recently, the course has extended its membership, attracting more visitors from as far north as Glasgow.

Management at the club follows a programme of continual development and clear objectives are driving management teams to continually improve all aspects of sustainability throughout their facility. During this on-site verification, it was clear that all employees are involved in aspects of sustainability including waste and water management, habitat enhancement, local community involvement and are very aware of appropriate chemical usage. Sustainable development practices are communicated well to all members of staff via a 3 day induction and training course, alongside frequent in-house training throughout the year.

The achievements in regard to sustainability offers encouragement and motivation to all those involved as well as demonstrates the clubs real commitment to their cause.

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### Nature

The site displays areas of open and gently undulating coastal grassland with more inland expanses of scrub to areas of important coastal dune heathland. The playing surfaces are set within the natural landscape giving the strong impression of naturalness. The protection and maintenance of the natural landscape is a very important factor for all management teams.

A number of ecological and environmental surveys have been performed on site to inform management of the species and habitats represented. A breeding birds survey conducted in 2014 was in evidence, as well as an on-site vegetation survey conducted in 2011/2012, an ornithological checklist from 2001 and annual ecological reports. In addition, the club follows an Environmental Policy Statement, which outlines the commitments and current approaches to environmental and ecological management, not just on the golf courses but in all other facilities on site.

It was clear that at Trump Turnberry, management teams demonstrate extensive knowledge in regard to the designated areas of the course, with two SSSI designations. The sand dunes on the western edge of the Ailsa golf course have been designated due to their national importance for the presence of a rich beetle assemblage and the second SSSI citation covers the northern section of the coastline, between Turnberry lighthouse and Port Murray, protecting the igneous rock formations present.

The club has worked to conserve large areas of core woodland, as well as create and maintain wildflower corridors to encourage pollinating species and to connect the course in a holistic fashion to the wider landscape. The wildflower mix found onsite includes the likes of common birds foot trefoil, ladys bedstraw, sheeps sorrel and wild carrot. Native species of varying size and structure have also been planted on areas of the three courses to encourage breeding and nesting grounds for local wildlife and open sandy areas have been well maintained so to provide a microhabitat for sand lizards.

The club works closely with the Small Blue Initiative to create grassland habitat for pollinating invertebrates with appropriate food plants for the small blue

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butterfly, aiming to re-establish this rare species.

The club recognises the importance of minimal chemical use to maintain health and playing quality of the turf. The application and timings of fertiliser and pesticide use is informed by an on-site weather station, controlled by a small-scale solar panel and agronomic targets set by STRI. Chemicals are applied only when required and following COSHH and LERAP codes of practice. The club recognises the need to support and maintain riparian buffer zones around ecologically sensitive areas and water bodies on-site to reduce pollution potential.

Greenkeeping staff are aware of and adopt LERAP, which is specifically stated in their Course Policy Document (CPD). Blanket spraying over large areas only takes place when appropriate and spot treatment is always considered first. An updated CPD, geared around performance, including IPM and timings of fertiliser use is being produced by the club and reviewed.

All hazardous substances are stored appropriately and in line with all relevant legislation. Spill containment kits were viewed and emergency wash areas are available. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are employed for any chemical spillages which includes documentation of spills, the correct storage and reporting of any accidents or near misses. The club use an online database, Diligence, which is reviewed regularly by the club's general manager, estate manager and HR director to highlight any major factors that may be the cause of repeated accidents.

Course management teams are aware of the need to strictly manage turfgrass species composition. This is currently carried out using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to reduce amounts of Poa and introduce a greater concentration of a fescue and bent blend. This is done by a combination of repeated overseeding, topdressing, aeration and verticutting.

The release of contaminated water into the wider environment is under increasing scrutiny and such, it is a legal requirement for golf clubs to have a water collection and cleansing system in place.

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The fully bunded washdown area is in line with all current and relevant legislation and is located close to the club's maintenance facilities. Waste water from this area is dealt with by means of an ESD Waste2Water unit, employing a biological remediation process that uses biological agents to remove and/or neutralise contaminants from polluted soil or water. Green waste and grass clippings are composted and screened, then mixed with divot mix from on-site and the compost created from this is then used for general landscaping purposes.

### Resources

Effort has been made to minimise the use of public clean water for irrigation by means of a water borehole, dug to approximately 120m deep which is used to alleviate pressure on the pond located on-site. The borehole is gravel lined and delivers up to 50,000 m<sup>3</sup> throughout the year. Water usage is reduced by means of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach including wetting agent use and regular servicing of the irrigation system by an external irrigation technician.

It is clear that all staff are made aware of water quality and efficiency issues, with salinity testing of the borehole occurring on a daily basis to satisfy the requirements of SEPA. Additionally, water into the Wilson burn is monitored visually by staff on a regular basis.

Irrigation scheduling of the three courses is based on data from an on-site weather station, soil moisture sensors and agronomic advice. Volumes are based on wind speed, temperature and rainfall, with superficial irrigation techniques only to be used to replace soil moisture that is lost via evapotranspiration and not replaced by effective rainfall. Irrigation currently takes place overnight to avoid additional losses via evapotranspiration.

The irrigation system itself and its system components have recently been upgraded to maximise efficiency. The system employs sprinklers with 180-degree heads where possible and are adjusted to in-play areas only.

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Sprinkler heads individually controlled for local and directed control over greens and surrounds. Additionally, adjustments of the sprinklers are automatically made in accordance with evapotranspiration data taken from the onsite weather station. New variable speed water efficient pumps have been installed, along with PVC pipework and hand watering to specific areas is employed where necessary by greenkeeping staff.

Grass species appropriate to local climate have been selected, with mixtures of bent and fescue used throughout the three courses. This enables the course to be irrigated less frequently as species can tolerate additional weather stress. Some investment in water saving infrastructure and technology have been made in recent years, made evident by the upgrades to the irrigation system and also within the clubhouse and hotel. Toilets now feature a dual-flush system to conserve and minimise water use and low-volume cisterns have also been installed. Showers within the hotel are set to reach and not exceed a certain volume to conserve energy and water resources.

In-house water usage audits are frequently conducted within both the maintenance facility and the clubhouse and water bills are reviewed frequently to determine irregularities. This allows greenkeeping staff to identify problem areas and hence, where best to target and investigate the installation of water-saving practices. A 3-day training course is provided for all members of staff to ensure adherence to water conservation practices.

A notable commitment by the club is to achieve a 30% reduction in energy usage and a 20% reduction in water usage by 2020 (2010 is the baseline year and reductions are calculated on a per available room basis).

All water and heating used within the hotel and club house is supplied using an energy efficient gas fired boiler. The club has made efforts to source their energy responsibly and have switched their energy supply to a Green Tariff.

Diversifying energy sources was discussed during the verification, however it was recognised that large scale renewable energy sources may not

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be entirely feasible as they could be seen to look unsightly and out-of-place. Considering the club is very prestigious and of high status, the practicality of such a venture was deemed unsuitable. Efforts to diversify energy sources and transition to renewables have been seen elsewhere, where aesthetic impact would be reduced. For example, the on-site weather station is currently powered by a small solar panel.

Investments in energy saving technologies have been made with the use of electric carts, vehicles and mowers/maintenance equipment. Energy efficient LED lighting has over time replaced halogen bulbs throughout the club house and maintenance facilities and heating and cooling system settings are adjusted seasonally in order to make carbon and hence, economic savings where possible.

Occupancy sensors (PIR) are installed in areas that are infrequently used in order to reduce electricity usage throughout the facilities. However, due to the significant upgrading works that have been being undertaken since June 2015, prior to its final re-opening in June 2017, it is difficult to recognise and quantify economic and carbon savings from adopting these practices. It is expected that these savings will be made obvious now that works are complete and the club is fully functional again.

Energy bills are regularly reviewed, and comprehensive energy audits are undertaken. Taking note of changes in everyday energy consumption can be a good motivator, not only to members of staff but also to golfers, and may encourage them to work more strongly towards the club's sustainable goals.

Management teams in all departments have evaluated ethical and environmental policies of the club and the vast majority of their suppliers and contractors, with appropriate adjustments being made in accordance to the club's sustainable policies. For example, efforts have been made to:

- Request recyclable or compostable packaging and materials from suppliers (e.g compost derived soils and woodchip)
- Purchase in large quantities when possible to avoid excess packaging

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- Consider eco-friendly cleaning products
- Avoid purchasing non-recyclable materials (e.g Styrofoam)
- Organise menus to use local seasonal produce (previously management used a central purchasing policy, meaning that goods may have had extremely long travel miles, however, under new management local suppliers are used as often as possible).

Waste from kitchens is not currently composted, due to potential vermin problems. Food waste is instead compacted, dried and bailed in an innovative food de-watering system prior to uplift by an external contractor. Non-recyclable waste is also compacted and uplifted. The club operates and comply to a zero waste to landfill policy and where possible, management teams will ask suppliers to take supply packaging away for re-use e.g pallets and boxes. Single-use products including disposable cutlery and plastic bags have been eliminated and efforts have been made to minimise paper usage in the clubhouse by means of technology such as electronic member invoicing and double-sided printing.

Waste streams are managed well, with recycling initiatives being clear to all levels of staff. In August of 2017, almost 23 tonnes of waste was recycled. Additionally, old and unwanted equipment is donated to other local clubs (e.g Girvan GC and Girvan Football Club) which may have lesser budgets. These initiatives are proactively communicated to staff and members by means of a 3-day training course and is re-iterated by the use of signage and information sheets made available throughout the clubhouse and hotel.

## Community

The club has made significant effort towards multi-functionality and recreational accessibility in all aspects of their golfing facility. Examples of this include collaborating with local education groups such as primary schools, where the club has provided primary school golf competitions and allowed the children to assist greenkeeping staff in planting shrubs around the course and on beach cleans as part of the campaign 'Keeping Ayrshire Beautiful'.

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As a major employer in the area, the club strive to improve their image as an active participator in sustainable development. The club liaises with the local community by means of offering function rooms for community meetings or workshops. Moreover, the club supports volunteering by means of encouraging members to volunteer on tournaments and committees. Facilities are also provided for fundraising events and hosting tournaments which donate to selected charities.

Auditors from the Green Tourism Awards returned to the resort in August 2017, where the club maintained its gold level status. It was recognised, however, that the communication of the club's green commitment could be improved.

The club offers a number of public access routes throughout the site, with a public right of way leading to the scenic Turnberry lighthouse and a coastal path which runs in conjunction with the Ayrshire coastal line. The club will continue to work closely with the Ayrshire Countryside Allowance in maintaining the public access routes.

Significant effort has been made to promote golf and its benefits to all under represented parts of the community including women, ethnic minorities, military veterans and lower income families. Examples of these efforts include offering all-inclusive junior memberships at a reasonable price of £250 and hosting a junior open at the club. Another example is by providing rehabilitation to injured militants through the practice of golf.

The club prides itself on carrying out equal opportunity monitoring across staff and golfers to put practices in place which hope to encourage under-represented groups and to avoid any discrimination across age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and ethnic background. In relation to staff welfare, the club encourage and support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff and host CPD events at the facility.

Risk assessments are carried out frequently and are controlled by individual departments.



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External risk assessments of all areas within the facility are executed by an external health and safety consultancy on an annual basis. Additionally, one week per year is dedicated to the likes of health and safety training for all members of staff to ensure they are best prepared in the case of any accident or emergency that may occur on the facilities. Top level organisation management conducts back of house audits on an annual basis, working to review working practices, general cleanliness and all relevant legislation compliance.

The club has introduced and continues to maintain a sustainable committee led by their Environmental and Welfare Executive Officer, which is open to all staff, allowing them to express ideas or opportunities to take advantage of, or even concerns regarding all things environment and ecology.

## **Conclusion**

Trump Turnberry has clearly demonstrated a solid framework for environmental stewardship and recognise their responsibilities regarding moving towards sustainability. This attitude is well demonstrated by all levels of staff, allowing the important spread of sustainability ethics. Sustainable management has been facilitated throughout all areas, including water and waste management, as well as energy efficiency and community relations. The club is making sound progress and are working consistently to achieve targets set both in-house and to meet the requirements of their 30/20 by 20 (Energy and Water) objectives. The club has introduced an impressive array of schemes designed to improve sustainability and several groups have been formed for staff and golfers to concentrate their efforts in several areas of sustainable management. Trump Turnberry is both very keen and receptive to advice provided in regards to future opportunities and targets to meet.