



**GEO Certified®**

# GEO Certified® Report The West Lancashire Golf Club

Prepared by Independent Verifier, Tony Hanson

Certified by GEO Foundation: June 2020  
Valid until: June 2025

**GEO Certified®**

 **GEO  
Foundation**  
Sustainability in and through golf

*“The West Lancashire Golf Club has continued to work on their sustainability management over the past 3 years, not limited to engagement and implementation of projects to enhance the naturalised habitat, reviews of energy consumption with LED lighting upgrade already undertaken and concerted efforts to reduce waste coming to site through bulk purchasing and separation. Environment and sustainability have become engrained across all areas of operations and opportunities to improve are consistently sought.”*

*Tony Hanson*

*GEO accredited Independent Verifier*



## Introduction

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GEO Foundation is pleased to confirm that The West Lancashire 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.

The West Lancashire 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, The West Lancashire Golf Club should be awarded GEO Certified® status.

For the certification period stated above, The West Lancashire 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

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## 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](http://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](http://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"> <li>• Habitats &amp; Biodiversity</li> <li>• Turfgrass management</li> <li>• Pollution prevention</li> </ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Energy</li> <li>• Materials</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships &amp; Outreach</li> <li>• Golfing &amp; Employment</li> <li>• Advocacy &amp; Communications</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewed aerial images &amp; maps</li> <li>• Confirmed survey documents and review period</li> <li>• Reviewed aerial images and images</li> </ul>

	<b>N1.1.2 Knowledge of legal designations for protected areas, habitats and species</b>	Understand legal responsibilities for protected landscapes and species; Record and monitor protected, endangered, or rare species found on the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Statutory designations onsite</li> <li>Species outlined in the 2018 Ecology report by James Hutchinson</li> <li>A SSSI is located to the North &amp; West of the site resulting in the designation as a SSSI Impact Risk Zone</li> <li>The club has ongoing discussions with local Wildlife Charities and groups</li> </ul>
	<b>N1.1.3 Understanding and respect for cultural heritage</b>	Protect any archaeological, historical or cultural designations on the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no known archaeological, historic or cultural features on the site</li> </ul>
<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>	Observe, track and / or monitor golfer play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area in play has been reviewed over the last 5 years to improve playability, aesthetic appeal and minimise the area of managed turf grass</li> </ul>
<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>	Regularly review and follow a habitat management plan; Prioritise native species when planting and landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2018 document is the basis for the Habitat Management Plan and is reviewed every 2 years</li> <li>Reviewed images of the on-site habitat</li> <li>An extensive discussion regarding habitat, ecology and the club's attitude to enhancing the natural environment followed highlighting the advice and Wildlife Group collaborations in place.</li> <li>CIPs</li> <li>Continue engagement with local wildlife groups, charities and community groups</li> </ul>
<b>N1.4 Conserve key species</b>	<b>N1.4.1 Practical conservation measures for priority species</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined above</li> </ul>
<b>N2 Turfgrass</b>			
<b>N2.1 Maintain optimum turf and soil health</b>	<b>N2.1.1 Appropriate turfgrass varieties adapted to climatic and other geomorphological</b>	Select appropriate grass species for climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The club was seriously affected by the drought of 2018 and has had to undertake remedial work on the fairways as part of the recovery programme including the</li> </ul>

	<b>factors</b>		<p>introduction of Dwarf rye grass and fescues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The greens have been over-seeded with bent/fescue with the intention of increasing resilience to climate change.</li> <li>The R&amp;A review of the site was undertaken as part of the Tournaments Venue advice and assessment programme, the feedback underlined the effectiveness of the work undertaken on the course.</li> </ul>
	<b>N2.1.2 Practices to maintain good soil structure and condition</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See N2.2.1</li> </ul>
	<b>N2.1.3 Careful and responsible fertiliser application throughout the year to avoid over-fertilisation</b>	Undertake soil tests and nutrient analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R&amp;A completed soil test for the site</li> <li>The club manages the site with the combination of nutrient testing and observation of playing surfaces to ensure optimum use of fertilizers</li> </ul>
<b>N2.2 Prioritise cultural management</b>	<b>N2.2.1 Non-chemical pest, disease and weed management</b>	Sharpen mowing blades; Remove surface moisture; Hand weeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good agronomic practices are maintained to reduce stress and potential introduction of pests and diseases</li> </ul>
<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>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping data is maintained and updated along with daily scouting allowing early interventions</li> <li>There are 2 fairways on site that are highlighted on the pests and disease mapping that are prone to remaining wet in the winter that have to be monitored and managed carefully</li> <li>Applications of pesticides have been low over the past 12 months indicating the delicate balancing act is currently being achieved</li> </ul>
	<b>N2.3.2 Application of chemicals with full safety precautions</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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turfkeeper system and automatic stock records were discussed and reviewed</li> <li>Spray licences were confirmed and discussed</li> <li>PPE equipment and lockers were viewed remotely</li> <li>There is a clear understanding of the balance required to reduce the pressure on turf while maintaining the playing surfaces and careful observation. This process allows</li> </ul>

			<p>early intervention with a range of options including physical and chemical options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No surplus mixed</li> </ul>
<b>N3 Pollution Prevention</b>			
<b>N3.1 Prevent pollution across the entire site</b>	<b>N3.1.1 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from golf course operations</b>	<p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spill kits in place, the incident response plan was not viewed on the occasion.</li> <li>• Mapping of the maintenance area was discussed and images from 2017 reviewed</li> <li>• Mapping of the buffer zones on course was viewed and discussed</li> <li>• Buffer zones discussed and maintained</li> <li>• Maps and visuals discussed as above</li> <li>• CIPs</li> <li>• Continue the process of review and testing of the Pollution Incident Response Plan</li> </ul>
	<b>N3.1.2 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from clubhouse operations</b>	<p>Ensure all hazardous materials are safely and securely stored;  Ensure compliance with all required standards and systems for hazardous waste and wastewater discharge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greensman are the registered waste contractor/partner with a contract to 2022</li> <li>• No discharge, all contained on-site and collected by registered waste contractor from contained tank</li> <li>• Potable mains provision in place for the clubhouse.</li> </ul>
	<b>N3.1.3 Practical measures to ensure pollution risks are minimised from maintenance facility operations</b>	<p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unchanged from 2017 - images on record</li> <li>• Discussed waste discharge licence – not viewed on this occasion, but confirmed appropriate</li> <li>• Bunded storage maintained and reviewed</li> <li>• Washdown system unchanged for 2017 - images on record</li> </ul>
<b>N3.2 Safely manage hazardous substances</b>	<b>N3.2.1 Legal compliance in the storage, handling, application and safe disposal of all hazardous substances</b>	<p>Maintain a register of hazardous materials available to authorised staff;  Safe storage in secure and ventilated concrete or metal building;  Sufficient storage capacity;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turfkeeper stock records observed</li> <li>• Local authority inspection is not required, tanks inspected internally</li> <li>• Hazardous material storage unchanged from 2017 - images on record</li> </ul>



		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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spill kits viewed remotely</li> <li>• Washing area unchanged from 2017 - images on record</li> <li>• Fuel storage and bunding unchanged from 2017 - images on record</li> <li>• Fire extinguishers observed with service record</li> </ul>
<b>N3.3 Responsibly manage waste / storm water</b>	<b>N3.3.1 Appropriate waste water usage and discharge licences</b>	Wastewater discharge licence; Appropriate treatment of machinery wash water (impermeable surface, oil / grease / clipping separation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed above</li> <li>• Club on mains sewage and potable supply, maintenance buildings waste held by septic tank and collected</li> <li>• Closed-loop water system is located on an impermeable wash pad</li> <li>• Discussed water containment and treatment systems for clubhouse and maintenance</li> </ul>

<b>RESOURCES</b>			
<b>R1 Water</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Mandatory Practices</b>	<b>Verifier Notes</b>
<b>R1.1 Minimise water demand</b>	<b>R1.1.1 Measures to reduce the need to consume water</b>	Target irrigation to essential playing surfaces only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed policies regarding areas, accuracy and optimisation of irrigation</li> </ul>
<b>R1.2 Maximise water efficiency</b>	<b>R1.2.1 Practical measures to use water more efficiently on the golf course</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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club has invested in a POGO moisture meter to allow accurate monitoring of moisture levels with GPS location data</li> <li>• The club operate a Rainbird Nimbus II system with mapping and remote control</li> <li>• The system is regularly serviced by staff and external contractors to ensure efficiency and identify any leaks or application inaccuracy</li> </ul>

	<b>R1.2.2 Practical measures to use water more efficiently in buildings</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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bills are reviewed regularly</li> <li>• The management system includes monitoring and review of utility invoices including consumption figures</li> <li>• Social media is used extensively to increase awareness of resource efficiency and broader sustainability issues.</li> <li>• Consumption totals are identified and monitored by operational areas</li> </ul>
<b>R1.3 Source water responsibly</b>	<b>R1.3.1 Measures towards alternative, lower quality sources of water</b>	Ensure appropriate water abstraction permit and reporting, as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club engaged a consultant to assist in increasing their license in late 2018 and the volume was increase to 31,000 - valid to 2028</li> <li>• This increase was partly required for the recovery work and over-seeding to establish more drought tolerant species going forward and reduce long-term consumption</li> </ul>
<b>R2 Energy</b>			
<b>R2.1 Reduce energy demand</b>	<b>R2.1.1 Measures to reduce the amount of energy consumed in course maintenance</b>	Minimise areas of managed turf to reduce mowing, irrigation, and turf inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club have reviewed the areas of managed amenity land on site, creating a 5-year plan to optimise the playing areas</li> <li>• Part of the plan included input from wildlife organisations to enhance the naturalised land area on site and connecting beyond their boundaries</li> </ul>
<b>R2.2 Maximise energy efficiency</b>	<b>R2.2.1 Measures to use energy and fuels more efficiently in buildings</b>	Audit energy use regularly; Regularly review bills; Categorise and track energy consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As identified above utilities are routinely monitored prior to invoice settlement, including recording of consumption to allow periodic comparison.</li> <li>• Consumption records reviewed and totals provided for 2020 YTD and the previous 3 years.</li> </ul>
<b>R2.3 Source energy responsibly</b>	<b>R2.3.1 Measures to source alternative, renewable forms of energy</b>	Determine potential sources of renewable energy in the area and on-site, through renewable energy providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed and currently the ROI is insufficient - the club will continue to monitor the potential</li> </ul>
<b>R3 Materials</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>	Undertake a review of materials consumed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club engage with suppliers, monitor waste coming to site and separate waste streams to maximise reuse and recycling over landfill</li> <li>• Cooking oil is recycled and processed to create biofuel by a local waste partner</li> <li>• Waste separation is in place across site to prevent co-mingling and preserve the value of the waste.</li> </ul>
<b>R3.2 Purchase responsibly</b>	<b>R3.2.1 Practical use of an ethical / environmental purchasing policy</b>	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In place and reviewed in 2017</li> <li>• The club places bulk orders where possible</li> </ul>
<b>R3.3 Reuse and recycle</b>	<b>R3.3.1 Waste stream separation for maximum recycling and re-use opportunity</b>	Demonstrate waste separation, reuse and recycling; Track how much waste goes to landfill, or is reused / recycled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed above Bins not observed on this occasion, but separation practices confirmed</li> </ul>
<b>R3.4 Demonstrate legal compliance</b>	<b>R3.4.1 Compliance with all local and regional waste management regulations</b>	Use authorised waste and recycling contractor for general, hazardous, industrial and green waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greensman has been the waste partner for several years and the current agreement expires in 2022</li> </ul>

<b>COMMUNITY</b>			
<b>C1 Outreach</b>			
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Mandatory Practices</b>	<b>Verifier Notes</b>
<b>C1.1 Diversify access and provide multi-functionality</b>	<b>C1.1.1 Social and recreational activities at the facility</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The club encourages use of the facilities by community groups</li> <li>A recreational route and traffic-free cycle way run along the western boundary of the site</li> </ul>
<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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The club encourages staff and members to engage with and volunteer for local and national charities and good causes.</li> </ul>
<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>	Create a 'sustainability working group'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainability is a key agenda point for management meetings</li> <li>Meetings are held regularly with additional time given to sustainability as required</li> </ul>
<b>C2 Golfers &amp; Employees</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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The club are aware of the mental and physical health benefits of golf and promote and encourage golf by existing and new players.</li> </ul>
<b>C2.2 Be open and inclusive</b>	<b>C2.2.1 Inclusivity and diversity in membership and visitor policies</b>	Demonstrate inclusive policies for members and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The club operates an open and inclusive policy in all areas of their operations</li> </ul>
<b>C2.3 Employ fairly and</b>	<b>C2.3.1 Ethical and legal</b>	Follow all relevant national	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are provided with initial induction training and are</li> </ul>

<b>safely, and provide career opportunities</b>	<b>employment, working conditions and professional development</b>	legislation and best practice for employment, health & safety etc	encouraged to continue their professional development via internal and external training.
<b>C3 Communications</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>	Provide information on the facility's sustainability commitments, actions, or achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club devote space on their website to sustainability and are rightly proud of their work and commitment.</li> <li>• Most of the information on projects is disseminated via social media, predominantly Twitter.</li> </ul>
<b>C3.2 Celebrate and promote sustainability</b>	<b>C3.2.1 Activities that raise awareness and engage people in the wider community</b>	Provide evidence of external communications and community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club engages with all stakeholders, local charities and wildlife groups to improve their understanding of the community and how the club fits within.</li> <li>• This engagement also helps shape their activities and projects.</li> </ul>

## 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](http://www.sustainable.golf)