

GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



Golf Facility: Wycombe Heights Golf Centre

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Executive Summary

Wycombe Heights Golf Centre is located to the east of High Wycombe, on the southern edge of the Cotswolds. The clubhouse, maintenance buildings and carpark are located in a small steep valley allowing the course design to access the hills and valleys, affording superb views and variations in playing levels creating additional interest for the golfers.

The surface soil is predominantly a thin slightly alkaline boulder clay, with areas of gravel and sand with an underlying sedimentary chalk bedrock resulting in the site being relatively free draining.

The golf facility itself dates back to around 1990 and provides an 18-hole main course with 18-hole short course, driving range and clubhouse with bar and function rooms

Nature

The club has continued the work undertaken initially, working primarily to enhance the existing the natural environment through a combination of sympathetic management and replanting of trees across the site.

As part of the turfgrass management process the club has been thinning some areas of woodland to increase light and airflow to Greens suffering from excessive moisture levels which had required increased inputs and man-hours. The opportunity was taken to use the felled timber to create brash and log piles providing the multiple benefits of improved playability, reduced man-hours, reduced inputs, and additional habitat from a single project.

The club has also continued introducing and monitoring bird boxes, providing nesting sites for owls and a number of raptor species.

The club continues to review the area in play, periodically allowing additional areas of rough to grow up and to monitor the resulting playing times, to help reduce the amount of amenity grass on site and to enhance the aesthetic look and challenge of the course.

The predominant turfgrass species have remained unchanged over the last three years, with a sward containing *Poa annua*, *Agrostis tenuis* and *Lolium perenne*, which provide a balance of required inputs and the quality of playing surfaces required by members.

Records are maintained regarding course areas prone to

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disease, and other site-specific problems such as surface water drainage, and more recently badger activity in and around the course. These records allow the course management team to undertake specific and assessed interventions to maintain the quality of course.



The club is continuing to operate within a management system which minimises the risks of pollution. The maintenance facility has a closed loop wash down pad, and waste water treatment equipment, to help reduce the risk of potential contamination. The washdown pad is also used for mixing pesticides and fertilisers to catch any accidental spills.

To the side of the wash down pad there is a bunded cabinet for empty chemical containers and the bunded fuel dispensing tank to provide an additional level of environmental protection.

Within the maintenance building there is a chem-safe chemical storage cabinet which also contains a set of stock records.

The maintenance of buildings are undergoing some alterations at the time of the verification visit to increase the working areas available and allow greater separation of vehicles and bunded storage.

Resources

The club's water resources are sourced from mains potable supply for maintenance building and clubhouse, with mains sewerage and irrigation supply provided by a combination of mains potable and borehole under a licensed abstraction volume.

The club has been going through a process of feasibility and planning for a reservoir to be sited within their boundary, however there has been a delay in the completion of the project due to issues identified during ground surveys.

The revised reservoir location is in the final stages of planning and should hopefully be in operation by the next certification visit in three years time.

The irrigation system is regularly maintained and monitored for potential leaks, in addition to the monitoring of spray arcs to reduce the area of irrigation wherever possible.

The clubhouse building has had some upgrades with the introduction of PIR controls on the urinals and aerated taps as part of a continuing clubhouse upgrade.

The club uses a combination of grid electricity for lighting and cooling, and LPG for heating and cooking. It is understood from onsite discussions, that the electrical consumption has been significantly reduced in the last three years due to the introduction of LED lighting in various areas.

The majority of public areas of the facility have now been upgraded to a LED, although the bar and back office areas will form part of the

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next capital expenditure programme, hopefully to be completed within the next three years.



Wycombe Heights Golf Centre operates within the Burhill Golf and Leisure organisation and the environment and ethical purchasing policies are established across all of their sites.

Individual sites have an opportunity to procure local produce, primarily in the catering and service supply of maintenance services and consumables for course maintenance operation, ensuring a local income stream and economic multiplier effect.

The club operates a waste stream management programme to separate paper, card, glass and a number of other waste products to help reduce the amount of waste to landfill. Plans are also being discussed currently to reduce the use of single use water bottles and coffee cups.

Community

The club hosts a number of events and competitions raising money for local charities and good causes.

As part of the maintenance of the wider grounds, the club also maintain footpaths and bridleways situated in and across the course, keeping them accessible to the community allowing access to a substantial area of natural environment in very close proximity High Wycombe.

Conclusion

I Tony Hanson, independent accredited verifier, recommend Wycombe Heights Golf Centre be awarded the GEO Certified eco-label again because of the continued work engaging staff and players with the environmental management and sustainability message.

The club continues numerous projects including re-planting programmes on the course and investing in new technology within the clubhouse to help improve resource efficiency.

The discussions through the day of the site-visit underlined the commitment of various staff members within the organisation. Plans already in place for both low-cost engagement programs and more significant cost capital expenditure projects to help reduce their environmental impact over the coming years.