

**Minutes of the Greens & Environment Sub-Committee Meeting Held in the Boardroom,
Links House on Thursday 17th August 2023**

Present: K Daly (Greens Convener), C Yule (Chairman), I Frier, E Kelly, L Gordon, A McCartney, R Wardlaw, P Goudie

In Attendance: M Wells (Chief Executive), K Stott (Links Superintendent), D Cairnie (Course Manager, Championship), M Reynolds (Course Manager, Burnside & Buddon), C Boath (Head of Sustainability)

1. Apologies

S Duncan

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Introduction

The sub-committee were introduced to Peter Goudie, a new trustee to the board.

4. Action Points

Action points were discussed with no further progress on each point.

5. Links Superintendent Report

The Links Superintendent opened discussion by asking if anyone had any comments, concerns, or questions from his report. A trustee enquired about the water fountains on the course, highlighting recent issues of little to no water being present. The Links Superintendent explained the plan to have two new systems installed in the very near future. As they are required to be connected to a mains line, it is unlikely that any of the

current fountains will be operational, but two new dispensers will be installed in two new locations – one at the 1st and possibly one at the 16th Burnside. When the two new systems are integrated and fully operational, the hope is to install a further four around the course. The new systems will be larger than the current fountains, giving easier access to refill water bottles.

A trustee raised a question from the report regarding bunker maintenance, sounding out the possibility of using artificial facings on the bunkers of the practice ground to reduce the quantity of bunkers that are required to be rebuilt. The Head of Sustainability touched on the environmental impact of doing so, as the artificial material cannot be recycled at the end of its life cycle. The Links Superintendent and Chief Executive agreed that this matter will be explored further but added that it would need to be carefully considered against the quality and authenticity of the courses at Carnoustie and how they are presented. Introducing artificial facings would likely not align with brand aspirations or sustainability goals but may add some value to off-course practice facilities.

5.1 Ecology Report

A trustee enquired what the term ‘fringing rough’ covered in the report. The Links Superintendent explained that this is a rough which allows golf balls to be found more easily. There has been extensive work done on the rough to ensure it allows a steady pace of play whilst also encouraging ecology. The Chief Executive contextualised the report against the backdrop of recent years strategies to manage rough areas, highlighting areas which had now been underlined to help establish a more diverse ecology in these areas. . The Links Superintendent confirmed the ecology plan will be followed regarding future gorse removal whilst also confirming the report will be followed across all courses, not only the Championship to continue the work of all courses being maintained in the same way.

A trustee raised question around the presence of Mares Tail on the course, and what could be done to limit/remove this. The Links Superintendent explained the hardship that comes with trying to remove Mares Tail, as it does not react to weed killer and will always return. The Links Superintendent confirmed the areas of Mares Tail are not impeding play and so will remain in place but will be managed and monitored.

A trustee enquired about the area of rough to the right of the 1st fairway, drawing reference to the report stating it is weak. The Links Superintendent confirmed why this was the case, as it can assist in the pace of play.

6. Course Manager Reports

6.1 Championship

A trustee raised question regarding bins on the course and highlighted since the launch of the tuktuk, the bins on a Monday morning are often overflowing. The Links Superintendent confirmed that one of the seasonal Greens team is now covering Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The Links Superintendent highlighted the appointment of the first Stonemason and Stonemason Apprentice to Carnoustie Golf Links. The trustees were unanimous in their compliments on the work the stonemasons have completed so far at the 10th of the Championship. A trustee raised question regarding the safety of the stonemasons working in the burns whilst golf is in play, to which the Links Superintendent explained a safety net is being fabricated to offer some form of protection. Signage will also be in use at holes the stonemasons are working on, to ensure golfers are aware of their presence.

6.2 Buddon & Burnside

The Buddon & Burnside Course Manager welcomed any questions or comments from the committee regarding his report to which there were none.

6.3. Irrigation

A trustee asked about the future of the bore holes. The Links Superintendent confirmed MJ Abbotts have a plan to bring someone to the course in September/October to source another area to place a bore hole.

7. Decision Paper

7.1 Courses Closures 2024/2025

The trustees had no comments and recommended the Course Closures 2024-25 to the Full Board for approval.

8. Sustainability & Environment Update

The Head of Sustainability recapped his report, drawing attention to the plans for the new cycle path. The Links Superintendent confirmed Tayside Contracts will carry out phase 1 of the plan which will see the cycle path between Barry Station and the Practice ground upgraded. This is expected to begin early September. The path will be widened and give space for vehicles, cyclists, and walkers. With future phases, some ground will be given on the Burnside side to allow for the widening. The Chief Executive explained that the proposed route for the cycle path when it reaches the Burnside Starters box, is to be re-routed in front of the building to allow a safer route for all, with better sightlines. He added, that area will be investigated further to ensure a safer and more satisfactory route for all, but would require an in-depth review of how this may impact the Burnside course, the 1st tee, starters box and putting green in particular. Findings and options will be presented back to the Greens sub-committee with proposed next steps.

9. Any Other Competent Business

Burnside & Buddon Development

Following on from discussion regarding the cycle track, the Chief Executive and Links Superintendent discussed flooding issues that impacted the Burnside course in particular and presented some options that were to be investigated further (with other flood mitigation strategies along the burns course) to attempt to mitigate or reduce future flooding events. The Chief Executive added that he was in discussion with SEPA, Harley Haddow (consultant engineers), Angus Council and other landowners with the aim of collaborating on this issue.

The Chief Executive added that various options and ideas had been discussed over many years regarding both the Burnside and Buddon course's including how they could be improved and offer more accessible golf for all, and this had been a subject of live discussion just before the pandemic. It was discussed and agreed that the executive should gather all previous options and ideas, and present these back to the Greens sub-committee with the assistance of CGLMC's golf course architect to re-visit, particularly in the light of both the outline proposal for the cycle path (potentially impacting the Burnside 1st Tee) and flood mitigation in mind.

It was agreed the next step would be to have a course architect assimilate and update plans to present to the sub-committee and to host workshops for the sub-committee to understand each proposal in depth.

Toilet Facilities

A trustee enquired to more toilet facilities being installed on the course as due to the launch of the tuktuk, they are meeting more visitors who are looking for facilities. The Chief Executive confirmed this will be considered.

Health and Safety issue on course

A trustee raised a health and safety issue of walkers using the course without giving way to any groups playing golf. The Head of Sustainability confirmed there will be more signage put up on the course soon, bringing more awareness to the public of golf in play.

Penalty Markers

A trustee raised question regarding yellow penalty areas now being red areas. The Links Superintendent confirm they were put in place by the R&A in 2022.

Par Change

A trustee questioned if the par 4 at the 14th of the Championship can be changed to a par 5. The Chief Executive confirmed he will speak with the Head Professional and come back to the sub-committee on the issue.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 1520 hours.