

**Minutes of the Greens & Environment Sub-Committee Meeting Held in the Boardroom,
Links House on 14th November 2023**

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

In Attendance: M Wells (Chief Executive), K Stott (Links Superintendent), D Cairnie (Course Manager, Championship), M Reynolds (Course Manager, Burnside & Buddon), S Sutherland (Irrigation & Services Technician)

1. Apologies

P Goudie, S Duncan

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Action Points

Action Points discussed.

- 9th green trees
Angus Council determine the trees to be in good health. Angus Council representative, Fred Conacher, will be visiting CGL later this week to review the trees and create a fresh action plan. Findings will be communicated to the sub-committee at the February meeting.
- Hybrid/Artificial bunkers
After gauging opinion of the sub-committee, it was agreed that the Links Superintendent will report back his findings after visiting Kingsbarns Golf Course. The sub-committee also discussed that if findings were favourable that hybrid bunkers may be trialled in practice areas, but not on the golf courses at this time.
- Course Management Plan/Review of Martin Ebert Plans
Will be discussed later in the agenda under flooding.

5. Links Superintendent Report

The Links Superintendent appraised the sub-committee of the challenging 6 weeks the team have faced with weather, noting that the timings of floods have been less than ideal with winter work approaching. He added that flooding was being escalated as a priority to understand and look at potential mitigation, including commissioning external civil engineering and hydrology advice. This is being looked in collaboration with the wider executive team.

The Links Superintendent mentioned that through the gloominess of the flooding, there has one major positive in the last few weeks, with the launch of Barnoustie, a cultivar (grass seed) created by Barenbrug in conjunction with Carnoustie. The Links Superintendent noted the launch of Barnoustie went well at the Golf Hotel, with a course walk taking place afterwards. It was fantastic timings for this product to launch, as the latest R&A report noted 70% fescue is now present on the CGL greens, testament to the fescue projects success over the last 5-years.

The Links Superintendent mentioned that a tree specialist will be attending in the next month to provide advice regarding a few trees. The tree at the 13th is particularly in need of attention as the trunk has split due to the weight of the branches. The knowledge of a tree surgeon would be welcomed to try to prolong the life span.

A trustee raised a question regarding bunker sand. The Links Superintendent explained that the same sand is used across all 3 courses in the bunkers but due to the Championship being played more, the sand requires more shaping, and some assistance is required from golfers with raking, moving the sand not only backwards but also forwards.

A trustee wanted to pass on positive comments he received from members of staff from Royal St Georges regarding the standard of the course when they played a few months ago, compliments were given to the greenkeeping team.

6. Course Manager Reports

6.1 Championship

The Championship Course Manager noted the resting greens procedure is working well and was highlighted in the agronomy report. This process will be in force again this year, once

again ensuring as limited disruption to play as possible. The Course Manager also noted the sand injection process was now working well.

6.2 Buddon & Burnside

The Buddon & Burnside Course Manager expressed dismay over the recent weather and noted the Burnside course 2/3/4 were almost back to being playable but are unfortunately back to GUR given the most recent rainfall.

The Links Superintendent mentioned the new VGR machine, which is helping with reducing organic matter volumes in the greens.

A trustee raised a question regarding the rock armour. The Links Superintendent confirmed stage one is now complete, with the mainline pipe connected earlier this week and rock armour now being replaced. The 18th hole of the Buddon would be back in play from Saturday 18th November.

6.3. Irrigation

The Irrigation Technician confirmed all is going well and the next phase will see the mains water pipe being installed to provide running water at all Hogan tees, a great feature for future championships and general play. The Links Superintendent confirmed the new bottle refill station had been well received with an additional station to be placed at the 13th. Pending the success of the water filling stations, additional ones may be added in areas around the course during the 2024 season.

The Links Superintendent is meeting with MJ Abbotts w/c 20th November regarding potential new boreholes. It was suggested at the next Greens meeting, the sub-committee can take part in a course walk to visit the new pump house.

7. Ecology Presentation Update

The Chief Executive gave feedback gained from a survey sent out to attendees of the recent Ecology Presentation hosted by the Head of Sustainability, along with guest speakers, Dr Bob Taylor and Sophie Olejnik. The feedback was all very positive, and showed an interest in CGL offering more presentations, ecological or otherwise. The event was very well attended with over 50% of attendees not being golfers or STHs.

8. Any Other Competent Business

Toilet at the 8th Championship Shelter

A trustee enquired if a toilet could be installed within the shelter at the 8th of the Championship, which is also located next to the TukTuk station. The intention of this would be to accommodate staff members of the TukTuk and as an additional toilet for golfers/public. The Chief Executive and Links Superintendent agreed this could be investigated.

Senior Open

A trustee enquired if there would be any restrictions to play enforced in the run up to the Senior Open. The Links Superintendent confirmed there may be minimal areas roped off.

Flooding

A trustee asked if any measures can be taken to combat the level of flooding the course has suffered over the recent months/year. The Links Superintendent explained that the severity of the flooding since October has been unprecedented and is not the norm – approximately 3x more rain as a normal October. The Chief Executive confirmed that we are at a point with future course plans that we need to understand why we are more prone to flooding at certain areas and use the opportunity of course changes to make changes to try to mitigate this. The Chief Executive confirmed that this is part of a bigger project and will tie in with the Martin Ebert future plans.

Burn Wall at 18th Championship

Questions were raised regarding the collapse of the burn wall at the 18th, and if there are any other areas of the burn wall in danger of suffering the same fate. The Links Superintendent and Chief Executive confirmed there are areas of the burn wall which are coming to the end of their life and will require CapEx investment to be rectified. They mentioned the new Stonemason and the work he has undertaken but noted that for any work to begin on the burn, we need to wait until the water level reduces and it is deemed safe for anyone to be in the burn.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 1550 hours.