



Tillicoultry Golf Club

TILlicOUNTRY GOLF CLUB

**COURSE MANAGEMENT
POLICY DOCUMENT**

FEBRUARY 2016

Record of Amendments.

Current Issue	Previous Issue	Changes from previous
January 2016	January 2016	None - First Issue of policy
February 2016	January 2016	Restrictions on working on water courses added –SEPA regulations. Use of motorised ride-on carts added. Use of motorised golf buggies amended.

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to define roles and responsibilities and to outline the activities and objectives related to course preparation.

Scope:

This document applies to, the Club Council, the green keeping team and all members (guests/visitors) of the Club.

Aim:

The aim of the document is to establish a clear and consistent approach to course management to fulfill the potential of the course for the benefit of members, their guests and visitors.

This document will be reviewed and amended from time to time, in accordance with changing climate, usage, resources and course layout and changes in the game of golf itself.

Limitations

Any major changes in this document should only happen following consultation with the green-keeping team and with the approval of the Club Council.

History

Tillicoultry Golf Club was founded in 1899. It occupies hilly terrain on the lower slopes of the Ochil Hills. Since its original construction, changes to the layout have increased its length to the current 5475 yards from the men's white tees. The course plays to a Standard Scratch Score of 67 from the white tees.

The course comprises nine holes, comprising 2 par 3's and 7 par 4's. Rough is minimal due to the small acreage of the course but many copses of planted trees, together with the more established trees, present a significant difficulty when playing.

The weather patterns at Tillicoultry Golf Club provide average rainfall with frequent frost and occasional snow through the winter. Springs, in recent years, have been poor and late, resulting in slow pick-up of growth to greens.

Roles and Responsibilities

Many of the roles and responsibilities relating to this document are determined by the Constitution and Rules of Tillicoultry Golf Club. The following have specific responsibilities to ensure that the objectives contained within this document are met:

Club Council

The Club Council is responsible and accountable to the members for the overall preparation of the course. The Club Council must approve any significant changes that may affect the play of the course.

The Green Committee

The Club Council has determined that a Greens Convenor / committee is not required. The Head Greenkeeper will attend the monthly Club Council meeting to update and discuss the condition and plans for the course. When the Headgreenkeeper is not available, the assistant greenkeeper will attend. If neither greenkeeper is available the Headgreenkeeper will provide a written report to the Club Council.

The Head Greenkeeper

The Head Greenkeeper is accountable to Club Council for the implementation of the course activities and objectives identified in this policy. The Head Greenkeeper's responsibilities, include but are not limited to:

- Providing a monthly verbal or written report to Club Council on developments and proposals.
- Planning long and short term maintenance schedule to meet demands on the course.
- Informing the Club Council on current and potential problem areas.
- Providing expenditure estimates to the Club Council to allow preparation of annual and long term budgets.
- Machinery maintenance and repair.
- Preparing plans, in liaison with Club Council, for machinery replacement.
- Purchase and storage of all fuels, chemicals, top dressings and other materials. All materials to be purchased from reputable suppliers and of a quality suitable for use on the golf course.
- Maintenance of schedules and records relating to machinery.
- Storage and safety of all equipment and materials.
- Implementation of the Club's Health and Safety Policy and that all personnel working on the course are familiar with this policy..
- Allocation of daily tasks to all greens staff (including volunteers, subject to relevant Risk Assessment).
- In liaison with the Club Council identify staff training requirements.
- Measure as appropriate quantitative data on speed and firmness on identified greens.
- Informing the Club Council of impending works on the golf course which will disrupt play.

Members, their guests and visitors

The greens staff cannot do everything and there is much that the members/ visitors can do to assist in keeping the course tidy and in the best possible condition.

Some of the activities expected are :

- Repair pitch marks on the greens.
- Replace divots on fairways and tread them in carefully.
- Repair divot marks on tees by filling with sand /seed mixture provided and tread in carefully.
 - Failure to make repairs to damage caused may result in disciplinary action or a ban on future play.
- Pick up any litter and either place it in the nearest bin or remove it from the course.
- Carefully rake bunkers pushing the sand towards the face rather than pulling it towards the rear.
- Replace rakes outside the bunker in a position least likely to interfere with a ball in motion.
- Not take buggies and trolleys on tees, greens, green approaches and surrounds.
- Use surfaced paths where provided, especially when using buggies and power trolleys.
- Keep dogs on a lead and remove any dog dirt from the course immediately.
- Observing all aspects of etiquette according to the Rules of Golf
- Accepting all decisions made with regard to course usage.
- Observing tee priorities at all times. .
- Wear suitably spiked golf shoes at all times, with particular regard for winter conditions where slipper conditions prevail.
- It is imperative that all members, guests and visitors consider others and help promote and implement the objectives of this document.

Course Management Policy / Objectives

General Policy

The Club's policy is "THE COURSE CLOSSES ITSELF" and, within reason, aims to allow play to continue using summer tees, fairways and greens for as long as possible throughout the year and to allow the use of trolleys (powered and pulled) unless damage to the course is considered to be inevitable.

In Winter the main greens will be in play unless they are affected by a thawing frost or are considered to be so wet that damage to them would occur, in which case temporary winter greens will be brought into play. Between October – March inclusive, artificial grass tees will be used.

During October– March inclusive, the fairways are protected by lifting balls from them and playing from a mat.

Greens

The objective is to provide in April- September inclusive, true, firm, fast surfaces that will hold a well-struck shot played from a closely mown area. Soft, holding surfaces are to be wholly discouraged. Where design, drainage, size, shape or situation limits maintenance solutions, then re-construction might need to be considered.

Greens maintenance will be programmed to minimise disruption to play but, where possible, to maximise the benefit from each operation.

The underlying objectives of putting surface management are to:

- Produce a good level of usability year round, barring adverse weather conditions such as frost ,snow and excessive rainfall
- Provide a good average standard of putting surface throughout the competitive season [April – September inclusive] and as long as possible thereafter.
- Build in the potential to be able to produce very high standards of putting surface for short periods at intervals through the late spring and summer months.
- Promote a good level of consistency between the main putting greens on a daily basis.

To achieve this , through April-September inclusive, verticutting, hollow coring, vertidrainng, microtining, and top dressing programmes will be formulated to prevent the development of dilute thatch to the turf base and to prevent compaction to the soil profile.

Routine maintenance through **April – September** , will include:

- Mowing to a minimum height of 3mm. Mowing heights and frequency of cutting are the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper and will depend on his /her reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming events and the state of the soil etc.
- Mowing using a combination of a ride-on triple mower and a pedestrian controlled mower to optimise the speed of the greens.
- Dew will be removed, as required, by mowing or by switching.
- Overseeding, as necessary, with appropriate grass seed.
- Holes will be re-located at most twice each week, inclusive of competition days. The hole cutter blade to be maintained sharp and hole trimming scissors used at each change of cup position. White top cup inserts integral with hole sleeve will be used for best presentation.
- Intermittent application of nitrogen feeds and dressings as determined by the Head Greenkeeper.
- As required, the application of fungicides to treat grass diseases.
- Wetting agents should be applied as appropriate as judged necessary by the Head Green keeper.

, Maintenance through the **Winter period** will include:

- Mowing to heights not less than 5mm as required and when possible.
- Improvements to drainage as part of the Winter programme of works.
- There will normally be major maintenance work to the greens which will cause disruption to normal play. Members will be notified in advance before this work is commenced.
- Application of liquid iron and nitrogen free liquid feed will be used to maintain colour and strength.

Green surrounds

The green surround shall be maintained to provide a smooth, well presented transition from fairway to putting green. Banks and mounds within the green surround shall be mown at a height which retains an attractive presentation without promoting scalping, drought or wear stress.

The green run-up and surround should comprise a similar texture and density of turf as for the greens, providing firm and dry surfaces which will facilitate a wide variety of approach play.

To achieve this, routine maintenance of the green surrounds and approaches will include;

- Mowing twice / three times a week to a minimum height of 7 mm
- The width of surrounds will generally be a single width of a triplex mower but may vary slightly in some locations.
- The width of approaches will vary to suit each individual green.
- Micro-tinning and dressing throughout the season (little and often approach), as required

Fairways

The objective is to provide a good playing surface from which it is possible to hit well struck shots. The shape of fairways should reflect the contours and features of the course, and take account of the varying standards of golfing skill of members.

Fairways will be cut at a minimum 12mm in Summer and maximum 15mm in Winter at the necessary frequency to maintain neat and consistent surfaces. The 7th & 8th fairways, due to their topography, may be inaccessible by course machinery during periods of heavy rainfall and mowing may be curtailed.

Aeration by slitting will be carried out to promote firm and dry playing surfaces throughout, concentrating on main traffic areas and known wet spots. Slitting will be performed once annually in the autumn.

Routine maintenance of the fairways during April - September will include:

- Once / Twice weekly mowing with a mowing height of minimum 12mm.
- Repairing and filling divots as required.
- Repairing problem areas as and when required.

Between October – March inclusive other work on the fairways will include:

- Aeration by slitting.
- Repairs and planned improvements to the course drainage system.
- Repairs to areas that have become worn and damaged during the season.

Tees

Tees will be maintained as for green surrounds. A zero tolerance approach will be maintained with regard to weed contamination on tees.

The objective is to provide a firm level surface from which to play during the main golfing season. During winter months, artificial surfaced tees will be in use. Tee markers will always allow a 3 club lengths distance for unrestricted swing when teeing up a ball, and the markers will be placed in alignment with the fairway.

Routine maintenance of the teeing grounds during the summer season will include:

- Movement of tee markers two to three times per week.
- Repairing divot marks as required .
- Cutting tees once / twice a week to minimum heights (7mm in summer)
- Cutting the sloping sides of tees once a fortnight .
- Trimming grass around tee markers once a fortnight
- Emptying rubbish bins as required =
- Aeration as required.
- Filling ball cleaner with water weekly if required.
- Filling the soil / grass seed box as required.

All major repair and maintenance work will be carried out during the winter months.

Bunkers

Bunkers will be maintained to provide hazards which collect balls to a central depression with adequate room for a full swing from this position. They will be designed to drain freely, be visible and be a positive influence on play. The sand used will be of a specification and laid to a depth to provide for a consistent playing surface.

The bunker sand will have the majority of its particles in the 0.125 to 1 mm range, having a colour appropriate for good definition and contrast.

Where bunkers do not meet these criteria then they will be up-graded but in such a way as to conform to the existing traditional style of design on the course.

The objective is to keep the bunkers in play and to the required standard throughout the main golfing season

To achieve this, routine maintenance of bunkers through the main golfing season will include:

- At the beginning of the season and as required throughout the season topping up bunkers with Bunker Right sand.
- The depth and consistency of sand in the bunkers should be sufficient to allow a splash out shot to be played without inviting a ball pitching in the bunkers to finish in a "fried egg" lie. Generally when in a bunker the sand should come over the welts of the shoes but little more.
- Fully raking all bunkers in the morning of all competitions and between events as required
- There must be at least one bunker rake located at each bunker.
- Bunker margins will be retained and edges trimmed on a regular basis.

During the Winter season, bunkers will not be in play but treated as Ground Under Repair.

Rough

The semi-rough will be topped as necessary to present a uniform surface at 50-75mm height. Deeper rough vegetation is mainly confined to the perimeter of the course or areas which are considered to be significantly off the playing line and will be managed with regard to any environmental management plans.

Two cuts, one of semi-rough (50-75mm) and one of intermediate rough(50mm) ,between the fairway and the rough on the down-slope side of the eight fairway, will be maintained. On all other holes only one cut of semi-rough (50-75mm) will be maintained.

There are many areas of the course where the rough is too tough to cut with normal equipment and no attempt to restrict growth in these areas will be made.

Environmental Management

Agronomy

The Golf Club will, if it is considered to be necessary, seek the advice of a professional, independent agronomist on course maintenance issues related to the greens.

Ecology

The course is well established and no major changes are envisaged to the structure which would impact on the ecosystem and which would require the advice of an ecologist. Application of plant protection chemicals is kept to the minimum to sustain adequate playing conditions and no increases in usage is likely.

Tree and Woodland

Professional advice will be taken from an arboriculturist to determine felling and thinning of any trees. A Code of Practice will be developed and implemented prior to any trees being cut down. Members will be advised of all proposals prior to any action.

A management programme will be maintained. Particular attention will be given to optimizing morning sunlight penetration and air flow over putting surfaces. Inappropriate trees such as poplars should be removed and replaced with more suitable golf course trees.

Any required felling licences must be in place and the necessary consent of the Local Authority and Forestry Commission obtained.

Contract conditions must be adhered to following any grant aided planting programmes.

Weed and Pest ControlDressings, Fertilizers and Other Chemical Treatments

The objective is to use the minimum amount of fertilizers commensurate with promoting healthy growth of the various grasses on the course. Fungicides will only be used to treat specific grass conditions. Small amounts of dressing applied frequently to the greens and fringes and for tees once or twice a year.

Measures will be taken as necessary in accordance with COSHH.

StaffAccommodation

A good standard of working and rest facilities will be provided for the staff, machinery and materials in accordance with Health & Safety requirements.

Employment Conditions

Tillicoultry Golf Club is committed to sustaining the optimum staffing level as finances allow and also to provide for the necessary training and education to retain a structured staffing profile, i.e. at any one time during the Summer / Winter we would expect to employ one fully trained head green keeper and one part time assistant greenkeeper.

The Club will endeavour to reward staff with competitive salary scales subject to financial resources. The Club will pay the annual membership subscription to BIGGA for all full time members of the greenkeeping staff.

We will ensure that we conform to all Health and Safety requirements as applicable to the staff.

Machinery and Storage

The existing facilities are located on the course adjacent to the 3rd hole and comprise:

- The green's shed, a breeze block building (alarmed) which houses most of the club's machinery together with workshop area
- Kitchen/Staff Rest Room.
- General Store Room and Drying Room.
- Toilets and wash facilities.
- Red Diesel tank and bund is located outside and to the South of the greens shed.
- Chemical and fertilizer container stores are located inside the greens shed.
- Covered areas for storage of top dressings, bunker sand will be located to the left front of the green keepers shed.

Provision of the necessary machinery and equipment is essential to achieving the policies set out in this document. The Club sets out to eliminate any old or unreliable equipment on regular basis. Cutting /bottom blades on all machines will be maintained at optimum sharpness at all times and taken out of service if not cutting properly. Regrinding will be carried out at least annually by an approved outside contractor.

Major Items

The major pieces of machinery considered essential to maintaining the course are:

List all machinery:

One Toro fairway mower ;One Toro workman with top dresser ; Two Triplex greens cutters
 One Hand mower ; One Boom sprayer ; Two Strimmers; One air blower
 One set Gang mowers; One Rotary Deck rough mower; One Tractor
 One spiker; One 'Fly mo'; Three Banks cutters; One scarifier; One Turf cutter

A full inventory of course maintenance equipment will be maintained. A planned programme of replacement will be produced as an ongoing measure though there will be flexibility within this structure to delay or bring forward purchases as the need arises.

All machines are to be well cared for by the staff, following the maintenance programmes in the appropriate manufacturer's handbook. All machinery will be cleaned and lubricated, as necessary, after use. The main items of machinery will undergo routine servicing as agreed with the supplier.

Work on the Course

The objective is to carry out all the work necessary to keep the course in the best possible condition whilst minimizing the disruption to the play of members and visitors.

Hours of Work

The greens staff works a flexible shift pattern depending on the time of year and the available light: Additionally during the main golfing season, staff are on a rota at weekends and Bank holidays to set up the course for competition play.

Timing of Work on the Course

Much essential work has to be completed each day and within certain timescales during the year. Moreover there are times when play on the course has to be restricted to allow the greens staff to carry out certain works. As far as possible these restrictions will be kept to an absolute minimum, however **greens staff have priority on the course at all times.**

During winter months it may be necessary to take certain holes out of play to permit uninterrupted work to be carried out.

It will be the aim of the Head Greenkeeper to plan essential work on the course well in advance and members will be kept informed via the notice board when any restrictions to play are envisaged. The co-operation of members will be required if the Club is to maintain the highest possible standards of the course together with our aims to achieve longer-term improvements.

Drains and Drainage Ditches, Water-courses, Bridges & Culverts – SEPA

The objective is to maintain these vital means of removing rainwater from the course in as effective a manner as possible and consistent with Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) regulations. **Before any work is carried out, SEPA must be consulted.**

Routine maintenance during the playing season will be confined to tackling problem areas as they arise and maintaining the appropriate hazard markings.

During the winter months work may include at Greenkeepers discretion:

- Cleaning out all open ditches to remove unwanted vegetation to promote free running conditions and make it easier to find balls in these water hazards.
- Repairs to the banks of the open ditches where required.
- Repairing and replacing collapsed or blocked underground drains.
- Adding to the network of drains where necessary.
- Update locations of all drains on map of the course.

COURSE USAGECourse closure April-September inclusive

The course may be closed on the authority of the Head Greenkeeper, when weather conditions are such that damage to the course would result if play were permitted; such conditions would exist if the greens were waterlogged or if the course was flooded. The course may also be closed if play itself could be dangerous; such conditions would include fog, high winds or thunderstorms.

When the Head Greenkeeper is 'off course', he/she will delegate the authority to close the course to either the assistant greenkeeper or to a member of the Club Council.

A decision to re-open the course may be taken at any time after an inspection by the Head Greenkeeper, assistant greenkeeper or by the delegated member of the Club Council, who will ensure that the condition of the course is acceptable for play or it is safe to resume play.

THE HEAD GREENKEEPER, ASSISTANT GREEN KEEPER OR THE DELEGATED CLUB COUNCIL MEMBER WILL BE THE SOLE ARBITERS IN THIS DECISION.

During a competition, play may be suspended or abandoned by the Match and Handicap Secretary if conditions become unsuitable or unsafe for play. This would not automatically close the course unless one of those persons set out above is present and considers it to be the appropriate course of action.

Every effort will be made to keep course closure to an absolute minimum

Course closure October – March inclusive

Whilst it is the aim of the Club to offer year round golf to its members there will be occasions when the course is deemed unfit for play.

THE HEAD GREENKEEPER , ASSISTANT GREEN KEEPER OR THE DELEGATED CLUB COUNCIL MEMBER WILL BE THE SOLE ARBITERS IN THIS DECISION.

Inspections will be made through the morning with a final decision on the day's play being made at 1pm. A decision to re-open the course may be taken by the Head Greenkeeper, assistant greenkeeper or by the delegated member of the Club Council, who will ensure that the condition of the course is acceptable for play or it is safe to resume play.

When possible a selection of main greens will be kept open, i.e. the naturally drier ones or those less susceptible to frost. Temporary greens will be prepared well in advance of possible use to present a decent surface on occasions when the main greens are out of commission.

From October – March inclusive, play from the fairways will be from mats.

Motorised 'ride-on' golf carts will be banned from use on the course.

Motorised golf buggies, will be banned from use on the course unless fitted with 'hedgehog' winter wheels.

Competitions

In the event of severe weather conditions leading to doubt over the playability of the course for the duration of a Competition, the Match and Handicap Secretary will decide on the outcome of the completion of the competition.

Local Rules to cater for unusual conditions will be published as and when necessary. These will be prepared by the Match and Handicap Secretary in agreement with the Head greenkeeper prior to posting on notice boards.

Course Development

A rolling 5-year business plan for course development plan will be formulated to take into consideration:

- Replacement of machinery/equipment
- The need for green reconstruction
- Up-grading of tees and development of winter tees
- Up-grading of bunkers
- Rough management
- Tree planting / removal
- Environmental improvements

The development plan will comprise a list of proposed projects to be completed on an annual basis but incorporating enough flexibility to allow for movement of individual projects forward or back a year in accordance with limitations of weather and finance.

Complaints Procedure

In no instance shall a member of the Greenstaff be reprimanded directly by a Member.

Any complaints relating to the condition of the course or behaviour of employees must be made in writing to the Club Council. The Greenstaff or members of the Club Council must not be subjected to verbal complaints.

Any complaints by the Greenstaff relating to the conduct of members must be made in writing to the Club Council.

Communication

Every effort will be made to maintain a dialogue with Members on issues relating to course management which have a direct bearing on course condition. Members will be informed, via a regular newsletter and notices, of works likely to cause disruption to play as soon as possible before the commencement of such works.

Members will be up-dated on progress in relation to the objectives of this document in the newsletters or by notices if deemed appropriate.

Members will be encouraged to support the objectives of the document by making constructive suggestions, in writing, to the Club Council.

On course notices will be used where appropriate.

Prepared by
Club Secretary

Approved by: Club Council

Agreed by:
Head Greenkeeper.