

# MARKET HARBOROUGH GOLF CLUB



## A GREENER OPERATION

### *A POLICY TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR ENVIRONMENT*

This environmental policy was written with the help of England Golf's policy guidance and is based upon the contributions of golf club staff and members.

The policy aims to provide a written record of the club's environmental goals and to set out how members and staff can help to bring about environmental improvements and ensure legal compliance.

The policy sets out its overall environmental aims together with an underlying rationale. In order to work towards those aims, the policy outlines seven specific strands or areas of activity. Each strand then breaks down into numbered objectives.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the associated action plan. This action plan maps out specific actions to be taken. Actions to achieve the objectives will be phased over a

five year period. The club will not attempt actions across all the strands at the same time, but will focus on particular strands each year as appropriate.

## **RATIONALE**

The golf club is adopting this policy for the following reasons:

- At a time when the world is increasingly aware of environment issues, and the risks that human activity poses, we need, as a responsible institution, to do what we can to protect and enhance the environment in which we play the game and live our lives.
- To provide a more beautiful and more enjoyable environment for our members and for our staff
- As environmental awareness grows, legislation on such matters becomes more significant. It is important to protect the club by having robust measures and policies in place that minimise risk of non-compliance and litigation
- Market Harborough is growing rapidly. As development accelerates it becomes more important to have regard to the long term effect of what might eventually happen on our neighbouring land.
- We are all familiar with issues surrounding the future of golf as a sport. In adopting this policy, the club aims to enhance its offer to potential members and thus help to protect its future viability.

## **PRINCIPLES**

Market Harborough Golf Club commits itself to:

- Providing a safe and pleasant working environment for all our staff
- Enhancing the natural environment of the golf course for the benefit of both golfers and wildlife
- Conserving energy and water
- Reducing waste
- Preventing pollution from all our activities
- Promoting wider environmental change by careful choice of products and services
- Working towards a 'greener operation' in collaboration with neighbours and partners
- Creating a positive ethos about 'green' issues that will positively influence all adults, young people and visitors who come into contact with the club

As far as is reasonably possible, the club's directors will support all parties to ensure that this policy is implemented across all the activities of the club and will periodically review the effectiveness of the policy.

The club will sanction a Steering Group to drive the policy forward. This group will report periodically to the directors and to the members as well as providing news of progress through newsletters, a noticeboard and other means.

The Steering Group will seek to identify and recruit any expertise and experience that exists among members. To this end, a larger consultative group, flexible in membership, will provide a forum and a sounding board for the Steering Group to use.

## **STRANDS**

In order to work practically towards the principles outlined above, the club will organise its actions into a number of strands. Each strand will break down into a small number of related objectives. Work will be planned each year to align with these strands and objectives. The strands will identify general areas for action; the objectives will be more specific. Specific actions planned for a time period will be drawn up in the form of Action Plans.

There will not be an equal focus on all the strands of action at the same time. Instead, the club, through its environmental Steering Group, and in consultation with directors and members through the advisory group, will prioritise actions according to the circumstances, taking account of

- Opportunities that arise
- Budget constraints
- Progress made

The strands of action are:

- 1. Wildlife and nature conservation**
- 2. Water use**
- 3. Energy use**
- 4. Waste and recycling**
- 5. Chemical use**
- 6. Purchasing**
- 7. Education and training**

Many of these strands of action will involve contacting and working with other bodies, be it local authorities, grant bodies, wildlife and nature bodies, planning authorities, local community groups and neighbours.

Rather than being presented as a separate strand, liaising with partner bodies is a kind of action which appears across all strands.

## **STRAND 1 WILDLIFE AND NATURE**

The golf course has the potential to be of significant value and a balance must be struck between the needs of a functioning golf course and wildlife needs.

### **1.1 Protected species**

- We will research and take advice with regard to protected species on the golf course
- Any protected species present on the course will be identified to members and visitors
- course management will be developed to take account of protected species

### **1.2 Out of play habitats**

- We will identify potential out-of-play habitats
- Plans will be developed for the management and enhancement of these habitat areas

### **1.3 Birdlife**

- We will seek advice from nature agencies concerning bird life around the course
- Plans will be developed, in conjunction with relevant neighbours if appropriate to enhance habitats for the growth and diversity of appropriate birdlife
- The development of birdlife around the course will be monitored, partly by means of a sightings list on an 'Environment' noticeboard

### **1.4 Invasive species**

- We will research the invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Weeds Act 1959 and will ensure that these species are not purchased or otherwise introduced on to the golf course
- Advice will be sought regarding the management any existing invasive species and appropriate actions will be taken

### **1.5 Designated areas**

- As a course which is partly heritage designated, we will clarify our obligations regarding its protection
- course management and environmental development measures will be adapted to take account of heritage restrictions

## **STRAND 2 WATER USE**

Water is a shared resource and must be fairly balanced between the needs of the golf club, other local services and homeowners and local wildlife. We must ensure that we do not use more water than our local water environment can sustain, and that we do not pollute our local environment.

### **2.1 Recording water usage and increasing efficiency**

- We will investigate ways of monitoring our water usage across all areas of the golf club
- We will seek ways of reducing water losses and usage

### **2.2 Treatment of washdown water**

- We will research advice on the treatment and disposal of washdown water and any associated legal requirements
- We will plan for measures to be legally compliant within a reasonable timescale, if necessary
- Washdown facilities will be regularly checked

### **2.3 Alternative irrigation sources**

- We will investigate alternative sources of irrigation water and undertake a feasibility study to evaluate their potential for our club

## **STRAND 3 ENERGY USE**

Saving energy has positive environmental and financial benefits.

### **3.1 Recording and reducing energy and energy costs**

- We will investigate ways on auditing and monitoring energy use across the golf club
- Having developed a clearer understanding of our energy use and our costs, we will develop ways of better tracking and reducing our energy use
- We will seek advice from external bodies regarding energy use and reduction

### **3.2 Alternative energy sources**

- We will continue to investigate alternative energy sources, including specifically the introduction of solar panels on the maintenance facility
- We will conduct feasibility studies on the introduction of alternative energy sources and, where budgets and grants allow, implement alternative energy plans

## **STRAND 4 Waste and recycling**

Waste is created in all areas of the golf club. Reducing waste can have significant environmental and financial benefits. In particular, reducing plastic usage and waste is a growing global issue to which we should respond.

### **4.1 Waste and recycling compliance**

- We will investigate legal requirements surrounding waste and refuse management, taking advice from the appropriate authorities
- Having conducted an audit of our current practice regarding waste disposal, we will work with local authorities to manage our waste and recycling operations more effectively
- Staff and partners working at the golf club need to be fully aware of waste and recycling issues and how they can contribute to a cleaner, 'greener' operation
- Members of the club and visitors will be made aware of the club's policies with regard to recycling and measures will be introduced to enable them to contribute to this policy

### **4.2 Plastic**

- Across all areas of the golf club, we will seek to reduce plastic usage, especially single use plastic

## **STRAND 5 CHEMICAL USE**

Chemical controls are an important tool in golf course maintenance. However, chemicals must be used with care and must be stored and disposed of according to law.

### **5.1 Safe storage and disposal**

- We will research the required standards for the safe storage, use and disposal of oils, fertilisers and pesticides
- We will aim to ensure that our storage facilities meet all legal requirements
- We will ensure that chemicals are only applied by qualified personnel and in appropriate weather conditions
- We will dispose of hazardous waste through an appropriate waste contractor

### **5.2 Chemical use on the golf course**

- We will seek advice from the appropriate authorities on pest and disease identification and management
- Playing surfaces will be monitored to identify pests and diseases quickly and accurately
- Where possible, the control of environmental factors will be used to manage and control pests and diseases. Chemical control of pests and diseases will be employed as a last resort, once agreed damage thresholds have been breached, and once other methods have failed.
- The green staff will continue with methods for the production of fertiliser 'in-house'



## **STRAND 6 PURCHASING**

The golf club can have an impact outside our own organisation by the careful choice and purchase of products and services.

### **6.1 Procurement policy**

- We will try to minimise packaging where possible and look for packaging which is recycled or can be recycled easily
- Where possible and suitable, we will use local suppliers, especially with regard to food and seasonal products, to reduce transport costs and work in collaboration with the local economy
- We will seek to reduce or eliminate peat in our course treatment, researching alternatives to peat-based top dressings
- When purchasing equipment of any kind, we will try to purchase the most energy efficient products and those with the longest effective life
- We will look to introduce a procurement procedure that interrogates potential suppliers' positive commitment to Environmental Policies

### **6.2 Partnership with the proshop**

- We will work in partnership with KJ Golf Academy and the staff in the proshop regarding procurement policy

## **STRAND 7 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

An ethos of 'green' behaviour around the golf club will contribute to the reputation of the club, its appearance, its costs, and its influence on all who come into contact with us.

### **7.1 Staff education and training**

- We will, when recruiting staff, make them aware of the club's commitment to protecting and enhancing the environment. Appointments will take account of applicants' experience of, and commitment to, positive environmental policies
- The club will commit itself to the professional development of its employees with regard to environmental factors. This applies particularly with regard to legal compliance matters
- The club will look for opportunities to improve environmental practice by sharing expertise with partner clubs

### **7.2 Member awareness and involvement**

- We will develop means to make members aware of the club's environmental policy and how they can contribute to it. This will include signage developments and a noticeboard
- In particular, young people who come to learn the game at this club will be made aware of the club's commitment to the environment. We will seek, through our behaviour as well as within their training and coaching, to educate them in how golf can take place in a way that not only causes minimal harm to the environment but can also enhance it.
- Once 'a greener operation' begins to be established, the club's marketing material will place an emphasis upon its positive environmental policies
- We will seek opportunities to publicise any significant achievements or developments regarding the environment, to improve the club's image and contribute to its recruitment and overall health

### **7.3 Accountability and consultation**

- This policy is formed under the auspices of the directors of the club. They will periodically review its operation with the Steering Group. The Steering Group will be accountable to the directors for the implementation of the policy
- Members will be involved and consulted as much as possible: through a flexible, consultative group, at the annual general meeting, and through notices and newsletters.