



PIKE HILLS GOLF CLUB

COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY DOCUMENT

November 2014
(Revised July 2023)

PREFACE

This document sets out the Policy of Pike Hills Golf Club, as agreed by the Management Board, regarding all matters impacting on course preparation.

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 is a working document which will have to 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.

Any major changes should only happen after broad consultation, both within the Club and if necessary, with designated professional advisors, together with the approval of the Management Board.

INTRODUCTION

Pike Hills Golf Club was founded in 1904, moving to the current location in 1945, and occupies approximately 120 acres of parkland terrain on predominately peat/clay loam soils. Since its original construction, changes to the layout have increased its length to the current 6,212 yards from the men's white tees. The course plays to a Standard Scratch Score of 73 from the red tees, 71 from the yellow tees and 71 from the white tees.

Although the course has been built on peat/clay soils, the drainage has been significantly improved by the installation of major drainage systems.

The majority of the greens are essentially of a soil-based construction.

The greens on the course are predominately annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) turf with high proportions of desirable bent grasses. Fairways comprise finer fescues and rye grass offering good turf conditions in most areas.

Rough is minimal due to the small acreage of the course but many copses of newly planted trees, together with the more established trees, present a significant difficulty when playing.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Many of the roles and responsibilities relating to this document are determined by the constitution of Pike Hills Golf Club. The following have specific responsibilities to ensure that the objectives contained within this document are met: Management Board is responsible for the overall direction and control of the Club, including determining policy, approving plans and exerting financial control. The Management Board must be consulted on any changes to this policy document and must approve any significant changes that may affect the play of the course.

THE COURSE/GREENS COMMITTEE

The Committee is made up of a maximum of six Full Golf Members. The Chairman is an elected member of the Management Board. The Chairman and members of the committee must be approved by the Club Management Board. The Head Greenkeeper attends all meetings of the Committee.

In accordance with the constitution of Pike Hills Golf Club, the Club Captain and Club Chairman shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.

The Course Committee is responsible for implementing the policies outlined in this document and for formulating management strategies, proposing amendments to the policy document and assessing progress in relation to the objectives of this policy document.

THE HEAD GREENKEEPER

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of agreed management strategies and also for producing budget proposals, staff performance and Health & Safety issues relating to course management and for informing the Members of impending works on the golf course which will disrupt play.

The Head Greenkeeper will provide reports as required on developments and proposals for course management to the Course Committee.

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.

COURSE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

GREENS

The underlying objectives of putting surface management are to:

- Produce a good level of usability year-round.
- Provide a good average standard of putting surface throughout the playing season.
- 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 putting greens on a daily basis.
- To make contingency plans to allow play when the main greens are not useable.

GREEN APPROACHES

The green surround shall be maintained to provide a smooth, well-presented transition from fairway to putting green. This will include a close-cut fringe, collar and apron. 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 collar 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.

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 but generally should not be narrower than 25 yards wide (except at certain specific points).

TEES

The objective is to provide a firm level surface from which to play during the main golfing season. During winter months the best combination of grass and artificial surfaced tees will be made available being mindful not to cause unnecessary damage to summer tees. 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.

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. Bunker faces will be riveted or fully roll turfed to help eliminate sand contamination, the sand used will be of a specification, depth and constructed to

S.T.R.I. (Sport Turf Research Institute) recommendations, so as to provide for a consistent playing surface. Where bunkers do not meet these criteria then they will be upgraded but in such a way as to conform to the existing traditional style of design on the course.

ROUGH

The objective is to provide two cuts of semi/intermediate rough between the fairways and the rough on all par 4 and 5 holes that will help to contain slightly off-line shots from entering the rough whilst allowing balls to be found and recovery shots made. 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

Pike Hills Golf Club works closely with both English Nature and the Wildlife Trust to ensure the environment for wildlife throughout the area is maintained and wherever possible improved, to help in this regard hawthorn hedges around the perimeter of the course are maintained in such a way as to protect wildlife, and log piles formed as wildlife habitat areas in out of play zones on the course.

Areas of copse out of normal play, shall predominantly remain uncut to provide a valuable wildlife habitat. These actions should be maintained and further improvements encouraged ensuring we provide a valuable habitat for wild life into the future.

The course management policy will be essential in achieving these objectives.

COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Club's policy is the *course closes itself* and within reason to allow play to continue using summer tees, fairways and greens as long as possible and to allow the use of trolleys (powered and pulled) unless damage to the course is considered to be inevitable.

In winter, main greens will always 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 are brought into play. Winter grass tees are used whenever possible otherwise play is from artificial tees. Fairways are protected out of season at the discretion of the Head Greenkeeper by the introduction of personal fairway playing mats.

GREENS

The objective is to provide in the summer season true, firm, fast surfaces that will hold a well- struck shot played from a closely mown area. Out of the summer season the objective is to keep the greens in play whenever possible.

Routine maintenance through the summer season will include:

- Verti - cutting.
- 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 reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming events and the state of the soil etc.
- Aeration using the Club's John Deere star tiner will be undertaken on a regular basis; also regular micro tining. This treatment encourages moisture penetration and good root development. It causes minimum disruption to normal play.
- Weekly use of the sorrel roller.
- Frequent turf iron use.
- Overseeding with appropriate grass seed.
- Regular (several times most weeks) re-location of the hole position and always for competition days.

- Ensure hole cutter blade is sharp and use hole trimming scissors each day for best presentation.
- Intermittent application of fertilizers and dressings as determined by the Head Greenkeeper.
- As required, the application of fungicides to treat grass diseases.
- Scarify bi-annually.

Maintenance through the winter period will include:

- Mowing to heights between 4-7mm as required and when possible.
- Aeration by means of tining, slitting etc
- Verti - draining
- Improvements to drainage as part of the winter programme of works.
- There will normally be a week when major maintenance work to the greens (i.e. hollow tining, slitting or deep scarification) will be carried out and which will cause disruption to normal play. Members will be notified in advance before this work commences.

Grass species that colonize the greens vary from surface to surface but the greens are mainly dominated by BENT with some annual meadow grass.

Greens will be mown / ironed regularly through the growing season at a height of 3-4mm. This will be raised to a height of 4-7 mm when winter conditions prevail.

Verticutting, top dressing and aeration programmes will be formulated to prevent the development of dilute thatch to the turf base and to prevent compaction to the soil profile.

A programme of autumn vertidrainage, winter slitting and shallow star slitting / narrow gauge solid tining through the spring and summer will be maintained to ensure good surfaces. To prevent thatch on the greens we should operate a system of frequent routine aeration.

Reduced compaction will be achieved by verti - draining in November and February.

Fertilizer, as required, unless chemical analysis indicates deficiency, and irrigation will be provided to a minimum level, merely to redress wear in order to retain a dense turf of fine texture.

Through the autumn and winter period a combination of liquid iron and nitrogen free liquid seaweed will be used to maintain colour and strength (currently using 3-0-3 winter feed).

Top dressing should be focused as required dustings in the late March to mid-July period followed by an application following the autumn verti-draining.

Wetting agents should be applied as appropriate through a sprayer on a 4-to-6-week cycle from March through September.

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

GREEN APPROACHES

The collar and immediate approach will be managed, except for cutting; in as similar a manner to greens as is feasible.

Routine maintenance of the green surrounds and approaches will include:

- Mowing twice a week to a height of 10 mm.
- The width of surrounds will generally be a single width of a triplex mower but 10 widths to the front elevation.
- The width of approaches will vary to suit each individual green.
- Micro-tining and dressing predominantly BETWEEN spring and autumn.

Ensure that traffic routes receive verti-draining programmed on an annual basis to improve soil structure and compaction.

FAIRWAYS

Routine maintenance of the fairways during the summer season will include:

- Twice weekly mowing with a mowing height of 14mm.
- Repairing and filling divots as required.
- Repairing problem areas as and when required.
- The use of fertilizers and dressings on fairways as necessary.

Out of the summer season other work on the fairways will include:

- Height of cut raised to 18mm.
- Aeration by tining and/or slitting.
- Verti-draining in autumn.
- Scarification.
- Repairs and planned improvements to the course drainage system.
- Repairs to areas that have become worn and damaged during the season.

Fairways are protected out of season at the discretion of the Head Greenkeeper by the introduction of personal fairway playing mats.

Fairways will be cut at 14-18 mm at the necessary frequency to maintain neat and consistent surfaces.

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

TEES

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

- Movement of tee markers daily.
- Repairing divot marks once a week or more often if required.
- Cutting tees twice a week to appropriate heights currently 10mm in summer.
- Cutting the sloping sides of tees twice a week.
- Emptying rubbish bins twice a week or when full.
- Aeration and scarification as required.

All major repair and maintenance work (i.e. leveling, re-turfing, size and shade) will be carried out during the winter months.

Tees will be maintained as for green approaches. In addition, divot repairs will be completed on a weekly basis to those tees taking heavy damage, i.e. those to par 3 holes, every other week for the remainder. Tees are verti-drained with 25mm tines in autumn/winter. Consideration should be given to applying growth regulators to reduce mowing frequencies. A zero-tolerance approach will be maintained with regard to weed contamination on tees excluding the 7th 9th tees as they sit in sssi land

ROUGH

Routine maintenance of the rough in the main golfing season will comprise:

- Mowing to a mean height of approximately 70mm using the Lastec rough cutter. (Note this machine is a horizontal rotary mower which will not closely follow local undulations in the ground and therefore will give rise to some variation in the height of cut).

Routine maintenance of the semi-rough in the main golfing season will comprise:

- Mowing to a height of approximately 25 mm using the cylinder machine. (This machine is equipped with mowers which will more closely follow local undulations).

Generally, the width of the first cut in the summer will be 2 cuts wide around the fairway, green surround on all Par 4s and 5s, and for Par3s, 3 cuts around the green surround only.

Deeper rough vegetation is mainly confined to the perimeter of the course and will be managed with regard to any environmental management plans.

BUNKERS

The bunker sand will have the majority of s particles in the 0.125 to 1 mm range, having a light tan colour to provide for good definition and contrast.(bunker sand is delivered bleached, so there is a time element to achieve consistent coloring)

The objective is to keep the bunkers in play and to the required standard throughout the main golfing season and for certain competitions in winter.

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.
- The depth and consistency of sand in the bunkers shall be maintained as per S.T.R.I. standards.
- Regular raking on the morning of all competitions and other events 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 there will be little day-to-day maintenance but work to certain bunkers to improve drainage or to relieve sand compaction will be undertaken.

TREE AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

A tree planting / removal programme will be prepared. 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 projects.

WEED AND PEST CONTROL

Dressings, 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 and our Health & Safety Policy

STAFF

Pike Hills 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 we would expect to employ six fully trained green keepers. The Deputy Greenkeeper to be fully trained to the same level as the Head Greenkeeper, so that there is not a drop in level of expertise should the Head Greenkeeper be away for any length of time.

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 members of the greenkeeping staff.

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

All staff are fully trained and competent to use all the equipment that they may be asked to use and Pike Hills' Health and Safety Officer is responsible for all training certificates which are kept in file in the Club Office.

MACHINERY AND STORAGE FACILITIES

The existing facilities are located in the middle of the course adjacent to the driving range:

- The green shed is a wood constructed building (alarmed) which houses most of the club's machinery together with workshop area and Bernhard dual action grinders.
- Vehicle wash down area.
- Chemical and fertilizer container stores.
- Concrete based storage areas for top dressings, bunker sand etc.
- The irrigation pump and computer control system is located in the greens/tractor shed.
- All facilities and equipment shall be maintained to a clean and tidy condition.

Provision of the necessary machinery and equipment is essential to achieving the policies set out in this document. The Clubs intent is for a five-year rolling programme for machinery renewal and sets out to eliminate any old or unreliable equipment, though there will be flexibility within this structure to delay or bring forward purchases as the need arises.

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 using the Bernhard grinding machine can be conducted by any member of staff who has been fully trained by Bernhard personnel.

All machines are to be well cared for by the staff, following the maintenance procedures 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; and any servicing and repairs is approved by Pike Hills' Heath and Safety Officer.

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; and any hazardous work, that golfers should be aware of, is on the noticeboard on the 1st tee.

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 must be completed before a certain time each day and within certain timescales during the year. Moreover, there are times when play on the course must 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 always have priority on the course.

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 Course Committee and 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.

There is a five-year plan.

IRRIGATION

The objective is to use as little water as possible whilst recognizing that during periods of low or no rainfall it may be necessary to irrigate greens and/or tees to sustain grass growth.

The irrigation system was installed in 1983, with improvements carried out regularly. The system provides water to all greens and tees and approaches, The system is tested weekly throughout the main playing season. It is drained down in late autumn to avoid frost damage and recharged in the spring when all elements are fully tested and any faulty components repaired or replaced. The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for deciding when to use the irrigation system.

Members should note that the irrigation system is only used to sustain growth which encourages the deeper rooted fine bent and fescue grasses whilst discouraging the poa annua. It will not be used to soften greens or to make them *greener* since these practices only encourage disease and do nothing to promote healthy growth.

DRAINS AND DRAINAGE DITCHES

The objective is to maintain these vital means of removing rainwater from the course in as effective a manner as possible.

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 will include:

- Cleaning out all open ditches 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.

MATERIALS

Only recommended materials, as suggested by suppliers, will be purchased for use on the golf course. Quality will not be sacrificed. Laboratory analysis will be undertaken as deemed necessary to ensure the provision of quality products appropriate to the requirements of the course.

WELFARE

A good standard of working and rest facilities will be provided for the staff, machinery and materials in accordance with our Health & Safety policy. Suitable clothing is provided for working in inclement weather.

COURSE USAGE

COURSE CLOSURE

The course may be closed on the authority of the Head Greenkeeper or the Course Chair, when weather conditions are such that damage to the course would result if play were permitted or if play itself could be dangerous. Such conditions would exist if the greens were waterlogged, if the course was flooded and during severe frost or snow or if there was fog.

A decision to re-open the course may be taken at any time after an inspection by an authorized person, who will ensure that it is safe to resume play.

During a competition, play may be suspended or abandoned by the Golf Committee if conditions become unsuitable for play. This would not automatically close the course unless one of those people set out above is present and considers that to be the appropriate course of action.

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

WINTER GOLF

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 or his designated representative will be the sole arbiter in this decision. 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.

Preferred lies will be brought into operation as appropriate from October to the end of April.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Measures to control traffic movement round the course will be taken throughout the year as deemed necessary, which members must observe at all times. Only wide-wheeled trolleys may be taken onto the course.

COMPETITIONS

In the event of severe weather conditions leading to doubt over the playability of the course for the duration of a Competition, the Golf Committee 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 Golf Committee in agreement with the Course Committee prior to posting on noticeboards.

SOFT SPIKES

The use of soft spikes is to be encouraged through the summer months. Safety issues suggest that soft spikes should be used at the golfers' own risk over the winter and the Club will issue a statement to that effect to be placed on the notice board at the appropriate time. Warning signs to encourage safe passage round the course when wearing soft spikes will also be placed at relevant points on the course.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

A rolling 5-year business plan for course development 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.

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

AGRONOMY

The Golf Club will provide, for as long as is considered necessary, for an annual monitoring visit from an experienced professional, independent agronomist. The agronomist will be given a remit to advise on course maintenance and development issues, including any resource issue which impinges on these.

COURSE ARCHITECT

Any major alteration or addition to the golf course proposed within the course development plan will be presented to a professional golf course architect for their comments before being undertaken. The architect will be expected to advise on such matters, taking account of the traditional design of the course.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Environmental management programmes are to be agreed and implemented after consultation with a recognised Ecologist who is sympathetic to the needs of golfers.

TREE MANAGEMENT

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.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for ensuring that the management of the course is carried out in accordance with due regard to the Club's Health and Safety Policy at all times and that all personnel working on the course are familiar with this policy & fully trained for the work they undertake. Risk Assessments are undertaken in consultation with the Health and Safety Officer.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any complaints relating to the condition of the course or behaviour of employees must be made in writing to the Chairman of Course and not directly with the green staff. The Greenstaff or members of the Course Committee should not be subjected to verbal complaints.

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 updated 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 Head of Course.

On course notices will be used where appropriate.