



Course Policy Document

April 2024

PENRITH GOLF CLUB

GOLF COURSE POLICY DOCUMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Document

This document sets out details for the management of the golf course at Penrith Golf Club and has been approved by the Club Council, and for the benefit of all members it will be posted on the club website as well as the noticeboards in the Clubhouse.

The policy will be followed, and any “major” changes will not be introduced without full consultation with the Club Council. Major changes will include, course design changes, tree felling (except conifers), removal or construction of bunkers and restyling/reconstruction of greens/teeing grounds.

This document will be reviewed on a biannual basis.

1.2 History of the Club

Penrith Golf Club was founded in May 1890, on the site of the former Penrith Racecourse. The Inglewood Golf Club, as it was originally known, employed a professional for a period of only two weeks to “put the course in order” and it also employed a secretary, who was authorised to purchase a lawnmower, hole-cutter and spade.

The course was initially laid out by several local people, but it was not until 1920, that renowned golf course architect Dr Mackenzie was engaged to provide advice on laying out the course again after the First World War. He commented that “it is unusual to come across such good golfing ground as that in the occupation of the Penrith Golf Club.”

Up until the 1950/60s the course was predominately of a moorland and heathland nature, but thereafter a considerable number of trees of varying species were planted, which gives the course its current characteristics.

The course is approximately 6200yds off the blue tees, and the standard scratch from these tees is 71.

The course and environs extend to approximately 70 acres, and the terrain is fairly flat except for the 11th and 12th holes.

The geology of the ground ranges from sand, gravel and clay to sandstone bedrock and exposed areas of rock.

The greens are earth pop-up type in construction, and are populated by bent grasses in particular, with annual meadow grass in the minority.

The climate in the vicinity of the course is typical Lakeland in nature, with above average rainfall.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 The Course Committee

The Course Committee is responsible for the management of the golf course, including finance, machinery and personnel; the Course Committee will meet regularly and not less frequently than once every eight weeks; and it will prepare for approval of the Club Council a schedule of course improvements planned for the period 2024 to 2026.

The Head Greenkeeper will attend each Course Committee meeting and will provide professional advice to the Course Committee. In particular, he will give a detailed report of the work done by his staff in the preceding month and present his proposals of work scheduled for the following month(s).

The Course Chairman will be responsible for the management control of the greenkeeping staff and will monitor agreed policies and ensure that correct management practices are followed. He/she will also be responsible for discipline within the greenkeeping team and will follow the procedures laid out in the relevant employment related documents.

The Course Chairman, along with the Head Greenkeeper, will monitor the allocated budget, in association with the Club Finance Manager, to ensure that expenditure remains within the agreed budget.

The Head Greenkeeper and the Course Committee will be responsible for the implementation of this policy in all its aspects - i.e. preparing work schedules; maintaining machinery; planning and long-term budgeting; maintaining schedules and records; allocation of daily tasks; adhering to Club's health and safety policy; application of fertilisers and chemicals and their safe storage and conservation.

The Head Greenkeeper will liaise with the Course Chairman on any areas of concern which he has.

The Course Chairman will present a Golf Course report at each meeting of the Club Council, and

2.2 Members, their guests and Visitors

All persons utilising the facilities at the Golf Club shall accept responsibility to take every possible care of the course and attendant facilities. They shall always, adhere to the etiquette according to the Rules of Golf, such as repairing divot and pitch marks, and raking bunkers. They shall also be alert to the position of greens staff when they are about to play, to ensure that they do not endanger them.

3. RESOURCES

3.1 Staff:

The agreed staff level is -

1 Course Manager.

1 Deputy Course Manager.

2 Greenkeepers.

1 Apprentice

Greenkeeper.

Total staff – 5

Greenkeeping staff will work a 45-hour week, 6 am to 3 pm. from 1st April to 30th September, and a 35-hour week, 7 am to 2 pm from 1st October to 31st March. Each member of staff will be entitled to 21 days' annual holiday, plus recognised Public Holidays. Not less than 10 days holiday will be taken between 1st October and 31st March.

There is a commitment to training and education of greenkeeping staff who are all encouraged to obtain qualifications in Greenkeeping to the maximum of their individual abilities. Staff are also encouraged to become members of B.I.G.G.A. (All memberships to be paid for by Penrith Golf Club) and to attend discussion groups and seminars organised by that Association. Members of the greenkeeping staff will be encouraged to obtain further qualifications necessary to enhance their progress within the greenkeeping staff structure.

3.2 Financial

The Club Council is committed to the allocation of sufficient funds to achieve the policies set out in this document.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 General

The objectives for 2024/26 are that the golf course should further improve to become recognised as one of the best maintained and enjoyable golf courses in Cumbria, and that this standard will be maintained for most of the year. It is accepted that the same high standard cannot be maintained during the winter months.

The golf course is to be maintained in excellent condition for the enjoyment of members of all handicaps, their guests and visitors.

4.2 Greens should -

- Be true, firm and dry.
- Be consistent within and between surfaces.
- Deliver the effects of spin on well struck shots.
- Provide an acceptable and sustainable speed.
- Be available for play for as much of the year as possible.
- Be of a tidy appearance.

4.3 Fairways should –

- Be firm and dry, having adequate drainage to shed surface water.
- Provide freedom of swing (i.e. eliminate sharp contouring and overhanging branches etc)
- Provide consistently acceptable lies.
- Provide a surface where the ball sits on top of the turf.
- Be cut to a height between 13 – 17mm subject to ground conditions.

4.4 Tees should –

- Be level, firm and dry.
- Have adequate recovery capacity (i.e. be of sufficient size to retain this characteristic).
- Be of sufficient elevation to provide view and definition.
- Be fairly aligned.

4.5 Bunkers should –

- Contain dry, clean and firm sand.
- Be filled to a maximum of 100mm of sand in the middle section and 50mm around the edges.
- On a daily basis in summer months be consistently maintained throughout the course.
- Facilitate the fair presentation of the ball.
- Facilitate a fair stance for the golfer.
- Be shaped and raked to keep balls away from the bunker edge.
- Be well presented and defined, containing a proprietary bunker liner.

4.6 Semi-rough – will be cut at a height of 25mm and be two semi-rough machine cuts wide.

4.7 Rough – The rough will be cut to a uniform height of 50mm throughout the course.

4.8 Woodland

Trees shall be harvested from time to time, to ensure a healthy stock, and will be thinned appropriately to allow safe passage of the rough-cutter machine. Any trees felled, will have the stumps removed by a fit for purpose machine, and the resulting disturbed ground re-instated properly. In addition, any tree within 5 meters of a course drainage pipe should be removed and the stump treated as detailed above.

5. TIMING OF WORK ON THE COURSE

5.1 Planned work

It will be the aim of the Head Greenkeeper, in regular discussions with the Course Committee, to plan work well in advance so that it is done with the minimum of disruption to the golf programme, and members will be advised of any unavoidable disruption. Should maintenance work require to be carried out on the course during playing times, the Head Greenkeeper shall ensure that the safety of staff is always maintained, and should it be necessary, for example, to temporarily close a green for remedial works, then a temporary green shall be brought into play until this work is completed. A “maintenance week” will be allocated in March/April, and a further week in August/September to allow for major renovation and remedial works to be carried out.

6. THE COURSE

6.1 Tees

The maintenance and improvement of tees has high priority. Cutting will be to a height no lower than 10mm, and tining, scarifying and fertilising are all practiced on a programmed basis. The use of grass tees will operate throughout the main playing season and as far as possible into the winter period. Nevertheless, temporary winter tees will be used wherever they are needed to prevent unacceptable damage to the permanent tees.

Tees will be dressed with lawn sand in spring, will be aerated on a regular basis throughout the year and will be treated with organic fertiliser as required.

6.2 Fairways

Fairways will be cut to a height between 13 – 17mm. They will also be deep tined and scarified to improve the quality of the grass and reduce the amount of thatch below the surface. Consideration will be given to selective top dressing on a worst first basis, subject to funds being available within the course budget.

6.3 Semi Rough and Green Surrounds

Two widths of the semi-rough cutter will be cut at a height of 25mm.

6.4 Collars, Approaches and Temporary Greens

Collars will be cut to a single height of no less than 8mm. Special care and attention will be given to the creation and improvement of aprons which will be verti-drained, when possible, slit tined, scarified and fertilised on a regular basis.

6.5 Rough

The rough will be cut to a uniform height of 50mm.

6.6 Greens

The composition of grasses on the greens is a mix of predominantly bent, with some annual meadow grass.

The long-term objective is to reduce the level of annual meadow grass gradually, and slowly introduce and encourage bent grasses to dominate. This policy cannot be introduced quickly whilst still maintaining greens in a consistent good state for play. However, the long-term objective can be achieved by a continuous programme of aeration to create conditions for the healthy bacterial activity to break down the thatch into compost and to encourage the deeper rooting species of grasses.

We will continue to progress a regime aimed at getting the soil biology correct, and to this end, will look to continue using a process of sustainable cultural practices to encourage healthy soil biology and bacteria.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper and depends on his reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming competitions, the state of the soil etc. During spells of good growing weather, the normal height of cut is 3.5 - 5mm, and up to 7mm during winter months.

Greens will be cut, rolled, switched or brushed daily unless inclement weather determines otherwise, groomed and verti-cut throughout the summer. Solid tines will be used to encourage moisture penetration, aid aeration and encourage deeper rooting grasses.

Holes will be changed as determined by the Head Greenkeeper, but at intervals as agreed with the Course Committee.

A policy of minimum irrigation is being followed and any dry patches which develop will be treated with wetting agents and more intensive use of solid tining.

The autumn and winter treatment of greens includes hollow tining, deep tining, verti-draining, slit tining and scarifying.

In order to produce greens that can be utilised as 'winter greens', where there is an apron, a specific area of this apron will be tended to produce as good a surface as possible for use when summer greens are declared unplayable. It shall be de-lined by a white line and shall also be deemed ground under repair from 1st November until 1st April (a local rule shall be introduced to cover this issue); shall be cut and rolled as required; and provide a surface as close as possible to the summer greens.

6.7 Fertilisation

The policy is to use as little NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorus & Potassium) fertilizer as possible to keep thatch accumulation to a minimum, whilst still applying enough to keep the turf healthy, provide sufficient growth for the turf to be able to recover from heavy traffic and be strong enough to fight off disease. Applications will always be as and when required, depending on sward health and weather conditions as determined by the Head Greenkeeper.

6.8 Top dressing

Heavier top dressings will be applied to greens in Spring and Autumn following verti-draining or hollow tining and lighter dressings will be applied during the remainder of the year when possible. Dressing 2 sand from Whitemoss is used and it has excellent water percolation properties, so we will continue to use this product to avoid a break in the profile.

6.9 Drainage and ditches

All surface water outfall drainage systems will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure satisfactory discharge.

Drainage on the main fairways will be monitored, and proposals for the provision of additional drainage required will be made as and when appropriate.

The main greens currently requiring further drainage are the 4th and 6th greens and these will be prioritised as and when finance is available within the course budget. Additional drainage on these greens will be connected into existing outfalls.

6.10 Temporary greens

It is intended that the agreed programme of work for the greens will make the use of temporary greens less frequent. Nevertheless, temporary greens will need to be brought into use from time to time.

An intensive programme of work is to be implemented to develop aprons to greens for use as 'frost' greens when necessary. Where aprons cannot be developed, an area for a 'frost' green will be identified and improved to ensure an acceptable putting surface. (Specifically, the 10th 11th and 14th holes)

It will be the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper or, in his absence, the Deputy Head Greenkeeper on duty, to decide on a day-to-day basis the need for temporary greens to be brought into use.

Permanent greens will be used except when play would cause unacceptable damage to those greens.

6.11 Bunkers

Bunkers will be raked by greenkeeping staff as required and at intervals agreed by the Course Committee, this will include raking on the morning of all "special events".

All bunkers will be examined regularly for water retention and the drains kept clear.

A rake will be provided for each bunker and all players will be expected to rake their pitch marks and footmarks. The rake will be replaced inside the bunker in accordance with E.G.U. recommendations.

6.12 Water Hazards

These will be maintained in accordance with advice from English Nature. Water levels will be maintained and hazards marked in accordance with E.G.U. Rules.

6.13 Boundary Walls & Fencing

Boundary walls and fencing will be inspected on a regular basis, initially by the Head Greenkeeper and any essential repair work brought to the attention of Course Chairman for remedial action, by appropriately competent contractors or if the skill is available in-house, by volunteers or greenkeeping staff.

Whilst some sections of boundary walls need minor repairs, and respective costings are included within the annual course budget, the fact should not be overlooked that major repairs of some sections of our boundary may need to be carried out in the not-too-distant future.

6.14 Pathways

Head Greenkeeper will ensure that all pathways are correctly maintained.

Paths should be edged so that they maintain a tidy appearance and don't become too narrow, and paths will be topped up with suitable path material as required. After new material has been added to paths it must be consolidated using an appropriate mechanical compactor.

6.15 Products/Substances used on the course

It is our aim to become much more environmentally sustainable and this will be done by reducing the amount of chemicals used on our playing surfaces, with the overall aim of developing finer turf grasses by producing healthier living soil throughout the course.

To achieve this, we aim to reduce the application of: -

Fungicides

Sulphate of

iron Irrigation

water

In addition, we intend to increase the application of:

Seaweeds & Other Bio stimulants

Wetting agents

Chelated iron

Organic fertilizer

The amount of aeration work that we complete on the course will also be increased significantly.

This sustainable approach will deliver a healthier, freer draining root zone, populated by finer grasses, which are less susceptible to disease, and produce a much smoother putting surface, at a sensible mowing height.

6.16 Major work on course

Should any major work be proposed on the course, this shall be agreed by the Course Committee, in consultation with members of the Club Council.

Major works will include: -

Removal of trees that will cause a lasting impact on the course.

Removal of bunkers

Addition of bunkers

Re-definition of fairways, greens or aprons

Re-definition of the course boundary

Any other major change as agreed by the Course Committee

7. CLOSING THE COURSE

7.1 Course closure

The course may be closed on the authority of the Head Greenkeeper or, in his absence, the Deputy Head Greenkeeper on duty, when weather conditions demand and damage to the course would result if play were permitted. Such conditions would exist if the greens were waterlogged; if the course was flooded or affected by severe frost or snow.

The Professional/Club Shop Staff, Course Chairman and Golf Chairman will be informed if a course closure affects a Club Competition. In the event of the need to use temporary greens during a Ladies' or Gentlemen's Competition the appropriate Competition Secretary or their nominated representative will be informed prior to the commencement of the competition.

If it is considered that the course has become unsuitable or dangerous for play, then the course may be closed by the Head Greenkeeper or the Deputy on duty at the time. In the absence of the Head Greenkeeper or their Deputy the Course Chairman or the Club Professional/Club Shop Staff are authorized to make such a decision.

Notice of a decision to close the course and time of next inspection will be recorded on the Greenkeeper's answerphone and the Club website, in periods of extreme weather conditions the decision may be taken to close the course for a number of consecutive days.

The re-opening of the course can be the decision of the Head Greenkeeper, Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Club Professional/Club Shop Staff or Chairman of the Course Committee only.

8. GREENS STAFF AND MEMBERS

8.1 Work on the course

The Greens staff will be vigilant and ensure that they do not delay play unreasonably. Nevertheless, Greens staff must be able to get through their work, and all players are therefore asked to give consideration to them by not stopping their work unreasonably, particularly at the beginning of the day, and to realise that it is in their own interest to do so. A code of practice has been established to cover the subject and published on the noticeboard. It should be noted that Greens staff have absolute priority on the course, for the completion of their duties, and Members and visitors must respect this decision.

8.2 Complaints

Members and visitors may not complain about the conduct of a member of staff nor about the state of the course to any member of the Greens Staff. Any complaint must be made to the Course Chairman, in

writing, who will investigate the matter, together with the Head Greenkeeper. If they cannot deal with the complaint themselves, the matter will be submitted to the Club Council.

8.3 Works during Club Competitions

Greens staff will refrain from any work which will change the state of the course during an official Club Competition.

9. MACHINERY

9.1 Replacement policy

The Head Greenkeeper will produce a 5-year rolling plan of machinery replacements, additions, repairs and renewals for consideration, amendment and approval by the Course Committee and ultimately the Club Council for incorporation into the Club's financial plan. The Head Greenkeeper has responsibility to keep himself up to date with developments in golf course machinery and to bring his recommendations to the notice of the Course Committee

The Head Greenkeeper is also responsible for the maintenance of all machinery - keeping records of use, routine maintenance and major servicing, etc. He/she will recognise the heavy investment which has been made and ensure that all machinery is used with care.

The Head Greenkeeper will undertake a machinery audit on a regular basis, to appraise the condition of the machinery and make the Course Committee/Club Council aware of any impending financial implications for machinery replacement.

10. IRRIGATION

10.1 Water usage

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible to encourage deeper rooting grasses. However, in almost every season there are times when rainfall is insufficient to sustain grass growth and needs to be supplemented. Water is also needed on demand to wash in fertilisers and other treatments.

Therefore, a guaranteed water source is essential for the maintenance of a golf course. The Head Greenkeeper shall ensure that the bore-hole pump is serviced at regular intervals of not exceeding 5 years.

10.2 Water Supply

Extraction is with the consent of the Environment Agency and sufficient supply is assured even in periods of drought, and the license will continue to be updated as required.

10.3 The System

The Irrigation system is pressurised in March/April when the danger of frost is past and is drained down in October/November or before the first frost. Each Green and Tee is controlled by a computerised programmer in the Greenkeeper's Hogust. The programme is designed to bring sprinklers into use in a pre-determined order.

11. FINANCIAL CONTROL

11.1 Long-term budgeting

In May each year the Head Greenkeeper will produce for the Course Committee a list of machinery, showing performance and notes on any problems which have shown up during the year. This will lead to a definitive spending budget for the next financial year for replacements and repairs which should be in line with the 5-year rolling budgets.

Additionally, the Head Greenkeeper will produce a budget for the purchase of fertilisers, chemicals, fuels and dressings for the following year.

In August each year the Course Chairman will prepare and submit to the Club Council for approval a budget for the year commencing in October. A quarterly review of actual expenditure, compared with the budget, will be made and the Head Greenkeeper asked to explain any significant differences.

All Individual items of capital expenditure of a value of or in excess of £6,000 (including VAT) which are proposed to be included in any budget shall, prior to such inclusion, be approved by the Club Council and shall also be approved by the Club Council immediately prior to contracting for such expenditure.

All contracts for purchases are the responsibility of the Course Committee and shall be negotiated and authorised by the Course Committee, or other persons specifically authorised on its behalf by the Course Chairman, such authorisation (and the extent thereof) being notified to the Club Council.

All purchases of capital equipment, supplies and services in excess of a value of £6,000 (including VAT) shall require, where practicable, tender by at least 2 suppliers.

The Course Committee and the Club Finance Manager, in consultation with an independent auditor shall affect and maintain a full inventory of all machinery and Stock with a valuation thereof on 30th September each year.

In consultation with the Head Greenkeeper and the Club Finance Manager, an independent auditor will maintain a system of stock control, valuation and reports to monitor the delivery, use and disposal of all Equipment, Machinery and stock by the Head Greenkeeper so as to avoid loss. This information shall be presented to the Course Committee for consideration, before any machinery is disposed of.

All accounts for payment shall be authorised in writing by the Course Chairman or such member of the Course Committee as he/she may appoint save that, in respect of items not exceeding £500 in value, such authorisation may be delegated by the Course Chairman to any other officer of the club.

12. CONSERVATION

12.1 Tree preservation

With an abundance of mature woodland on the course, it is important to have a policy to preserve trees and to protect the habitat of birds, animals and flora on the course. However, it is recognized that our woodland must be properly maintained, and any diseased trees must be pruned or felled.

Trees, hedges and shrubs which affect the course, particularly those that overhang tees or greens and prevent the growth of grass, may require to be pruned, and on some occasions felling may be necessary. In addition, felling may be required in certain areas in order to give 3m wide access to the rough-cutting machinery.

Any tree felling work will be carried out under the control of the Head Greenkeeper who will engage a tree surgeon when necessary, or utilise the skills of appropriately qualified members of staff, and ensure that any tree preservation orders are respected.

It will be the Head Greenkeepers responsibility to ensure that all tree felling or pruning works are carried out in a safe manner having taken due regard of all Health & Safety requirements and regulations which will include ensuring that all personnel involved have current and appropriate safety qualifications.

Tree planting/removal will take place where and when necessary, with professional advice being obtained if required.

To reduce environmental impact, where the removal of a tree(s) is considered necessary, the Course Committee will make best efforts to plant a replacement tree(s) of a suitable species at an appropriate position within the confines of the Club's landholding.

Certain animals such as grey squirrels, rabbits and moles can cause damage to the course, and it is the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper to keep this problem under control.

13. PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

13.1 Expert knowledge

Notwithstanding the complete confidence the Club Council has in the competence and technical knowledge of the Head Greenkeeper, it is the Club's policy where it thinks appropriate, to seek expert opinion as and when necessary. Such advice may be sought from external specialists such as the STRI (Sports Turf Research Institute), or from any Club Member who holds any relevant expertise.

Any such advice received shall be considered by the Course Committee and Club Council, and where considered appropriate, the advice obtained will be incorporated into the Club's future strategy for the course.

No alteration to the architecture of the course may be undertaken without the approval of the Club Council Committee.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

14.1 Policy

The Course Committee and all Greenkeeping staff are to ensure that they are familiar with and comply with the Club's current Health and Safety Policy Statement. The H&S policy document is held in the Club Administration Office. The Head Greenkeeper must ensure day-to-day compliance by all staff, of all relevant legislation in relation to Machinery, Pesticides, Workplace regulations, construction work and any other pertinent work tasks.

14.2 Risk assessment production

Risk assessments shall be produced for all tasks that pose a risk to the workforce and these shall be assessed and updated on an annual basis.

15. Training

15.1 Training budget

An adequate training budget shall be put in place to ensure that Continuous Professional Development opportunities are available to all Greenkeeping staff. This will assist in the continual improvement of the course and will enable all staff to upgrade and update their knowledge base.

16. Environmental Policy

16.1 Maintenance and preservation policy

Penrith Golf Club is committed to the maintenance and preservation of the golf course for future generations in a sustainable and environmentally- friendly manner.

The Club Council endorses the adoption of environmentally friendly practices throughout the course and Clubhouse.

Additionally, the Club Council realise the importance of such practices not only locally, but nationally and globally. These practices include waste minimisation and recycling, energy efficiency, minimal use of chemicals, water resource management, nature and landscape conservation.

In order to promote good environmental practices, our Policy with regard to the environment is as follows:

- a) To identify the significant environmental impacts of our activities and to develop suitable objectives, targets and management programmes, applying appropriate operational procedures to minimise our environmental impact.
- b) To comply with relevant legislation, regulation and other requirements relating to our environmental impact and to improve employees' understanding and commitment to environment practices through structured communications and training in a safe working environment.

- c) To prevent pollution, minimise our inputs of utilities and resources and the outputs of emissions to the atmosphere, effluents to waters/sewers and wastes to disposal facilities, endeavouring to re-use, recover or recycle materials where practicable.
- d) To develop and maintain constructive relationships with relevant environmental organisations to ensure good communications and sourcing of best advice.
- e) To introduce sustainable operating procedures and practices to minimise Penrith Golf Club's overall impact on the environment.
- f) To strive for continual improvement in overall environmental performance.

17. Communication

17.1 Updates

Every effort will be made to communicate with Members and Visitors, relating to course management, which has a direct bearing on course condition.

Such methods of communication may include Newsletters and other forms of communications. In addition, the Club website will be utilised to ensure that as many people as possible receive the appropriate information regarding the course.

Members will be updated where appropriate regarding progress made in relation to the Course Policy Document, and Members will be encouraged to make constructive suggestions and comments about the course, in writing, to the Course Chairman or Club Council.

On course notices will be used sparingly, and where relevant, but will be kept to a minimum for aesthetic reasons.

Updated – April 2024. Gavin Oliver – Course Chairman.

Approved by PGC Club Council – 29th April 2024