



SOUTHWOLD GOLF CLUB

ESTABLISHED 1884

Golf Course Policy Document

May 2019

COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

The course at Southwold has for over a century, occupied classic heathland terrain which displays many of the characteristics for which traditional British golf is known. The purpose of this document is to define a coherent, long term policy that will provide unity and direction and ensure that the course's potential will be realised to the full now and in the future. In addition it will provide a reference point from which new committee members may understand the work of their predecessors, and members understand the aims and decisions of the Golf Group.

2. Objectives:

1. To preserve and sympathetically evolve the course.
2. To present the course consistently to a standard appropriate to its original and natural style.
3. To encourage the growth of indigenous grasses (fescues and bents) throughout the course and discourage, wherever possible, the infiltration of broad-leaf species.
4. To manage and preserve all heathland species, such as gorse and heather where they enhance the appearance and play of the course and to discourage the growth of plants, shrubs and unwanted trees that are not natural to the terrain.

3. Roles and responsibilities:

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for providing a Business Plan which shall enable the Golf Group appropriate resources to fulfil the objectives set out within this document.

The Golf Group

The Golf Group shall be responsible to the executive Committee for the development and management of the course playing areas and its immediate surroundings.

The General Manager

The General Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that the Head Greenkeeper carries out his duties in accordance with the decisions of the Golf Group. He will liaise with the Head Greenkeeper and Professional to ensure that the annual programme and five year plan are practicable and appropriate. He will deal with any concerns of the members about the course and where appropriate discuss these with the Head Greenkeeper or Golf Group.

The Head Greenkeeper

The Head Greenkeeper should strive to keep the course in good condition at all times. He is responsible for the detail and execution of course management within the guidelines of the course management policy. He is expected to plan work in outline at least three months in advance and to prepare programmes of work. He is to monitor these programmes and report progress to the Manager as necessary. He is to take note of Club fixtures and competitions when planning his work programmes. He is to discuss any problems over staff, machinery or budget with the Manager. He is authorised and encouraged to seek advice and assistance from other Clubs. He will prepare the estimates for labour, materials, repairs, improvements and capital equipment and submit this to the Golf Group for approval. He will control costs within the authorised amount.

The Head Greenkeeper is also responsible for:

- (i) Allocating daily Green Staff duties and checking the standards of work:
- (ii) Undertaking and recording annual Green Staff appraisals
- (iii) Identifying and delivering staff training requirements and organising and recording such training:
- (iv) Maintaining records of staff attendance and discipline in conjunction with the Manager:
- (v) Maintaining the machinery as per manufacturers' instructions, either through contract or by green staff:
- (vi) Recommending replacement and new machinery to meet objectives and standards within the five year plan.
- (vii) Maintaining and updating the irrigation system.

4. Course Management Practices

a. Greens surrounds and approaches.

The management of the greens is intended to produce true, firm putting surfaces all year round. This will be achieved by promoting bents and fescues at the expense of *poa annua* (annual meadow grass). This will require a regime of minimum fertilising and watering together with deep aeration to encourage these deeper rooting grasses.

In general:

(i) Greens will normally be cut not less than five mornings a week before play during the growing season and on the mornings of major matches and competitions. Out of the growing season the cutting regime must balance the need to keep the course in the best possible playing condition with the need to preserve the grasses from the privations of the winter weather. Cutters will be set at between 6mm in winter and at 4mm in the growing season at the discretion of the Head Greenkeeper.

(ii) Verticutting and grooming will be carried out as required and irrigation as conditions dictate. The minimum irrigation will necessitate watering dry spots by hand and applying wetting agents as required and as per manufacturer's instructions. Top dressing will be applied throughout the growing season as recommended by the Agronomist. Top dressing from the same supplier and to the same specification must be used. This should not be changed without very careful consideration and the approval of the

Agronomist. Overseeding will be carried out as necessary to increase the proportion of high quality fescues and bent . Fertiliser will be applied in the growing season as growth dictates, but no later than the end of August.

(iii) Holes on the greens will be moved at least once a week in the growing season including prior to major competitions and matches. Usually this will be on Tuesdays and Fridays. Pin positions will be in accordance with the attached guidelines.

(iv) Surrounds and approaches will receive a similar level of attention as the greens, but be cut less frequently and to the appropriate height.

b. Tees

The objective is to achieve a uniform, firm, level and fully grassed surface to withstand the demands of regular play throughout the year. At appropriate times the tees will be scarified, divoted, fertilised and treated for weed control. An appropriate regime of aeration will be established to maintain surface firmness to all tees. Divots will be repaired regularly. Tee markers will be moved regularly to prevent undue wear at any point. Tees may be expanded to a sufficient size to eliminate the need for winter tees, but any expansion should be handled sympathetically with regard to the character of the original design.

c. Fairways

The fairways will be cut regularly to an agreed height throughout the growing season. They will be vertidraind, scarified and the weeds treated as necessary to improve the quality of the turf. Divots, rabbit scrapes and other damage shall be repaired on a regular basis.

d. Bunkers

(i) Bunkers will be raked most days and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Uniform levels of sand will be maintained, using sand to an agreed specification and the bunkers will be kept free of weeds and large stones.

(ii) Banks and surrounds will be maintained in good order and rakes provided in each bunker.

(iii) Rakes should be left in bunkers where they are not only in a safe position and are convenient for players to use but have the least chance of interfering with a ball in motion.

e. Semi-rough and rough

The semi-rough shall be cut regularly to a height of around 75mm. Other areas of rough that come into play shall be cut if the sward becomes too dense or dominated by coarse grass. Other areas may be left in their natural state. Appropriate action is to be taken to kill weeds in the semi-rough. Any alterations to the definition between fairways, semi-rough and rough will be decided by the Golf group.

f. Gorse, Brambles and Bracken

A programme of gorse management will be put in place. Whilst gorse is an essential part of golf on the course its further encroachment should be stopped. Monitoring gorse spread will be done with the aid of techniques such as aerial photography. Gorse shall be controlled or if necessary encouraged with particular regard not only to the policy objectives but with an awareness of the need to secure the safety of all persons on the golf course. Due consideration must be given to the need to ensure the course presents a challenging but fair test to the low handicap golfer, while being an enjoyable experience for the ordinary club golfer.

Brambles, bracken and their spread will be monitored in the same way as gorse and a programme of management followed having regard to the policy objectives. As far as possible brambles and bracken will be kept away from normal playing areas.

g. Irrigation

The adoption of sensible watering practices is essential on all parts of the course to ensure retention of character. In line with previous objectives irrigation will be limited to that needed to promote a good playing surface consisting predominantly of the indigenous fescue and bent grasses.

h. Rabbit control

The objective is to monitor and control the rabbit population to a minimum level. All lawful measures will be considered with shooting being carried out at frequent intervals.

i. Course Closure

The course may require closing in the event of: waterlogged ground, snow, winds in excess of 40 mph. The head greenkeeper has the ultimate authority to close the course, although, where possible, this will be done after consultation with the General Manager or the Professional.

5. Golf Course Design

- a. No alterations will be made to the design of the course without very careful consideration between the golf group and a respected course architect.
- b. An alteration would include the removal, creation or substantial remodelling of bunkers, significant changes to the position or shape of greens or the position of tees.
- c. Any alteration that might change the natural style of the course should not be considered.

6. Green Staff and Members

- a. The Club will appoint a Course Manager/ Head Greenkeeper, Assistant Greenkeeper and enough staff to satisfy the requirements of this policy document. The Club will encourage and support the staff in their work towards recognised greenkeeping qualifications.
- b. Players are to ensure that it is clear for them to play without endangering green staff. Green staff will be vigilant so that they do not delay play unreasonably and will stand aside and signal when they are ready for balls to be played. However work has to be done productively and members should give consideration to the green staff by not stopping their work unreasonably, particularly early in the day. Greenkeepers have priority on the course before 8am and must be allowed to complete their duties.
- c. The Club's policy towards health and safety is laid down in the Southwold Golf Club Health and Safety Policy: Practice and Procedures.

7. Complaints

All complaints, about the condition of the course or the work of the green staff, either in person or in writing, must be made to the General Manager and not to members of the green staff. Such complaints will be considered and, where appropriate, taken up with the Course Manager or Chairman of the Golf Group and a written reply provided.

Appendix A to Southwold Golf Club Course Management Policy

CODE OF CONDUCT - MEMBERS, VISITORS AND GREEN STAFF

1. Daily Course preparation.

This includes work on Tees, Bunkers , Greens and their surrounds. It normally takes the staff 3 hours to complete these daily tasks following the most economical route.

Work starts at 6.00 a.m. in the summer and 7am in the winter

Players starting before 8.00 a.m. are asked to give priority to the green staff so that daily course preparation can be completed in the shortest possible time.

2. Notices to Members and Visitors.

The following events will be shown on notice boards:

- When chemicals are being used on the course:
- When abnormal work is in progress;
- When temporary greens are in use.

3. Players and Green Staff

Players are to ensure that it is safe to play without endangering the green staff and should not play to a green if work is in progress on that green.

Green staff will, when working on a green, stand aside when appropriate and signal when they are ready for a ball to be played to that green.

4. Complaints

Any complaint is to be made to the General Manager and not directly to any member of the green staff. The General manager will investigate the complaint with the Head Greenkeeper and refer it to the Golf Group or Executive Committee if necessary.

5. Bunker Rakes

The following guidance should be followed:-

Rakes will be placed at the back of the bunker (i.e. furthest from the green) with the head on the sand and the tines down. The handle will rest against the bunker edge with about one foot of handle length extending outside the bunker. Whenever practical the handle will be aligned with the direction of play and positioned in the center of the bunker. In large bunkers, where more than one rake is provided, they should be spaced out evenly.

Appendix B to Southwold Golf Club Course Management Policy

Hole Changing

Hole changing is one of the most important of the routine jobs on the course. It sets up the course for play and must comply with the rules of golf. The overall aim is to provide a fair and balanced test of golf that rewards a good shot and punishes a bad one. Precision and care is required to obtain good results.

Changing the hole

Always use a board and cut the hole through the board.

Once the cup has been sunk in place, put the board over the hole and stand on it to reduce chance of crowning.

Repair pitch marks and remove any weeds close to the hole.

Make sure the old hole core is level with turf and is well pressed down. If it is too high the mower will scalp it. If it is too low it will leave a depression.

The hole cup must be sunk 1" below the turf surface.

Look out for disease and pests and report them to the Head Greenkeeper.

Carry some top dressing (especially in dry weather) for filling in around drying old holes plugs.

Positioning the hole

- The hole should be positioned at least two paces from the edge of the green, particularly for all competitions.
- Take into account the design of the hole, the length of the shot to the green and the weather conditions for the coming week.
- An area 70cm to 100cm should be as nearly level as possible and the hole should not be placed within two paces of a severe slope or recently used hole position.
- If the hole must be cut on a slope, cut vertically and not with the slope.
- Make a balanced selection of hole positions with respect to left, right, central, front and back positions e.g. 3 front, 3 back and 3 middle.
- Make a balanced selection with regard to difficulty e.g. 3 difficult, 3 moderately difficult and 3 easy.
- For competitions held over several days anticipate players traffic patterns and use the walk off side of the green for early rounds if possible.

Appendix C to Southwold Golf Club Course Management Policy

IRRIGATION POLICY

General Points

Southwold Golf Club is situated in an area of low rainfall and this has been an important factor in developing the fine turf we have today.

Over use of the irrigation system would lead to a change in species composition from fine fescues and bents to broad leaved grasses. This in turn will lead to thatch formation and softer surfaces more prone to drought and compaction. Once into this downward spiral it is disruptive to get back to traditional surfaces and with each year that passes it becomes more difficult.

As a general rule water should be applied sparingly and early and late in the season irrigation should be avoided.

Greens

The basis of the good all year round condition of the greens at Southwold Golf Club is the fine leaved turf. Regular drying out of the greens is essential in preventing the invasion of the weed grass *poa annua*. During wet summers the *poa* content of the greens has the opportunity to increase, so to prevent further increase and eventual domination of the sward it is essential that any opportunities to put the *poa* under stress be taken. During the summer the greens will be dried out whenever possible and irrigation will only be applied to keep the more drought tolerant fine grasses alive.

Tees

On the tees water is applied to promote recovery from wear and germination of seed in the divot mix. Too much water would give a soft surface more prone to wear and encourage weed grasses. The policy is to keep the tees dry but not so dry that the turf is unable to recover from wear.

Fairways / Approaches

There is no system in place for irrigating fairways.