

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

LEISURE and ARTS ADVISORY BOARD

22 September 2009

**Report of the Chief Leisure Officer
and the Director of Finance**

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)

1 POULT WOOD GOLF CENTRE – GOLF SOCIETY CHARGES

Summary

This report recommends the charges for golf societies at Poulton Wood Golf Centre for implementation from 1 April 2010.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Members may be aware that the golf society charges at the Poulton Wood are considered in advance of the overall review of charges, which are reported in January. This enables promotional packages to be prepared for publication, prior to societies beginning to plan their programmes for the following year.
- 1.1.2 The golf society market has become highly competitive with courses now offering a variety of packages to large groups of golfers. The societies at Poulton Wood are co-ordinated by the Clubhouse Contractor Par 4 Catering.
- 1.1.3 In considering charges for Council facilities, Members will be aware that the Medium Term Financial Strategy seeks to optimise opportunities to increase income where this is feasible.

1.2 Current Charges

- 1.2.1 Society packages currently available at Poulton Wood are set out at **[Annex 1]**. The packages were revised last year, focused on adding value, with broader choice and a simplified menu reflecting customers' preferences. The introduction of 9-hole packages has given a greater choice to customers, and reflects demand in a changing golf market. Members will note that the green fee element within the society packages is comparable to standard green fee charges, and for most categories societies pay a small premium. A promotion introduced in 2009/10 where the organiser of the Society goes free (which is common practice at other courses) has been well received.

1.3 Usage Patterns

- 1.3.1 Society packages at Poulton Wood are promoted actively and are well presented by the Clubhouse Contractor. 1,289 society tickets were sold in the last financial year (1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009) generating net income of £21,600 to the Council. This represented a reduction on previous years. The market is now highly competitive and the number of players in societies and the number of societies continues to decline both locally and nationally. It is recognised that price and quality remain the determining factors in where societies choose to play.

1.4 Competing Facilities and Trends

- 1.5 In comparison to competitors it can be seen from [Annex 1] that charges for society packages at Poulton Wood are generally comparable. It has been the strategy at Poulton Wood over recent years to maintain the society charges in line with those of local competition to develop usage and to encourage loyalty. It is considered that this approach should be retained.

1.6 Consultation

- 1.6.1 The Clubhouse Contractor and Golf Professional have been consulted and feel that given the highly competitive market, recent decline in usage by societies, the current economic climate, and the premium already charged for this service; that no increase should be applied for 2010/11.

1.7 Proposed Charges 2010/11

- 1.7.1 Members are reminded that the green fee element of the society charges was increased last year in line with inflation. In view of declining usage levels and the need to remain competitive it is proposed that prices are not increased this year.
- 1.7.2 The following are therefore proposed:

Package	Existing Charge 2009/10 (£)	Proposed Charge 2010/11 (£)
(1) 9 hole	13.50	All prices held at 2009/10 level
(2) 9 hole	19.50	
(3) 18 hole	24.50	
(4) 18 hole	33.50	
(5) 27 hole	29.50	
(6) 27 hole	35.50	
(7) 36 hole	35.50	
(8) 36 hole	41.00	

1.8 Legal Implications

- 1.8.1 The Council's Financial Rules require that all fees and charges must be reviewed at least once a year, and be reported to the appropriate Advisory Board.

1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.9.1 These proposals are in accordance with the guidance in the Council's budget strategy.

1.10 Risk Assessment

1.10.1 The proposed charges take into account a range of factors including market conditions and customer feedback and have been brought forward within the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is felt there is a risk that if charges are increased this will have a detrimental impact on overall income from society charges.

1.11 Policy Considerations

1.11.1 Healthy Lifestyles, Young People, Community, Business Continuity/ Resilience.

1.12 Recommendation

1.12.1 It is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the golf society charges at Poulton Wood Golf Centre are held at current levels for 2010/11 for the reasons outlined in the report.

The Chief Leisure Officer confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation, if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers: Nil

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Nil

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