

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Environment Committee****21 January 2015****North Inch Golf Course Market Development****Report by Executive Director (Environment)**

The report outlines the marketing development initiatives planned for the North Inch Golf Course.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 At an Executive Sub Committee of the Environment Committee on 5 March 2014 it was agreed that the Council should continue to operate the North Inch Golf Course (Report No. 14/97).
- 1.2 The report included a marketing plan for the golf course which has actively been implemented since the appointment of the Golf Course Officer in September last year.
- 1.3 As part of the marketing plan the installation of an on-line booking system was highlighted. The booking system has been progressed with an organisation called BRS Golf. BRS Golf offers a complete management tool to control all aspects of golf tee time bookings from any source. The system will provide critical management information such as course usage, revenue and booking status. All bookings in the BRS system will also automatically build a marketing database for future use allowing the Council to send out offers and promotions on season tickets and tee-times.
- 1.4 The BRS Members booking module allows members and visitors to book tee times online through our new website for casual and/or competition tee times. This can be accessed 24 hours per day and from any location.
- 1.5 BRS Visitor Booking Module allows visiting golfers 24 hour a day access on line to book North Inch Golf Course and pay by credit/debit card online for casual tee times and/or Open competition tee times. Surveys show that in 2013, 51% of visitor tee times were booked outside of normal office hours.
- 1.6 The report also included a revised pricing schedule for Golf Course Season Tickets and Green Fees for 2014/15.
- 1.7 As part of the preparations for next season a review of the North Inch Golf Course Season Ticket and Green Fees for 2015/16 was undertaken. This work also reflects the enormous interest in golf arising from:
 - The 2014 Ryder Cup being hosted in Perthshire at the Gleneagles Hotel
 - The Junior Ryder Cup being hosted at Blairgowrie Golf Club
 - The Scottish Government's ClubGolf initiative to offer coaching to every Primary 6 pupil

- 1.8 The proposals below seek to link the increased interest in golf participation to ensuring that the municipal golf course in Perth and Kinross can support the development of golf for all ages, as part of the Ryder Cup legacy.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The pricing schedule for 2014/15 has had the effect of stabilising the North Inch Golf Course income, compared to income for 2013/14. Income in 2013/14 was £46,000, with income for 2014/15 projected to be of £48,000. However, in order to further grow the membership, visitors and income for the course it was recognised that some rates required to be amended, with some new categories added.
- 2.2 The full range of revised and new North Inch Golf Course Season Tickets and green fee options for the 2015/16 season can be seen in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 In terms of New Season Ticket Options the following categories are proposed:

Get into Golf

- 2.4 Get into Golf is a brand new initiative designed to help introduce new players to the game in a fun and welcoming environment, appealing to people who have never played golf but like the idea of giving it a go.
- 2.5 The initiative is a partnership between the Scottish Golf Union, Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association and Professional Golfers' Association. In support of this initiative, and to attract new members to the North Inch Golf Course, it is proposed to introduce a 1 year restricted usage category open to beginner golfers (18 and over), who have never previously been a member of a club.
- 2.6 As part of the package the new members will be offered a 4 week beginner's golf class free of charge and will have access to free hire clubs to play the course. These clubs will be sourced via a golf club "amnesty" undertaken at the Council's Recycling Centres where people can hand in unused golf clubs. The cost of this membership will be £99 per annum, with playing times restricted to:

- Weekends after 2pm.
- Monday – Friday 11am – 3pm & after 6pm.

Young Adult (18-29)

- 2.7 Across Scotland there are very low membership numbers in the 20-30 years age category, with the average age of a golf club member in Scotland being 55. Part of the barrier for this age category at the North Inch Golf Course is the financial burden of moving from a £20 junior season ticket to an adult season ticket costing £279.

- 2.8 It is therefore proposed to ease this financial burden by introducing a young adult season ticket for existing members in the 18-29 age range which would cost the same as our concession rate of £189.

Family Membership

- 2.9 In the report in March (Report 14/97), the family day ticket was changed to £20 for 2 Adults and up to 2 children (17yrs and under). It is proposed to further encourage families to play the North Inch Golf Course by introducing family season ticket at a cost of £500.

Pro Rata Membership Rates

- 2.10 It is also proposed to introduce pro rata member rates for those members who may join later in the season. Pro rata rates would be made available in June, July and August each year for adult, senior & concession categories. Beyond these dates it would be more advantageous for members to take up the winter free membership offer (see section 2.11-2.12).

Winter Free Membership Offer

- 2.11 For new members who join the North Inch Golf Course from 1 November onwards it is proposed that they would effectively not be paying membership fees until 1 April the following year.
- 2.12 In essence the member receives 17 months golf for the price of 12. In this situation the full fee must be paid at time of joining, with the payment scheme highlighted in paragraphs 2.18 - 2.21 not available.

New Junior Membership

- 2.13 New junior members can join the North Inch Golf Course for £20. However, to encourage further new junior members a 4 week coaching class worth £20 will be included free of charge. The new members will also be able to apply for a ClubGolf Voucher which will give £20 off their first year membership effectively making membership and coaching free in their first year.
- 2.14 ClubGolf has been established to create a development pathway from entry level through to the highest levels of achievement, enabling increased access to golf, higher participation levels, improved standards of performance, and sustained growth in the future.
- 2.15 ClubGolf was part of Scotland's successful Ryder Cup bid. At the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles in September 2014, the Scottish Government announced a funding boost of £1m over four years of ClubGolf.

Existing Junior Members

- 2.16 Although existing junior members will not be able to access the ClubGolf voucher they will be able to access the 4 week coaching class worth £20, for free.

Existing Adult and Senior Members

- 2.17 As reported at the Environment Committee in March 2014 existing Adult and Senior Members who renew season tickets for the second year will receive a price freeze for the 2015/16 season.

Fairway Credit

- 2.18 The Council have been working with Premium Credit in relation to their Fairway Credit, a market leading brand for collecting payments for golf membership subscriptions.
- 2.19 Fairway Credit offers flexible payment and pricing options which will help the Council to attract more season ticket holders to the North Inch Golf Course and retain current members. With season tickets being able to be paid up over 12 monthly instalments this will be beneficial to golfers who are not in a position to pay for their ticket in advance.
- 2.20 By splitting the cost over 12 months, an adult season ticket which costs £279 per annum would cost £23.25 per month and a senior ticket costing £189 per annum would cost £15.75 per month. This will allow our users to spread the cost more evenly. Fairway Credit will charge the user 6.5% for this service.
- 2.21 Full payment will be made to Perth & Kinross Council in advance, and the finance company will manage the collection of payments from the user throughout the year.
- 2.22 In recent years the local golf green fee market has found an upper limit as to the price that can reasonably be charged for a round of golf. This has been due to an excess supply of tee times and the many promotional green fee offers available to golfers, which has meant that the market cannot bear any increase in pricing. Many local golf clubs have not increased their visitor green fee prices for the past 7 or 8 years.
- 2.23 Therefore it is proposed to freeze the existing green fees, with the introduction of the following new green fee options also proposed:

Six hole course

- 2.24 It is proposed to introduce a short six hole course on the first 3 holes of the golf course. Temporary greens will be established on each hole and will be utilised at certain times e.g. late afternoon at the weekend or during school holidays. The inclusion of the new greens will create six smaller holes that will make for an accessible, enjoyable but still challenging golfing experience for beginners.
- 2.25 This layout allows beginners to enjoy a challenging but manageable round of golf that can act as a step up to a 9 or 18 hole round of golf.

- 2.26 The establishment of the short course will not affect or interfere with the first 3 holes, with these holes still being fully playable as part of the established 18 hole course, as the short 6 hole course will only be available at quieter times.
- 2.27 The following charges would be introduced for the short course:
- Adult Round £3.50
 - Junior Round £2.50
 - Family Ticket (2 adults & 2 children) £10.00
- 2.28 This price would include the provision of clubs and golf balls collected through the amnesty highlighted in paragraph 2.6.

Mini Golf and Inflatables

- 2.29 The mini golf set and golf inflatables purchased as part of the 2014 Ryder Cup Celebrations and offered for free hire to communities during 2014 which will be located at the North Inch Golf Club Starter's Hut for families and beginners to use, and increase the golf related offering available at the course and will provide a legacy from the 2014 Ryder Cup. These will be charged at the same rate as the putting course (£1.00)

4 Ball and 2 Ball Offers

- 2.30 In Scotland golf club memberships are in decline with a greater emphasis on the number of individual visitor rounds. In order to encourage groups to visit and derive greater usage through the North Inch Golf Course, it is proposed to introduce the following 4 Ball & 2 Ball Offers:
- Midweek 4 ball deal £40
 - Midweek 2 ball deal £25
 - Weekend 4 ball deal £60
 - Weekend 2 ball deal £35
- 2.31 Part of these suggested changes to the fees (particularly with regard to seniors) is to narrow the gap between adults and seniors pricing and to bring the age category in to line with other clubs and normal practice.
- 2.32 The effectiveness of these changes will be monitored throughout the 2015/16 season. This will form part of the review of the North Inch Golf Course. A report will be brought before the Environment Committee later in 2015.

Golf Perthshire Pass

- 2.33 The Perthshire golf pass is part of the wider Golf Perthshire initiative, and allows golfers to purchase a pass that allows players to play a range of courses throughout Perth and Kinross. As part of this scheme, and to attract golfers to the North Inch, it is proposed to offer a 25% discount on green fees through this pass.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Based on the information provided in this report, the Environment Committee is asked to agree to the revised and new North Inch Golf Course Season Tickets and green fee options for the 2015/16 season.

Author(s)

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Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Jim Valentine	Executive Director (Environment)	12 December 2014

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

This report relates to (iii), (iv) and (v) above.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and

- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to (iii), (iv) and (v) above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising from proposals contained within this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications arising from proposals contained within this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 The proposals in this report do not have land and property implications as the Council continues to operate the North Inch Golf Course.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
 - (i) Assessed as relevant for the purposes of EqIA, with a positive impact, that retention of the North Inch Golf Course supports less mobile golfers, due to the Course's relatively short distance and flat topography.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.5 The proposals have been assessed in terms of the requirements to manage the Council's Greenspace assets in a sustainable long term way.

Legal and Governance

- 3.6 The Head of Legal Services and Head of Democratic Services have been consulted.

Risk

- 3.7 Members whose charges have been subject to an increase are likely to be disappointed. However, this may be mitigated by the price freeze agreed for the 2015/16 season.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Finance, Head of Democratic Services and Head of Legal Services have been consulted.

External

- 4.2 The North Inch User Group has been consulted.

5. Communication

- 5.1 The proposals will be communicated to the North Inch Golf Clubs and Users.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

North Inch Golf Course Report, Environment Committee, 05 March 2014
(Report No. 14/97)

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Proposed Membership Charges Effective 1st April 2015

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL
THE ENVIRONMENT SERVICE
PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP CHARGES EFFECTIVE 1ST APRIL 2015 - VAT @ 20%

ITEM 4: NORTH INCH GOLF COURSE CHARGES	Charge 14/15	VAT Status	VAT	Total Charge 14/15 (Inc VAT)		Proposed Charge 15/16	VAT Status	VAT	Proposed Total Charge 15/16 (Inc VAT)	% Increase	
* (see footer) Full Season Ticket (7 day ticket) - Adult	£229.17	S	£45.83	£275.00		£232.50	S	£46.50	£279.00	1%	
- Senior	£137.50	S	£27.50	£165.00		£157.50	S	£31.50	£189.00	15%	
- Concession	£137.50	S	£27.50	£165.00		£157.50	S	£31.50	£189.00	15%	
- Young Adult (18-29yrs) NEW CATEGORY						£157.50	S	£31.50	£189.00	NEW	
- Junior (17 yrs and under)	£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00		£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00	0%	
17 months for price of 12 Adult (1st November each year)						£232.50	S	£46.50	£279.00	NEW	
17 months for price of 12 Senior/Concession (1st November each year)						£157.50	S	£31.50	£189.00	NEW	
Family Membership (2 Adults & up to 2 Children)						£416.67	S	£83.33	£500.00	NEW	
Get into Golf - Restricted times of play - 1 year only before upgrading						£82.50	S	£16.50	£99.00	NEW	
Winter Season only Oct to Mar - Adult	£80.83	S	£16.17	£97.00		£81.67	S	£16.33	£98.00	1%	
- Senior	£48.33	S	£9.67	£58.00		£55.83	S	£11.17	£67.00	16%	
- Concession	£48.33	S	£9.67	£58.00		£55.83	S	£11.17	£67.00	16%	
- Junior (17 yrs and under)	£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00		£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00	0%	
Summer Rounds March to Oct - Adult (weekday)	£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00		£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00	0%	
- Adult (weekend)	£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00		£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00	0%	
- Senior (weekday)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Senior (weekend)	£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00		£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00	0%	
- Concession (weekday)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Concession (weekend)	£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00		£11.67	S	£2.33	£14.00	0%	
- Members Guest (any day)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Twilight (Any day after 5pm)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Junior (17 yrs and under weekday)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
- Junior (17 yrs and under weekend)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
- Family Ticket After 2pm (anyday 2 adult + 2 Junior)	£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00		£16.67	S	£3.33	£20.00	0%	
- Short Course Adult Round						£2.92		£0.58	£3.50	NEW	
- Short Course Junior Round						£2.08		£0.42	£2.50	NEW	
- Short Course Family Ticket (2 adults + 2 children)						£8.33		£1.67	£10.00	NEW	
Winter Rounds Nov to Feb - Adult (weekday)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Adult (weekend)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Senior (weekday)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Senior (weekend)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Concession (weekday)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Concession (weekend)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00	0%	
- Members Guest (any day)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
- Junior (17 yrs and under weekday)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
- Junior (17 yrs and under weekend)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
- Winter greens or 9 Hole (Adult)	£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00		£4.17	S	£0.83	£5.00	0%	
Group Discount (Summer only) - Adult (weekday - min 12 required)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		
- Adult (weekend -min 12 required)	£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		£8.33	S	£1.67	£10.00		
- Senior (weekday - min 12 required)	£0.00	S	£0.00			£0.00	S	£0.00			
- Senior (weekend - min 12 required)	£0.00	S	£0.00			£0.00	S	£0.00			
- Adult 4 ball deal (Midweek)						£33.33	S	£6.67	£40.00	NEW	
- Adult 2 ball deal (Midweek)						£20.83	S	£4.17	£25.00	NEW	
- Adult 4 ball deal (Weekend)						£50.00	S	£10.00	£60.00	NEW	
- Adult 2 ball deal (Weekend)						£29.17	S	£5.83	£35.00	NEW	
Miscellaneous -											
- Trolley Hire						£2.50	S	£0.50	£3.00	NEW	
- Putting						£0.83	S	£0.17	£1.00		
- Mini Rakes (Cost to Purchase)						£5.00	S	£1.00	£6.00	NEW	

