

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Strategic Lead – Roads and Neighbourhood**

**Council: 16 December 2020**

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**Subject: Dalmuir Golf Course update**

**1. Purpose**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide an update on proposals that were agreed at the West Dunbartonshire Council meeting held on 29 January 2020, in relation to increasing participation numbers at Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course and to reduce the net cost of operating the facility.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1** Council is asked to:

- i. note the increased usage levels and subsequent reduction in the net cost of operating Dalmuir Golf Course as detailed in section's 4.4 and 4.5;
- ii. note that the actions detailed in section 3.2 (ii-vi) were paused due to the COVID19 pandemic, and these will recommence during early spring of 2021;
- iii. agree that Officers continue with the implemented pricing structure and further develop marketing opportunities to increase income levels at the facility; and
- iv. note that a further update will be provided for consideration in December 2021.

**3. Background**

**3.1** In March 2019 as part of the 2019/20 budget setting meeting, Council agreed to increase all golf fees by 20% to better recognise the value of the service provided, whilst remaining lower than local competitors. It was anticipated that this would raise an additional £20k in revenue. The implementation of this increase in fees resulted in season ticket sales reducing from 183 in 2018/19 to 146 in 2019/20. The overall income generated remained the same.

**3.2** Following a discussion at the Council meeting of 29 January 2020 it was agreed that:

- i. The proposed fee structure for 2020/21 to be:
  - Adult season ticket - £250
  - Junior season ticket - £50
  - Senior Citizen season ticket - £125

- Adult visitor per round - £10
  - Junior visitor per round - £5
- ii. The Council would develop a marketing campaign to highlight what is on offer using both WDC and WDLT social media platforms. This will target current WDLT leisure club members, nomadic golfers with no current club affiliation and youngsters looking to take up the sport. The campaign was to include the following:

**Email**

- Existing customers for renewal
- Previous customers – win-back campaign
- WD Leisure customers – integrated package offer

**Social Media**

- Posts on WDC and WDL Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

**WDC Employee Offer**

- Promoted via the intranet and payslip advertising

**Leaflets and Posters**

- WD Leisure sites
- Libraries
- Community Centres and schools
- Press Inserts Lennox Herald, Dumbarton Reporter and Clydebank Post

**Digital**

- WDC homepage
- WD Leisure App targeted notifications

**Plasma Screens**

- Church Street
- Clydebank Town Centre Office
- WD Leisure sites

- iii. The Council would develop a leisure package partnership with West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust to its existing 5,000 members that would include unlimited golf for an additional fee of £200.
- iv. The Council would introduce Foot-golf as a means of increasing income.
- v. Officers would explore the potential for Community Asset Transfer of Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course as a long term sustainable option
- vi. Officers would explore the option of developing the Dalmuir Bowling Pavilion into a café clubhouse.

**3.3** The report identified that the agreed proposals had a savings target for financial year 2020/21 of £30k. This would be delivered by increasing participation levels. The target for the first year was to increase the general

season ticket sales to 250, with an additional 100 leisure club members taking up the golf package.

#### 4. Main Issues

4.1 West Dunbartonshire Council has one eighteen hole municipal golf course located in Dalmuir. Over the past three years there has been a steady decline in season ticket sales for the facility, from 183 members in 2017/18 to 146 members in 2019/20.

4.2 This decline in usage has resulted in reduced income, thus increasing the subsidy required by the Council to continue to operate the facility. The level of subsidy required to operate the facility in 2019/20 was £130k.

4.3 Due to the initial COVID19 lockdown the golf course was closed from 23 March to 29 May and most of the agreed proposals detailed in 3.2 of this report were not implemented. This was delayed due to the impact of the COVID19 pandemic to the service and resource availability. Despite this the membership uptake and general participation numbers at the golf course have increased significantly. The new pricing structure appears to have pitched the course as an attractive offer for members and visitors.

4.4 The following table provides the membership numbers and participation levels over the last four financial years including the 2020/21 year up to 31 October 2020:

Year	Membership Numbers	No. of visitor rounds
2017/18	183	3,635
2018/9	179	3,482
2019/20	146	3,035
2020/21 to 31/10/20	207	5,278

4.5 As detailed in section 3.3 of this report Officers were set a savings target of £30k for financial year 2020/21 in relation to operating the golf course. As of 31<sup>st</sup> October the savings achieved are £50k. It is anticipated that a further £20k of savings will be achieved in the remaining 5 months. The table below identifies the operating costs and income generated over the last two financial years:

Year	Operating Costs	Income	Subsidy
2019/20	£187,000	£57,000	£130,000
2020/21	£195,000	£135,000*	£60,000

\*projected 2020/21 full year income

#### 5. People Implications

5.1 There are no direct people implications resulting from this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** This report identifies that the anticipated savings that will be achieved during the 2020/21 financial year will be £70k. This is £40k more than the target identified within the Council report of 29 January 2020

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** As detailed in section 4.2 of this report there remains a level of subsidy required to provide a municipal golf course at Dalmuir. If the level of subsidy is not reduced there is a risk that the facility could become unsustainable and could close.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** An initial screening confirms there is no adverse impact.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1** As detailed in the report of 29 January 2020 engagement has taken place with user groups and other interested parties. This has informed the recommendations made in this paper.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** This report supports the Council's Strategic objective of efficient and effective public services that improve the lives of residents.

### **Gail Macfarlane**

Strategic Lead – Roads and Neighbourhood

Date: 20 November 2020

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**Person to Contact:** Ian Bain, Greenspace Manager

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** Minute of Council meeting – 29 January 2020  
EIA Initial Screening

**Wards Affected:** All