

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by: Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood (Shared Service)

Council: 22 December 2021

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**Subject: Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course Update****1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the implementation of proposals agreed at the Council meeting held on 29 January 2020, in relation to increasing participation numbers at Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course and reducing the subsidy required to operate the facility.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- i. Notes the increased usage levels and subsequent reduction in the subsidy required to operate the Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course as detailed in sections 4.4 & 4.5; and
  - ii. Agrees that Officers will continue with the agreed pricing structure and will also progress marketing opportunities to maximise participation levels at the facility.

**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 would 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. Develop a marketing campaign to highlight what is on offer using both West Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust social media platforms. This will target current West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust leisure club members, nomadic golfers with no current club affiliation and youngsters looking to take up the sport. The campaign will include the following:

**Email**

- Existing customers for renewal
- Previous customers – win-back campaign
- West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust customers – integrated package offer

**Social Media**

- Posts on West Dunbartonshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

**West Dunbartonshire Council Employee Offer**

- Promoted via the intranet and payslip advertising

**Leaflets and Posters**

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

**Digital**

- West Dunbartonshire Council homepage
- West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust App targeted notifications

**Plasma Screens**

- Church Street
- Clydebank Town Centre Office
- West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust sites

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.

- iii. Introduce Foot-golf as a means of increasing income.
- iv. Agree that Officers explore the potential for Community Asset Transfer of Dalmuir Municipal Golf Course as a long term sustainable option
- v. Agree that Officers 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. It was anticipated that this would be delivered by increasing participation levels. The target for the first year was to increase the general season ticket sales to 250.

**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 2020 and a number of the agreed proposals detailed in 3.2 of this report were not able to be implemented. 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 2020/21, up to and including 31 October 2021:

Year	Membership Numbers	No. of visitor rounds
2017/18	183	3,635
2018/9	179	3,482
2019/20	146	3,035
2020/21	207	5,278
1 April to 31 October 2021/22	264	5,800

**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 reducing the subsidy required to operate the golf course. The actual subsidy reduction achieved in 2020/21 was £70k, with an additional subsidy reduction predicted for 2021/22 of £13k.

The table below identifies the operating costs and income generated over the last three financial years:

Year	Operating Costs	Income	Subsidy
2019/20	£187,000	£57,000	£130,000
2020/21	£195,000	£135,000	£60,000
2021/22	£202,800	£155,000*	£47,000

\*projected 2021/22 full year income

## **5. People Implications**

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

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 This report identifies that the reduction in required subsidy is anticipated to be £83k during the 2021/22 financial year. This is set out in item 4.5 with the level of subsidy required reducing from £130k in 19/20 to a forecast subsidy of £47k in 21/22. This is £53k more than the £30k target identified within the Council report of 29 January 2020.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

7.1 As detailed in section 4.2 of this report the level of subsidy required to provide a municipal golf course at Dalmuir is not sustainable in the long term. If the level of subsidy is not reduced there is a risk that the facility 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**

Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood Services

Date: 10 December 2021

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

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** EIA

**Wards Affected:** All