

CHALK DOWNLAND GOLF VOLUNTEERS

Revitalising chalk downland golf courses

‘So much more than a golf club’

Chairmans Message

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to our 1st AGM, our inaugural meeting on 24th May 2023 when we established a ‘Constitutionalised Volunteer Group’ for future coordinated approach to activities and funding opportunities.

Well, it has been a long and rewarding year, both in financial terms and outcomes of funded projects for the benefit of the course’s conservation and biodiversity.

We have been able to secure the following funding opportunities to undertake & complete the following projects.

FiPL Phase 1 - £7900 - Purchase of hand tools, Wildlife Trust training, Interpretation boards, Botanical Survey and Management Plan including future recommendations for the next ten years.

Luton Airport Greener Future Fund - £9575 – removal of non-indigenous trees (including 6th tee), planting of indigenous native trees, electric chainsaw and appropriate protective clothing.

FiPL Phase 2 - £9700 - In October 2023 Chalk Downland Golf Volunteers were offered a further grant to create chalk scrapes as the exposed chalk is receptive to a wide range of rare species which colonise the chalk habitat. The soil from these scrapes will be used to build up the earth bank around the 6th tee and improve the trench on Warden Course so it can be brought back into play by 2nd and 6th greens.

Woodland Trust – 120 Native hedging plants

This application was granted in October and were planted in Spring 2024.

County Wildlife Site (CWS) – Surveyed in July 2022 and status identified in May 2023, Main Habitat Calcareous Grassland & Scrub, Buffer area for Galley and Warden Hills SSSI.

Presence of a BAP species: Basil-Thyme

With the various projects all seemingly running in an ongoing year on year for the last three years, these have been exciting times for the course development, and I would like to thank all who have participated in working hard as volunteers in meeting the challenges of the projects, and in particular the positive spirit on each wet and windy day.

Through the various above funded projects we have been able to work very closely with the green staff and greens committee regarding use of labour and equipment, we have been able to secure funding to offset that and we have a balance of funds where we would like to consider some return back to the staff/club members regarding the option to purchase some items of equipment to the benefit of the staff and the members. We have currently made a contribution of £893.75 to the club as part payment of the purchase of a ‘Weather Station’.

The purchase of a 'Weather Station' system would allow for a more scientific approach to watering, feeding, fungicide control and be recording data, stop over watering and switch of irrigation system in event of rainfall etc - preventing wasted water being extracted from borehole, stops greens being overwatered - direct impact on speed of green, identify ultimate growing times, water loss from greens, when to apply fungicides, when too apply feeds etc..

Regretfully, whilst the above has been an exciting time, I am not standing for continuation of Chairman of Chalk Downland Golf Volunteers (CDGV) and I wish you all continued success if seeking funding opportunities and future volunteer projects out on the course.

The title above personally reflects to me that the club is a lot more than a golf club and needs to continue this successful delivery plan and I wish you all well for the future.

Many thanks
Paul Burgess
Chairman CDGV.