

**POLICY #16 - COURSE MANAGEMENT**



**A. Introduction**

The purpose of this Course Management Policy (CMP) is to set out details of the approach to managing and maintaining the Golf Course at Royal Malta Golf Club (RMGC), which have been approved by the Board of Management (BOM). This is a working document designed to stand the test of time. The General Manager and BOM will conduct an annual review of the CMP and make any recommendations for changes for approval by the Board. Where necessary, expert opinion will be obtained internally and externally.

Prepared by General Manager: October 2019

Reviewed and Approved by BOM: 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### B. Course Description

Founded in 1888, the Golf Course is managed by the Head Greenkeeper and a team of Greenkeepers. The Course covering 26 hectares has a par of 68 and a standard scratch of 66, comprising two Par 5 Holes, one on each 9; 10 Par 4 Holes; and 6 Par 3 holes.

Yellow Tee Yardage 5,501

Red Tee Yardage 5,081

### C. Aims of this Policy

The overall aim of this Policy is to ensure that the Course is maintained and presented in the best possible condition throughout the year so that it is recognised as being one of the best maintained and best presented Courses in the Mediterranean. Also, to ensure there is a structured and clear forward plan for the ongoing improvement of the Course aimed at enhancing the enjoyment of members, guests and visitors by providing a fair test for golfers of all abilities.

### D. Roles & Responsibilities

**D.1 The BOM** is ultimately responsible for the overall management of the RMGC including policy, forward planning and financial management.

**D.2 The General Manager and Head Greenkeeper** are responsible for the management of all aspects of the Course, including maintenance, current and capital account budgets, as well as producing and implementing a rolling 5-year Course Development Plan (CDP).

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible, in conjunction with the General Manager, for the implementation of this Policy in all its aspects, which includes but is not limited to:

- Deploying Greenkeeping resources efficiently and effectively including holiday scheduling
- Planning and scheduling Course maintenance in the fixture list
- Liaising with the General Manager on any problem areas
- Machinery maintenance and repair
- Planning and preparation of annual and long-term budgets
- Attending BOM Committee meetings when required
- Maintenance of schedules and records relating to machinery
- Staff training, discipline, work schedules, appraisals

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- Implementation of the Club's Health and Safety Policy
- Purchase, secure storage and safe usage of fertilisers, dressings, pesticides, fungicides and chemicals
- Monitoring expenditure against budget
- Secure storage of all machinery and equipment.

### **E. Staff Resources**

The agreed staffing level is:

- Head Greenkeeper
- Deputy Head Greenkeeper
- Mechanic
- 6 Assistant Greenkeepers

The Head Greenkeeper in conjunction with the General Manager will undertake an annual review of staffing levels. Changes will be recommended to the BOM for approval.

It is in the Club's financial interest that repairs and maintenance costs are kept to a minimum. The benefits of employing a Greenkeeper/Mechanic versus a dedicated Mechanic should be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head Greenkeeper and General Manager.

The General Manager in conjunction with the Chairman of the Board will review staff salaries annually and any changes will be recommended to the BOM for approval.

### **F. Hours of Work**

The Greenkeeping staff work a flexible shift pattern between the hours of 06.00 and 15.30 depending upon the time of year, the available light and the needs of the competition schedule. Each member of staff works 8.5 hours a day, including a 30-minute break.

All Greenkeeping staff are rostered for weekend and public holiday working as required, at the appropriate overtime rates (staff may be credited with hours in lieu when overtime is worked).

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Weekly overtime timesheets must be completed by all greenkeeping staff with a copy signed by the Head Greenkeeper. These must be presented to the Accounts Administrator in the Office each month in time for the payroll run.

### **G. Training**

Training is an essential element in achieving a team of skilled and motivated staff.

RMGC is committed to help and encourage training and education through approved colleges & academic institutes. All permanent greenkeeping staff are encouraged to obtain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in Greenkeeping to the maximum of their individual abilities.

The Head Greenkeeper is encouraged to become a member of BIGGA (membership fees will be paid by RMGC) or other industry organisations such as the IOG.

### **H. Finance**

The Board is committed to providing sufficient funds to achieve the policies set out in this document.

In October/November each year the Head Greenkeeper, in consultation with the General Manager, will produce a list of machinery, including details of any problems that have occurred during the year. This will help produce a spares and replacement budget for the following year. These will then be discussed by the General Manager and Chairman of the BOM and recommended for approval by the BOM. Additionally, the Head Greenkeeper, in consultation with the General Manager, will produce an annual budget for purchase of fertilisers, chemicals and other materials and consumables for the next year.

The Club invests in a range of machinery and equipment to ensure the Course is maintained to the standards required. Each September the Head Greenkeeper, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board and General Manager, must produce an updated annual rolling 5-year capital investment plan for machinery replacements for consideration and approval by the BOM. If this is agreed it will form part of the Club's financial plan.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

The Head Greenkeeper must not incur any expenditure, unless it is within budget. If any expenditure is required urgently in excess of budget, it must be authorised by the General Manager.

A continual review of actual expenditure, compared with budget, will be maintained on a monthly basis. This information will be discussed by the BOM quarterly.

### **J. Greenkeeping Facilities**

The facilities are situated between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> tee boxes next to the Marsa race track. They comprise a large purpose-built shed consisting of:

- Head Greenkeeper's office
- Toilet and shower room
- Kitchen / Staff room
- Large main area for housing machinery
- A workshop area
- Tool storage facilities
- Separate chemical, petrol and diesel storage containers

In addition, there is:

- A wash-down area
- Bays for the storage of top dressing, soil and sand
- A Pump House and water storage facility situated next to the 15<sup>th</sup> tee.

### **K. Machinery and Equipment**

The Board regards the provision of the necessary machinery and equipment as an essential pre-requisite to achieving the policies set out in this document. It will be purchased, maintained and replaced when necessary with the most appropriate, range of machinery and equipment for the upkeep of the Course.

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for keeping himself up to date with developments in golf Course machinery, and make recommendations to the General Manager, including obtaining competitive quotations for acquisition and disposal of machinery.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for the maintenance of all machinery, including all health and safety requirements as well as keeping records of use, preventative maintenance, major servicing, repairs etc.

### L. The Course

#### L.1 Greens

Creeping Bentgrass and Tiffeagle Bermudagrass are the predominant species on all greens (seasonal). The long-term policy is to maintain Creeping Bentgrass year round, including through the hot Summer months. Putting green re-construction aside, this long-term objective can be achieved by a continual programme of aeration and sand top dressing to create conditions which encourage healthy bacterial activity, which in turn breaks down the thatch layer and encourages the deeper rooting species of grasses. Consistent over-seeding throughout the year is also essential. It is policy to utilise only the latest advanced generation Creeping Bentgrass variety such as 007.

The height of cut on greens is the responsibility of the Head Greenkeeper, and depends on his reading of future weather conditions, forthcoming events, the state of the soil, moisture levels etc. During the main playing season, the greens should be cut 4 to 6 times a week and the effective height of cut should be between 3mm and 4mm to achieve consistent speeds of between 9ft and 10ft on the “Stimp meter”.

Pace of the green should be the optimum for prevailing conditions but smoothness should never be sacrificed for speed. Consistency of pace and roll between greens is more important than the pace of any one surface.

The skill level of those playing should always be considered when preparing the greens in relation to pace and firmness for major events.

Grooming, scarification and verti-cutting together with the use of hollow coring to encourage moisture penetration will be carried out as required during the growing season. Scarifying and hollow coring will normally be carried out every May and September; verti-draining will be carried out during Spring and Autumn using 12mm to 19mm diameter tines to help improve drainage, improve root growth and lessen compaction.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Top-dressing will be applied at a minimum rate of 4kg/m<sup>2</sup> (30 to 40 tonnes) after hollow tining. Further light top-up dressings (4-6 tonnes) will be applied during the playing season as required. The overall objective is to apply 90 to 100 tonnes of top-dressing on all greens over the year.

It is recognised that top-dressing lying on the surface of a green can be frustrating for some golfers. However, the application of top-dressing throughout the year, particularly on putting surfaces, is one of the most important greenkeeping practices because it:

- Dilutes thatch
- Increases depth of quality growing medium
- Improves drainage
- Improves surface smoothness and trueness
- Promotes finer grasses/healthy turf
- Reduces disease
- Promotes deep root development and
- Reduces the need for fertiliser and irrigation.

Top-dressing should be undertaken in conjunction with aeration, scarification or verti-cutting to ensure that the fresh material is integrated into the soil profile.

The Head Greenkeeper should take account of the fixture list when planning maintenance work on the greens.

Judicious use of the automatic irrigation system, coupled with some hand-watering with or without the use of wetting agents, is essential if soil moisture content levels drop and grass on the greens becomes 'stressed'.

### **L.2 Hole Positions**

Hole positions will be changed 2 to 4 times a week dependent on the weather and competition schedules. The correct coloured pennant should be attached to the flag stick to show the position of the hole - Red (front), Yellow (Middle) and White (Back).

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

If heavy rain is forecast, areas where water will accumulate on the greens should be avoided. Generally, the hole should be positioned at least 2 metres from the edge of any green. If a bunker is close to the green edge, or if the ground slopes away from the green edge, the distance should be greater.

The ground 60-90 cm around the hole should be as level as possible. In no case should holes be positioned within 2 metres of a very severe slope or ridge. If the design of the green dictates that the hole be positioned on a slope, the hole should be cut vertically, not with the slope. The condition of nearby turf should be considered when picking pin positions, especially taking care to avoid old hole plugs which have not completely healed.

There should, where possible, be a balanced selection of hole positions for the entire Course with easy, moderate and difficult positions at the front, middle and back of the greens [following the 6x Red, 6x Yellow and 6x White “rule”].

For all club competitions, the Head Greenkeeper is responsible for deciding on the appropriate hole positions; except for Majors (including the Malta Junior Open) when the General Manager will be responsible. The playing conditions, particularly the speed and firmness of the greens, and the skill level of those playing should always be considered when picking hole positions.

### L.3 Tees

Good maintenance of tee boxes is an essential element of achieving the overall objective of presenting the Course in the best possible condition throughout the year.

- All tee markers will be moved 3 or 4 times a week depending on weather and competition schedules. In all cases the teeing area will provide golfers with a flat stance that is at least 4 meters wide. The tee markers will be placed square on to the direction of the fairway or green in the case of Par 3s.
- Ball cleaners will be checked regularly and water replaced as necessary.
- Rubbish Bins will be emptied weekly.

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- Divot boxes provided on all Par 3 holes will be checked and replenished weekly
- All tees will be cut at least twice a week to a height no lower than 8mm. Tees must be cleared of grass cuttings after mowing
- Divotting will be carried out twice a week on all tees
- Tee banks will be cut weekly to a height no lower than 24mm
- Tee signage will be kept clean and sponsorship materials should be removed when no longer valid. Wooden supports should be treated annually.
- The areas around the tee signage will be trimmed regularly and cleaned/treated as necessary
- Inspection and spot spraying for weeds will be carried out regularly
- Solid and hollow coring, scarifying and fertilising all be undertaken on the tees throughout the year on a programmed basis.

### L.4 Fairways

- All fairways will be cut two or three times a week to a height no lower than 12mm.
- A regular programme of scarification will be carried out once or twice a year to maximise grass growth and improve drainage.
- Fairways will be verti-drained every year and sprayed to control weeds every year at the appropriate time (based on the life cycle of weed species).
- Fairways will be fertilized a minimum of twice a year.

There is insufficient man power to undertake fairway divotting on a regular basis, so throughout the season members will be asked to volunteer to help divot fairways with support from the greenkeeping staff. In addition, the greenkeeping staff will divot once per week in May in preparation for the annual club championships.

Fairway width can vary from hole to hole and the difficulty of each hole should be taken into account when deciding the appropriate width. As a guide, a fairway should be no narrower than 20 metres plus the first cut on either side. However, there are a few places on the Course where tree roots prevent this width being achieved, where the fairway will be cut to the maximum width possible.

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Distance plates in the middle of fairways must be kept clean and visible. Coloured distance stakes (Red for 100 yards, Yellow for 150 yards, Blue for 200 yards - to the middle of the green) must be upright and visible, usually on the right hand side of the fairway in the Rough.

To ensure that the Course is playable and enjoyable for golfers of all abilities, where practical the maximum carry to the fairway from red tees should be no more than 80 yards and no more than 125 yards from yellow tees. On holes where the Course layout makes it impractical to implement these distances, the fairway should start as near as possible to these distances from the tees.

### **L.5 Aprons and Green Surrounds**

The aprons and green surrounds will be cut twice a week to a height no lower than 8mm. There will be a programme of scarification, solid coring, top dressing and over-seeding throughout the year. The presentation of the aprons and green surrounds has a marked visual impact on the Course. A surround will be formed of at least one machine width around each green. Careful cutting of the surrounds is essential to avoid scalping and to achieve an even surface.

Aprons should be approximately 20 yards long. To prevent unnecessary wear and tear, traffic around the approaches will be controlled by blue lines with signage to direct players away from these areas. Signage should not be placed directly in front of the green on the apron as this could divert good approach shots. In the Summer some aprons and areas around greens will be roped off particularly where renovation is required.

### **L.6 Semi-Rough**

The first cut off on both sides of the fairway is treated as semi-rough which normally will be cut once a week to a height of approximately 24mm. This should enable the ball to remain visible, whilst still slowing it down. On most holes, the semi-rough will be one machine width alongside the fairway and is an important element in the presentation of the Course.

### **L.7 Rough**

The remaining rough mainly outside the tree line will, when possible, be cut once a week to a height between 42mm and 51mm.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### L.8 Ditches

The grass within the ditches across the Course will be cut every week to a height between 42mm and 51mm.

### L.9 Trees

Tree management is an integral part of general Course maintenance. The trees on the Course are subject to Tree Protection Orders and appropriate permissions must be sought for all tree work undertaken on the Course (such as treating Phoenix Palms against palm weevil).

There is a wide range of trees on the Course both in species and age, including a significant number of Aleppo Pines, Sandarac Trees (*Tetraclinis articulata*), African Tamarix (*Tamarix africana*), Olive Trees (*Olea europaea* L.), Cypress Trees, Phoenix and Watsonia Palms.

Deciduous trees shed their leaves which have to be cleared from the Course by greenkeeping staff.

There are a number of trees and plants considered invasive such as Eucalyptus, Acacia and Castor Oil trees. Orderly removal with a programme of tree replanting will form part of the rolling 5-year CDP. The aim will be to minimise the impact on the appearance and playability of the Course and will also:

- Allow light and air into key areas of the Course to improve turf quality
- Encourage flora and fauna to re-inhabit areas

Greenkeepers will also remove dead/dying trees and branches that could become dangerous to greenkeeping staff or golfers.

### L.10 Integral Hedges

The management of integral hedges, particularly behind the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> greens, and perimeter walls will form a part of general Course maintenance. All hedges on the Course will be kept neat and tidy but special consideration will be given to the hedges beside the 15<sup>th</sup> fairway which ideally should be high and thick enough to stop most golf balls being hit onto the local road and race track.

The metal trellis beside the 15<sup>th</sup> Tee should be replaced as it does not provide adequate protection against badly struck golf balls for those watching the trotting races.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **L.11 Bunkers and Hazards**

These require considerable improvement and upgrading. The major areas of concern are differing sand consistency, sand depth and distribution within bunkers, sand compaction and poor or ineffective drainage. As with course drainage improving bunkers will form a significant part of the rolling 5-year CDP.

Good maintenance of the bunkers is an essential element in presenting the Course in the best possible condition. The depth of sand should be consistent between 50mm and 100mm, and bunker edges and banks must be kept tidy. Sand in bunker faces should be shallow enough to prevent plugging yet sufficient to ensure the ball remains in the bunker.

The definition of bunker margins must be maintained so that golfers are in no doubt as to whether or not they are in the hazard. Bunker fringes should be edged and trimmed to a height that will permit a ball to be gathered into the hazard.

Bunkers must be raked at least 3 to 4 times a week during the main season. This is essential to maintain a consistent depth and distribution of sand.

Each bunker has its own rake. Rakes should not be placed inside bunkers but on the side of bunker so not blocking play into the bunker or from the bunker to the hole. For fairway bunkers and greenside bunkers in front of the green, the rakes should be placed on the side of the bunker lying parallel to the direction of play; for other greenside bunkers, the rakes should be placed beyond the bunker.

There are a number of areas, mostly ditches, across the Course that are marked as hazards with red or yellow posts. Hazard margins must be clearly defined with posts or lines so that golfers are in no doubt as to whether or not they are in the hazard.

### **L.12 Paths**

There are a number of dirt paths on the Course. Their surfaces should be even and kept weed free throughout the year and the shale/stone or sand should be replaced or topped up as required. The path should have defined edges kept in good condition. The construction of any new paths would be part of the rolling 5-year CDP. Direction signs need to be in place and pointing in the right direction.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **L.13 Ditches**

All ditches should be examined regularly and kept free of leaves, debris and silt to ensure the free flow of water. During the summer months, the banks of ditches should be cut once a week to a length of between 42mm and 51mm.

### **L.14 Drainage**

The Head Greenkeeper will include in the maintenance plan a planned programme to check drains on the Course on an annual basis. Where necessary, drains will be rodded to clear blockages to ensure the free flow of water off the Course.

Improving Course drainage in the long term must form an element of the rolling 5-year CDP. For large scale schemes, a drainage expert should be consulted before commencement of work.

### **L.15 Ground Under Repair (GUR)**

Areas of damage across the Course that it would be unfair to expect a player to play from must be clearly marked and repaired as soon as practical. Until repaired, the area must remain marked as GUR. Every effort must be made to keep these areas to a minimum. Marking of GUR is particularly important for major events and competitions.

## **M. Practice Facilities**

RMGC has 4 designated Practice Areas:

- The Main Practice Area with driving range, bunker and green (situated at far end of the car park parallel to 8<sup>th</sup> fairway).
- Practice Green (between 7<sup>th</sup> Green and 14<sup>th</sup> Tee)
- Small Putting Green (outside the clubhouse entrance)
- Putting Green (next to Ladies' 3<sup>rd</sup> Tee)

These practice areas will be maintained and cut regularly. A practice strip cut at surrounds height will be maintained on the Main Practice Area. All greens will be cut to mowing height, with flags in holes facilitating practice by more than one person. The bunker on the Main Practice Area is to be kept in a good playable condition.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### N. Course Closure Procedure

The Head Greenkeeper, normally in consultation with the General Manager or an authorised member of the BOM, has the authority to close and reopen the Course. In his absence, authority is delegated to the Deputy Head Greenkeeper, normally in consultation as above.

When neither the Head Greenkeeper nor the Deputy Head Greenkeeper is available the action may be authorised in priority order by:

1. The General Manager
2. An authorised Member of the BOM
3. An authorised Member of the Captain's Committee.

#### **N.1 Action when Course is to be Closed**

When the decision to close the Course has been made, the person responsible for the decision must ensure that:

- The removable Course Closed signs are positioned prominently on or around the 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Tees.
- The Office, Greenkeeping Staff, Club Professional and Caterer are advised of the closure as soon as possible.
- If a competition is about to begin or is in progress, the competition organiser is advised at the earliest opportunity.
- All members are advised as soon as possible by the most suitable method e.g. email/website/facebook and notice in the clubhouse.
- If a competition is in progress, the klaxon is sounded to advise players on the Course that the Course is closed - one prolonged klaxon blast (10 seconds).

#### **N.2 Action when Course is to be Reopened**

The responsibility for reopening the Course is the same as for closing the Course. The person responsible for the decision:

- Must ensure that the Course Closed signs are removed.
- The Office, Greenkeeping Staff, Club Professional and Caterer are advised as soon as possible.
- If competition is about to begin or is in progress, the competition organiser is advised at the earliest opportunity.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

- All members are advised as soon as possible, by the most suitable method, e.g. email/website/facebook and notice in the clubhouse.

### **N.3 Conditions Requiring Course Closure**

Course closure for the following conditions will be reviewed as follows to ensure the Course is re-opened at the earliest opportunity:

#### **N.3.1 Flooding or Waterlogging**

Half hourly from 7am to 3pm in Summer and hourly from 8am to 3pm on weekdays in Winter. At weekends reviews will be on an ad hoc basis.

#### **N.3.2 Electrical Storms**

On a half-hourly basis from play being suspended.

#### **N.3.3 Fog and Mist**

On a half-hourly basis from play being suspended.

#### **N.3.4 Special Circumstances**

On an ad hoc basis, depending on circumstances.

### **N.4 Signals**

The following signals will be used to announce Course closures, suspension and resumption of play:

- One prolonged klaxon blast (10 seconds) - Abandonment of play
- Three short klaxon blasts (3 seconds) - Resumption of play

## **O. Protecting the Course in Winter**

### **O.1 Temporary Greens**

It is the Club's policy to use temporary greens only when absolutely necessary such as during winter over-seeding or after severe damage from vandalism, an act of god or a situation beyond the control of the Head Greenkeeper and General Manager.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

The greenkeeping staff will start preparation of temporary greens during late Summer in readiness for winter over-seeding. Normally temporary greens will be sited on grass cut to approximately 12mm and on ground appropriate for play. Temporary greens are used when conditions dictate that the use of the main greens would potentially cause damage that would be detrimental to their long-term condition or the condition of the surrounds.

### **0.2 Use of Temporary Greens**

Temporary Greens will be used in the following conditions:

#### **0.2.1 Waterlogging**

The surface layer of the greens can be damaged if play is allowed on the greens when they are heavily waterlogged. This leads to greens that are weak and prone to disease.

#### **0.2.2 Work on Greens**

At various times of the year there is work on the greens such as over-seeding. During such times, temporary greens are prepared for use until the work on the greens has been completed. This allows the work to be completed as quickly as possible and doesn't compromise the safety of the staff completing the work. Once seed has taken root the greens will be re-opened.

#### **0.2.3 Application of chemicals**

Chemicals including fertiliser and anti-fungicides are used frequently throughout the year. Chemicals ensure that the greens are as healthy as possible. From time to time treatment for diseases such as fusarium is needed. Anti-fungicides are expensive and need to be given the best possible chance of working by allowing the greens to rest and aid absorption.

#### **0.2.4 Special situations**

Situations may arise where the use of temporary greens will be needed for specific holes. Examples include damage to the playing surface, excessive wear of walk-off areas and possible danger to golfers' safety from damaged or fallen trees etc.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **0.3 Decision to use Temporary Greens & to revert to Main Greens**

The Head Greenkeeper in consultation with the General Manager will be responsible for the decision to move to temporary greens and the decision to move back onto main greens. In their absence, the BOM will be responsible. If the decision has to be made during a weekend, then the Head Greenkeeper, General Manager or any BOM member present will make the decision with, if necessary, input from the Captain's Committee.

### **0.4 Temporary Tees**

If there is little or no grass on normal tees, winter tee mats will be provided or temporary teeing areas will be cut to enable play to continue from as near as possible to existing tees. The Head Greenkeeper and General Manager in consultation with the BOM will decide when Course conditions require the use of winter tee mats or temporary tees.

### **0.5 Fairways**

It is essential that measures be taken to protect fairways when there are extended periods of rainfall. Whilst these measures may be inconvenient, they are essential to ensuring that the Course is in the best possible condition for the playing season.

#### **0.5.1 Use of Buggies and Trolleys**

The Head Greenkeeper and General Manager will on occasion ban the use of golf buggies until ground conditions are dry enough to support the use of buggies.

The use of buggies and/or electric trolleys by members who are registered disabled will never be banned unless the Course is closed to all members. However, passengers may not be allowed on ride on buggies if they are not registered disabled.

All members are encouraged to minimise the use of buggies by carrying their clubs or using lighter pull trolleys. Buggies and Trolleys should never be used within 10 yards of putting greens.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **O.5.2 Restricted Access**

To try and minimise the damage to the Course during the Winter, stakes and ropes will be used to restrict access to certain areas. Members must avoid these roped off areas and use the “trolley parks” where designated.

### **O.5.3 Preferred Lies and Winter Rules**

These can be introduced on the recommendation of the Head Greenkeeper in consultation with the General Manager to protect the fairways in adverse conditions.

## **P. Greenkeepers working with Golfers**

### **P.1 Work on the Course**

The Greenkeeping Staff take a great pride in their professional workmanship and work hard to present the Course in the best possible condition for the benefit and enjoyment of members and visitors.

Greenkeepers always have priority when working on the Course but are aware of the need to work without inconveniencing golfers.

Golfers must not play shots when they are in range of greenkeepers unless they are aware and have signalled it is safe to do so.

Improved mechanisation enables the greenkeepers to carry out most tasks quickly and efficiently, but inevitably there can be conflicts between them and golfers.

### **P.2 Complaints**

Members and visitors must not, under any circumstances, complain about the conduct of a member of staff, nor about the state of the Course, to any member of the Greenkeeping Staff. Any complaint must be made to the General Manager who will investigate the matter together with the Head Greenkeeper. If they cannot deal with the complaint themselves, the matter will be referred to the BOM.

### **P.3 Planning Work on the Course**

To achieve the best possible balance:

- Every effort will be made to start daily work on the Course as early as possible and to keep ahead of golfers starting early.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Course or hole closures will be planned and notified to Members well in advance.
- There are a few times each year when play on the Course will have to be restricted to allow the Greenkeeping Staff to set up the Course for major competitions. As far as possible these restrictions will be kept to an absolute minimum and members will be informed.

### **P.4 Golfers' Help on the Course**

Golfers should help maintain the condition of the Course by:

- Repairing all pitch marks, even if not caused by them. Unrepaired pitch marks take much longer to recover and cause irregularities in the surface of the green that can affect the roll of putts.
- Raking bunkers. Pushing the sand towards the centre - not pulling it towards the edges - using a club if there is no rake.
- Replacing rakes outside bunkers as stated in L11 to reduce the chance of rakes being struck by a ball entering or leaving a bunker.
- Replacing divots. This helps the Course recover more quickly as many replaced divots do 'take'.
- Not dropping any litter (including cigarette ends) on the Course, picking up litter and dropping it in one of the bins.
- Never taking Buggies, Electric and Pull Trolleys onto tees, greens, green surrounds or between bunkers and greens.

### **Q. Irrigation**

#### **Q.1 Policy**

The overall policy is to use as little water as possible to encourage deeper rooting grasses to predominate. However, almost every season there are times when rainfall is insufficient to sustain grass growth and needs to be supplemented. Water is also needed on occasions to wash fertilisers and other treatments into the greens.

The Head Greenkeeper is expected to minimise water wastage by scheduling irrigation only when absolutely necessary to sustain plant health when there is no rainfall.

## **RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Q.2 Water Supply**

Water is drawn from a series of underground bore holes and stored in a tank located next to the 15<sup>th</sup> Tee Box. Usage is recorded by taking meter readings daily and submitting them to the BOM monthly. These records shall be made available for scrutiny by the Environment Agency and shall be retained for 10 years.

### **R. Ecology**

#### **R.1 Flora and Fauna**

It is the aim of the BOM to preserve the natural habitat of birds, animals and flora on the Course. Any protected species found on the Course shall be reported to the Head Greenkeeper and the General Manager and be recorded.

Care is taken to encourage seasonal flora and fauna, such as oleanders and birds such as the Yelkouan Shearwater, Northern Gannet and Grey Heron.

Care must be taken not to disturb bird nesting boxes. Certain animals can do damage to the Course. Appropriate steps will be taken to minimise or prevent any damage.

Tree maintenance will be carried out in such a way that it has as little an impact on the natural habitat as possible and encourages wildlife.

#### **R.2 Trees**

Trees that affect the Course may need to be pruned, particularly when they overhang tee boxes, restrict the growth of grass cover or increase the risk to golfers by restricting visibility of tees and greens that are close to the line of shots on adjacent holes.

Small trees and shrubs need to be securely staked so that they are not damaged by golfers playing their shots.

On some occasions tree felling may be necessary. This must be approved by the BOM and must be carried out under the control of the Head Greenkeeper who must ensure that the conditions of any tree preservation order are complied with.

Tree planting will take place where and when necessary, with professional advice sought as appropriate.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### R.3 Protected Buildings

Great care must be taken while working close to the protected Ta' Ceppuna Chapel and the Maids Bedroom. Any work undertaken on the structures themselves must be done with the prior approval of Historic Malta.

### S. Professional Advice

Notwithstanding the confidence that the Board has in the expertise and knowledge of the Head Greenkeeper and his team, the General Manager and the Board will seek professional advice if they decide it would be beneficial.

### T. Health and Safety

The General Manager is the Club's Health and Safety Officer. Mr Kevin Gauci has been appointed as the Club's Health and Safety consultant who will audit the Club's Health and Safety Management once per year. The General Manager through the Head Greenkeeper has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Greenkeeping Staff are appropriately trained and follow all Health and Safety policies and procedures; and that all the necessary records are maintained.

The Club's Health and Safety Policy shall be distributed to all members of the Greenkeeping Staff together with a comprehensive series of COSHH and Risk Assessments.

The Head Greenkeeper is responsible for maintaining and updating all the Risk Assessments relating to work on the Course and ensuring that the Greenkeeping Staff understand and follow them.

Mr Kevin Gauci is responsible for updating COSHH assessments but the Head Greenkeeper is responsible for advising Mr Gauci when any new chemicals or substances are introduced and ensuring that staff follow the procedures contained in the COSHH assessments.

The Head Greenkeeper must ensure that the Greenkeeping Staff are provided with all necessary protective equipment. It is the responsibility of the staff to wear the equipment for the tasks specified. Staff may only undertake work for which the appropriate training has been provided and must not undertake any work which they themselves consider to be unsafe.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### U. Website

The General Manager and the Office will ensure that details and photos of the Course are maintained up-to-date on the Club's website.

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### Appendix A

#### Course Maintenance Summary (Main Playing Season)

Area of Course	Cutting Frequency and machine used	Cutting Height or Speed	Manpower Required	Weekly Manpower Required
Greens	5 to 6 times per week dependent on the weather and the competition schedule. Flex 21 Greens Mower.	3 to 4.5mm to achieve 9ft to 10ft on the "Stimp meter"	½ a man day	1½ to 2½ man days
Tees (Including Divotting)	Twice per week 3250/4230 Greensmaster or hand cut with GM 1000 mower	8 to 12mm	¾ a man day	1½ -man days
Collars/Aprons	Twice per week. 3250D Greensmaster	8 to 12mm	½ a man day	1-man day
Fairways	2 or 3 times a week dependent on the weather and the competition schedule Reelmaster 5510D	12 to 18mm	1-man day	2 or 3-man days
First Cut off fairway / semi-rough	Once a week 3100D Sidewinder	24 to 30mm	1-man day	1-man day
Tee Banks, Surround around Greens	Once a week 3100D/3500D Sidewinder	32 to 38mm	1-man day	1-man day
Drainage Gully Banks and other steep banks	Once every two Weeks, 3500D, Flymo or Strimmer	32 to 38mm	4-man days	2-man days
Rough	Once to Twice per week, 3500D 4300D Groundmaster	42 to 51mm	3-man days	3-man days

## RMGC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Rough in Trees and Copses	Once per week 3500D	42 to 51mm	1½-man days	¾ of a man day
Bunker Edges	Strimmer or Flymo every week to 10 days	32 to 38mm	2-man days	1-man day
Hedges	Every two to three weeks. Hedge Trimmers	N/A	4-man days	2-man days
Bunker Raking	Rakes, rotavator other hand tools. 4 to 6 times a week	N/A	½ a man day	2 or 3-man days

### Appendix B

#### Additional Course work

The following work is carried out, as required, during the playing season includes:

- Scarifying, coring and top-dressing greens.
- Spraying to treat or prevent disease.
- Spraying to kill weeds.
- Clearing ditches.
- Strimming around hazard markers, tee yardage blocks, tree trunks etc.
- Securing staked trees
- Repairing and securing the netting that stops golf balls going into tennis courts and into swimming pool.

### Appendix C

#### Non-Course Activities

- Machine maintenance.
- Sharpening cutting units on mowers.
- Maintaining records and other paperwork.
- Ordering equipment, fertilisers and chemicals.
- Staff training and development.