



MARKET HARBOROUGH GOLF CLUB

GREENSIDE 15

This Greenside repeats a message previously put out to Members in the February 6th 2014 issue of **FORE!**

FORE-warning: No change after trolleys review

The use of trolleys has become a contentious issue, with a few members expressing frustration because their use has not been permitted. The current spell of unprecedented weather - Leicestershire has suffered double its usual January rainfall - has left our course extremely vulnerable to wear and tear. On some days it has opened when conditions were marginal, at best.

There is a lack of understanding about why bans are necessary or desirable. The facts are that wheels of any sort compact ground, squeeze out air and, consequently, both damage roots and greatly extend recovery time as growth increases with longer days and warmer temperatures. It follows that if trolleys were allowed unrestricted access at this time, many areas would suffer considerable degeneration. Damage would be particularly severe where traffic is concentrated, notably around tees and on approaches to greens.

In response to members concerns, a working party, consisting of representatives of Captains, Greens and Board, was established and met to consider whether or not it is feasible to move away from the current system, which is indicated on the noticeboard as follows:

Red: The course is unfit for play and is closed to all golfers.

Amber: The course is open, but trolleys are NOT allowed (no exceptions)

Green: the course is open, without restriction. Trolleys are allowed.

This policy has been in place for more than 12 months - having been introduced because the 'dispensation' concession had been misused - and has worked well until the current extreme spell of weather. Dispensations had been granted to those who, on grounds of age or certified medical need, were unable to play golf without the assistance of a trolley. However, it was very difficult to control trolley access, and the system caused confusion and ambiguity, leading to frustrations of a different kind.

Since it is straightforward to obtain a medical certificate, one simple option considered has been to grant dispensation only on an age-related basis. However, our club has around 100 active members aged 70-plus and more than 60 aged 75-plus. That's a fantastic success on one level, but allowing this large group unlimited trolley access would create almost as much pressure on the course as a complete de-restriction.

After much discussion the working party unanimously decided that the current system should be retained. Greenkeepers will continue to monitor and review conditions on a daily basis and will open the course to trolleys as soon as conditions allow. If necessary, greens will be protected by posts and rope. As is self-evident, the primary aim of trolley bans and other measures is to protect your course from degradation so that for the majority of the playing season it can be presented in the best way possible. We ask that members respect this decision and heed all signposting and other on-course notices.

MW (Author) & MJC for the Greens Committee

15.2.14