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FINALISTS FEEDBACK REPORT

CLUB: The Manchester Golf Club

DATE OF VISIT: 28 September 2011

GOLF CLUB REPRESENTATIVES: Mark Jones and Gordon Yates

The Manchester Golf Club presents an extensive and stunning area within which to play golf. The fact that of the 200+ acre site, only 50% of this is used for golf, highlights its biodiversity potential and ecological importance and it is clear that this has been recognised by Mark, Gordon and the whole team at The Manchester.

There have been a number of significant developments at the club since STRI's last visit in 2010. Firstly, the club now have a new water sourcing and management system in place which has now eliminated the clubs reliance on mains water. This has not only made the water sourcing aspect of the golf courses' management much more sustainable but also considerably more cost effective. In addition, the club have now purchased an Amazone Groundkeeper which will allow a more intense and effective maintenance regime to be imparted through all rough grassland areas on the golf course. It was clear from my visit that this had already had an impact on reducing the nutrient levels in the sward and promoting the finer leaved grasses which are ideal for golfing play. I feel that this has been a superb and worthwhile purchase and one which will in the coming years reap significant rewards and offer further opportunities for grassland development in other areas around the golf course, thereby reducing the intensively managed area of the site.

A further significant development has been the clubs application to Natural England's Environment Stewardship Scheme with a view to gaining funding for an extensive (in excess of 3 km) hedgerow to mark the clubs centenary and also to provide a valuable wildlife corridor across the site. I wish the club well with their application and feel the initiative is extremely worthwhile.



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The final significant initiative has been the purchase of a 200 litre compost tea brewer from Symbio which the club are utilising to optimise the condition of their tees and greens. Many clubs have seen significant success with the use of compost tea and I feel this will certainly be the case at The Manchester. Indeed, the fact that no fungicides have been applied at all this year and that the application of nitrogen to the greens has been down to its lowest level at 42 kg/ha is a very positive sign for the future.

Extensive scrub and tree removal has continued through 2011 with a view to enhancing the biodiversity of the site and in the case of tree removal with a view to enhancing playing surface quality developing further views out to the wider countryside and also to benefit the woodlands themselves and allow remaining trees to develop into better quality specimens. The two ponds seen during STRI's last visit to the club in 2010 are settling in well and beginning to re-vegetate and will by 2012 be fully vegetated and providing significant ecological and visual value.

Considering the extent of work undertaken on such a large site it is extremely impressive to see just how much can be achieved whilst also maintaining top quality playing surfaces. There is no question that the club is at the forefront of ecological and environmental management within the golf industry and therefore I am delighted to present the club with the 2011 Nature Conservation Award. Congratulations to all involved.

Signed



Richard D Stuttard
Ecology & Environment

