



Motion

It is proposed that the Members of Beech Park Golf Club agree to a Tree Management Plan which will be conducted over the next 1 - 10 years. Including, the identification, mapping and tagging of the native trees on the site. Included in the plan, is the planting of Ash, Beech, Scots Pine etc. over the coming years. It also includes for the removal of some trees (Mainly hybrids) and replacing them with species natural to our course. This will add value in terms of Course playability, whilst having regard to local environmental demands.

Approval is sought by the present and future Course Sub Committee's to carry out this Tree Management Plan as outlined.

Tree Management Plan

Forestry is a slow growing business as it takes a long time for trees to develop. Unless they are properly managed, trees can become unsightly, ineffective and not achieve the purpose for which they were planted.

The Management Plan

Every forest has a management plan to cover the short, medium and long-term objectives of the planter. Planting trees in an investment for the future. Similarly, parkland golf courses should have a management plan for having trees on the course. The plan will lay out the club's strategy, purpose and policies regarding existing and proposed trees on the course

The plan should be designed to:

Achieve the original objectives of the course design;

Improve course playability and provide protection to golfers by screening some areas;

Be attractive, enhance the environment and maximise bio-diversity creation;

Recognise where tree plantings have failed and note the conditions that have led to this.

Improve the health of existing species,

Ensure the removal of any trees is backed up with clear reasoning on how the course will benefit.

Only trees and plants that are *Native* to the site should be planted in the future.

Examples:

- Oak, Ash, Alder, Aspen, Birch, Hawthorn, Holly, Rowan, Scots Pine, Willow etc. and non-native such as Beech, Lime, Chestnut, Eucalyptus etc.



Design Considerations

Thoughtful tree planting should increase the playability and add to the overall appearance of the course. Any new planting should fit the overall design philosophy of the course. Using new plantings to enhance habitat corridors throughout the course linking out of play areas and water courses.

If possible, plant trees with Irish provenance and which relate well to surrounding and provide maximum opportunity for biodiversity creation. Non- native, of course, should be Beech including Copper Beech.

Consideration to underplanting with shrubs or biennial species to provide cover for young trees. These shrubs can be removed later or will simply be out-competed as the trees grow. This will also reduce the need for herbicide application.

Planting

Single Trees

As a semi to mature golf course, most planting will be “fill-ins” or single replacements. Careful consideration should be given to species selection having regard to course requirements, position and aspect.

A single replacement tree of a reasonable size is very costly and once planted requires care and attention by staff, particularly for watering in the first 3 years after planting. Another problem in is planting too close together or close to other established trees where one or more will dominate and the impact is lost. The trees are small when planted so are often planted too close. Examine existing mature trees on the course and measure the distance between the centre of these trees for information.

Larger areas.

For larger areas, a cost- effective way of planting is in groups of bare root or young trees (Slips or feathered slips). Certain situations might suit this and should be considered. These can be formatively pruned to suit the golf course. Removal of weak or poorly formed trees is always an option when smaller trees are planted heavily in an area. Plant various sizes of plant material within the one planting area as this will increase the natural look of the scheme. The purpose will be to reduce the number of trees over time leaving the best and stronger trees to grow to maturity.

To reduce costs further, plant in groups of trees in a fenced off area declared as GUR with a drop zone. Little or no intervention will be required by staff (including mowing). Initially vegetation will grow and almost smother the new trees but within a short few years the trees will dominate. Consider Scots Pine (*pinus sylvestris*) as an option for this. Chicken wire or similar should be used to keep out deer, rabbits and squirrels all of whom do serious damage to young trees. If possible, golfers should kept out for similar reasons.



As a golf course dominated by deciduous trees, wonderful views and patterns of colour (40 shades of green) are enjoyed in the summer and autumn. Unfortunately, this means that in winter, the leaves have gone and little colour remains. To counter this, an evergreen species should be considered interspersed throughout the course. To date, Leylandi *cupressa* has been used for this purpose. Unfortunately, Leylandi is a sterile, hybrid developed about 150 years ago and is only produced from cuttings. It was intended as hedging. Many foresters don't consider it a "real tree".

From a golf perspective, Leylandi causes slow play. Balls become trapped in the branches which grow upwards close to the stem in a close-knit way. Although the ball can be seen to enter a Leylandi, it is not always easily visible when the player gets there. Time is wasted searching for it as the player knows it is there but just can't see it.

A suggested replacement is Scots Pine, (*pinus sylvestris*) which is native to Ireland and an evergreen. There are a number of fine mature specimens already on the course (13th) and fairly recent new planting close to the 16th green. Bare root or young plants of Scots Pine are relatively in-expensive. Considered interspersed planting of this species throughout the course will add winter colour without the negative impact on play of Leylandi.

Tree Removal

Trees should be removed as a last resort only.

Some valid reasons for tree removal are: Dangerous condition, end of life; Disease; Thinning in cramped conditions; Not in keeping with course design or playability.



Protecting Your Investment

Once planted, it is imperative that the trees are protected:

Ensure all greenkeeping staff keep clear of tree trunks while mowing.

Remove tree ties and stakes as soon as possible to ensure the tree develops a healthy trunk caliper and root system.

Train green keeping staff in the art and science of pruning. If the golf course has a trained horticulturist utilise them if possible. Annual formative pruning will guarantee young trees develop to their full potential. Make sure all pruning cuts are made cleanly and correctly. Use the natural target pruning method to prevent stub and flush cuts.

Protect trees from construction damage. Do not allow contractors to compact areas beneath mature trees.

Implement an aeration programme in areas of heavy traffic flow.

Monitor tree planting schemes annually and identify trees that need transplanting.

Undercut trees if possible in the years prior to transplanting to increase the success rate of transplanted trees.

Lower branches should be pruned to allow access to find and play the ball. In most golf clubs for example, branches are never below 6 feet.

Eye injuries caused by low branches are the most common and frequent injury in a forest environment.

Normally some areas have wood, dead wood etc., deliberately left on the ground to create eco systems which are necessary for the cycle of life. These areas are usually areas not visited by most golfers.

Suggestions

Start an inventory of all trees on site.

Spinneys of small trees; Provide proper protection for new plantings,

Woodchips produced on site for ground cover and low maintenance

Removal of low branches, for speed up of play and safety and ease of maintenance

Collect new growth trees from course e.g. Oaks on right of 14th tee box

Keep a photographic record of the course so that changes can be tracked over the years.