

***The report summarised: “Cumberwell Park has a conscientious, knowledgeable course management team that fully supports responsible, sustainable golf. Highlights include the creation of rough grassland and wildflower meadows for flora and fauna, a flagship raptor breeding programme, butterfly and moth surveys, resource-saving practices, waste recycling, employee and community initiatives, sustainability communication, conservation green keeper of the year award and an ongoing conservation programme for continual improvement, reputational enhancement and competitive advantage”***

## **Nature**

The club takes its role as custodian of the land very seriously and is committed to fostering nature. This is demonstrated by a number of initiatives. The rough grassland allows wildlife to move safely through areas that benefit biodiversity. It also provides a habitat for wildlife during summer (including skylarks that breed there). The diverse range of trees on the golf course and much of the mature woodland is classified as ancient, providing an excellent habitat for many species. Woodlands are natural as possible: tree management is limited to forest edges and paths to ensure public safety. There is a preference for natural woodland succession over the planting of new trees. Hedgerows are cut outside the bird breeding season to avoid disturbance; trees are planted within them to create a range of heights and habitat diversity. New hedgerows are planted with native species and connected to existing hedgerows and ditches to create wildlife corridors.

Cumberwell Park aims to develop and enhance the habitats on the golf course. There is a rolling habitat management plan, annual habitat management survey and conservation record. The flagship project is its raptor breeding programme, including raptor boxes to support the site's carrying capacity for Barn Owls, Little Owls and Kestrels. The Club has established its first apiary as an addition to the Syngenta Operation Pollinator

Natural wildflower meadows are uncut to ensure new flowers will emerge next year and grass clippings are removed (to reduce nutrient input). Machinery is prohibited through the meadows (except for cutting) to preserve flowers and minimise wildlife disturbance. The creation of microhabitats includes bird and bat boxes, small mammal nesting boxes, bug hotels, beehives, and log piles. There are nesting boxes for Kestrels: an amber-listed endangered species. The course has been the Little Owls' home for several years, however they have only recently successfully bred. Understorey vegetation grows naturally, and fallen trees decompose to create wildlife habitats.

Correct practices and procedures are adhered to for pollution prevention. Only the greens receive regular spraying, with modest nitrogen applications on course. Buffers around watercourses

## **Resources and Climate Action**

Conserving resources such as water and energy is important to the club. There is a wider responsibility to ensure as little as possible is used to improve self-sufficiency. Examples of this are irrigation only of greens, tees and approaches and par three course. The green staff allow the main course fairways to burn up during the summer, and rough areas can survive with little water. Low water demand bents and fescues are sown in all areas. Other considerations to reduce water demand include weather forecasts, data moisture readings, hand watering, wetting agents and targeted irrigation. The water source is from onsite winter storage and local land drainage. There is a recent upgrade of the Irrigation system with Rainbird and a new pipeline to maximise night-time watering. Machinery cleaning includes a

compressor and power washer to reduce water demand. Rainwater from the maintenance facility roof is stored and used for spray application.

Reducing the number of bunkers (which require sand) and modifying some others to grass swales reduces inputs. The course produces its own woodchip for mulch. The Pro-shop stocks bamboo tees, replacing plastic tees and sells refillable water bottles. Most food and beverages are locally sourced (e.g. Butcombe, Inch's and Thatchers). Young tree whips, for example, are locally sourced within 50 miles. There is a designated, secure waste recycling area outside of the Clubhouse including clear recycling area information for glass, food waste, dry mixed recycling items, mixed waste, non-food, non-recyclable items and waste cooking oil

## Community

We're always working on new ideas to be a better neighbour and create events that encourage members of the local community to interact with the club and course. This is evidenced by Charities supported including Bristol Children's Hospital Grand Appeal, Fight for Sight, Dorothy House Hospice, Dyson Cancer Centre and Bath Royal United Hospital. The Course Manager and assistant Green Keeper ran the Bristol Half Marathon, raising £1,500 for Macmillan Cancer Support. The Club sponsors two green keepers who play for local rugby clubs (Avonvale and Bradford on Avon). Cumberwell Park volunteering includes, during COVID, the head of conservation helping the local raptor group monitor its 800 boxes. The course manager is the Education Secretary of the Local BIGGA committee, which provides training courses in chainsaws and the safe use of pesticides, for example. Cumberwell Park hosts Blind Golf Groups and gives many four-ball golf vouchers for charity auctions

Cumberwell Park partners with a local farmer to harvest the rough grassland on the course. The grass is cut using in-house machinery, bailed and collected for winter beef cattle feed. Before this partnership, the grass decomposed on the golf course. The business ensures the footpaths and bridleways pass through the golf course with rights of way signs

Golf rounds support health and wellbeing of the local population. The Club has inclusive policies and practices (e.g. Junior Golf Programme), and the junior team recently qualified and won the Home Nations Inter-club championships England finals. The Club has a Welfare Officer and is 'SafeGolf' Certified. There are safeguarding policies and procedures for children, young people, and adults on the notice board and website. There is a Conservation Corner notice board in the Clubhouse on which members can record butterfly species seen on the course, including date and location. The website regularly communicates on sustainability initiatives. The Club host PGA EuroPro Tour Events and wildlife initiatives on the course (e.g. wildlife meadows) are in the SKY TV highlights. The Club also provides Conservation Evenings talks with local groups such as the Rotary Club and Corona Ladies. The BBC has visited the course to film and document the Little Owls for a children's tv programme. In 2021, Jon received a Conservation Green Keeper of the Year Award. Cumberwell Park is also a recent past Winner of the Bath Life Awards (Environment Award), highlighting its positive work.

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If you have any queries about this please contact Course Manager Matt James