

A First for Two Clubs with Green Credentials



Forsgårdens Golf Club, Sweden

Widespread recognition of golf's positive social and environmental impacts is gathering pace – and is being led by a group of clubs who have shown the way toward ever-stronger achievements and credible communications through the GEO Certified™ ecolabel.

Sweden's Forsgårdens Golf Club is a leader among leaders, stepping up in 2009 as one of the very first golf clubs to become GEO Certified™. Three years later, they are the first club in the world to be re-certified by the Golf Environment Organization.

Re-certification is a vital point of credibility for all ecolabelling, demonstrating how sustainability can extend deeper into decision-making and communications over time, and affirming the important 'continual improvement' principle that makes sustainability a mindset and a journey rather than a static destination.

The announcement represents a milestone in golf's sustainability movement; the first time that any golf club, anywhere in the world, has been re-certified via a dedicated, third-party verified and transparently reported programme for golf.

Gordon Shepherd, GEO Board Member and former Head of Global Policy for WWF

International recognized the significance:

"Having worked on the development of many industry certification programmes and ecolabels, from forestry to fisheries, I have seen landmark points in time, when something significant demonstrates a clear path to a more sustainable future. This is one of those moments.

"GEO was founded to support clubs in their sustainability actions and bring forward real, transparently reported results; steering away from one-time awards that

risk bringing complacency, in favour of driving continual improvement."

It is to Forsgårdens' considerable credit that through this re-certification, they demonstrate clear and quantifiable improvements across a comprehensive range of issues. Amongst all the processes and protocols, we are reminded that it's positive individual, personal engagement and action that environment and society needs."

Ole Riger-Kusk, an independent verifier accredited

by GEO, conducted the initial certification and the recertification and found that Forsgårdens upheld and strengthened a solid environmental performance.

Making more improvements in the three years since becoming GEO Certified™, especially around landscape and ecosystems, energy and resource conservation, waste management, and also more communications with authorities and the surrounding community.

Coventry GC First in England to be GEO Certified™

Coventry Golf Club is the first golf club in England to be awarded the international ecolabel GEO Certified™ in recognition of outstanding sustainability efforts.

Established in 1887, the club celebrated its 125th anniversary this year and also the centenary of the re-location of the course to Finham.

Many of England's nearly 2000 golf courses are community based clubs like Coventry, making this an important example of how sustainability can be embraced with positive results for the environment and the economic performance of the golf business.

Phil Weaver, Coventry's Head PGA Professional & Course Manager and Chairman of the PGA of Great Britain and Ireland, was part of the driving force behind the journey through the programme that led to the GEO Certified™ ecolabel, and remarks:

"We recognise the pressures on the

environment at large and understand that golf clubs have an important responsibility to take their stewardship of the land seriously. In the last few years we have become much more aware and active, making sustainability a consideration in every decision we make."

"The GEO OnCourse™ programme was easy to follow and made sure we thought about a wide range of practical areas and there were suggestions for improvements as we went along. The on-site verification with Matt Johns was extremely constructive and left us with new ideas and motivation for the future. We will fly the GEO Certified™ flag with a great deal of pride."

Weaver worked in close conjunction with colleagues Club Captain Keith Lindsay, Club member Professor Ian Foster, and past Captain and President Robin Bussell to drive the project forward and become the first Golf Club in England to achieve this prestigious award.