

Branching Out



Trees often form an integral part of both the strategy and landscape of a golf course and yet both the management and planting of trees are frequently viewed by golf clubs as of minor importance.

Subsequently, new tree planting is often undertaken by one well-intentioned individual who views the golf course as an extension to his own garden.

The results of this are all too often evident when visiting courses. Flowerng cherries and other exotic species abound and once established it becomes very difficult to rectify such problems as club house politics dictate no tree should ever be removed, no matter how many replacements are planted.

It is therefore essential when undertaking tree planting schemes, of any size, to take advice and to plant in keeping with the existing landscape character of the course. Similarly, where courses have existing woodland, management will be required in order to create sustainable woodland and to protect the strategy of the golf course.

It is therefore advisable to take expert advice from the outset, this

course of action is however often curtailed as it is thought to be expensive. But to quote Dr Alister MacKenzie, 1920, *Golf Architecture* "Perhaps the most serious mistake made by golf committees is the fallacy that they will save money by neglecting to get expert advice."

This statement manifests itself in a number of ways regarding trees. Firstly, careful planning is required to avoid the future problems with turf management factors such as air circulation, sunlight penetration, water uptake and rooting habit have to be taken into account at design stage otherwise the trees which are planted and maintained for a number of years will then have to be removed.

Secondly, suitable species to suit the soil and climate of the area need to be used if successful establishment is to be achieved.

Finally, planting and management costs can often be offset by grants from various organisations. Listed below are guidelines to some of the grants available for both new planting and the management of existing woodland.

Branching Out



The Forestry Authority Woodland Grant Scheme

Planting Grants	Broadleaves	Conifers	Conditions
Up to 10ha	£1350/ha	£700/ha	Min spacing 3m*
More than 10ha	£1050/ha	£700/ha	70% paid after planting**

* min area 0.1ha-0.25ha * min width 15m ** 30% paid after five years

New Planting

The basic new planting grant is paid in two instalments - 70% when planting is finished and 30% after five years once successful establishment is achieved (although your contractual agreement is over 10 years). Allied to this grant are a number of supplements which are aimed at encouraging planting in priority areas

Better Land Supplement - £600/ha

This grant could apply to either new golf courses or courses which are extending onto new agricultural land. The land to be developed must be either "arable land" or "improved grassland" and must have been in agricultural use for the previous three years and be of that designation at the time of the initial inspection by the Forestry Authority.

Community Woodland Supplement - £950/ha

This may be applicable to golf courses which have a public footpath or bridleway crossing through areas of potential new planting.

The aim of the grant is to encourage public access to new woodlands. This is, of course, in contradiction to most golf club's policies where safety dictates discouraging access. However, if the access is already there, then why not take advantage of the grants available, using the new planting to screen and protect the public right of way.

It may also be necessary to way-mark the route of the path with "Walkers Welcome" signs provided by the Forestry Authority or to offer the use of car parking facilities to the public. This grant may or may not be applicable to individual golf courses but at £950/ha is particularly lucrative.

To be eligible for CWS, the new planting must be within five miles of a conurbation where there are few other woodlands available for recreation.

The payment is normally made with the first instalment of the new planting grant

Locational Supplement - £600/ha

The aim of this grant is to encourage planting in target areas, particularly Community Forests.

Payments are made with the first instalment of the establishment grant.

The grants are awarded on a discretionary basis, with different criteria being used in different areas.

Case Studies

- Balbirnie Park, Fife - Grant of £2950 for managing 14ha of small woods over five years.
- Roseberry Grange, Durham - 19,000 trees planted, 72% grant.
- Brookdale, Manchester - 6,000 trees planted, 47% grant
- Hadley Wood, London - 1,100 trees planted, 40% grant.
- Grant of £4125 for managing 23ha of woodland over five years.

Existing Woodland

Natural Regeneration Grant

Natural regeneration provides an alternative to new planting in areas of existing woodland. The grant falls into two categories.

- a discretionary payment of 50% of the agreed costs of work necessary to encourage natural regeneration (paid on completion of work).
- a fixed payment of £325/conifers, £525/broadleaves once restocking has occurred at the appropriate density.

Annual Management Grant - £35/ha per annum for five years

Annual Management Grant is intended to help towards some of the costs of the work required to maintain and improve existing woodlands.

Types of work eligible

• safeguard or enhance woodlands that are of high conservation or landscape value

* improve woodlands which are currently below environmental standards - examples being clearing conifers from stream sides or improving the landscape value of woodland.

Payment of Grant

For woods under five ha the payments is in a lump sum in year two once the work is complete.

For areas over five ha the grant is paid annually for a period of five years.

Woodland Improvement Grant

WIG is available in specific areas of the country over a limited period of time. It is paid to bring certain types of woodland back into management or where work will improve the conservation, landscape or recreational value of the site. It is a discretionary payment of 50% of aged costs.

Other Grants

Other grants may be available from sources such as MAFF, The Countryside Commission and local authorities.

Summary

To date we have been able to secure grant aid for over 50 clubs ranging from Aberdeen to London. Net cost varying from £1,000 to £9,000.

Eamonn Wall & Co is a Woodland Design and Management firm with bases in Dollar, Durham and Reading, specialising in the management of trees in the golfing landscape. If you require further information, John Nicholson would be pleased to hear from Tel: 0191 384 2556