



Every one a winner

Winners, Portmore Golf Park

Richard Stuttard, of the STRI, reveals the winners of this year's Golf Environment Awards and explains why they were successful



STRI's Golf Environment Awards have once again brought to the forefront of the golf industry ten of the most environmentally proactive golf clubs in the UK.

In addition to this the awards attracted a significant number of first time entrants to the programme indicating that awareness of environmental and ecological best practice is continuing to spread throughout the industry.

In 2010 our overall winner is Portmore Golf Park situated close to Barnstaple in North Devon. This 27 hole facility constructed on former agricultural land in the 1990's has had ecological and environmental considerations built into its ethos since inception. The Club has achieved the perfect balance between presenting a top quality golfing experience with a low environmental and financial cost.

The foresight and enthusiasm of owner, Colin Webber, has resulted in the creation of a successful and sustainable business model for the Club particularly with regard to ecological and environmental

considerations. On the nature conservation side the course is a rich mix of diverse mature woodland, extensive well managed deep rough grassland and visually and ecologically superb water features. The Club has a true appreciation of the need to develop ecological corridors through the golf course and

son, Josh, are strong advocates of the use of Compost Tea and have developed considerable skills in its development and application.

Waste reduction and management has also been a priority at Portmore, particularly over the last five years. In that time the Club has achieved a two thirds reduction

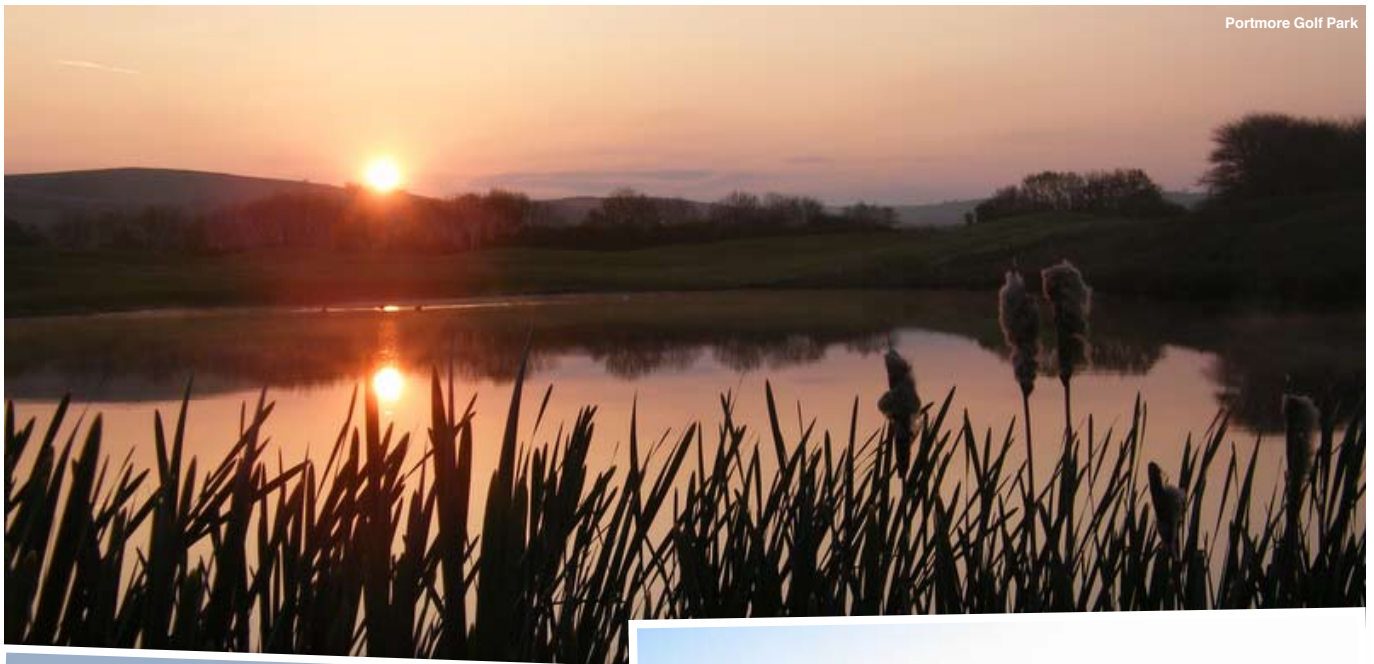
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have as a result created appealing vistas from all parts of the golf course. On the playing surfaces an eight year programme of intensive management has seen previously annual meadow grass dominated greens become almost entirely fescue. No pesticides or fungicides have been used on the course for over 14 years and only organic fertilisers are applied. Colin and his

in landfill waste – a considerable environmental achievement.

Overall, and with all environmental bases covered, Portmore Golf Park find themselves worthy winners of the 2010 overall prize.

Our Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year award has been given to James Hutchinson, of Fairhaven Golf Club. James, who was featured recently in Greenkeeper



Portmore Golf Park



Silloth on Solway Golf Club



Fairhaven Golf Club

International was given the award for his tireless dedication toward maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity interest at Fairhaven. With the full backing of Club representatives James has very much taken the lead in establishing countless ecological projects across the site. Fairhaven is host to a rare mix of woodland, grassland, heathland and links characteristics and has significant opportunity, if managed correctly, to be a true wildlife haven. Happily James picked up on this around five years ago and has been making enhancements to the course ever since. Some of James' most visually striking projects have included the creation of extensive wild flower areas, heather establishment and promotion and pond clearance and maintenance. James' achievements are a shining example of how the enthusiasm and dedication of an individual can achieve significant results.

The remaining eight prize winners in this year's awards are all worthy recipients, each with their own individual distinguishing characteristics. Our Regional Prize winners;

Loch Lomond Golf Club, Silloth on Solway Golf Club, Aberdovey Golf Club and Aldeburgh Golf Club each offer very different but very special golfing experiences. Loch Lomond Golf Club sits within a truly breathtaking setting which has been further enhanced by the work of the golf course maintenance team. As managers of such an important site there is a clear sense of responsibility from the whole team and this is reflected in the quality of ecological work undertaken. The Club have also paid significant attention to environmental matters with large scale water management projects undertaken and waste management being a particular specialism. The Club are on course to achieve their highly commendable goal of sending zero waste to landfill by 2012 – a not inconsiderable achievement.

Our Northern Regional winner, Silloth on Solway Golf Club, received their award for the large scale ecological management work that has been undertaken over the last 10 years and continued in earnest in 2010. The transforma-

tion at the Club in the last 10 years has been truly staggering with this former gorse choked coastal course being gradually reverted to its original more open character. Following large scale gorse removal the Club have continued to enhance the bio-diversity of the course by exposing wetlands, developing heather swards and establishing and maintaining good quality open and fine leaved rough grasslands. Additionally this year the Club have significantly improved their impact on local water resources installing a bore hole to obtain irrigation water and investing in a new highly efficient and accurate irrigation system, thereby ensuring minimal inputs to the turf.

Aberdovey Golf Club has retained their 2009 Welsh Regional title following the continuation of its extensive ecological and environmental management programme. In 2010 the Club have focused on sand dune restoration and stabilisation, scrub clearance and grassland management and have also paid particular attention to further naturalising the golf course with deep coastal grass-

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Silloth on Solway Golf Club



Portmore Golf Park

The Golf Environment Awards continue to promote the wide range of environmentally positive initiatives that are being undertaken throughout the golf industry



Delamere Forest

lands being developed around tee complexes and bunkers to create a more natural rugged appearance.

In addition to Silloth on Solway Golf Club's battle with gorse invasion our Southern Regional winners, Aldeburgh Golf Club has also made significant management advances in recent years, again reverting the character of the course back to its more original open nature. The Club have developed fine leaved

rough grasslands and a strong heather component in addition to maintaining extensive deciduous woodland. Turfgrass management at Aldeburgh is of the highest order with fertiliser, pesticide and water inputs kept to an absolute minimum and this has been reflected in the firm, fast and true playing surfaces that are achieved here. Additionally in recognition of the increasingly strict water legislation relating to golf, Aldeburgh has commissioned and will shortly be installing a reed bed to cleanse waste water from its machinery wash down area.

The Golf Environment Awards also offers special initiative prizes in the following areas – Nature Conservation, Waste Management, Water Management and Turfgrass Management. Each of the four winners here have undertaken

innovative and effective projects in their respective category areas. This year's Nature Conservation Award has been given to Delamere Forest Golf Club. The win for Delamere Forest is made all the more special by the fact that this is the Club's first application to the Awards Programme. A hidden gem, supporting a wide range of habitats including mature deciduous woodland, gorse, heather, fine leaved open grassland and large, well maintained water bodies, there is a great appreciation at the Club of the benefits of enhancing the nature conservation value of the site, not only for wildlife but also in terms of the visual and strategic aspects that the natural environment can offer. The result is a course that has significant aesthetic and playability appeal and is a striking natural environment within which to play golf.

Our Waste Management Award is given to Clubs which pay specific attention to waste reduction on the golf course and take seriously the need to manage this in a sustainable and responsible fashion. In 2010 Machrihanish Dunes Golf Club are the well deserved recipients. Open for just over a year the course was constructed on ecologically rich duneland near Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre.

Given the very special nature of the environment within which the course sits the Club has adopted a rigorous waste management policy which dictates that all waste streams are dealt with in the most environmentally appropriate manner. This includes all maintenance facility related waste; oils, batteries, fertiliser bags, pesticide containers, contaminated wash down water and also gives cognisance to Clubhouse waste also.

Purchasing policies and sustainable sourcing are also key elements addressed by the club and as a result Machrihanish Dunes are very much leading the way in terms of waste management within the golf industry.

Our Water Management Award has been given to Maesteg Golf Club in South Wales. For many years several areas of the course have been prone to flooding/water logging and the Club has put a considerable amount of effort in recent times to combating these issues.

In 2010 one of the few remaining issues was a green prone to regular water logging due to surface water run off from an adjacent hillside. To deal with this the Club took on an ambitious project to completely redesign the topography of the green and green surround.

This project, designed and undertaken in-house was to raise the previously low set green and create a swale at the low point of the green surround to divert water around the playing area and direct it off site. The project was a huge success with the water logging issue completely solved and the re-designed hole looking and playing superbly.

And finally we move onto our Turfgrass Management Award. This award is presented to Clubs which have adopted a sustainable approach to Turfgrass management.



This year the award has gone to Royal St David's Golf Club in Harlech, North Wales. Course Manager, Roger Kerry, and his team have put in considerable effort toward changing the composition of the formerly input demanding annual meadow grass dominated playing surfaces to the bent/fescue dominated swards we see today. In recent times the annual meadow grass content of greens has changed from 80% to approximately 5% as a result of input control and cultural management techniques. The result is a consist-

tent set of firm, fast and true playing surfaces which are environmentally and financially sustainable and are crucially available for play for the vast majority of the year.

The Golf Environment Awards continue to promote the wide range of environmentally positive initiatives that are being undertaken throughout the golf industry and it is hoped that those clubs who are yet to address environmental sensitivities at their club will gain inspiration from the fine example set by this year's winners.



This page: more shots showing the splendour of Portmore

For more info. on this years winners and how to apply for the 2011 Golf Environment Awards Programme please visit www.golfenvironmentawards.com or alternatively call Richard Stuttard on 01274 518903

