



THE
MACHRIE
HOTEL & GOLF LINKS

Covid -19 Update May 2020

Dear Member,

I am delighted to confirm that the golf course The Machrie Links will be open for play to the members of Islay Golf Club for non-competitive golf on the June 1st, 2020. To ensure social distancing can be adhered to for the staff the first tee off each day will be **9am. All play must commence from the 1st tee.**

At this time, the Hotel, Driving Range, Wee Course, Hebrides Putting Green, and all putting and short game facilities will remain closed, there are no hire items available and the Teaching Studio and Trackman Simulator are also unavailable. The 1891 lounge is also closed.

All Tee times Bookings **MUST** be made in advance by calling 01496 302310 and then the member **MUST** check in at the porch at the front door of the hotel or by calling 01496 302310 on arrival. It is necessary during this time we are aware of any members playing golf.

We encourage any members to adhere to the **advice and social distancing policies** as below

ADVICE FOR GOLFERS ON THE MACHRIE LINKS:

- Insist on social distancing (2 metres rule) on tee grounds, greens and throughout the rounds, there are no tee markers so play from your desired tee (please refrain from teeing up directly opposite the yardage sleeper)
- Always leave the flag in the hole. We ask golfers to carefully remove their golf ball from the hole, not with a golf club. Anything within 2 feet or agreeable distance is a "gimme". Spacers have been placed in the hole to make retrieving a golf ball easier.
- Rakes and any other pieces of course furniture that golfers may touch have been removed, including the pins on all putting greens – the greenkeeper team will prepare the course, and where possible rake the bunkers. Golfers can smooth out footprints with their feet. Preferred lies are in operation in the bunkers, by placing the ball within a club length of the original spot, not nearer the hole.
- Benches where possible have been removed, any fixed benches remaining should not be used
- Golfers should only pick their own ball up
- Do not share any equipment, such as golf clubs or rangefinders
- Don't shake hands before or after your game
- The airline for cleaning shoes following the round is now closed
- Hand sanitisers are available as golfers leave the golf course

During this period the Greens Team are working at a limited capacity and will do their utmost to maintain the desired standards however this will not always be achievable and would appreciate the leeway and support at this time. As there is currently only a team of four, maintenance will be very limited.

The Machrie Links – course update

From the beginning of lockdown on March 23rd the greens team has consisted of three members, with the rest of the team furloughed at this time. Due to the drought conditions we have since brought one additional member of the team back to work. Below is an overview of the work on the course and hopefully this will give an understanding of what conditions to expect when golf returns. During April we had 13mm of rainfall and up to the 15th May we have had 2mm, it has been an incredibly dry spring.

Greens

The height of cut (H.O.C) on the greens was increased to 6mm, with the greens being mown to a maximum of twice per week. This was to reduce the stress on the plant and assist us in our overseeding efforts on the greens, the greens have been overseeded with both bent and fescue during the closure. There are some weeds on the greens, and these will be sprayed in due course once the new seed has developed. Nutrition has been kept at an absolute minimum as has the irrigation. As we approach opening top dressing will increase to smooth and firm the surfaces.

Surrounds

The surrounds are mown to a maximum of twice per week, the H.O.C has also been increased to 9mm, with overseeding and appropriate nutrition in place. With having irrigation to the majority of the surrounds we have been able to control the moisture well in these areas.

Tees

The tees have been mown once a week with the triple mower, due to the reduced staffing pedestrian mowing has not been possible. The tee banks have been cut when required and are relatively low priority at this time. The tees will be fed and weedkilled prior to the course opening if the weather permits.

Fairways

The main focus during the lockdown period has been the moisture management on the fairways, the Greens Team have been working in shifts from 7am – 9pm over seven days to constantly irrigate the new fairways. Overseeding work has also been carried out on the new fairways with good results, however there are a few areas that are still being worked on and improved. With the weather breaking and offering some rain it has freed up some of the man hours to focus on these areas. Fairways will be weedkilled when time and weather permit.

Bunkers

The bunkers have been untouched as per the guidelines set by the R&A, they will require substantial work to get them to the expected standard, this will be a slow but ongoing process once the course

opens, particularly with the naturalised bunkers, hence the reason we suggest using preferred lies if required.

Other areas

Due to the extremely dry weather there has been, and the reduced staff very little work has been carried out on the Wee Course, Driving Range, Short Game area, Hebrides Putting Green and hotel grounds. Work will increase on these areas once the staff numbers increase.

Finally, all of us at The Machrie would like to wish all our members well and hope you enjoy the opportunity to return to the wonderful links.

Good golfing and best wishes,

Dean Muir

Golf Manager