



1. Introduction

Firstly, I wish to express my appreciation to you, as a member of Pyecombe Golf Club for the patience and understanding that you've shown during the period that the Club has been closed.

Whilst a date has yet to be confirmed, this policy has been prepared to advise you of the Club's approach when the COVID-19 'lock-down' is lifted sufficiently for a return to golf. The policy has been approved by the relevant committees.

I should say from the outset that, as with the easing of lock-down restrictions, our return to golf will be on a staged basis, taking small steps – hopefully steadily – in the right direction. Our policy will therefore be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The policy draws on guidance provided by the following national bodies:

- England Golf
- R&A
- Golf Club Managers Association
- British and International Golf Greenkeepers Association
- PGA

I have also been in regular contact with numerous members of the Golf Club Managers Association and our HR team; sharing ideas and discussing how best to approach matters.

A word of warning before you read on. Golf will look very different to what was considered 'normal' in the past. All golf will be booked online. The various measures / restrictions that we have put in place seek to ensure that members are as safe as possible.

2. Play Safe Stay Safe

The overriding objective when returning to golf is that the game is played safely. England Golf recently coined the phrase '*Play Safe Stay Safe*' which you'll probably hear a lot.

Our policy applies to your entire golfing experience, from arrival at the Club through to departure. In other words, it is not limited to conduct on the golf course.

Throughout your time at the Club, please comply with the usual social distancing measures that we're now all very familiar with.

3. Clubhouse facilities

We are only able to open the Clubhouse facilities on a limited basis. This results from a number of factors, including the way in which government is likely to phase its removal of lock-down provisions, continuing social distancing measures and contamination risk.

- Locker rooms - Remain closed until further notice. Access to lockers will be limited. Please contact the office two days in advance to make arrangements for collection of clubs from the locker room.
- All toilets - Remain closed until further notice.
- Bar & catering - Both operations remain closed until further notice.
- Office - Open during normal office hours. The preferred communication methods are a telephone call / email. Access to the office can be gained via the side entrance next to the putting green. Please respect the social distancing measures that have been put in place.
- Pro shop - Open every day. Lines have been marked outside the shop to support social distancing if queuing for entry. Please adhere to notices displayed within the shop. The professional team will only be able to accept card payments.
- Marshalls - Outside pro shop opening hours, the first tee, course and facilities will be marshalled from time to time by a group of volunteer members. Spot checks will be conducted to confirm membership, so please make sure that your bag tag is displayed prominently and do not be offended if approached!

4. Course set up

Various measures have been taken to encourage social distancing and / or reduce contamination risk. I realise that such measures will impact upon course presentation and the standards that you're used to.

- Generally - The R&A have issued guidance documents concerning essential maintenance, which the Club will endeavour to follow. See previous newsletter correspondence concerning the restrictions that are in place. I do not intend to repeat the information within this document.
Please also note that the Greens Team will continue to operate on reduced staffing numbers for the time being.
- Ball washers - Covered over. Please regard as 'out of use'.
- Ball retrievers - Removed from the course. Please avoid entering into staked penalty areas to retrieve golf balls.
- Benches - Roped over / turned upside down. Please regard as 'out of use'.
- Bins - Covered over. Please regard as 'out of use'. Kindly take any litter home with you.
- Divot filling boxes - Removed from the course. Please repair divots as far as you can at all times. The Greens Team will do their best to spread divot filling mix as regularly as possible.
- Rakes - Removed from the course. Please use your golf club and / or feet to 'rake' bunkers after use. [See Local Rules.](#)
- Stakes - Stakes and other objects defining areas of the course remain in place. [See Local Rules.](#)
- Shoe cleaner - Spray guns have been removed. The machine is out of use.
- Holes - All holes have a 'liner' inserted into them, preventing the ball from falling completely below the putting green surface. This makes retrieval easier and you should be able to do so only handling the ball itself. Hole locations will be changed

as regularly as possible. If the location of a hole is not changed, sanitiser will be applied as part of morning course setup. [See Local Rules.](#)

- Flagsticks
- Retained. Signs are placed on all flagsticks reminding players that they are not to be touched. Course flagsticks will be sanitised as part of the morning course setup.

5. Practice facilities

- Practice nets
- These have been taken out of use because at present we cannot guarantee safe sanitising practices.

The following are in use, including but not limited to before a round of golf:

- Putting green
- Maximum 4 people permitted at any time.
Priority is given to those who are due to play next.
- Chipping green
- Maximum 2 people permitted at any time.
- Lower practice ground
- Maximum 2 people permitted at any time.
Priority is given to the professional team for lessons.
- Upper practice ground
- Maximum 3 players permitted at any time.
Based on current ground conditions, you can drive to this facility.
- Applicable to all practice
- Please mark your practice golf balls before use. Only collect those balls that definitely belong to you. Do not touch yardage markers or flagsticks / holes on the practice facilities as they will not be routinely sanitised by the Greens Team.

6. Arranging your round

All golf will be organised in accordance with any government requirements.

- Online tee booking required
- All golf must be booked online. This will allow us to maintain an accurate record of those attending the Club which is essential in the current circumstances. If you are unable to book online, please call the office / pro shop who will be happy to help you. There will be no roll-up golf at all, until further notice. This includes both formal and informal roll-up arrangements. Usual 'block bookings' such as the Saturday morning roll up and Ladies reservations will not apply.
- Tee booking availability
- You can book online from 7p.m, up to four days in advance. Tee time intervals are set at ten minutes. A maximum of two golfers per tee time is likely. Anyone attending the Club on an ad-hoc basis will be politely turned away.
- Members only
- To start with at the very least it is anticipated that course demand will be very high. This is especially so given the reduced tee times available. It is therefore essential that we prioritise member use of the course. As a temporary measure and whilst course demand is assessed, member guests, green fees and societies will not be permitted at the Club.
- Booking etiquette
- In the interests of fairness to your fellow members, we respectfully invite you to please:
 - Consider playing outside 'peak' times.
 - Not play on consecutive days.
 - Play a maximum of 3 times per week – ideally on weekdays so that weekends are left for those that are unable to play at other times.
 - Not play on both weekend days, if possible.

As an example, you might choose to play Tuesday early morning, Thursday twilight golf and Sunday mid-morning. Of course, everyone's circumstances will differ.

Closure of premises - The security bollard will be put up at 8:30p.m. every evening. Please aim to be off the course before this time. See 11 below for further information.

7. Forms of play and scoring

Competitive golf - During the initial period of golf being played, there will be no competitions. When competitive play is permitted, we will review the Club diary and organise a schedule of events that seeks to facilitate competitive golf for all. We will also permit a method of scoring that does not strictly comply with Rule 3.3b. [See Local Rules.](#)

8. Before your round

All players should adhere to the following protocol:

Maximum 20 mins before tee time	→ Arrive at Club. Remove equipment from vehicle. <i>If you arrive before this time, please remain in your vehicle.</i>
15 mins before tee time	→ Proceed to putting or chipping green.
10 mins before tee time	→ Report to the pro shop.
5 mins before tee time	→ Proceed to first tee.
At your tee time	→ Please be ready to play.

If you cannot make your tee time, please cancel your booking online / call the pro shop asap so that the tee time can be used by another member.

9. Push / electric hire trolleys & buggies

All hire trolleys & buggies - Available for use until 2:00p.m. each day, subject to normal restrictions surrounding ground conditions. All trolleys / buggies will be issued by the professional team and sanitised immediately before and after use. Buggies are limited to one person only. For example, The passenger seat cannot be used. The buggy cannot be shared between players; one walking and one using the buggy, then switching during the round.

10. During your round

Social distancing - Please follow standard social distancing measures and keep at least two metres apart at all times during the round. This includes but is not limited to:

- Your playing partner, the Greens Team and members of the public.
- Teeing areas & putting greens, where space can be limited.
- When walking to the ball.
- When searching for a ball.
- When playing shots.

- Indirect infection risks - Before commencing play, mark your ball distinctively to aid identification. Do not touch stray balls or other items that others may have been in contact with.
- Bunkers - With no rakes on the course, please smooth the sand using your club and / or feet. Aim to leave the bunker as you'd expect to find it. [See Local Rules.](#)
- Putting Green - Please do not touch flagsticks. [See Local Rules.](#)
- Medical emergency - Staff have been provided with the necessary Personal Protective Equipment to facilitate transport back to the clubhouse.

11. After your round

- Social distancing - Social distancing is as important after your round. When your round is over, please leave the Club immediately, so that there are no gatherings around the clubhouse area.
- Clubhouse - As mentioned above, the clubhouse will remain closed. There will be no bar and catering operation. Toilet facilities are not available. Any clubs retrieved from lockers should be taken home.
- Car parking - The security bollard will be put up at 8:30p.m. every day. Vehicles that are 'locked in' to the car park will have a guidance note left on the windscreen, with advice on how to exit.

12. To reiterate my thanks to you all

These are unprecedented times, which have warranted unprecedented measures.

As I mentioned in my introduction, I have been in contact with many other Clubs via the Golf Club Managers Association – who are all implementing similar policies. Some have various concerns over how their members will react to only being allowed to return to golf on a limited basis. I, on the other hand have confidence that the PGC community will work together so that we can all return to the Club that you love – in a fair and safe way.

Thanks for your understanding and cooperation.

I really am looking forward to your return!

Best wishes – and 'stay safe!'



Geoff Wise
Managing Secretary

Enc: Local Rules

LOCAL RULES

EFFECTIVE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Up to date version can be found on the first tee notice board. Please check before play

1. PREFERRED LIES

APPLICABLE TO HOLES 2, 4, 6 & 11

When a player's ball lies in a part of the general area cut to fairway height or less, the player may take free relief once by placing the original ball or another ball in and playing it from this relief area:

- Reference Point:
Spot of the original ball.
- Size of relief area measured from reference point:
6 inches from the reference point, but with limitations as set out below.
- Limitations on location of relief area:
Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and
Must be in the general area.

In proceeding under this Local Rule, the player must choose a spot to place the ball and use the procedures for replacing a ball under Rules 14.2b(2) and 14.2e.

The above rule applies to the general area, which may include paths through the rough, cut to fairway height or less.

2. PREFERRED LIES

APPLICABLE TO ALL BUNKERS

When a player's ball lies in a bunker, the player may take free relief once by placing the original ball or another ball in and playing it from this relief area:

- Reference Point:
Spot of the original ball.
- Size of relief area measured from reference point:
One club length from the reference point, but with limitations as set out below.
- Limitations on location of relief area:
Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and
Must be within the bunker.

In proceeding under this Local Rule, the player must choose a spot to place the ball and use the procedures for replacing a ball under Rule 14.

3. RELIEF FROM ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITIONS

Relief is permitted and may be taken under Rule 16

AREAS CUT TO FAIRWAY HEIGHT OR LESS, THAT HAVE BEEN SCARIFIED

An area that has been cut to fairway height or less, that has also been scarified is GUR.

RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE 17th FAIRWAY

Area(s) defined by white lines are GUR.

7th HOLE

The area defined by markers is GUR.

Players may:

- (a) Play the ball as it lies.
- (b) Take complete relief from the area as GUR.
- (c) Take a preferred lie -

When a player's ball lies within the area marked as GUR on the 7th hole, the player may take free relief within the area once by placing the original ball or another ball in and playing it from this relief area:

- Reference Point:
Spot of the original ball.
- Size of relief area measured from reference point:
One club length from the reference point, but with limitations as set out below.
- Limitations on location of relief area:
Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and
Must be in the general area.

STAKES / OBJECTS DEFINING AREAS OF THE COURSE

All stakes and other objects defining areas of the course are immovable obstructions.

4. TREE COMPOUNDS

(Trees that are enclosed / surrounded by staked fencing such as within the photograph)



Free relief is permitted and may be taken when a Tree Compound causes interference in any of the following ways:

- The player's ball touches or is in or on a Tree Compound.
- The Tree Compound physically interferes with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing, or
- The Tree Compound intervenes with the player's intended line of play.

If the Tree Compound is close enough to distract the player but does not meet any of these requirements, there is no interference under this Rule.

5. SCORING IN STROKE PLAY

NON-COMPLIANCE OF RULE 3.3B PERMITTED AS FOLLOWS

Players should enter their own hole scores on the scorecard. It is not necessary for a 'marker' to do this. After each hole, the 'marker' should confirm the player's score verbally. It is not necessary for the 'marker' to physically certify the player's hole scores. It is not necessary to physically return a scorecard to the Committee. Scorecards can be photographed and emailed to the pro shop.

6. GOLF BALL 'HOLED'

USE OF HOLE LINERS / HOLE CUPS

Our present use of hole liners means that it is impossible for the golf ball to be 'holed' in accordance with the definition provided within the rules of golf. The entire purpose of the hole liner is to prevent the golf ball from falling entirely below the putting green surface.

As such, the golf ball is considered 'holed' if it is in the hole and any part of it is below the surface of the putting green.

In addition, a ball is deemed 'holed' with the next stroke if it lies within 12 inches of the hole. Please note that this does not prevent a player in match play conceding a stroke that is outside this length.

Penalty for breach of local rule:

Match play – loss of hole.

Stroke play – two strokes.

If a player incurs a general penalty for a breach of the above local rules, no additional penalty under the local rules is applied.