

Highlights

The use of nature-based solutions to create golf courses that play well, build resilience and support local communities

Significant biodiversity improvements including 17 hectares of meadow, 8 hectares woodland, 7 new wetlands and a 'bee bank' on each course

Significant year on year savings and improved course quality

Piloted an innovative 'Golf for Health' partnership with the local health trust to improve patients' health and wellbeing and have developed a 'Park Golf' course for the less able



Fife Golf Trust

Fife Golf Trust (FGT), established in 2012 and based in Kirkcaldy, manages 7 golf courses on behalf of Fife Council, and is responsible for a greenspace area of almost 550 hectares. The business has embedded biodiversity gains and sustainability into their day-to-day operations via their Sustainable Management Strategy and their work is a formal part of the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan. They also have International Golf Environment Organisation (GEO) certification, placing them into the same arena as commercial golf courses such as the St Andrews Links Trust and Carnoustie Golf Links.

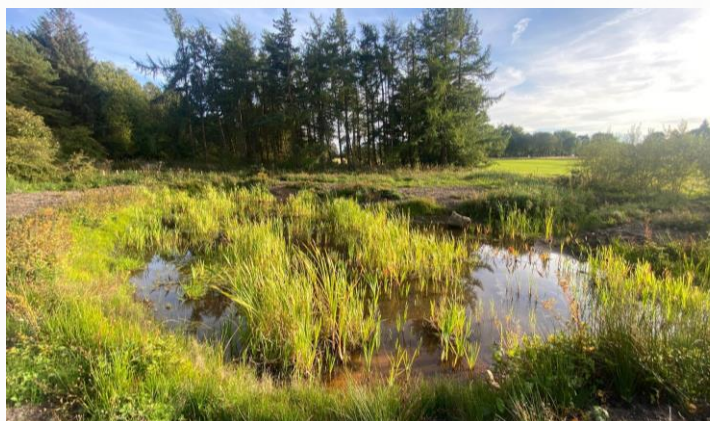
The business engages widely with local nature and biodiversity groups, charities, and other businesses, both within and out with the sector, to share good practice and support the delivery of their initiatives. As a small charitable trust, the business uses this partnership working and collaboration with others to overcome some of the financial barriers that they could face to implementing some measures.

Category description: Nature Rich Scotland

The Nature Rich Scotland Award recognises organisations who have adopted nature-based solutions to tackle environmental and social challenges, whilst delivering benefits.

They have achieved significant biodiversity improvements including the creation of 17 hectares of meadow and over 8 hectares of woodland, 7 new wetlands, 4 new ponds, a 'bee bank' on each course and nearly 2km of watercourses planned for naturalisation. They undertake regular monitoring of the nature benefits, and the data is shared with Fife Nature Records Centre'.

Their 'Seven Golf Courses for Nature' model is helping to build resilience and climate adaptation. The wetland areas are in places where flooding has become problematic, providing a natural solution to alleviate the issue and are allowing plants and wildlife to flourish. The reprofiling of the watercourses that run through the sites will help naturalise straight, steep-sided ditches, encouraging freshwater habitat to establish and help alleviate local downstream settlements with flooding issues, by slowing up the movement of the water.



Fife Golf Trust has achieved significant year-on-year cost savings and vastly improved course quality through a strict management approach in the use of fertilisers, fungicides and herbicides and reducing their water consumption for irrigation by 40% through use of PoGo meters to regularly measure and monitor exact soil moisture levels. This revenue saving is used to drive further sustainability improvements across the golf courses.

The business has piloted an innovative 'Golf for Health' partnership with the Royal & Ancient and St Andrews University around 'golf prescriptions' to improve patients' health and wellbeing. The pilot had 30 participants in 2023, and FGT hosted with the help of their PGA pro Ally McDonald. They've also designed and built a 6-hole 'Park Golf' course for the less able at their Dunnikier site, which was a catalyst for introducing the Japanese game of Park Golf to Scotland.

Fife Golf Trust provide a quality, affordable, accessible, all abilities nature-based activity (golf) for over 3000 members. The 2019 Course at Dunnikier Park Golf Course has a diverse range of regular customers including local school pupils, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation group, Alzheimer Scotland, and a bereavement support group, demonstrating their ethos of 'Golf for All'.

The Seven Courses for Nature project is supported by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot.

Quote from the company:

"Fife Golf Trust are honoured to receive this fantastic award which recognises the positive contribution we have made to nature and the environment as land managers.

We are passionate about practicing sustainable golf course management, and whilst we manage our greenspaces primarily for golf, we ensure these spaces have a diverse ecosystem promoting a wonderful habitat for wildlife. Our recent Nature Restoration Fund project allowed us to intensify our biodiversity and ecological commitments, and to have this hard work recognised is a significant milestone for us.

We would like to thank all FGT staff and volunteers for their hard work delivering the project, our funders NatureScot for making the project possible, and to the judges for identifying our environmental contribution."