

## **Management Response to Agenda point 8**

The Management thanks the member for raising concerns regarding slope rating—these matters have already been raised and reviewed by the Greenkeeping Team.

Management has been very clear with the Greenkeeping Team about the importance of consistency, and the team works extremely hard to maintain the course to the original standard as measured. The standing instruction has always been to present the course in that way.

Naturally, occasional challenges arise—weather conditions can vary dramatically, machinery issues do occur from time to time, and mistakes can happen. However, the team remains diligent and committed to maintaining the same overall structure, standard, and playability across the course in line with the rated standard.

Following what has been a particularly dry and hot summer, Management hopes members share the view—echoed by much of the feedback received—that the course is currently looking good and playing well. The rough, which was heavily affected by the dry conditions, has now recovered impressively, and the ongoing reinvestment in the course continues to show real results.

### **Position on Re-Rating**

Management is firmly of the view that a re-rating is not necessary at this time. The Club is aware of the issues which may have allowed the course to play slightly easier than its slope rating last year and is clear on the learning. Management is also aware that there are many other factors which may impact match performance, and these are consistent with England Golf insights.

### **Background: Course Rating Is Professionally Governed by England Golf**

- **Governed by England Golf:** Course ratings in England are conducted by England Golf under the World Handicap System (WHS), ensuring consistency and fairness across all affiliated clubs.
- **Expert assessment:** Trained teams from England Golf evaluate each course using a standardized procedure that considers length, obstacles, green speed, elevation, and expected playing conditions.

**The current course rating for PRGC was conducted over 3 full days by a trained, specialist, three person England Golf team using the consistent WHS methodology.**

**The rating now in place is comprehensive, accurate and professionally verified.**

The original course rating was completed on the basis of a brief visual inspection of the course from the clubhouse balcony in under an hour

- **Maintenance alignment:** The Greenkeeping Team's role is to maintain the course to the standard present at the time of rating. Their work supports consistency, not difficulty manipulation.
- **Re-rating frequency:** England Golf re-rates a course every 10 years as standard unless the course undergoes significant changes.

There have been **no significant course changes** which would alter the slope rating.

## **Match Performance May Vary Independent of the Course Rating**

England Golf's insights highlight several contributing factors beyond slope rating:

- **Team composition changes:** New or less experienced players
- **Opposition strength:** Competing clubs may have improved their squads, training, or strategy.
- **Weather and seasonal conditions:** Variability in wind, rain, or temperature can affect play.
- **Course familiarity:** Visiting teams may now be more familiar with the layout, reducing home advantage.
- **Psychological factors:** Confidence, pressure, and morale can significantly influence outcomes.
- **Player availability:** Injuries, retirements, or personal commitments may affect team strength.

## **Conclusion**

Management remains committed to presenting the course to the standard assessed by England Golf. While slope rating concerns are acknowledged, the Club does not believe a re-rating is necessary at this time.

See below - notes from Barry Woledge relating to Slope Rating at PRGC

## Course Rating Review

The following table highlights the rating differences across local courses:

Course	White	Yellow/gold	Red
Hazlemere	132	127	119
Harewood Downs	131	127	127
Stocks	130	124	111
<b>Princes Risborough</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>119</b>
Waterstock	126	123	114
Winter Hill	123	126 (L)	
Badgemore Park	122	119	114
Whiteleaf	122	120	108
Weston Turville	117	116	114
Wycombe Heights	117	115	111
Chartridge Partk	116	113	104

On a felt fair basis the courses at PRGC would appear to be out of alignment.

We know the course rated by Ian Bishop and his team was very well set up and laid out with narrow and reshaped fairways, the rough set at a uniform 2.5 inches and the greens reduced back to their original size. A tough test of golf. Go offline and you lose at least a shot. With no par 5's there is no recovery. The ratings were fair.

The problem is we do not play that course. There were many complaints about the depth of the rough and the shrunken fairways leading to a reversion to the course we have today. This has a major impact on our handicaps and it is no surprise all our teams are now significantly less competitive than we were immediately post WHS introduction.

Can we either have:

- The course we now play properly assessed or
- Revert the course to the one that Ian Bishops team assessed?

Barry Woledge