



Open letter to Little Hay Golf Club

October 2009.

I am writing on behalf of the board of trustees of Sportspace, Dacorum Sports Trust, about what has happened since the fire at Little Hay Golf Course and what we hope to be able to do in the future.

I need to start by thanking you for your understanding and help since that shocking day in April, when so much damage was done.

The trustees were proud of, and delighted by, the response of the Sportspace management team and the staff at Little Hay. While the fire brigade were still tackling the blaze, managers were already contacting Portakabin, and, with a lot of hard work, the course was re-opened within 48 hours. We were also pleased to receive many favourable comments from members and users of the course about how quickly and how well the catering and other facilities were reopened.

As trustees, we were greatly in the debt of some hard-working individuals. In particular, we have been very pleased by the work on your and our behalf by Rebecca Hemmant. As well as all her other duties for Sportspace, she is your point of contact, of course, but you should know that she has sought and gained our approval at every stage of the detailed discussions with all concerned. She continues to have our full support.

George Reid, the Course and Complex Manager, has also worked extremely hard in ensuring the day-to-day service has had minimal disruption, in spite of being delivered in Portakabins, and that the grounds maintenance and greens have met your needs. His team have continued to deliver a successful golf development programme. Their commitment has been outstanding. A special mention should also go to Karen Wicks and her team for the excellent service they also continue to provide in the catering facilities.

Since the fire, things have not gone quite as quickly as they did in those first few days! I am sure you understand that there are a lot of considerations involved in deciding what to do and how to go about it, and that these were complicated by the fact that, although we operate the site, we do not own it. So we have been negotiating the minutiae with Dacorum Borough Council and the insurers.

Sportspace exists to improve the sporting and physical recreation facilities and provision in Dacorum, while reducing the cost to the council (and therefore the

Council Tax payers). So, throughout negotiations about rebuilding Little Hay, our position has been very straight-forward: we want to build something that will improve the amenity and help increase usage and income.

Our original, preferred option was to erect a modern, improved, two-floored building on the site of the old club-house and shop. That would have required substantial, additional investment. Even preparing and submitting plans for a two-storey building would have involved considerable additional costs (with no guarantee that the plans would gain approval).

Unfortunately, at the time of writing, we have not been able to persuade the council to share any of the risk involved in the necessary additional investment, and unless that position alters, we shall have to go ahead with 'Plan B'. That is to rebuild the burned down building on a "like for like" basis, but with some modernisation and an improved internal layout.

Again, thank you for your tolerant understanding and support. We had a major, devastating fire. We re-opened incredibly quickly, and we hope to have the rebuilding completed by next summer. We shall continue to explore plans to provide additional facilities, including a spa, and our fundamental aim – to improve LHGC – remains unaltered.

Yours sincerely

Mick Dennis, chair of trustees.
Sportspace – Dacorum Sports Trust