

New Fairfield Golf Course Preserves Wildlife

Fairfield Golf and Sailing Club, located in Audenshaw, Manchester is now ready to begin an exciting new era thanks to work completed by Souters Sports to create a course redesign including a number of new holes, improvements to existing holes and an increase from par 68 to 71.

The Golf Club have worked hand in hand, with United Utilities, the land owner, to extend the club's lease for a further 50 years and giving the club an extra 16 acre parcel of land. A portion of land brought into use was a vacant former reservoir which had been attracting anti-social behaviour. United Utilities will later develop more of the vacant land to include a hotel and conference centre and a small retail element.

The club also worked with former European Open Champion and PGA Professional Andrew Murray and Richard Le Sueur of Golf Design Scotland on the redesign.

"As the architect for the project, Richard took a flexible approach to the design enabling the scheme to evolve over the course of the project and it was a pleasure to work with him," commented Paula Steer, Head of Property for United Utilities Property Solutions.

Souters Sports were selected for the construction work based on expertise and efficiencies. Todd Jerome was brought to the company as Golf Development Manager bringing a wealth of experience in golf course construction having previously worked on the Links at Herrion Field US, Castle Course St. Andrews, Scotland, The Renaissance Club, Scotland and Loch Lomond, Scotland. Todd has an MSc in Golf Course Architecture.

The Fairfield re-configuration project is a good example of golf working in harmony with the environment. "The project start was deferred for months and a considerable amount of resources went into overcoming any potential negative impact on the sites environment," commented Todd. "To protect the Great Crested Newts, we followed avoidance measures, erected newt fencing and conducted trapping/relocation throughout the project. We also created wetlands and ponds as part of the golf design and constructed newt hibernacula with the aim of creating a long term, sustainable habitat with the potential to actually increase the newt population."

To address concerns that three holes of the re-configuration were built on a landfill site, with the potential of asbestos, Souters Sports imported tested topsoil, measured and recorded all surface coverage levels to insure the landfill areas were adequately.

"Attention to detail on environmental matters during the planning and construction phases is an important part of our responsibilities. With the course now completed and with the site's natural habitat not only regenerating but improved, it all seems very worthwhile," says Todd.

"Souters have been a pleasure to work with," says Paula. "Their professional yet flexible approach to business has seen them win the respect of the whole project team during the golf course remodelling works. Fairfield has been very demanding at

all levels, requiring not only the ability to build the vision of the architect and design team but to overcome the worst British weather which was thrown at them. Souters Sports staff and management have a great “can do” attitude and are a credit to their company.”