



## **The Royal Birkdale Golf Club – BUGGY POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Due to disability, some members and visitors may not be able to play golf without the help provided by a motorised ride-on buggy. The purpose of this document is to establish a standard for the safe operation of all ride-on buggies operated on the course at The Royal Birkdale Golf Club. The document also sets down the criteria to be applied and conditions to be met when the Club considers applications for their use.

### **Qualifications**

Use of a ride-on buggy will not be allowed unless authorised in writing by the Club and will be restricted to members and visitors demonstrably having a disability to play golf unless aided by the use of the buggy. (See also `Use in General Play and Competitions` below).

Certified annually by their registered medical practitioner or Physician.

Holding a valid driving license.

Anyone wishing to use a buggy on the course should apply in writing to the Secretary and will be required to sign the Golf Buggy Safety Policy Acknowledgement Form which forms part of this policy document.

Ride-on buggies are available for rent from the Club. Alternatively, applicants are permitted to use their own four wheeled buggies but they will also be required to provide a detailed specification of the buggy and a copy of their Insurance Schedule along with their application.

Any person who accepts the privilege of operating a ride-on buggy on the golf course is deemed by so doing, to have the knowledge, training and skill to safely operate this vehicle and be fully accountable for their actions and the consequences thereof.

The safe operation of ride-on buggies on the course requires conscientious application and adherence to the minimum standard of care prescribed by this policy.

Ride-on buggies must be operated in accordance with the requirements of the following documents:

- Golf Buggy Safety Policy
- Golf Buggy Safe Working Practice
- Golf Buggy Safety Policy Acknowledgement Form.

In order that these conditions can be met in practice, the Secretary must be given written prior notice of a requirement by a member or visitor to use a ride-on buggy. The Club reserves the right to refuse permission if all of the conditions stipulated are not complied with.

Individuals must notify the Club as soon as the medical justification for the use of a ride-on buggy is no longer applicable at which time authorisation will be withdrawn.

The Club also reserves the right to withdraw authorisation if they believe the medical condition or disability necessitating the use of a ride-on buggy ceases, or the conditions for its use are not fully complied with.

In the interest of safety, or the condition of the course the Club staff may impose restrictions governing the use of the ride-on buggy on the course whenever in its absolute discretion it deems it expedient to do so. This might apply to the whole or just part of the course. Potentially unsuitable conditions include water-logging, frost, etc.

### **Use in General Play and Competitions**

During general (non-competition) play a ride-on buggy shall only be used by members and visitors authorised to do so.

Ride-on buggies may only be used during closed and open competitions by those suffering from a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act.



## **The Royal Birkdale Golf Club – Golf Buggy Safety Policy**

The Club has a duty of care to all users of the golf course. The topography of certain areas of the course is such that caution and prudence must be shown by the user of a ride-on buggy. It is also necessary for the Club to provide adequately safe means of access for all golfers including those given permission to use buggies. Moreover, the Club has to ensure the safety of golfers who do not wish to use ride-on buggies but who might be at risk from a mechanically defective ride-on buggy or its careless use.

To assist the safe employment of ride-on buggies all potential users (members and visitors) shall comply with the following conditions:

1. Ride-on buggies on The Royal Birkdale Golf Club property may only be used by members and visitors who are disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act.
2. Ride-on buggies must be operated with the utmost courtesy, care and consideration for the safety and convenience of pedestrians. Pedestrians must be afforded the right-of-way at all times.
3. In the interest of safety, it has been necessary to limit the access provided to the course for those individuals using ride-on buggies. The Club will provide a map showing what access is available, the routes that must be used and highlighting any obvious dangers on the course. Individuals must carry and refer to this map whenever they are using the ride-on buggy on the course.
4. Ride-on buggies must be operated and parked in such a manner that they do not impede or interfere with normal pedestrian or vehicular flow on roadways, ramps or pavements.
5. Ride-on buggy operators will be responsible for the security of the vehicle whilst in use on the course. They must prevent unauthorised use.
6. The Royal Birkdale Golf Club is responsible for providing buggies that are fit for use and correctly maintained. It is the responsibility of approved users to notify the professional staff of any problems with a buggy owned by the Club.
7. The Royal Birkdale Golf Club has no responsibility for the maintenance of buggies owned and operated by individuals on or beyond the confines of the course and the Club car parks. Members and visitors who are operating their own buggies are responsible for ensuring that their buggy is fit for use and correctly maintained.
8. The Club will accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury caused other than that arising from the negligent use of a ride-on buggy by their servants or agents.
9. No ride-on buggy will be operated in excess of 15km per hour. All speed limits must be observed.
10. Ride-on buggies shall be used only between dawn and dusk.
11. Ride-on buggies must be operated in compliance with the common` rules of the road` regardless of whether ride-on buggies are operated on pavements or roadways.

12. Operators must stop the buggy at blind intersections and proceed with caution.
13. The consumption of alcohol and/or the improper use of drugs is not permitted when using the Ride-on Buggy.
14. The Secretary has the authority to immediately prohibit any individual from using a Ride on Buggy. Application for reinstatement of permission can only be made to Council.
15. There may be occasional times relating to course conditions or weather where the Course Manager can temporarily suspend the use of buggies on the grounds of course protection or health and safety.



## **The Royal Birkdale Golf Club**

### **Safe working Practice for Ride-on-Buggies**

- Ride-on buggy operators must not be under the influence of alcoholic drinks or drugs
- Never allow children to drive the ride-on buggy.

#### **BEFORE USE**

- All operators of ride-on buggies must sign a Safety Policy Acknowledgement form before they are allowed to drive the buggy
- The Club's buggies are available for rental from the Professional shop and can be booked in advance.
- Club buggies are available on a first come first served basis
- The buggies should only be used by the individual authorised to use them and they should not in any circumstances offer a lift to any other individual
- Professional shop staff will provide comprehensive instruction on the safe operation and use of the Club's buggies.

#### **DURING USE**

- Do not move off until you are seated.
- Always remain seated and hold on while the vehicle is in motion.
- Hands, feet and head must be kept inside the buggy at all times while the vehicle is in motion.
- Always carry and refer to the map of routes and hazards which will be issued when you have permission to use a ride on buggy.
- The vehicle must be used to progress the game and must not be driven off the approved routes to look for golf balls.
- Ride-on buggies must not be driven in prohibited areas.
- The vehicle must not be used on tees, greens or the slopes leading up to them.
- The vehicle must not be taken inside any white line protecting the approach to a green.
- The vehicle must not be used within two metres of any bunkers, ditches or ponds or slopes leading to them except when using designated bridges.
- Check the area behind the vehicle before reversing.
- Set the parking brake before leaving the vehicle.
- Always consider the terrain, existing vehicular and pedestrian traffic conditions as well as environmental factors that may affect your ability to operate the vehicle safely.
  - Drive the vehicle only as fast as the terrain and safety considerations allow.
  - To avoid tipping over, drive the buggy straight up and down severe slopes.
  - Slow down before corners.
  - All turns must be executed at reduced speeds.
  - Avoid sudden stops or changes of direction that may result in loss of control.
  - Be extra careful when the course is wet and muddy.

#### **AFTER USE**

Club buggies are to be returned to the Professional shop. If the Professional shop is closed the keys are to be handed in to the bar.



## **The Royal Birkdale Golf Club – Buggy FAQ**

### ***Q. Why can't every golfer have the option of using a buggy on the course?***

**A.** The Royal Birkdale Golf Club was not designed for buggy use. There are numerous hazards to vehicle use including raised tees, sloping aspects to fairways, ditches and other water hazards as well as narrow paths and steep drop offs. This makes navigating safely around the course a greater challenge than many others. The course covers 96 hectares and is a site of Special Scientific Interest as designated by Natural England. The ecosystem supports a number of species of fragile fauna and flora. The Club is proud of its stewardship and wishes to minimise the impact of vehicles on the course.

### ***Q. Why do I need a doctor's authorisation to use a buggy?***

**A.** The policy of The Royal Birkdale Golf Club is that only individuals with a disability significantly affecting their ability to play golf can have access to a buggy. Your doctor is asked to certify two separate facts. The first is that under the Equality Act of 2010 that you have a substantial condition that affects your ability to play golf **and** secondly that you can safely control a buggy that weighs up to 450kg and travels at up to 15mph over uneven ground – being in possession of a valid driving licence would generally be considered sufficient.

### ***Q. Why does my doctor's authorisation need to be renewed annually?***

**A.** Conditions requiring the use of a buggy can change - either improve to a point where the individual no longer qualifies or deteriorates to a point where a buggy can no longer be controlled safely.

### ***Q. Why do I have to have a condition that has lasted, or is likely to last 12 months or more before I can use a buggy?***

**A.** The Equality Act (2010) states that a disability has to exist for, or is likely to exist for 12 months or more before the legislation is applicable. The policy of The Royal Birkdale Golf Club is to comply with the Equality Act in terms of disabled access and not exceed the requirements under the Act. Conditions that, because they are not substantial, or are likely to last less than 12 months are not covered. For example, a recent muscle, joint or back condition would not be covered by the Act.

### ***Q. Why do I need a valid driving license to use a buggy?***

**A.** This ensures a minimum standard of competence in controlling a motorised vehicle is met.

### ***Q. Why can't I rent a buggy on the day I am booked to play?***

**A.** The Royal Birkdale Golf Club policy is that requests to use a buggy are received and processed by the Secretary's Office at least 7 days prior the date of proposed use. This is to ensure that the criteria for safe usage are met and the applicant has had time to read, understand and anticipate any problems related to the buggy policy before they play.

Requests at short notice do not allow sufficient time for any queries, which may be pertinent to safe buggy usage, to be made and answered. The buggy fleet is limited which can lead to lack of capacity if there is demand at short notice.

***Q. Why are buggies sometimes used for non-golfing purposes?***

**A.** The Royal Birkdale Golf Club Policy allows buggies to be used in emergencies and to allow the transportation of authorised individuals and light equipment around the course on business associated with the functioning of the club.

***Q. If I am eligible to use a buggy why can I not always be assured that one will be available to rent?***

**A.** Our buggy fleet is limited to a maximum of 6 vehicles. The booking process allows visitors and guests, who have followed the booking procedure laid out in the buggy policy, priority (except on competition days)

Members, who are eligible, are allowed to book a buggy up to 6 days in advance. If a buggy is booked and not used, without 48hr notice of cancellation, the full buggy rental charge will apply.

***Q. Why can't I share a buggy or drive a golfer who is eligible to use a buggy?***

**A.** Two golfers in a single buggy increases the impact on the course. A greater distance is covered and there is a greater axle weight. These impact on the time taken to play the course and the impact on the course.

***Q. Why are the buggies fitted with GPS control that limits where I can drive on the course?***

**A.** This is to stop buggies been driven into hazards or vulnerable parts of the course, both for the safety of the driver and for protection of the course, flora and fauna.

***Q. Why do members have booking priority on competition days?***

**A.** This is to ensure that any member playing in a competition, who is eligible and wants to use a buggy, has the opportunity to do so.