

CHESHIRE COUNTY GOLF PARTNERSHIP

Press release

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For immediate use

CAPTION: Romiley Golf Club receives its GolfMark award (left to right) Head PGA professional Alex White, Junior Organiser Bob Blundell, Club Captain Derek Worthington, Cheshire County Golf Partnership development officer Craig Thomas, and Hon Secretary Charles Haworth

A CHESHIRE golf club is proving to be a class act in its efforts to encourage more people to take up the sport.

Romiley Golf Club head professional Alex White has been swapping the clubhouse for the classroom with a project to introduce golf to primary school pupils in the Stockport area.

Now the club's work – which has seen a revival in their junior numbers - has received national recognition.

Romiley GC, which can be found at Goosehouse Green, has been awarded GolfMark, a national seal of approval for junior and beginner friendly facilities which play an important role in the development of the game.

GolfMark is a national scheme that incorporates ClubMark and recognises initiatives that focus on Coaching and Playing, Club Environment and Child Protection, and Duty of Care, all of which are extremely important to parents and children alike.

Alex joined the club, which was founded in 1897, 19 months ago and has been busy building new links with the local community.

"I have been working with the schools sports partnership in Stockport, delivering Tri-Golf sessions to six primary schools that ring the club as part of their PE lessons," explains Alex.

"We run five lessons for them, with a sixth at the club itself which gives the youngsters a chance to get a feel for what a real golf club and course is like. We also held a mini golf festival as part of the Queen's Jubilee, which proved very popular.

"Romiley always had a strong junior section, but they all grew up together and

the numbers had dropped. Now the numbers are building back up again and the members take a great deal of pleasure in seeing so many young golfers enjoying the excellent club we have here."

Alex has adopted a proactive approach in trying to attract new players of all ages to Romiley, while the club also offers a special taster membership to adults and has no minimum age limit for junior players. He has taken the inflatable golf net, provided by the Cheshire County Golf Partnership, to public events like Romiley in the Park and the Romiley Young Farmers Show.

"Golf needs to get out into the local community and these events were an ideal opportunity to engage with people of all ages," adds Alex. "They help raise the profile of the club while our taster membership scheme is a great way for people to sample what both the sport and the club have to offer, which includes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and a good social life."

With the taster membership scheme, Romiley is providing a pathway towards full membership of the club by offering adults three months membership for just £100 from March this year. This is a tremendous offer as it also includes five lessons from the professional.

Alex believes the GolfMark award will now help the club build for the future.

"GolfMark shows parents that we have an official stamp of approval and that Romiley is a safe place to come with a fun environment in which youngsters can enjoy learning and playing their golf," he adds. "It is something parents will look to more and more in the future as a benchmark of the facilities on offer.

"The funding that this award opens up to the club will help us build on our successes so far and go on to establish new links to different areas of the local community, such as secondary schools, for example."

Says Craig Thomas, county development officer for the Cheshire County Golf Partnership: "GolfMark is a positive signal to anyone thinking of giving golf a go at Romiley that they have the right duty of care policies in place.

"It means a parent dropping off their child knows they are in a positive environment with the emphasis on the right care and responsibilities.

"The club has responded positively to the challenge facing golf clubs of attracting a new generation of players. GolfMark is a fitting acknowledgement of their efforts in taking the sport out into the local community."

Says Melanie Flude, regional development officer for England Golf: "More than 600 clubs across the country have successfully worked towards GolfMark, which shows how the sport is opening its doors to new players and offering both a warm welcome and expert help and advice so they can get the most out of the game.

“Romiley typifies that approach and should be congratulated for all the hard work the club and its members have invested into achieving GolfMark.”

Further information about Romiley Golf Club can be found at www.romileygolfclub.org

Note to editors

GolfMark is an initiative jointly provided by the EGU and EWGA via the England Golf Partnership's 'Whole Sport Plan' for golf and is an integral part of the England Golf Partnership's vision to 'Grow the Game'.

The England Golf Partnership (EGP) brings together the amateur governing body, England Golf and the PGA, to grow the game with the support of the Golf Foundation and Sport England.

County Golf Partnerships, involving the county men's women's and professional organisations, are part of the EGP's Whole Sport Plan for golf and an integral part of its vision to make England the world's leading golf nation by 2020.

In Cheshire the partnership is supported by the Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs, the Cheshire County Ladies Golf Association and the Cheshire and North Wales PGA.

For more details of the activities in Cheshire visit www.cheshiregolfpartnership.com

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