

NGCAA reports constructive talks with Government over Licensing Act 2003

TALKS between the Government and the National Golf Clubs Advisory Association (NGCAA) have been described as 'constructive' and 'candid' by experts.

The NGCAA has lobbied the Government over the treatment of golf clubs under the new licensing laws that came into effect on November 24th 2005.

James Purnell MP, the Licensing Minister, invited Michael Shaw, national secretary of the NGCAA, to voice the five key concerns of 1,200 member clubs on the Licensing Act 2003 which are:

" Why are efficient golf clubs being penalised for early application of the new licence? It would be fairer if clubs were able to renew their licence on the 24th November each year - not twelve months after the date they applied.

" Why should fees be charged based upon the square footage of a club which includes the size of the actual course? It is unfair that golf clubs should subsidise smaller, but more profitable, commercial city centre pubs and clubs.

" A review of the scale of fees is needed. The NGCAA backs representations in this field made by the English Golf Union.

" Why should Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC) get special treatment? It is not practical or prudent for all golf clubs to convert to CASC status and they should not be prejudiced for not doing so.

" Why is the paperwork so complicated? The Government must examine simpler methods of application including the use of technology.

Michael Shaw, national secretary of the NGCAA, says:

"We were granted sufficient opportunity to air our views over this important matter for golf clubs all over the country. It is important that our members recognise that we will continue to fight for the best interests of clubs on any issue that affects them.

"Our opinions and advice offered to James Purnell MP were constructive and candid. We are looking forward to future developments on the matter.

"I must express our thanks to Tim Yeo MP, who is also a vice president of the NGCAA, for kindly facilitating the meeting at his offices in Parliament Street."

Contact the NGCAA on 01684 311353 or see www.ngcaa.org.uk for membership details.