

Childwall Golf Club Ecology & Sustainability Newsletter May 2026

“From sustainability and conservation of wildlife, to health and well-being for all ages, to jobs and economic value through local supply chains, ***golf is good for nature and communities***” (Golf Environmental Organisation (GEO) Foundation)

Wildlife News



Siskins – above Male; top right Female; right Siskin singing.

We have had many Siskins at and around our bird feeding station near the 18th green. Huge numbers visit the UK in winter from Northern and Eastern Europe.

They are easily recognised by their yellow and black plumage.



Redpolls on the Nyger feeder by the 18th green (left).

Notice the red forecrown and the male's bright red breast (above).

Like Siskins, large numbers of Redpoll visit the UK in winter.

Steve Young says that a Siskin and Redpoll influx started during the first week of March with the odd bird still present at the start of April. The highest count was of at least 20 Siskin and 15 Redpoll, including a ringed bird that I haven't had any info about yet.

Pheasants are becoming more widespread on the course now, not just restricted to 11th and 12th in the fields bordering the course, but actually walking across course. I've seen 4 males and 2 females, plus five 1st year juvenile females.



Pheasants on Childwall Golf course: Left is a male; Right is a female

A few pairs of Blue tits have occupied our nest boxes. They will visit more frequently when they have young so keep your eye out when you are playing golf.



Blue tit at nest box number 82 which is behind the 15th green



Ring-necked Parakeet in a nest hole behind the 16th green. Also, a Nuthatch is nesting behind



Great Spotted Woodpecker on a drumming tree behind the 16th green



Kestrel inspecting the nest box vacated by the Tawny Owls. Kestrels breed in April/May (much later than the owls)

Tawny Owl at CGC

After a walk around the course on 2nd March, I thought I'd check the nest box on 13th hole for any sign of our Kestrels; they have successfully bred for the last two years raising seven young.

There was no sign but as I looked more carefully I thought I could see two white lines at the back of the box. Puzzled I walked further away onto the practice ground to get a better angle, took a few photos and zoomed in on the camera screen. There in front of me was the head of an adult Tawny Owl, the two white lines I'd seen formed the head pattern!

I needed more height to see more of the bird so went back to the office, borrowed a large stepladder, set it up on the practice ground and took a few shaky images from the top step.

On 4th March I checked again and this time could see the head of one owlet, proving that the box was being used to nest in not just as a winter roost site. The owlet looked about one-week old meaning the eggs would have been laid mid- late January allowing for a thirty-day incubation period.

I checked three or four times a week, seeing two owlets on 11th March then finally three together on 18th March. Being owls, feeding took place during the night so watching them was hard work. After the 18th March I saw very little of them. Presumably they all successfully left the box and were hiding up in nearby trees as on 2nd April I watched a female Kestrel tentatively cling to the box while peering inside. Seeing all was clear she then entered and seemed to settle down as I didn't see her again in the next thirty minutes; hopefully they will breed again.

Steve Young



Tawny Owls occupying the 'Kestrel Box' in the Poplar trees by the 13th fairway.

All pictures by **Steve Young**

Birdie of the Month – Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*)

Scientific name: *Strix aluco*

The Tawny Owl is an owl the size of a Woodpigeon. It has a rounded body and head, with a ring of dark feathers around its face surrounding the dark eyes. Tawny Owls in the UK are mainly reddish brown above and paler underneath.

Tawny Owls.....

- breed in broad-leaved and deciduous woodland,
- are resident and sedentary in its habits,
- there are approximately 50,000 breeding pairs in the UK,
- it is an amber-listed Bird of Conservation Concern.

Our most familiar owl, the Tawny Owl, is found across Britain but is absent from Ireland.

Tawny Owls breed early in the year, and their hooting calls can be heard from late autumn and through the winter months. The owls at CGC had bred and fledged by the end of February/early March.



Three owlets in the nest box by the 13th fairway

The hooting call of a Tawny Owl is probably the most familiar of UK owl calls. It is the **male** only that makes this call to proclaim its territory. The **female's** call is 'keewik', which is used as a contact call.

Tawnies are night owls in every sense, so you're more likely to hear their hoots than see their faces. If you're really lucky, you might spot one snoozing in a tree during the day.

A resident pair have successfully bred in our 'Kestrel Box' on the 13th fairway and produced three young which have now fledged. We hope they will return later this year.



There are many iconic **Bluebells** blooming around the golf course. They have violet-blue, bell-shaped flowers that carpet our woodland areas. Bluebells flower early before the trees' canopy of leaves shade out light. They provide valuable nectar and pollen for many insects including our Childwall honey bees.



Cowslips are part of the primrose family and like primroses and bluebells also flower early.



Fox (left) photographed on the course by Carl Smith.

The warm weather has brought out many species of butterflies.

Below left to right: **Speckled Wood, Holly Blue & Orange Tip**

(Photos by Steve Young)



Sustainability News

- Since the installation of solar panels and new gas boilers, we are expecting significant **reductions in both electricity and gas costs**. Both electricity and gas usage have been monitored quarterly on a dashboard for many years. Thanks to Pat Donnelly and Gavin Brown for their commitment to this. The charts below show the electricity and gas consumption during the 1st Quarter of 2026. There is a significant reduction in the cost of gas consumption (chart 1). The reduction in electricity consumption will become apparent after spring/summer of 2026. The solar panels were installed in October 2025 (chart 2).
- There is an “i-pad” behind the bar for members to view a live update of our energy consumption.

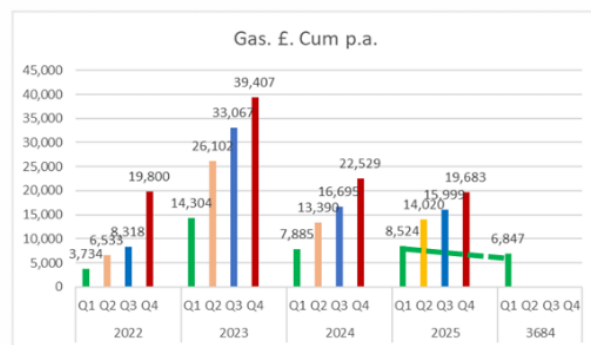
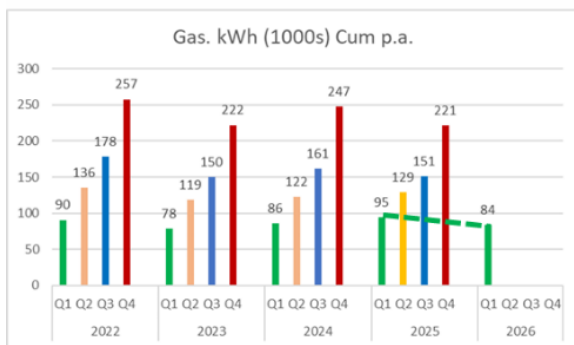


Energy Dashboard, Q1 2026 Gas (Cumulative)



c.10% decrease in consumption in 1st quarter

c.24% decrease in cost in 1st quarter



New Boilers installed in June 2025.
Impact to be tracked over the coming months / years.
The above stats for Q1, 2026 indicate an initial improvement in efficiency.

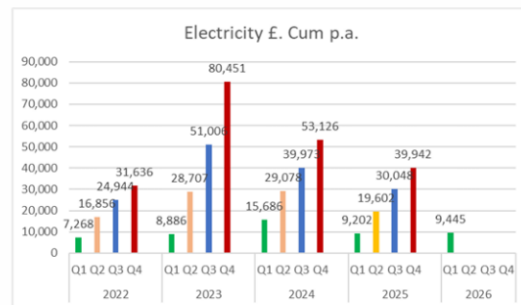
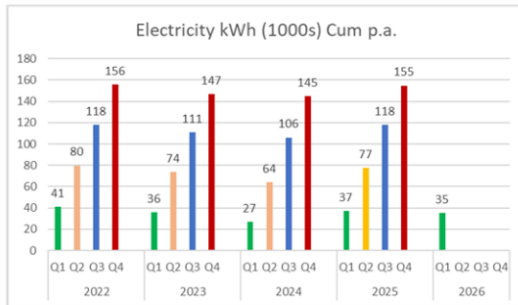
Chart 1: Gas consumption



Energy Dashboard, Q1 2026 Electricity (Cumulative)



Small decrease in consumption in 2026 Q1.



100 solar panels were installed in October 2025. Their impact will start to kick in from Spring 2026.

16/04/2026

Chart 2: Electricity consumption

- Water conservation is an ongoing topic and is being reviewed by committees. Our new Course Manager, Andrew Birchall, has excellent experience in this area. England Golf and the R&A have stated that “sustainable water management is one of the main topics that golf clubs are reaching out to us about, alongside Biodiversity Net Gain”.
- Many thanks to Andrew Birchall and his greens staff for installing “Broken tee” buckets at the Par 3 holes. The contents are recycled.



- Thank you to all members who continue to use our recyclable bins for plastic and paper waste.

- Tree removal is an emotive issue, however, in consultation with Andrew Birchall and the Greens Committee it has been established that trees are removed for very good reason. This is either due to a health and safety issue (dead or dying trees) OR to provide more light to greens and tee areas.

Eco Team Photo Competition



Picture of a Great Spotted Woodpecker at the bird feeding station near the 18th green (by a member of CGC)

We have decided to postpone the Eco Photo Competition for the time being. It was decided that photographs should only be taken at Childwall Golf Club and we did not want people taking photos while playing golf for fear of 'slow play'.

Brochure of Ecology & Newsletter at Childwall Golf Club

- A reminder that both the **Ecology Brochure** and the **Newsletter** will be available to view by members and visitors in the lounge area of the clubhouse.



Childwall Golf Club Ecology & Sustainability Committee



***Ron Pierce
(Chair)***



Gavin Brown



***John Fox
(Secretary)***



Helen Gale



***Steve
Young***



***Steve
Finnegan***



Pat Donnelly



Carl Smith



***Indira
Maddison***



***Alison
Bagnall***



***Andrew
Birchall***

Best wishes,

The Childwall Golf Club Ecology & Sustainability Team