

Greens Report March 2023

Since my February report we have had a mixed bag of weather, from warm sunny days, hard frosts, high winds and snow fall.

The high winds resulted in a couple of trees blowing down amongst the avenue on 3rd and 4th semi rough. These were just two small 20ft trees that we chopped up and disposed off due to the nature of them. We have continued to work towards the allocated allowance of trees to meet our quota with regards the Forestry Commission plan, and have only 7 trees left to remove between 7th and 9th fairways.

We have been dropping off onto this work while the weather has been bad and the course is closed as it's a dangerous area to work when golf is operational, therefore when the course is closed we can work safely and effectively. Over the last two to three weeks while weather hampered us, we have also been processing split logs in preparation for next year and have cleared an area inside the main machinery shed to store them and allow them to dry.

After speaking with Ian, the beech tree at the start of the 12th avenue that was marked to be removed last year, was trimmed back to try and save it as it was decaying. After monitoring it last year and then into this year it was showing severe signs of disease and rot. It was decided that we had tried our best to prolong and preserve the tree but now the time had come to remove it. This was carried out last week during the snowfall and the tree was felled safely and the majority of smaller limbs and branches were burnt on site, the remainder of the trunk was cut up, split and taken off site.

All the new tee markers that we cut, dried out, nailed have now all had the bodies stained with two coats of Ronseal and the end facias double coated in either white, red and yellow and are ready to be put out at the start of the new playing season. All the course furniture is now completed with the same stain, but some seats as I reported last month needed a bit of attention to repair them. So far we have only lost one seat completely but that has been replaced with a seat purchased in remembrance of Mr. Gary Amos through his friends. The seats as they have been completed have been put back onto the course as we've completed them.

A friend of mine Mr Kevin McArdle who has his own landscape and fencing company had 20 rolls of left over turf. He kindly dropped it off for us free of charge. After we had re-installed the new pipe at the 3rd green we back filled with gravel and root zone and intended to over seed it. During this time the rabbits have had a field day scratching out the root zone. With the turf Kevin provided, I decided that we would turf the whole drain line, as far as we could from the front to the back of the green. This has tidied up the area massively and will knit in far much quicker than the intended seed. The 20 rolls got us the full length of the approach and the out of play areas we will seed, pre-season.

All the bunkers have been edged and shaped with the half-moon turving iron and long handled shears. The top bunkers have been rotavated but due to hard frosts the bottom bunkers were just edged and tidied. There are several bunkers that needed more work and reshaping. Again after my last meeting with Ian we agreed that the two bunkers on the 6th be re-shaped.

The left one was to be made a better shape in the bottom and slightly larger and the right side one to reshape the bottom and to lose "the eyebrow" from the top. Both these are now done and just require a little landscape and fresh sand. We also agreed that the 15th over hang be removed and the face turfed, this has been shaped and the face requires backfill when weather allows, but will keep

original sand. The 11th right side bunker is to dig out and the sand be used to top up left green side bunker and replace the right side bunker with new, as last season we temporarily topped it. The right side 14th bunker lip was to reshape to try and deflect the water from washing the bunker out. This channel has been lifted so now the water will be diverted away from the bunker, this will also be topped up pre-season. The new sand is ordered and will be literally the last thing to do. This way with the bad weather the sand will be fresh and not contaminated with all the bad weather we are having and will be fresh for the start of the season.

I ordered all the oil and fuel filters for the machines last month and they arrived at the start of this month. I'm currently working my way through the machines, changing filters, greasing units and frames and repairing any faults I notice along the way in preparation of the season.

Along with this work we have continued to clean car park of leaves, grit car park and pathways when needed, change holes, rake bunkers, dress wet areas with sand, move ropes to spread wear. We have cut tees and approaches when possible and also greens. The team and myself are also taking the remaining days of our annual holiday allowance before the end of this month. Jeff and Jack have had there full allowance, Colin is off next week and I'm off the last week of March which will complete 2022/23 holidays.

Finally an incident occurred on Tuesday 7th March, a senior member, Mr J. Lamont slipped while approaching the 18th green and fell. Although he was fine, albeit a little shaken he was helped up by his playing partners and completed his round. I was approached by Mr Lamont minutes later in the car park as I had been fitting a new toilet lock in the male toilets. Mr Lamont explained what had happened and said it was extremely dangerous. I pointed out and tried to explain to Mr Lamont that we would hoop the area and dress it with sand, as we have done other areas to help access. I also explained that at 9.30 when the seniors teed off the ground was white frost and hard. By 1pm when they were completing their round the sun was now out and the frost had thawed. I explained we can try and direct golfers as best as we can, with roped areas, signage but the players themselves have to be vigilant and have a certain degree of mindfulness regarding changing ground conditions and take appropriate action, if required. Following that I explained the only other possibility is to close the course when it's wet.

If this was the result over the winter we would never be open. We as a club and staff monitor the course daily and move ropes when needed, sand wet areas and try and provide a service that the members pay for, we understand and take seriously the duty of care regarding to members safety, but they equally need to take some responsibility.. If they feel they are at risk, walk off and bring to the attention of the club.

Hope this can shed a bit light on the situation and the controls we use over what is tricky ground conditions over the winter months

Thanks Regards

David