



Phase One Operations Update

As the contractor felling part of phase one comes to an end it is a great time to give you all a brief explanation of what has taken place and some of the reasons for our decisions. Firstly though I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their positive comments, support and patience during this phase of works. As you will have noticed over the past few weeks there has been plenty going on and the 5 hectares we hoped to achieve have been completed with the help of some good weather patterns. As was stated during the presentations not everything goes to plan during such works and this type of operation is very much an artistic endeavour to find the right look and balance. In certain areas of phase one this endeavour has allowed us to leave more than was previously thought and in other areas it has meant taking more than thought to achieve the correct effect. What is important though is that looking at it now I strongly feel we have achieved the best look we could achieve with the poor tree stock we had.

If we take an area where we had to take more than first thought such as behind the 1st green I feel we have done what is necessary to gain the best aesthetic with what was available. Whilst I would always lean on the side of light and air for the benefit of turf grass it is always been my opinion if we can leave a tree we will! As was alluded to in the presentations it is almost impossible to say with any certainty how many trees are going to be removed during a given phase but only give a ball park percentage figure. In this instance 50-60% was that ball park.

Tree removal is undoubtedly a long-term agronomic benefit to turf grass however the removal of trees in a larger scale project such as ours also forms an artistic and strategic dilemma. When trees have grown together in such close proximity as was apparent at the rear of the first, each tree severely affects the health and form of the tree next to it. What becomes apparent is twisted growth, small quantities of lower limbs, lack of wood density to the central stem and heliotropic one sided growth. Whilst this does not affect the general aesthetic of a tightly packed woodland once one tree is removed it then becomes apparent how poorly formed the two next to it are. The situation at the back of the first resulted over the years from a large quantity of self seeding tree species which we can see developing from old photographs. Left unchecked and without planning this self seeded woodland had trees which were allowed to grow as they pleased and in essence a small scrubby woodland formed. Woodlands as with all trees require management if they are to prosper. Without management the trees in this area were poor in form and health resulting in a need to take more than was originally thought.

Despite this fact though during this phase of operations what became apparent were a couple of potential greats to the rear of that scrubby woodland. As they were a good distance from the playing surfaces and far enough from the scrub to be detrimentally effected then we were able to open these up creating a vista of them and a magnificent vista up the 2nd hole which can be seen all the way from our clubhouse. This vista has received much positive feedback which is greatly appreciated. Any area of tree management or golf course construction is very much an artistic process. Often with such a mass it

is difficult to see the wood for the trees so to speak. It is only by opening them up that the clear picture becomes apparent and whilst not what was always originally intended often the greatest vistas are produced from the unknown quantity!

Strategy

In relation to challenge and strategy of the golf course offered by the trees I would like to reiterate my feeling that to create the canvas firstly it has to be stripped back. Having had brief consultations with a renowned golf course architect it was his agreement that for him to put in place a plan for the necessary architecture first it would be a huge benefit to see the blank canvas. Whilst I would wholeheartedly agree that in areas the need for more architecture is needed the requirement to take out trees such as the birch on 4th and the trees up the right of the 2nd was needed so the balance of the hole can be seen and the space for any architecture correctly ascertained.

Trees as was noted in the presentation do not form a hazard that was in line with the formation of the course and the age of design it was laid out in. Over the years various notable architects have seen the need for trees but have openly rejected their use as a defensive strategy for a golf course. The encroachment and poor planting of trees on the course had changed aspects of the course from strategic design to a Penal form thus changing the concept of holes and traditional design. Whilst I appreciate as do others on the greens committee that taking out trees in landing areas opens up certain holes the option to put in and replace lost architecture now becomes evident and will be something that will be drawn up by a qualified Golf Course Architect.

Trees and gorse form hazards on golf courses that if unmanaged are far from fair! As an example playing the 16h hole a drive would only need to miss the cut grass by 10 yards for it to be rendered a lost ball in the thorny gorse. This is far from fair and should not form the purpose of gorse. Gorse interestingly also enriches the environment around about it giving of high quantities of Nitrogen. It is no surprise then that where gorse is present tall grasses around about it are coarse and dense in appearance resulting in yet more lost balls. Removal of gorse forms an important part firstly in the restoration of correct strategy and secondly in the betterment of fine acid grasslands which played a significant role in the formation of the golf course.

During the presentations I was keen to stress that trees form an important part of the modern day Pannal and also a Heath land eco system. **It has always and will always be our intent to save and beatify the greats that we have lost in amongst a sea of undesirables.** Whilst plenty of wood has been removed during phase one there are still a lot of trees out there! The major difference now though is that where there are trees they have a greater chance of flourishing and they can be seen to be appreciated. If you add in alongside that the improved light and air and the remarkable vistas that have been created I am sure you would agree that as tree management progresses phase one has been a great success and a positive change for our future.

Moving Forward

Now that the contractor element of the process has been completed we are making progress with the stump grinding phase. This is a particularly difficult part of the process taking time and creating holes which will need filling. Getting this part right though will allow us the best opportunity of establishing good grasslands moving forward. Following our stump grinding phase we will complete the remaining one hectare of woodland management in house over the course of the winter. This involves works between holes 4 and 5, works to the first fairway area and further scrub removal in our ever improving woodland on the 5th bank side. Once completed these areas will compliment the wonderful works already achieved over the past few weeks.

Tree management whilst a scary prospect to start is vital for our game, our turf grass and our great specimen trees. We have learnt many things during the phase one felling however one thing remains constant that is the need to make the most of the glorious Pannal that was shrouded in a sea of trees. The improved vistas, the feeling of open space, the light, the air, uncovering lost architecture and lifting the veil off our golf course have left us with a tremendous canvas from which we can create a better strategic course and reinstate some of Pannal's lost features. We hope you are enjoying the new vistas and are excited about the future possibilities ahead.

To conclude I would once again like to thank you all for your patience and support. I would particularly like to mention the outstanding volunteers who give up their time to come and help us in our cause. They by their actions speak volumes for the work we are doing, the things that have been achieved and the bright future we look forward to creating as time progresses.

Warmest Thanks

James Parker
Golf Course Manager

