



## **MOWSBURY GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE REPORT MARCH 2019**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The winter of 2018/2019 has been a complete change from last winter. Last February we were in the midst of the “Beast from the East” with temperatures below freezing for most of the month. In contrast this year we have seen temperatures up to 15 degrees Celsius. This has meant that the members can enjoy the course more frequently during the winter months than in previous years. In addition, it has been of great assistance to the green-keeping team who have been able to continue with the presentation of the course and also achieve the winter projects that were scheduled into our winter works programme.

In terms of rainfall and in comparison, I can confirm the following;

Month	2017	2018	2019
Nov	43mm	34mm	
Dec	75mm	64mm	
Jan		48mm	22mm
Feb		26mm	27mm

With regard to snow, we have only closed the course for two days this winter. Trolley “hedgehog wheels” were brought into effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> December and removed 1<sup>st</sup> March due to the current dry conditions. As winter begins its conclusion, we can start preparing the course for yet another busy and hopefully successful golfing season.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for giving our Head Green-keeper (Richard Saunders) a complementary years membership in recognition of his hard work during the summer of 2018.

### **GREENS MAINTENANCE**

The greens have benefitted from the favourable weather conditions and restrictions of playing the main greens have almost been non-existent.

As part of our disease management programme we have applied fungicide using a contact and systemic fungicide. This has proved to be very successful and has controlled slight outbreaks of Fusarium disease in this exceptionally mild winter. In addition to the fungicide, liquid iron has been applied in January 2019. You will have noticed that this most recent application of soluble iron made the greens go quite dark in appearance. This not only hardens the leaf of the plant

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against the possibility of disease out break but also helps to acidify the soil and restricts development of diseases such as Take All.

Granular fertiliser was applied to all greens on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November - shortly we will apply an early spring “cold start” fertiliser which will kick start the growth and help to recover from any blemishes caused from aeration and general maintenance during the winter months.

Due to the unseasonably mild conditions we are currently mowing the greens on two occasions per week at a height of 5mm.

We will soon be looking to carry out our spring programme and will need to discuss this programme of work this evening so that we can minimise any impact to play. This work is scheduled for the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April. This work is expected to consist of;

- Thatch removal
- Solid tining
- Top-dressing with dressing sand
- Fertiliser application

## **TEES MAINTENANCE**

As always, following a period of protracted hot and dry conditions such as the summer of 2018 it is followed by a necessary period of recovery. To compensate for this where necessary we have carried out aeration, over-seeded the tees with an aggressive tees renovation mix and applied autumn and winter fertiliser.

All tees were put into winter positions at the beginning of January which included putting all par 3's onto winter mats. We took the decision to take the 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> tees off of the main teeing area early as both of these tees in particular had suffered from the summer heat and lack of water which will be mentioned later in the report.

We have noticed that the tees not in play and particularly the Par 3 tees have benefitted from being rested. It would be nice to extend this practise and play winter mats from around December until late March to help the tees recover from the rigors of the golfing season.

There will be some areas/ tees that need additional maintenance such as an application of granular moss-killer. In March we will be applying a slow released granular fertiliser which is designed to release its nutrients over a 12- week period.

The main tees will all be back in play by the end of March, Frequent cutting of the tees will commence when spring growth starts to develop. We have been cutting the tees on a more frequent basis this winter due to the mild conditions. All summer tee blocks are in the process of being repainted and will be back in use by the end of March.



## **FAIRWAY MAINTENANCE**

Despite the hot summer the fairways have recovered well - if you recall during August and September, some fairways were totally brown and divorced from any shades of green. To help the recovery process the fairways have been aerated on three occasions. Now that the spring weather is approaching a specialised slow release fertiliser called “Marathon” will be applied to stimulate further growth, where any weakness exists.

Cutting of the fairways will take place shortly to increase presentation and improve definition between the fairways, areas of semi rough, rough and the carry from the tee to the fairway.



## **ROUGH MAINTENANCE**

During the winter months comments about the rough are very minimal as the rough mainly looks after itself. Therefore, it is a good time to take the opportunity to service the rough mower and prepare for another hectic cutting season. At present the ground conditions are very dry but as we all know, Mowsbury has a habit of producing high grass yield in early May if warm and wet conditions prevail. To further assist with this issue we have recently purchased a new rough cutter which will help during these periods of strong growth.

Now that the grass is just starting to grow you will see the rough cutter out dealing with pockets of early growth and help to create a more uniform appearance prior to the onset of Easter.

## **BUNKER MAINTENANCE**

As part of our winter works schedule a lot of emphasis has been put on the renovation of certain bunkers around the course. This has involved filling in the bunker on the left-hand side of the 3<sup>rd</sup> fairway and creating a new bunker more into the fairway. The original bunker did not face



the green and was more of a water hazard rather than a bunker at certain times of the year. The bunkers we are working on now should hopefully be in play for the beginning of May. I know that there has been a comment that perhaps this work could have been carried out earlier in the winter. However, the current dry conditions have meant that the damage often expected from construction projects in the winter has been minimalised. Further reconstruction will be carried out on the 14<sup>th</sup> green side bunker & the 15<sup>th</sup> fairway bunker.

Bunkers are being fully raked at least twice per week at the moment and a general walk round and tidy up daily.



## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

As part of Turfcare Leisure's annual health & safety review, all risk assessments, COSHH risk assessments, policies and procedures have now been updated. This documentation will be available to the club in both paper and electronic versions.

In early April our annual health and safety inspection will take place by Safe n Sure Ltd to regulate our working practices and to ensure that our company keeps up with current and new safety legislation.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, all of our Head Greenkeepers/ 1<sup>st</sup> Assistants will attend our company Health and Safety meeting and this will be followed on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 by our first aid refresher courses for some of our staff.

## **IRRIGATION**

The persistent heat of last summer certainly tested our irrigation system and on the whole it performed well. As previously mentioned, some tees seemed to suffer from a lack of water and closer inspection revealed that the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> tees were suffering from a decoder fault. New decoders will have to be purchased to rectify this problem.

We carried out a manual check on the greens and tees at the end of the year and we have noticed that 6 sprinklers are in need of replacing. It would also be useful to hold a couple of sprinklers in stock in case of future break downs.

There are 3 valves assemblies that need replacing. Last year we replaced the valve assembly on the left-hand side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> green, we now need to replace the valve on the rh side of the 2<sup>nd</sup> green. There is a problem with the valves on the 10<sup>th</sup> green - we are unable to turn these on manually.

## **AOB**

Tree pruning has taken place around the course, a few trees have been removed that were either dead or diseased.

Due to a couple of golfers slipping on the steps on some of the tees it was agreed with the Manager to rope off the steps during the winter months to eliminate a health & safety issue. After evaluating the steps it was found that the steps cannot re-open until a non-slip material is applied to the steps themselves. At present, authorisation to purchase this specialised material is being considered by Fusion.

It would be worth considering the purchase of a new set of flags, flag poles and hole cups as the set we have out at the moment are two years old and are starting to look tired.





## **CONCLUSION**

The new season will soon be upon us and everyone will be out enjoying the course. This current dry weather means that we can start the year on a better note than the very wet spring we suffered last year.

Hopefully, when the new bunkers are brought into play the members and visitors will see that we are all trying to move things forward and continue to improve the course at Mowsbury.