

## Dear Members

Finally I have something positive to write on our putting surfaces it has been a long 5 months to get them to recover from the Leather Jacket damage seen throughout the Winter and Spring. Certainly for the Ladies Club Championship Rd1, L'Anresse Open, Le Riches & Tradesmens Cup the putting surfaces have performed reasonably well.

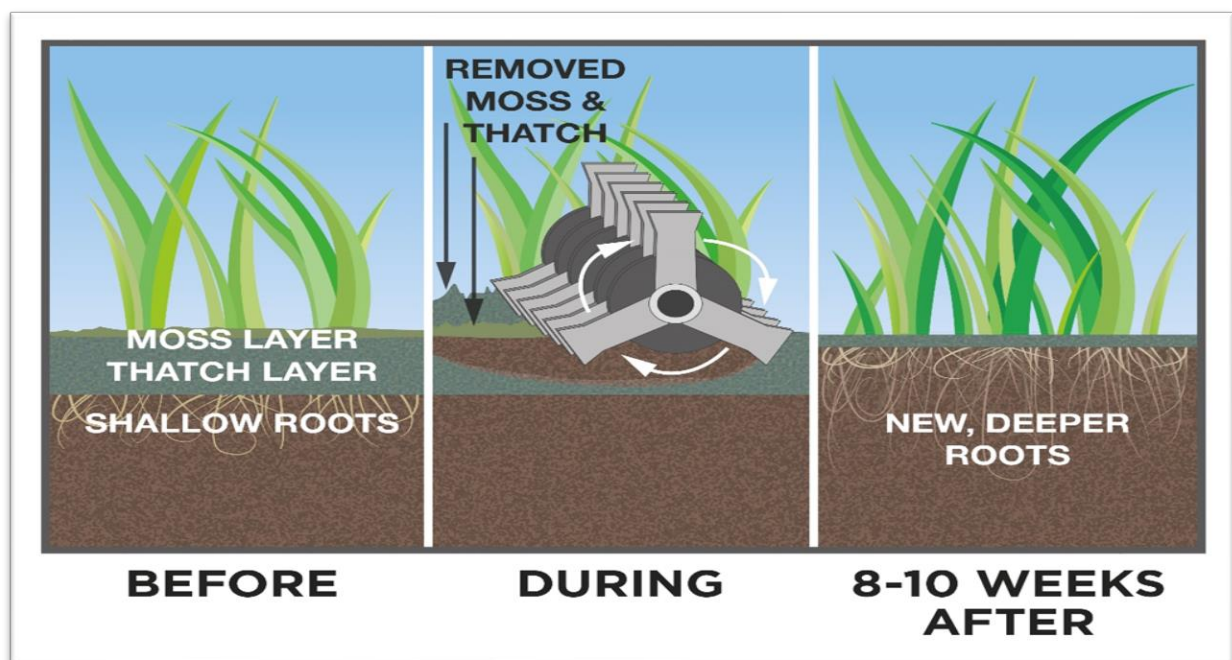
Our aim now is to make sure this winter the Leather Jackets are treated in October-November so we avoid going in to another season with the damage experienced this year. I am heading away in September to undertake a qualification Pa6G that I then can apply Merit Turf for when we receive our licence to apply to the putting surfaces. Although this will give us protection on our greens the Leather Jacket infestation at L'Anresse is severe and we will experience further damage to our fairways as we go in to the depths of winter.

## Bunkers

The sand has finally arrived and the greens staff have been out topping up the bunkers. We have sent the existing bunker sand off for analysis to the European Turf Grass Laboratories to check the suitability and overall playing characteristic quality of the sand. This is on going and G.C.M will be taking their findings in to account and decisions will be made on the performance results.

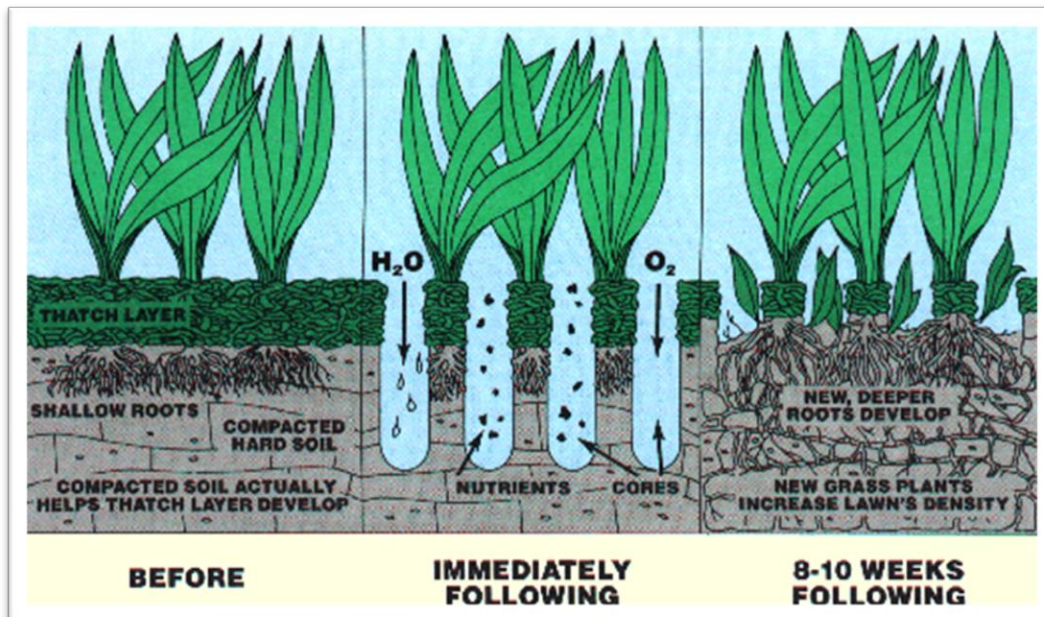
## Maintenance Week

Maintenance week will go ahead from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September our aim is to reduce the Organic Matter (Thatch) content of our putting surfaces. We will be using differing methods to reduce the accumulation and move towards higher performing putting surfaces in the years to come.



*Scarification Benefits*

Scarification removes unwanted lateral growth and dead plant material and opens up the surface for topdressing sand to mesh in to. Slicing the grass surface helps encourage the grass to grow upright resulting in a truer, faster putting surface. Scarification removes thatch which is a buildup of organic matter and is comprised of dead grass, leaves, shoots, roots and stolon's.



### ***Core Aeration Benefits***

The putting surfaces will then be hollow core aerified using a 12mm diameter hollow core. The benefits of core aeration are huge especially with the higher organic matter content we have in the greens at L'Anresse. Thousands of cores are physically removed from the putting surfaces having a great impact on the amount of thatch that has accumulated, by pulling a core it removes part of the thatch layer. Other benefits include gaseous exchange where carbon dioxide and other poisonous gasses are released and oxygen levels replenished. Compaction relief thus improving drainage and soil water uptake.

We will then overseed using Fescue cultivars. Fescue is the ideal grass for links golf. Fescue has a very fine leaf and is the ideal grass for links putting surfaces. We have many weed grasses that also make up our greens at L'Anresse these are generally coarse leaved and are not suitable for putting greens our aim over the coming years is to try and make an impact on reducing these coarse grasses and create an environment where the finer fescues will flourish.

Finally top dress application will be made to the greens using 40 tons of material. This will fill the core holes and give the fescue seed the ideal bed to germinate. Topdressing also furthermore dilutes the organic matter content regains surface smoothness aids in soil exchange for an improved rootzone that helps in producing firmer playing surfaces.

I expect the greens after completion to take three weeks to fully recover. I understand this has a great impact on the surface quality but these essential works are a necessary evil for the overall health of the putting surfaces going forward.

### **Ecology Consultancy Visit**

During October L'Anresse Links will be visited by Sophie Olejnik an industry leading Ecologist within the golfing sector.

Sophie has worked with many British Open venues and has a vast knowledge on returning links golf courses to their natural surroundings. Our aim with Sophies visit is to vastly improve the environment for the local Flora and Fauna to thrive. L'Anresse has somewhat been left over the years and many invasive species have started to take over especially bracken.

We will be able to take Sophies findings to the Vale Commons Council and Jamie Hooper the Islands Ecologist to work with them in improving the course aesthetically whilst providing an environment where the local Flora and Fauna will thrive.



***Invasive Bracken starting to colonise the natural dune system between 14 and 15 and many other areas around the course***



***Degenerative Gorse being suffocated by Bramble and Bracken***

Gorse has a habit of becoming degenerate and of little value, for both golf and wildlife, through lack of, or inappropriate management, but is an integral part of the links landscape. Our aim is to manage the Gorse through coppicing and removal to encourage new growth encouraging stronger, healthier aesthetically pleasing shrub that's a haven for wildlife.

I am really looking forward to Sophie's visit as I am sure this will be the catalyst in our quest to return the Links to its natural landscape, enhancing the course further showing off all the natural features that have been lost over time.

**Irrigation**

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July saw one of the most intense electrical storms I have ever witnessed. Although the rainfall was much needed the electrical damage caused to our irrigation system was significant.

Nearly all the components to the P.C control system were damaged and had to be replaced with a translator to one of our irrigation zones lost. The electrical storm also took out one of our pumps situated at the far end of the course.

This had a significant set back to our works on the course with a contractor needed to help reinstate the system. The parts have arrived and I am pleased to report that the majority of the system is working again.

## **Rabbits**

The subject of rabbits and the damage they are causing is at the top of nearly all the memberships frustrations. The damage they are causing is significantly detrimental to the course.

I have spoken with many members that have voiced their frustrations on the out of control problem we are facing. Many saying they have lost balls down holes, Injured themselves and the overall damage they are doing to the golf course is heart breaking.

As for us greenkeepers we have had to tow numerous machines out of holes, experienced many punctures, with the sand exposed from their scrapes destroying our cutting units that then have to be re ground as the sand causes blunting of the blades. We have attempted to fill many of the holes but they are dug back out within a couple of days of repair.

Unfortunately the powers that be do not seem to want to warrant any specialist permissions to control this problem.

G.C.M Board Member Jason Savident spent numerous hours compiling an extensive document on the application to the relevant authorities on the possibility of controlling the rabbits. I am incredibly grateful to Jason for the extensive knowledge background he possessed on putting together a case covering all local laws and guidelines. Jason has provided below details of the outcome of our application:

*Since the spring, work has been going-on in the background seeking solutions to controlling the current out of control rabbit population.*

*This has included a detailed application to Environment & Infrastructure for a special licence to shoot rabbits (out of season) and liaison with the States Vet and other professionals.*

*Ultimately and regrettably the application has failed. The Law Officers have advised that there can be no appetite to approve the application on what is effectively public land and any activity would fall foul of legislation, including The Firearms Law.*

*GCM are in discussions with local rabbiters who can start their activity on October 1st and greenstaff will be assisting in the clearance of some gorse and bracken areas to make access to runs easier. Consultation has also taken place with UK experts as*

*controlling the wild rabbit population for the golfing seasons ahead is a must. It may be that before then, some rabbits will succumb to the effects of myxomatosis but there are no clear indications that this disease is prevalent.*

*The work of the application has nonetheless raised the issue of not only the unsightly damage to the links and the wider Common that the wild rabbits have caused but the damage to golfers overall enjoyment of golf and use of the course in general. The risk to injury and nature of injuries that GCM are aware have occurred due to rabbit holes have also been fed back. The States Vet is supportive and legislation such as classifying wild rabbits from a game animal to a pest may be considered going forward, which can open-up other control methods that could take place all year round.*

**Jason Savident G.C.M Board**

From Friday 20<sup>th</sup> August a contractor will be starting to clear channels in the bramble and gorse so that the ferreters can resume when the hunting season commences from 1<sup>st</sup> of October. The channels are being made over a month early so that the rabbits return by the start of the hunting season.

On a final note I would like to thank all the green staff for their continued hard work. On numerous occasions coming in extra early to keep ahead of the days play and working extra weekend shifts so we can go the extra mile in producing the course as best possible with such a busy callender.

I hope this has given you all a brief insight to the works planned for the coming months and members are starting to see improvements to the course whilst finally being able to enjoy putting once again.

Kind Regards

Ollie