



MOWSBURY GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE REPORT SEPTEMBER **2019**

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INTRODUCTION

Last year we had the hottest summer for 40 years and subsequently this year we have experienced the hottest day on record at 40 degrees! As you can imagine, extremes like this cause a number of problems with the maintenance of greens and golf courses. Nevertheless, with autumn renovation programmes, spring work and the normal weekly green-keeping tasks to maintain a healthy sward, the course this year has looked well and we have received a number of favourable comments.

Comparison between this summer and last using our rainfall data, you can see the following;

| Month | Rainfal(mm) | Month | Rainfall(mm) |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| June 2018 | 2mm | June 2019 | 86mm |
| July 2018 | 7mm | July 2019 | 42mm |
| August 2018 | 47mm | August 2019 | 31mm |

As the autumn approaches, we now commence an intense programme of renovation on the greens. This has followed the Club Championships on the 31st August and the 1st September. Once this work has been completed by the 6th September, normal maintenance will resume on the course.

GREENS MAINTENANCE

The greens have stood up well to the weather this year helped by our programme of deep aeration last winter and spring, vigorous thatch removal and frequent light top-dressing this summer. This has all contributed to a strong and healthy sward.



Our fertiliser programme has been compiled based on the soil analysis results and fine adjustments in Potassium levels and additional Magnesium. These have helped the plant to develop strong cell membranes and improve the tolerance to stress, heat and disease.

On the 12th June all greens were spiked to a depth of 75mm this was to help moisture get down to the roots and let air into the surface.

During the week commencing 24th June we carried out our summer renovation programme. This consisted of a single pass with our thatch-away units to reduce the build up of thatch followed by an application of a pure sand top-dressing which was then worked into the surface.

Other work undertaken recently;

Throughout July/August intensive hand watering and applications of localised wetting agent were ongoing. This was to compensate for the deficiencies in the coverage of the irrigation system.

- 6th August 2019 - the greens were de-thatched.
- 19th August 2019 – the greens were lightly aerated.
- 19th August 2019 – High Potassium Fertiliser was applied to all greens.
- 27th August 2019 – the greens were again de-thatched.



Week commencing 2nd September 2019 - we have been carrying out our autumn renovation work which has included hollow-coring the greens to a depth of 100mm followed by topdressing with a straight sand topdressing.

During the summer we have been cutting the greens at a height of 4mm. From the end of September we will slowly increase this height till around early December when we will get up to

6mm.

Applications of preventative fungicide will take place during late summer and early autumn to protect against Fusarium. We will also resume our programme of aeration at various depths to encourage a strong rooting system. Naturally we will liaise with the Pro-shop to avoid any disturbance.



TEES MAINTENANCE

The tees have benefitted from the intermittent heavy showers we have experienced. We are still experiencing irrigation issues on the 6th, 7th and 15th tees which naturally has not been as noticeable due to the recent wet weather.

During the season the tees have been cut twice a week at height of 14mm.

In the coming weeks an application of fertiliser to the tees will take place to help with recovery and give them a boost ready for the winter play.

FAIRWAY MAINTENANCE

Last year from late June until September grass growth was limited due to the hot, dry conditions. This year we have been cutting the fairways twice per week and sometimes more to cope with the vigorous grass growth. It is only in the last week that we have seen a slowdown in growth.

Applications of herbicide have controlled broad leaved weeds and yellow suckling clover. These were carried out just after dawn on calm mornings. This avoided any disruption to the day to day play of the course and worked very effectively with good results.

The re-shaping of some of the fairways has been well received by the members, particularly in the carry areas between the fairways and tees.

The fairways were maintained at 16mm during the summer and in the coming weeks this will be raised to 19mm and then later in the year up to 22mm.

ROUGH MAINTENANCE

The presentation and condition of the rough has received favourable comments throughout the spring and summer.

This year we purchased two rough cutters which has meant that we have been very efficient in our maintenance of the rough.

BUNKER MAINTENANCE

The bunkers are being raked on a regular basis on at least three occasions per week.

During the season the bunkers have been weeded and edged regularly.

Further re-construction of bunkers will take place during the winter months. Liaising with the General Manager of the site we will compile a schedule of work to continue our bunker improvement programme at Mowsbury.

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We can appreciate that members would like this bunker upgrading programme to incorporate more bunkers per year as we have had a number of complements on those already completed.

One thing highlighted in the recent Members survey is that comments indicate that all sand in the bunkers that have not already been re-constructed should be changed as soon as possible to replace the old yellow sand that has been in the bunkers for a considerable amount of time. As this is a capital item it does not fall under our general maintenance remit, the reconstruction and sand replacement in five bunkers per year was a special agreement made at the start of our most recent contract to help to move these areas forward, which indeed it has.

HEALTH & SAFETY

During the winter and after a risk assessment had been compiled it was decided after discussion and agreement with the General Manager that all sleeper steps on the course should be closed for general use due to a rapid deterioration as a result of the hot summer last year. This was a decision that was not taken lightly but was done to avoid any unfortunate incidence. Once the authorisation was given to us to proceed on the 18th July to purchase specialised non-slip material we were able to place the order immediately and received the grip clad on the 8th August. Work commenced on that day on the 1st tee and this tee was open to general use after work was completed during the afternoon. Further work was carried out on the steps around the course throughout that week.





IRRIGATION

As we reported in our last meeting we have some issues with the underground irrigation system. These are mainly caused by the age of the underground wiring, deterioration in the pipework (ie: PVC glue loses its strength after 30 years) and of course general wear and tear on a system that is used frequently during the summer months year after year.

Mowsbury is a pressurized system and therefore the constant pressure is always looking for weakness. Naturally, upgrading will be necessary in certain areas as a matter of course. This has been discussed with the General Manager and I understand he is evaluating the way forward to rectify this problem.

We did have one major issue that we were able to sort out “in house” and this was when the valve on the 10th green ruptured. We had to replace the whole valve assembly as this problem would have affected the operation of the whole system.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Mowsbury course continues to move forward and the increase in golfers this year indicates that visitors enjoy playing the course and using its facilities. Nevertheless, we need to strive to improve things continuously year on year. One area that would benefit the course during the winter months would be gradual improvements to the path network around the course.

Finally, working together with the committee, club members and the management team we can all continue to develop and improve the course and its facilities.