



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

### **CONTENTS**

Introduction  
Greens Maintenance  
Tees Maintenance  
Fairway Maintenance  
Rough Maintenance  
Bunker Maintenance  
Health & Safety  
Irrigation  
A.O.B  
Conclusion

### **INTRODUCTION**

As with the varying patterns of summer weather, this year has been no exception. In 2018, prior to the driest and hottest period for 40 years there was a prolonged wet spell in early spring. This year has been much drier and this has reflected in the throughput of golfers enjoying the facilities.

During early spring a programme of work was carried out on the greens which consisted of;

- Thatch removal
- Aeration
- Top-dressing
- Over-seeding
- Application of high potassium fertiliser

This work, coupled with the autumn work of 2018 has helped the greens to recover well from the stress of a very hot summer.

Mowsbury tends to be a wet course and struggles to cope with heavy rainfall during the winter months despite frequent drain clearing and renovation across the course. However, the course as a whole has been much drier during the early part of the year enabling us to complete a lot of maintenance and winter project work when conditions can sometimes be much more difficult.



After the spring work had been completed, the greens settled down and maintenance is continuing to ensure the facility continues to improve year on year.



## GREENS MAINTENANCE

The greens played and look well throughout the winter and our disease management programme avoided the sometimes troublesome disease we can experience.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> March a spring and summer fertiliser was applied as a pre-cursor to the proposed spring programme work.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> March, the greens were mechanically de-thatched in two passes to improve green firmness and ball speed across the surface.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April the greens were solid tined to allow air into the root structure, this will encourage root development and surface drainage. The incorporation of a sandy dressing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> April has the added benefit of diluting the remaining thatch in the greens surface.



On the 12<sup>th</sup> April, after the greens had recovered from the spring work and the top-dressing had worked its way into the surface, we lowered the height of cut down to 4mm to ensure that we start to get the green speed for early spring play and upcoming competitions.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> May a high potassium (13-0-46) fertiliser was applied to continue to increase potassium levels helping the sward to resist the problems of disease and dry patch. This fertiliser is very soluble and causes minimum interruption to play.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> May the greens were again de-thatched to continue to improve playability following recent works carried out. This will be carried out again prior to the Captains Day competition on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2019.

Further top-dressing of the greens is due to be carried out during the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> June.

## TEES MAINTENANCE

As with the greens the tees have recovered well from the hot summer of 2018 and the winter use.

An application of Spring and Summer fertiliser on the 15<sup>th</sup> March was carried out to encourage growth and recovery along with aeration to reduce compaction prior to the re-start of play. The main tees were brought back into play on the 29<sup>th</sup> March.

The tees are currently being cut at 14mm on two occasions per week.





## **FAIRWAY MAINTENANCE**

The summer of 2018 resulted in the fairways drying up considerably as of course it is impossible to irrigate such vast areas. However, I am pleased to report that the fairways are now in excellent condition once again following the dry cracks that had formed and the browning of the sward. Aeration has helped this recovery along with special treatment of problem areas which has included seeding and spot treatments with high performance fertilisers.

In mid-march the height was lowered to 19mm and then lowered further on the 10<sup>th</sup> April to 16mm. The fairways will remain at this height except when conditions become exceptionally dry and hot, at which time we may increase the height of cut to de-stress and compensate.

## **ROUGH MAINTENANCE**

Grass production this year is totally different to last May and June. In 2018 the conditions were wet and very warm, the start of the playing season this year has been exceptionally dry with a prominent cold north easterly wind.

With the investment of a new rough cutter together with a second hand reserve rough cutter purchased at the end of April, this has culminated in the rough being in a presentable condition for the main start of the golfing season.

Naturally, there are still a few thin areas, especially where tree roots are prominent. This is the result of last years drought, but hopefully with a normal English summer, these areas will quickly recover and a healthy sward will develop.

The height of cut will be reduced as necessary and in line with the fairways to continue to maintain presentation going forward.

## **BUNKER MAINTENANCE**

As part of our winter work programme, we carried on with our bunker improvement project across the course to complement work carried out in previous years;

- This year we filled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> fairway bunker, creating a new bunker more in play.
- The face was lowered on the 14<sup>th</sup> bunker on the short right side of the green. The bunker face was turfed, making it slightly larger.
- The face was lowered and turfed on the 15<sup>th</sup> bunker in front of the ladies tee.

Sand has been placed and the bunkers that were worked on in 2018 are in play and the bunkers mentioned above will be filled with sand ready for play this coming weekend so that they are in use for Captains Day.

Next winter we will be continuing the bunker improvement plan so that year on year the members can see that this area is moving forward.

General maintenance continues and includes regular hand and machine raking, re-distribution of sand where necessary and topping up where needed.





Recently, the bunkers were weeded and edged as at this time of year the growth is more prominent in these areas,

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

During the winter months when conditions were wet and icy it became apparent that the wooden sleeper steps on several of the golf tees around the course were showing signs of wear and could prove to be a potential health and safety hazard. Therefore, an inspection was carried out on all of the steps and after liaising with the Complex Manager it was decided to restrict access to these areas until improvements could be made. After evaluating the pro's and cons of whether to completely reconstruct each section of steps and replace with new sleepers or to apply non slip material to the existing steps it was agreed during an on site meeting that non slip strips should be applied to the existing steps. Costings have been carried out and once approved by Fusion Head Office this work will be completed to bring the steps back into play and to reduce risk of slips and falls in wet conditions.



In periods of heavy frost where ice was prominent on the paths, certain areas that had started to show signs of wear and depressions forming where water accumulated became a slip hazard. Despite routine maintenance of the paths, it may be advantageous prior to the onset of next winter to re-dress all of the paths with a new coating of granite dust.

## **IRRIGATION**

Following the hot summer last year it was highlighted that there are a few faults in the system. We have been dealing with some of these issues "in house" but where decoders and electric problems are a problem an irrigation specialist had to be consulted. We are currently waiting for SJS Irrigation to make contact to deal with these issues.

## **AOB**

Over recent weeks we have had a spate of some flags and tee markers going missing, some are returned from the woods by walkers, some are never seen again. It may be prudent to keep some spares in stock as these are starting to run low.



## **CONCLUSION**

We have had a good start to the playing season, the weather has been very much on the side of the golfers and visitors and presentation is good for all.

Hopefully, the hot spells will be interspersed with rain so that we don't suffer such a dry period as last year.

