



MOWSBURY GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2019

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INTRODUCTION

As you will recall the latter part of August and early September were very dry, however the balance has been re-dressed since then with quite heavy down pours of rain and a generally wet period of weather. In September we measured a rainfall amount of 54mm of which 50mm fell in the last two weeks of the month. October was wetter still with 75mm of rain falling during the month.

In early September it was quite notable how dry the course had become and how much the levels of growth had dropped. Now the course has a fresh green feel particularly as the rain followed our spring maintenance work. This meant that new grass seed germinated, the topdressing was washed into the playing surface and the fertiliser was activated resulting in growth and recovery prior to winter.

GREENS MAINTENANCE

As mentioned in our last report, the autumn renovation work on the greens took place in early September which included de-thatching, hollow tining, over-seeding, an application of top-dressing followed by an application of high potassium to address a site potassium deficiency in the soil profile whilst the weather was dry. This meant that all work was completed efficiently and on schedule. Additional seed was used as required and with the heavy rains that followed this all worked well

You may have noticed that one or two of the greens have been slightly reduced in size following discussion with the General Manager. Sometimes over many years the greens can gradually increase in size therefore we are looking at this and will continue to do so throughout the winter, making small adjustments as necessary.



Work carried out on the Greens;

- 2nd October – all greens were treated with a fungicide mix to manage and prevent occurrences of Fusarium
- 9th October – a granular 7-0-14 product was applied with high potassium to build strength prior to the colder winter months.
- 15th October – height was raised up to 5mm and this will be increased to 6mm in December. This will protect the playing surfaces when detrimental weather conditions combined with play can cause wear.
- Throughout October the greens were cut daily, this is now being reduced to 2-3 times per week as growth slows.

On the 4th November we applied a fungicide in combination with a liquid fertiliser to continue to protect the greens going forward.

Aeration of the greens will take place on a regular basis over the coming months (100mm solid tines, 150mm slitting tines and verti-draining). This will continue the process of encouraging through drainage and promoting strong root growth.

TEES MAINTENANCE

The tees have coped well with what has been a challenging year with high temperatures, dryness, intermittent heavy rain and persistent play.

There are some issues with the irrigation system on a few of the tees. During the dry conditions of early September we had to water these with manual sprinklers as required.

Recently we applied a granular fertiliser whilst rain was imminent to continue to assist their recovery from summer play and encourage growth up until we go onto our winter tee positions at the start of January. Par 3 tees will be placed on winter mats at the same time.

The tees are currently being cut once per week at a height of 15mm and tee markers continue to be moved frequently to manage wear during these wet conditions.

As with the greens we will be spiking, slitting and verti-draining the tees during the winter months to incorporate air into the soil profile.

During recent meetings we have discussed the possibilities of upgrading some of the current tee mats that are situated on the





course. Naturally over the years artificial tee mats are prone to wear. Having investigated different tee mat options, we have obtained a cost effective alternative to the normal standard mat. At Wyboston Lakes Golf Course they have purchased lengths of artificial grass that can be cut to size (3m x 2m) and installed in a railway sleeper frame with granite dust. The results of this have been well received by the members and even after six months of wear they are still to a high standard.

FAIRWAY MAINTENANCE

The recent rainfall has benefitted the fairways enormously following a period of dry weather which had caused some fairways to go a bit brown and cracked in places.

On the 11th September the height of cut was raised to 19mm and this will be increased again in mid-November to 22mm. This will encourage a thick, strong sward for the Christmas period.

Now that the fairways are softer we will begin to aerate them which will be an ongoing process throughout the winter while weather allows.

As in previous years we will continue to watch out for localised flooding of areas and investigate any possible drainage blockages as required.

ROUGH MAINTENANCE

Since the rain the rough is continuing to grow quite noticeably. We continue to cut at 3 inches which will continue to be the height throughout the winter months.

We will continue to cut the rough for as long as ground conditions will allow so that we can keep presentation particularly when there is some autumn leaf fall.

Over the winter months we will carry out some thinning of some of the plantations. We will be removing lower branches on trees that cause problems for mowing and dead trees will be removed.

BUNKER MAINTENANCE

Following our bunker re-construction programme over the last few years it is quite noticeable that these do not hold water following heavy rain. This is helpful to the green-keeping staff and of course the golfers.

This re-construction project is an ongoing process and is continuing to make a difference. This slow but steady approach ensures that the course and play is not affected too much.



The bunkers are being raked on a regular basis and the bunkers have been weeded and edged throughout the year.

Further re-construction of bunkers will take place during the winter months. Liaising with the General Manager we will agree on a proposed start date, possibly in December and compile a schedule of work to continue our bunker improvement programme at Mowsbury.



Proposed bunker upgrades during the winter period 2019/2020

- 1) 6th green – greenside bunker – re-design and reduce in size
- 2) 17th left hand side – greenside bunker – convert to grass trap
- 3) 3rd right hand side – greenside bunker – convert to grass trap
- 4) 4th right hand side – fairway bunker – lower face and re-shape
Extend to the left into fairway to make more of a hazard
- 5) 4th left hand side – greenside bunker – lower face, re-design and drain
- 6) 6th right hand side – approach bunker – reduce in size and re-design

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety continues to be of high priority and is a culture we promote throughout our company.

Our Health and Safety consultant will carry out another inspection during the winter months to point out any possible problems or hazards that need to be addressed.

After Christmas we will be holding our annual Health & Safety staff meeting for all Head Green-keepers/ Supervisors and at the same time will be updating our risk assessments, Health & Safety Policies & Procedures.



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As always, we will be holding update courses for First Aid and Fire Marshall training as necessary.

The feedback from the members has been very positive relating to the installation of the grip clad decking during the summer on the steps to the tees. This has much reduced the risk of a slip or fall during wet conditions.

IRRIGATION

Some work is required on the irrigation system to ensure its efficient operation during 2020;

- Two greens have a decoder out of action
- Two tees have a decoder out of action
- Sprinklers damaged/ broken that require replacement
- Valves need replacing due to leaks, non-operation & low pressure
- 10th tee – this tee is very wet at the moment due to a problem with the valve at the rear of the tee. This cannot be isolated at the moment as it requires a new gate valve as the current one does not operate.

Currently we are awaiting a visit from JML Irrigation who will compile quotation so that these issues can be addressed prior to the start of the new season.

A.O.B



Just as a point to be noted the Council have visited recently and cut the boundary hedge alongside the 7th hole.

As scheduled in early November we are commencing a programme of re-dressing the current paths around the course with granite path material. This is a very hard wearing substance and will enhance the appearance of the course and addresses any muddy areas on the path network.

The first phase is the installation of 20 tonnes of path material from the clubhouse along the rear of the 18th green and the 1st tee area commencing on 1st November 2019. In addition to this, surplus material will be spread in the path area adjacent to the 8th tee.





The second phase will include the crossing of the bridle path between the 7th green and the 8th tee once authorised by the club.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have nearly reached the end of 2019 and look forward to 2020. The bunker improvement programme will continue to show benefits along with our ongoing targeted maintenance plan.

Hopefully the weather will be kind over the next few months so that we can expect a good level of play throughout the winter and particularly over the Christmas period.