

# February Course Report



## Greens

### Fertiliser

It is pleasing to report the success we are seeing with the targeted feeding programme. It is still early days, and more testing is required, however early signs are promising.

Grass clippings were sent away for analysis.

Our feeding only targeted the elements which were found to be low.

Instead of a flush of colour followed by a steady decline over a 2-week period before feeling the need to feed again. We experienced a more natural return of colour, and this remained consistent. It must be said that the length of time between feeds is skewed with the lack of nutrients required at this time of year.

The greens still have some scarring from disease. We will have to wait for some warmer weather before we can seed and get some recovery.

### Thatch

We have localised problems with thatch build up. The recent trend in the weather sees more and more moisture in the air. I believe it is this, coupled with our lack of maintenance opportunities which has seen an acceleration of thatch building up.

If the thatch is left, the results would be unplayable surfaces like we have recently seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> green. The water cannot penetrate the thatch layer, the surface is spongy and weak.

We need to mechanically remove this thatch layer – Deep scarification or Hollow tining. Remembering that these options only remove a small percentage so repeating the process is necessary, coupled with routine top dressings and verti-cutting.

It is important that we get these areas under control again and equally important to allow the time to keep the thatch levels down across all the surfaces. This will mean disruption to playing surfaces, but it is to the benefit of the greens and playing surfaces throughout the year.

## Lockdown Maintenance

### Furlough

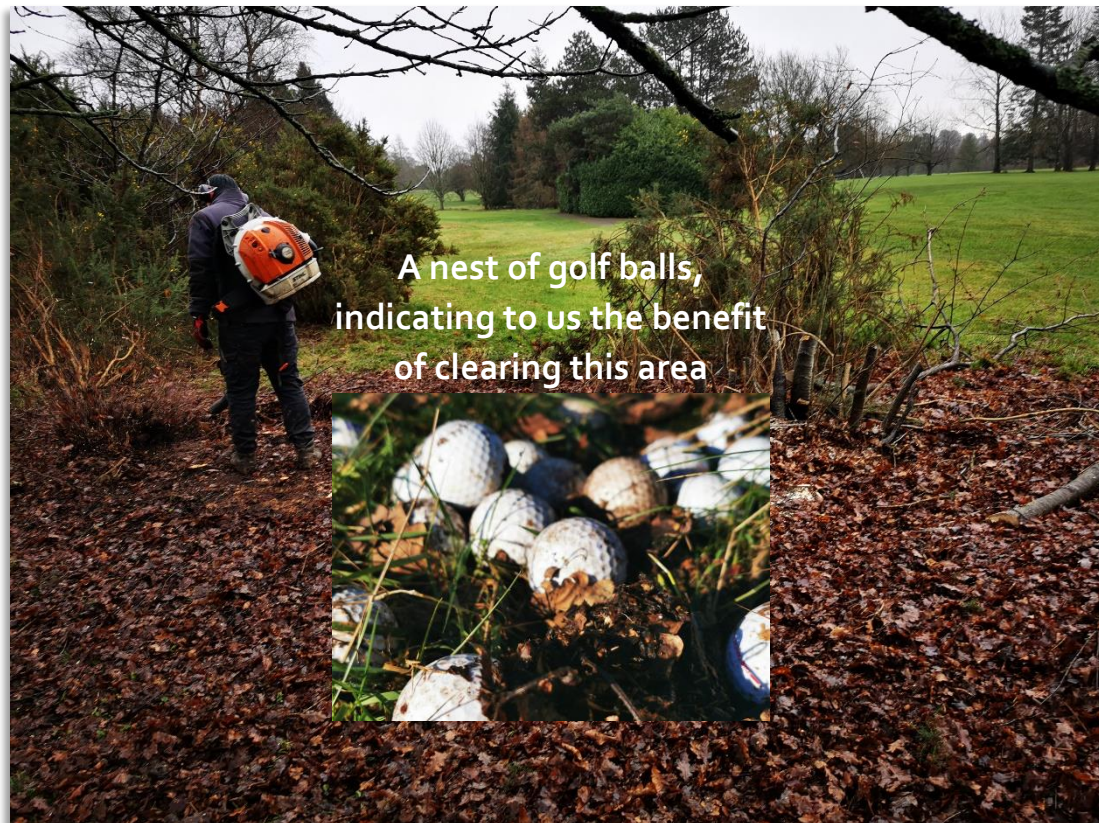
We have 3 members of our team at the course during the week, 2 on furlough. Weekends are covered with 1 person coming in performing dew clearing and general security checks. We keep in touch via a group chat to make sure they are safe.

Currently, it has not been possible to get any machinery out on the course due to the saturated ground. Spraying has been problematic to say the least. Fortunately, we found a fully functional (never been used) pedestrian sprayer in one of the sheds – its has been a life (putting green) saver!



## Course Maintenance

As we are a reduced team you will not see the dramatic changes like we saw on 14 in the last lockdown. However, we are managing to get out and target smaller areas to allow light and air into the playing areas, but also to help speed up play as you can see here on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

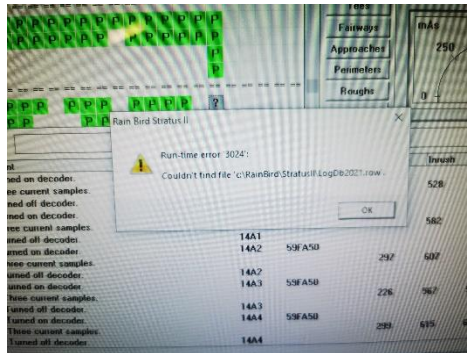


Walking out to areas to clear as its too wet for vehicles. Here - improving the 6<sup>th</sup> hole appearance from the tee.



## Irrigation Software

As we mentioned in the November report, we electronically check the irrigation system for decoder breaks. These can be noted, and hopefully fixed in time for spring. During the January check the system showed an error message and after some investigation we found that every Rain Bird system in the world had been affected.



Fortunately, we are in the northern hemisphere and are not in desperate need of irrigation water. Unfortunately, the fix requires the latest software, and our system is running software which got replaced 4 years ago. The new software comes with an array of exciting new features (for a greenkeeper!) but also requires us to conduct a full audit the system.

An audit consists of checking each sprinkler head and noting its –

- Arc settings
- Nozzle size
- Any damage

On each hole we also need to check the valve box. Making sure all hose couplings are in working order, the boxes are not damaged and noting any other potential problems (ants nests spring to mind).

With all this information loaded to the database, the new software can accurately reflect the system on the course. It will be like a total system re set.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Project

Following advice from the Architect, the mounding in front of the tee needed some slight adjustments. Unfortunately, this has been hampered by the wet weather.

The Mechanic is still waiting for parts to fix the Stump Grinder. As soon as this is fixed, we will clear the remaining stumps.

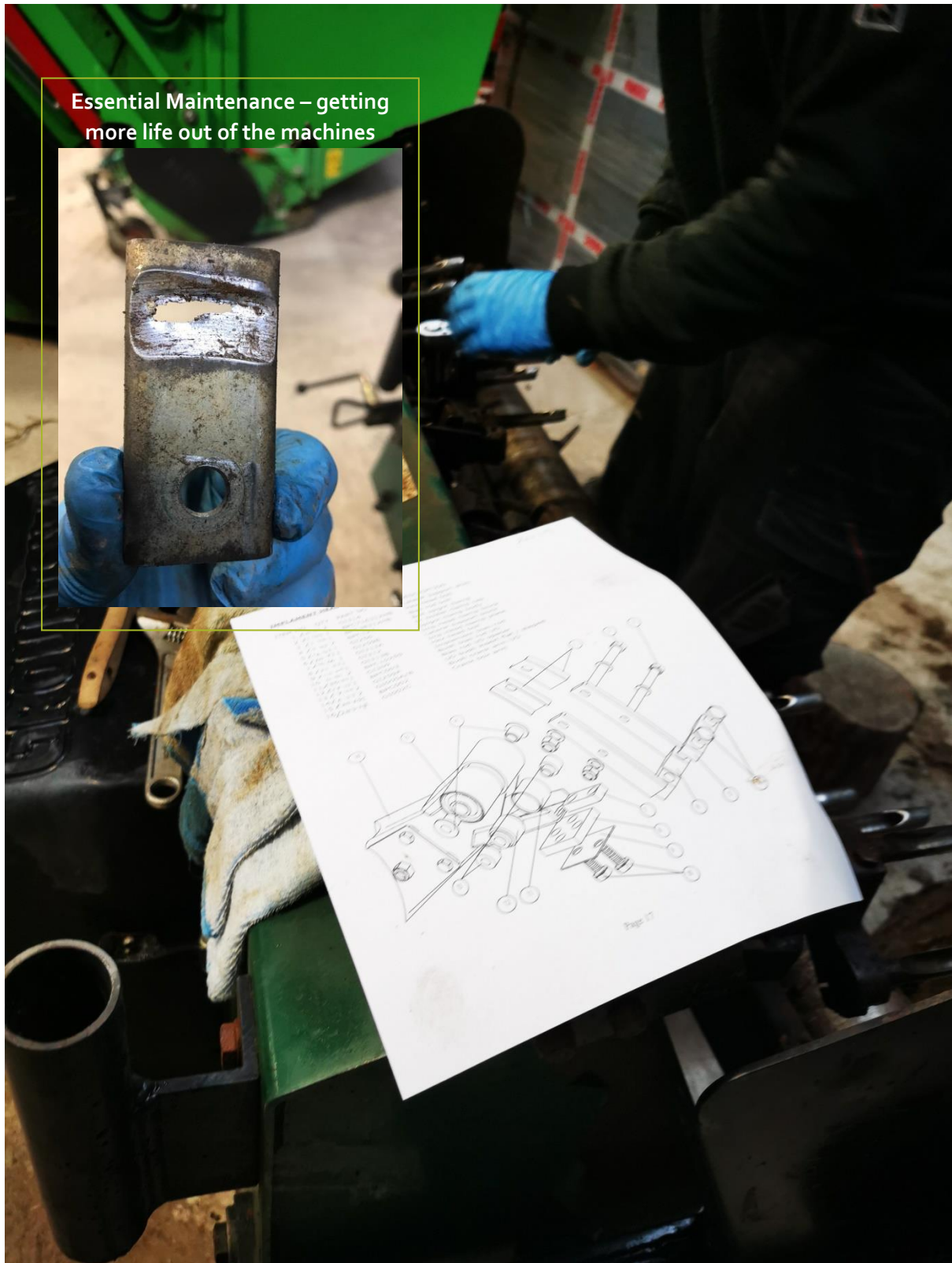
We did manage to dig through the worn path to expose soil ready for seeding.



It is hoped that a freshly sewn area, full of natural grasses and some wildflowers will encourage golfers to use the path to the right rather than create a worn area again detracting from the aesthetical view of the hole.



## Preparing for Spring





2 x 30 tonnes of top-dressing sand = Surface improvements.

## Ongoing Work

- Clearing work to help light and air movement around sensitive playing surfaces
- Clearing work to help see the hole from the tee and speed of play
- General woodland management following Course Policy
- Machinery and Workshop Maintenance
- Feeding tees and Approaches
- Surface renovations if weather improves

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