

Dear Members

I have compiled a brief report on the progress being made up to now. Unfortunately I can not show everything the Greenkeepers have been working on but I hope you find this report informative and our plans in the coming weeks going forward.

This past month has been incredibly dry and the greenkeeping team are in desperate need of rain. The cold temperatures seen through the night are causing frosts and play delays on most mornings. Spring growth has still not started for us yet and we are awaiting the rains to help get the grass moving. I recently tweeted Guernsey Met to find out how much rain we have actually had this month.



As can be seen above we have received an incredibly low amount of rainfall and this looks like it will continue in to next week, well below the monthly average. This is making progress incredibly hard, I am sure it will come but at the moment we just have to remain patient.

This month our main priority has focused on treating the leather jacket problem on the putting surfaces. We have been working with Dr Minshad from Swansea University on nematode control. These microscopic organisms enter the host and kill the larvae. Due to the frosts in the mornings our last application of the nematodes has been put on hold until the weather starts to change.

We have also been using a soil acidifier in conjunction with the nematode programme on Dr Minshads advice. This has shown some effectiveness also.

So far we are seeing promising signs of recovery. Although very slow due to the lack of growth at the moment I am confident we are making inroads, we are still seeing signs of activity from these pests but the damage does seem to be reducing.



Application of Nematodes 7th Green

The Greenkeeping team have also used a black sheeting method that draws the leather jackets up on to the surface that we are then able to sweep up off the greens to further reduce the damage these pests are causing. We have had to reduce this method recently due to the busy competition calendar this practice is just not practical at this time. To enable us to put the sheeting out four staff members are needed and nearly all staff are required the following morning to sweep up the larvae before golf reaches the green.



Black sheeting 7th Green

I completely understand many members frustrations on how bumpy the greens are playing at the moment. As a Greenkeeper looking at the putting surfaces each morning It is also just as frustrating watching the greens you put so many hours in to maintaining being eaten away each day. Unfortunately without the relevant pesticides it really does feel like your fighting with your hands tied behind your back.

On a positive note we have made inroads on the application for a licence to apply an emergency approval pesticide this Autumn, although this is not over the line yet I am confident with our application progress with all the relevant parties that seem to have agreed with the licence now awaiting approval.

The leather jackets will emerge this Autumn as Crane Fly (Daddy Long Legs) they will then start laying their eggs within the turf. We must not let what happened last Autumn happen again and we have to somehow break the cycle. Otherwise we will be left with thousands of leather jackets eating away on the playing surfaces all winter and in to the first part of the playing season as we are experiencing at present.

Last week a weed killer application was applied to all the paths and steps around the course to tidy them up. These weeds are now starting to turn yellow and should be free from over growing unsightly weeds over the coming weeks.



Knapsack Treating Weeds

Over the past fortnight many of you may have seen the irrigation system up and running. This is due to the dry weather accompanied by easterly winds we are experiencing at the moment. We are trying to water the greens during the middle of the day to reduce lowering our soil temperature further which could slow our growth potential down. At times with the course as busy as it is this has just not been possible and watering through the night is our only option.

We have experienced many leaks from the Upvc pipe work that require fixing and on average we are seeing two to three leaks per week since the system has been re commissioned. The pump system faults have been rectified by local contractors supported by MJ Abbotts Irrigation on the mainland. Although they are not running at full potential they are working to an operational standard.



Irrigation Leak 2nd Fairway

As we are moving in to the summer months and golf can be played late in to the night and early mornings I would just like to make the memberships aware that to apply 3-4mm of irrigation to all the playing surfaces on the course takes between 10-12 hours. Starting the program at 20:00 each evening the cycle will not finish until the early morning. I understand if you're playing in the evening and early mornings that at times the irrigation could be in your way we just can not run the system in a shorter time frame so please be aware that keeping the turf alive and playable has to take priority between these times.



I have been assured that the bunker sand ordered a month ago is on route to the Island and should be delivered by the end of this week. Next week we will reinstate the fairway bunkers on the 6th hole and are then able to top up the remaining low level sand in the bunkers around the course. The Greenkeeping team will try and firm the new sand as best we can using a tamping plate on hire. In my experience the sand will still be a little soft and some plugged lies may occur in the coming weeks until the sand fully settles.

Turf for the bunkers that have been filled in on holes 6 and 11 arrives next week and we will have that laid in place also which will tidy up the green surrounds on those holes. The bunkers now receive a weekly weed and back pack blower to all the faces to keep them as tidy and presentable as possible.

Over the coming weeks hopefully once these early morning frosts and drought conditions have ceased our aim is to apply fertilizer to Tees, Fairways, Approaches to then enable us to work on improving surface refinement, reducing the moss build up and definition through scarification. We just need the weather on our side. The Green staff will then start applying selective herbicide to all these surfaces and in to the semi roughs to eradicate the many weeds that are accumulating and further enhance the course.

Lastly I would like to thank all the members that turned up last week for our divot evening. I counted over 50 members which was an incredible turn out! We used over seven tons of soil just for the front 9 which shows how much play we are experiencing.

This gives us all on the greenkeeping team a massive help and really does help the course recover from the amount of play we have experienced over the past month.

I would also like to thank L'Ancrese G.C for hosting the event and for the superb Chili con carne enjoyed by all afterwards. Also a big thank you to Nigel Vaudin for the use of his HIAB and for shovelling the 7 tons of soil in to everyone's buckets "I am sure his back would have been hurting the following day"

I look forward to next weeks divot evening and would encourage as many members as possible to get involved for the back 9.

I hope this has given you an update on where we are with the course at the moment and I'm hopeful come next months report we can have some positivity re the putting surfaces.

I wish all the members a great golf season with some of the scoring I have seen of late will certainly be some handicap reductions along the way.

Kind Regards

Ollie



