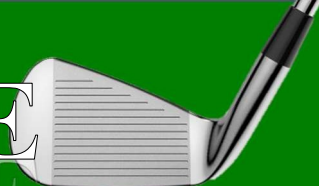


HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE GOLF CLUB GREENS COMMITTEE

October/November 2019

Report for Club



OK WE'VE HAD ENOUGH RAIN NOW...

A few weeks ago, I was praying for rain. Now several weeks later I've had quite enough of it. It's been great to get the grass green and growing again, but now have had so much it starts to generate muddy areas that we would all rather were not there. There is not a huge amount we can do about it, other than to ask members to not all follow the same route. We have been and will continue to rope certain areas off. This is not to irritate people but to try and give those areas a chance to not turn into mud. Please respect these areas and avoid walking on them particularly with your trolleys.

HOLLOW CORING OF GREENS

You will no doubt all have noticed this took place a few weeks ago. This is where we physically remove cores of earth from the greens and fill them with sand. This assists with drainage and removal of thatch. It did as many will have noticed take some time to recover. However, the greens are now back to normal and for this time of year are looking pretty good despite the excessive amount of rain we have been having. The positive news is we don't have to hollow core every year as we are on top of thatch and have been for some years. We will still have to tine the greens and use sand during the year but as we are not physically taking cores out of the ground, they should recover more quickly. For your information we have to get in excess of 100 tonnes of sand into the greens annually as part of their ongoing maintenance. Whilst it can be annoying, it cannot be avoided, unless we want the greens to deteriorate. The cut on the green's mower has now been raised to a winter cut level. The grass is still growing at present, but will tail off in due course as the nights start to get colder.

SILVER MOSS

We have had an issue with silver moss in the last 12 months and been considering options as to how to deal with it. A new product has come onto market which we are testing on the 13th green. It appears to have killed the moss as expected. The greenkeeper has also seeded the area and we hope to see this new grass coming through in the next couple of weeks. It is very likely that we will continue this next year as the growing seasons starts to continue treating this problem.

WINTER PROGRAM UPDATE

We have agreed a number of items to be addressed this year as part of the winter program. This is outside of the usual work that needs to take place on the fairways in terms of tinning which assists with drainage and thatch.

We are looking to re-build the 2nd tee. You will note that it is far from flat these days and overdue for renovation. Following the success of the 7th tee renovation last year we want to keep this going each year and do at least one tee as part of the program.

We will be adding a permanent winter matt to the 11th tee this year. The aim of course being to ensure the grass tee is not massacred during the course of the winter months. This should be introduced during the coming months ahead.

We are in the process of replacing the liner in our water tank which is used to irrigate the tees and greens during the summer months. It created a leak during the summer months which impacted our ability to water the greens as we would normally like. Whilst we managed to get through this period with sensible water management by the greens team, we have no choice now but to replace the tank liner. This is a big task and will be undertaken this winter. I took a look into the tank the other day from the top now it is empty and it is huge!

13th Bunker – We are looking to make some changes to the right-hand fairway bunker on the 13th. This is to make it more of a fairway bunker and provide a fairer opportunity for people to get out of it. We are still considering what to do with the left-hand bunker on 13. There a number of schools of thought out there which we will consider probably after the right hand one has been completed.

One of the things that came out of the STRI report last year was that we have too many trees on the course. We are looking at opportunities to remove certain trees whilst at the same time trying to improve the look of the area. Such a case is happening to the right of the 3rd green where a number of not very nice-looking trees are being removed with the aim to provide the nicer looking trees to thrive.



Above is the treatment of silver moss being trialled on the 13th Green. Looks messy but is preferable to having to take out large cores of earth.

BUNKERS

A number of the bunkers have had additional sand added following member feedback. It is almost impossible to get all bunkers exactly the same, but I feel we have made some improvements. Now we are getting so much rain there will be days when they are compacted. That cannot be avoided. If further rain is due it is not time well spent to send the greens team out to rake them if it will be back to square one the next day. I hope you understand in these instances. We are trying to juggle resources against benefit gained.