

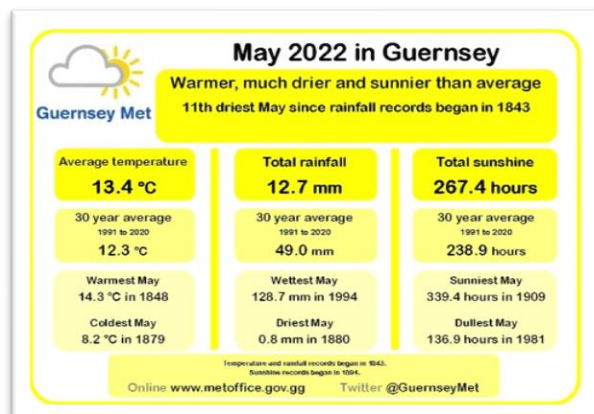
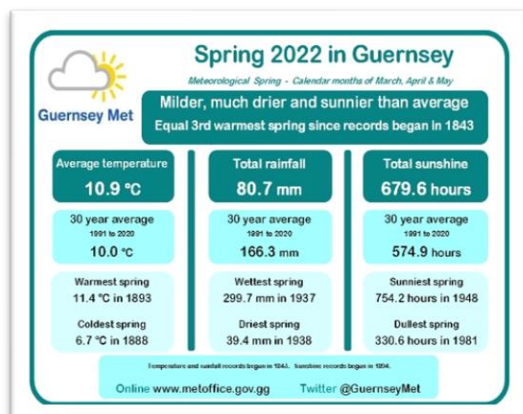
Dear Members

The golf season is well underway with competitions on the course most days keeping us Greenkeepers incredibly busy.

We have had one of the driest Springs I can remember in Greenkeeping. April gave us cold dry easterly winds with only 26mm of rain recorded for the month. 90% of that rainfall had fallen by the 12th April. May turned out to be even worse with 9mm recorded for the month. This made May the driest since 1998 and the warmest since 2008. The Spring rains are critical for us enabling the playing surfaces to start growing consistently allowing us to start our fertilization programme on all surfaces repairing the wear and tear the course has suffered through the winter months. Once the turf is growing we then drop our heights of cut on the mowing machinery ready for the season ahead. Unfortunately, this year the rains just did not happen. This made the start of the season incredibly tough with competitions coming thick and fast the turf just was not ready to start growing.

We then had to rely on our aging irrigation system which has proved to be a massive headache with constant leaks each week and heavy repair works needed to rectify. This then means valving off extensive areas of the course whilst repairs are carried out. Whilst these areas are valved off to stop leaks and further loss of water this then enables repair works to commence. In turn we cannot irrigate areas of the course. Unfortunately our irrigation system is failing at an alarming rate and we are now in the situation that further more staff are needed to be taken off golf course maintenance works to get repair works completed. Unfortunately this will have an impact of the overall quality of the course as certain jobs will have to be reduced or put on hold whilst we carry out repair works.

Due to the dry winter, where I recall the course being closed only on one occasion and an extremely dry spring our water levels sourced through the quarry behind Amarreurs road are running low. G.C.M were due to purchase water off States of Guernsey Water which would be pumped from Earlswood helping to replenish levels. Unfortunately the pumps that are used by the States failed and we are awaiting them to repair and hopefully continue pumping to ensure we have sufficient water to get us through the summer months. We must make precautions in the event the States are unable to continue pumping water. In the event this does happen it may be decided to prioritize Greens & Tees and the tough decision of letting our fairways approaches etc fall in to the hands of nature on how much precipitation they receive may have to be made. Certainly with the weather extremes we seem to be encountering in recent years it is very worrying if we do find ourselves in this situation.



(Guernsey Met Weather Data Spring (2022))



(L'Ancrese Links Water Source Quarry) (June 2022)

2nd Carry Works

Many of you may have noticed that our carry's to the fairways at L'ancresse are in a poor state and over the next year we will be trying to improve these both from a playability and aesthetic point of view. The team started on the 2nd hole as this was deemed to be one of the worst looking and playing performing. We carried out extensive works of core aerating, these cores were then left to dry and a metal drag matt was used to break the cores up. We then seeded the area using a blend of fine fescue cultivars and these were worked in to the aeration holes by brushing and switching. Obviously due to the excessively dry spring we have encountered results have been slow. The Greenstaff have watered manually as much as possible and we have seen a vast improvement to the carry, although progress has been slow I am hoping we will have an improved looking and playing carry this season as long as we have availability of water. If restrictions come in one of the first areas of the course water will have to be turned off will be the carry's.



(2nd Hole Carry works undertaken)

Staff Training

Whilst the greenkeepers have been extremely busy so far this season many of them are undertaking work based qualifications also.

Golf Course Management have recently invested in our staff education. Currently we have three staff in part time education with a view of enrolling furthermore staff in September. Educating staff in industry best practices is an invaluable tool to aid our staff reaching their full potential. The furthermore skilled and educated we can train our Greenkeepers undoubtedly will improve themselves and L'Ancrese Links for future years.

Shay Goddard has been undertaking his work based Diploma Level 2 in Sports turf. Currently Shay is about to complete year one and is looking forward to completing the course at the end of year 2.

Shay is doing incredibly well and the future is bright should he wish to remain in greenkeeping.



(Shay Goddard Applying Fertilizer & Divot Filling Tees)

James Falla has also been working towards his Level 2 qualification in Sports Turf. James has been enjoying his work out on the course. His knowledge of the course whilst bringing his playing perspectives in to greenkeeping through his years as a junior golfer have helped him massively in his ability to set up the course for competition golf.



(James Falla Shaping & Raking Bunkers)

Wayne Moore is currently undertaking his work based Diploma Level 3. This course is aimed at those Greenkeepers who are looking to move in to a more senior role within the team, having already gained enough experience through work and completion of his Level 2 many years ago. Wayne now feels it is the right time to pursue his passion for golf and greenkeeping and take his career up to the next level.

Wayne has been a great help on numerous occasions coming in early to spray or mow fairways ensuring he stays ahead of the days play keeping disruption to golfers at a minimum. Whilst spending time with our apprentices showing them the ropes of their daily duties.



(Wayne Moore Spraying Wetting Agent to Carries & Checking Moisture Content Readings On Putting Surfaces)

G.C.M also provided the greens staff with training from Hunter Grinders on set up and use of our machinery grinding equipment. Having well maintained mowing machinery that are set up correctly and cutting with sharp mowing blades makes a noticeable difference on course aesthetics whilst also ensuring the overall turf health is not compromised using dull, blunt mowing equipment. Hunter Ltd gave Kevin, Winnie, Wayne and myself a two day course going through the setup and operational use of their grinding equipment. Which we all found to be an invaluable couple of days with many tips and tricks learnt.

Kevin our mechanic has been extremely busy. Many of you do not see Kevin out on the course as he is based in our maintenance facility working on our machinery fleet ensuring the mowing equipment is set up ready for the following day. Kevin has completed a John Deere course on mowing machinery set up. Kevin really is the cog that keeps us turning with his extensive knowledge of mechanics and his ability to fix almost anything, he really is an invaluable member of the team.



(Kevin Walsh Maintaining G.C.M Machinery Fleet)



(Hunter Grinder Training Day Mowing Units Sharpened)

Tom Martel has joined us from St Pierre Park where he was part of the Greenkeeping team. Tom will be starting his Sports Turf Level 2 Apprenticeship course in September. He is looking forward to enrolling on the course and taking his knowledge of the job further. Tom has been a great addition to the team and has been working hard these past few months helping to bring the course to where we are today.



(Tom Martel Edging Bunkers)

Greens Works

I have been pleased with the way our putting surfaces have been performing over the past 2 months given the spring we have faced. We are overdue to do some light aeration works to the putting surfaces in the coming weeks. Aeration is a necessary evil that ensures high performing putting surfaces for 365 days a year. As a golfer myself I completely understand members frustrations when the greens have been aerated and top dressed but it really is an essential practice for the turf that air is made available in to the rootzone and toxic gasses that are held within are released in to the atmosphere.

The works will be light with 10mm tines used and disturbance will be kept to a minimum and we will quickly have the greens back to their best within a week.

G.C.M have agreed that these essential works are to take place week beginning 27th of June.

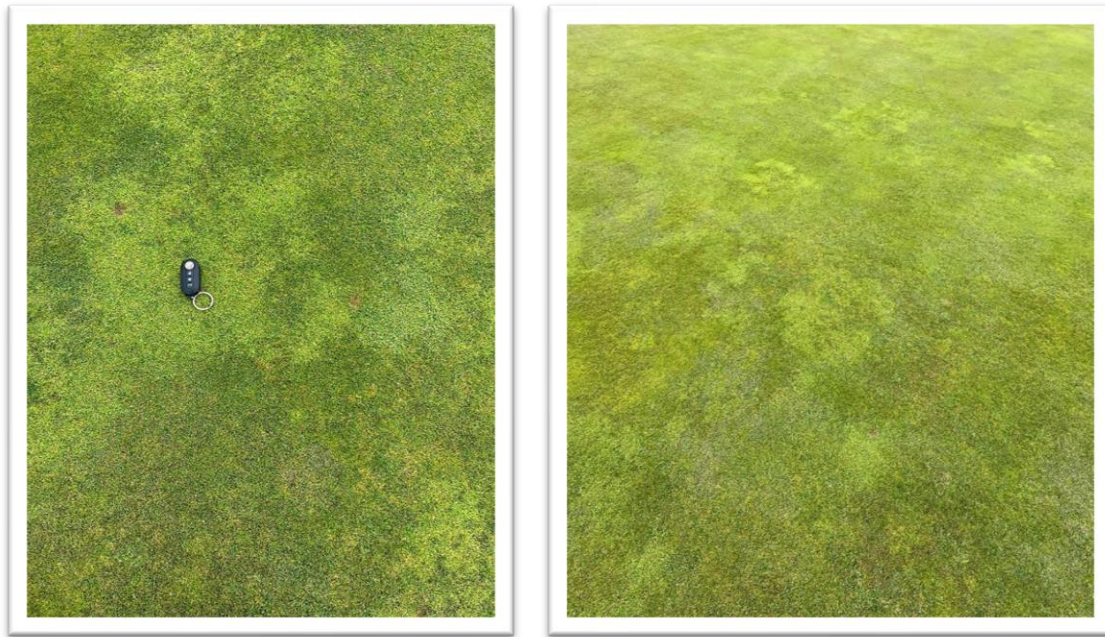


(Toro Pro Core Aeration Works)

We will also be spraying our putting surfaces with a selective herbicide. L'Ancrese has numerous small clumps of Clover (*Trifolium repens*) within our putting greens that are not only unsightly they will also have a negative impact on how the ball rolls across the surface. We have been out regularly hand weeding our greens but unfortunately Clover is a tough weed to eradicate by cultural practices. There are also numerous Buck's Horn Plantains (Star Weed) (*Plantago coronopus*) that we hand weed regularly this will also help reduce the amount of these tough weeds, so that we can culturally control going forward.

Using this type of Selective Herbicide will also bring with it a control of a weed grass that is within our putting surfaces. Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) is a weed grass that has no place in high performing putting greens. Its coarse leaf blade and lush growth habit make it an undesirable grass for putting surfaces. Once this practice is carried out it may be seen that patches may occur on the putting greens where this turf grass is in decline. We will be seeding these areas to aid quick recovery. Again this will have an a detrimental impact on the putting surfaces but the pros far outweigh the cons. This is very much like going for a golf lesson where you have to go backwards before going forward.

We will be carrying this out when weather conditions are favourable.



(Yorkshire Fog (Holcus lanatus) on L'Ancrese Putting Surfaces)

Irrigation

Many of you would of seen the ongoing leaks we are encountering at present. Whilst many important competitions have been underway and our focus on trying to get the course set up as best we can whilst trying to get the irrigation leaks and faults sorted has proved to be somewhat difficult. Martyn Savident brings with him a wealth of experience with his many years in greenkeeping, and his extensive knowledge of uPVC Pipe work which has been a great help so far this season.

Martyn has had a full time job these past two months fixing the many leaks that have occurred. I'm hoping the worst of the leaks are behind us now for the remaining part of the season and Martyn's time is freed up to get back out on the day to day maintenance of the course.

Martyn has been helped by Winnie when it has been possible as Winnie's main concern has been the set up of the course for the daily competitions. Winnie has been a great help to me and many of you may of seen him coming and going all over the course, sorting out the various issues that occur. Winnie has put an incredible amount of hours in of late, being up on the links on numerous weekend and weekday nights helping to sort our irrigation issues. He puts a great deal of work afterhours and I must thank him for his dedication. The phone is always going for both of us dealing with contractors, service agents, sales reps and lastly ourselves going through everything in the evenings.



(Martyn Repairing Irrigation Blow Outs)

Bunkers

Our bunker sand has finally arrived after a two month wait! The Green Staff will be out this week checking sand levels and replenishing where needed. The dry easterly winds this spring were responsible for a vast amount of sand being lost from our bunkers which is proved to be very expensive purchasing and shipping to the Island.

Flags and Reflectors

Currently we have changed our flags over whilst we wash our White L'Ancrese Links flags to keep the fresh new look that they have been showing these past few months. These will be returned out to the course by next week.

We have had some feedback on range finders struggling at times to pick up the pins. We have looked in to buying the mirror tops for these pins and have been quoted at £40 each which is a high expense to come out of our materials budget. We have now wrapped a reflective sticker around the pins located just underneath the flag. This is obviously a trial and are looking for your feed back on the performance of these reflectors and if this makes locking on to the pins easier. If there are still issues G.C.M will then look to explore purchasing the mirror tops which may have to wait until next seasons budget.



(Temporary Flags with Reflective Stickers on Pins)

Greenkeeping Assistance Volunteers Scheme

Following an appeal for members to assist the greenkeepers in undertaking some less arduous and the more routine greenkeeping duties, I am pleased to say that a healthy pool of willing volunteers have already expressed an interest in the Greenkeeping Assistance Volunteer Scheme.

GCM Director Jason Savident will meet with myself and Winnie in the near future to discuss the way forward to effectively harness the willingness of those members who have kindly put themselves forward to assist in the continued improvement of the course.

If any other members feel that this is something they would be willing to help out on, If they could contact their G.C.M director or speak with Phil in the Pro Shop. Thanks must also go to the members who have already volunteered this will be a great help to us.

I have been incredibly happy on how well the course has performed of late, with the Greenkeeping team receiving numerous compliments from players out on the course on how much they are enjoying their golf. Which for us is a real boost and makes the extra early mornings and long hours all worthwhile. We have a long way to go on ensuring L'Ancrese Links is regarded as one of the finest Links Courses in the Channel Islands. We are making steps forward in achieving our goal and I am hopeful in future years that we will be able to invest in equipment that will ensure that furthermore progress will be made. I hope this has given you all an insight to some of the works we have been undertaking of late. Congratulations must also go to Jamie Blondel, Kay Mapley on winning the Island Championships and recently Danny Blondel & Noah Davy winning the U.V. I have been following the scores closely all season with every week proving to be low round winners recorded. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of season and I will update at the end of next month.

Kind Regards

Ollie

