

Looking forward.....

Despite two met office designated storms since my last report, the weather has for the golf course at least become more favourable. Less rainfall is key but we did experience a very cold spell and some extreme high winds. The winds have helped with the drying process and now we are experiencing a mild period. All of this has meant play has been possible on a daily basis although with some restrictions in place. Drier conditions have allowed the greenkeeping team to also access the course so greens have been cut and sprayed and a couple of cuts to the approaches, tees and temp greens.

We are now focusing on the coming season. Machines are being serviced and readied. The team has been working hard on crown lifting trees along the boundary of every hole. This has a practical purpose of allowing us to mow under the trees without damaging either the tree or the machine or any danger to the greenkeeper. Golfers tend to appreciate it as it allows easier recovery shots from off target drives. Holes 6-17 are mostly complete as I write. We aim to complete holes 1-4 and 18 by the end of next week.

If the weather remains favourable, we will continue to complete limited maintenance to main areas of play. Once the tree work is complete, we aim to begin the restoration work to the bunkers with the aim of bringing them back into play for the start of the coming main playing season.



Bunker Green 3 during the recent storms.

The multiple storms of this winter with the unprecedented rainfall have caused major damage to nearly all bunkers on the course. Major flooding caused the washing of debris surrounding the bunkers into the base, moving the sand around, mixing wormcast, leaf mould, etc with the existing sand. The sand in all bunkers is now contaminated and therefore not suitable to maintain or for play. This will prove to be a huge amount of manual work to restore them back to a playable and presentable standard.



Fairways Bunker hole 1

Above is typical condition of a bunker once the standing water has drained. We can see the mud and debris washed into the bunker with the sand from the sides then washed over the top. This sand is now contaminated beyond the point of a simple clean up.



Bunker edge damage

The very wet and soft conditions have weakened soil structure around many bunkers and caused faces to collapse. This causes playability problems, issues with aesthetics and also dangerous for maintenance.

Each and every bunker will require edging, removal of all contaminated material and topping up with fresh bunker sand to adequate levels. We will aim to complete the work bunker by bunker and hole by hole. This is going to require significant resources, both physical and financial so patience will be needed as we also need to consider the preparation of all other areas of play for the coming season. Hopefully we will now have a prolonged period of good weather and no further flooding events. It is

a fine balance between beginning the work early enough to complete before the start of the new season but not too soon that any work we do is undone by further extreme weather events.

Please be conscious of the greenkeepers working on these holes and please lift and move your ball to respect the safety of the team. Please do not play over the heads of the Greenkeepers or expect them to stand to one side while you play. This work has to take priority for everyone's benefit and we do not wish to close holes to play if possible. But the safety of my team will always be paramount.

Many Thanks

Ryun Holden

Course manager