

AUGUST 2010

HEAD GREENKEEPERS NEWSLETTER

Now that the Club's fantastic new website is up and running, it's time to resume my newsletter. I am planning to follow the same format as previous newsletters but I will produce it quarterly rather than monthly to ensure that there is sufficient news and information to keep it interesting.

Course Summary

Since my last newsletter and over the winter, contractors have successfully completed drainage work on six of our greens. This was considered essential following the performance of the greens over the last two very wet seasons. There are now 8 greens remaining which we plan to drain over the next two winters.

As luck would have it we have had one of the driest and warmest starts to the year and this has had a considerable positive effect on the condition of the course, especially the greens. Our maintenance programme this year (although very similar to previous years) has delivered far better results.

However, July has been far wetter than the earlier months and it is pleasing to see that the greens with drainage are performing very well and much better than those still to be drained.

The last six months has seen a different approach to the overall presentation of the course, mainly aimed at the seedhead rough areas. Although at times the seedhead rough was visually pleasing it proved unpopular amongst members so this year we have reduced the height of cut in these areas. The new lower cut has met with universal approval from members with fewer if any lost balls, this in turn must speed up play and for most members increase the enjoyment of their round of golf.

Our current maintenance programme is based around solid greenkeeping practices of light topdressing, light feeding and aeration with the aim of reducing compaction, increasing natural surface drainage and good general plant health. Getting this balance right will ensure that the presentation of the course will remain high even if the weather turns against us.

The dry conditions at the start of the season has been a test for our irrigation system which has been virtually unused for the last two years. Small problems on certain greens have been highlighted and these have now been repaired. We have been aware that the teeing areas have dried out over this period but although we have a generous water abstraction licence there are physical limits to the amount that we can draw from the borehole and store at any one time. During long dry periods priority for the use of this water has to be given to the greens.

Course Maintenance

- **Greens Renovation Work**

The greens renovation work will be carried out in September and will include larger spiking and heavier topdressing. Although this is bound to have an initial impact on the general quality of the greens, it is essential to help reduce the build up of thatch and prepare the greens for the demands of regular winter play.

Environmental News

- **Course wildlife**

The deer have recently been spotted around the course. However, I am interested in sightings of all wildlife so please keep your eyes open and let me know of any new sightings.

BIRDS	SIGHTED	DATE
Goldcrests	5th fairway and 6th tee	2008
Reed Warbler	Wet pond on 6th fairway	2007
Green Chested Woodpecker	15th pond	2007
Owl (type unknown)	Next to 2nd tee	June 2008
Sparrow Hawk	Back of the 13th green	July 2008
Male and female Pheasant	Under the beech trees on 18th fairway	July 2008
Pheasant (male and female)	Edges of the practice ground	March 2009
Heron	15th pond 6th wet area	2008 April 2009
Kestrel	Back of the 11th Green also sat on a fence post back of 14th tee	Sept 2008 March 2009
MAMMALS	SIGHTED	DATE
Fox	Between 1st and 18th fairway Near the 15th tee	October 2008 January 2009
Roe Deer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheltering in trees alongside 11th fairway • also 18th fairway • 1st fairway • 3 deer seen near 1st tee • 7th fairway 	2007 / 2008 March 2009 April 2009 May 2010
Grey Squirrels	Trees at back of 13th tee	2008
Stoats	Crossing the maintenance track side of 11th fairway	June 2008
Field Mice	Edge of practice ground	October 2008
PONDLIFE	SIGHTED	DATE
Roach	15th pond	March 2009
Newt	7th fairway near 7th pond	March 2009