



November 2024 - Course Update

Autumn/Winter update

This update outlines some of the larger projects on the course this week but does not include the continuous maintenance work completed by the staff throughout the year.

It has been another busy period for the greens team & volunteers as we continue our winter project work. October's challenges include the leaves and the growth all over the course.

- **Greens** - I am pleased to see an improvement in our greens after the tumultuous spell with disease which we still actively monitoring as disease pressure continues to be very high.
- **Winter Greens** - these are all prepared and ready for play if the weather turns against us. The Fixtures & Greens Directors will communicate when the use of mats becomes compulsory. Members are encouraged to use mats now, but this is not compulsory - yet.
- **White tees** - these are now adjacent to the yellow tees, to protect the main tees during the winter.
- **October growth spell** - With growth still rampant due to the mild October temperatures, we are spending more time than expected on managing this.
- **Leaves** - we are collecting up to 25 tonnes of leaves - a day. The new leaf blower and leaf collector machine have been used a lot. Some windy days have brought a lot of leaves down, but some trees are still holding onto them.
- If anyone has any questions about the report, please email me or speak to me on the course.

Course Strategy Group project - Bunker Work

Originally scheduled for the 14th of October, our work around the bunkers had to be delayed after we were notified that the original company were running 5 weeks behind.

Thankfully, we were able to contact AllGrass and, as most members will have seen, work began on Tuesday the 17th of October. To have the project completed swiftly, the greenstaff and the AllGrass team worked through the weekend to have the project complete by Tuesday 24th October, thus avoiding lengthy disruption to the members.



The bunkers on holes 10 to 15 have all been reshaped in accordance with the club's development plan laid out as designed by the golf club architect Scott McPherson.

We are very satisfied with the work carried out by the Architect and Allgrass Ltd and hope that members are also pleased and can all visualise how these holes will look when the season begins in April 2025.

Now that the groundwork has been completed, the greenstaff have begun turfing the runoff areas of these bunkers. We will then welcome WhiteMoss onto the course on Monday the 18th of November to line the refurbished bunkers. This will take a single day to complete.

Throughout this work we also need to find time to complete repairs on the irrigation pipes around the newly constructed bunkers. This is another lengthy and time-consuming task but is essential to maintain standards around the greens.

Finally, when this has all been finished, the greenstaff will build the revetted walls of the bunkers, before turfing the bankings to blend in with the surrounding areas. While this is a time-consuming task, it should allow for a stronger bunker face and consistent aesthetic appeal.

Course Strategy Group - 11th Green reshaping

While we had access to the digger and Jordan from AllGrass, we took the opportunity to reshape the 11th green (as pictured below). This was something that was recommended to us by STRI in their 2024 June report.



Greenstaff multi-tasking on both bunker and banking



Using a laser level, we lowered the banking around the 11th green to beneath the level of the lowest point of the green. STRI advised us to do this as it will allow water to drain off the green instead of sitting on the playing surface as it does currently. This will create a natural drainage system and increase the greens playability in the wetter months. Over a distance of 11 metres, we dropped the surface 30mm, not a huge amount but sufficient to allow surface water to run off.

Ongoing work on the Greens - Verti-draining & Air2G2 - November 2024 - to improve natural drainage

In my update regarding the disease early in the season, I highlighted natural drainage practices as a focus for the greenstaff over the winter months. Due to the time-consuming projects of the bunkers, I have had to complete these practices over the weekend. The greens have now been verti-drained using 1/2tines. This took longer than usual, as we had numerous mechanical issues with the machines which we are still trying to resolve.

We will continue with these practices throughout the season as the greens still require the support. Pictured below is a black band around a plug from our greens. This is created by anaerobic gases (Hydrogen Sulphide gas) in the soil which is commonly known as black layer, it has a negative effect on rooting and drainage. This is best dealt with by following good aeration practices, so we will continue solid tining the greens to open up the surfaces. Furthermore, we will also complete a third round of aeration with the Air2G2. For more information on the purpose and effects of this procedure, please refer to my report from September. This is booked to begin on Monday the 11th of November and we hope to see results just as positive as last time.



Black Ring Created by Anaerobic Gases (highlighted in yellow)



Outlook - what's coming in 2024 and 2025

In addition to the very important day to day tasks of course set up, cutting rough, fairways, approaches and greens, there are some other projects the team may be able to tackle in the winter months including:

Bunker work - this will remain the top priority for the team and volunteers, and we hope to conclude this before the end of 2024. The bunkers will not be brought into play until they are ready, and the Fixtures & Greens teams are happy that they have fully bedded in.

Tree program - if we get frosts/snow, the team may start work on a tree thinning program, as recommended in the STRI report. Many greens and tees are surrounded by high canopies of trees, blocking sunlight and air.

White House - installing a concrete floor - the main storeroom at the white house is not currently fit for purpose and quotes for installing a concrete floor will be obtained. This would improve the club's ability to store seed, chemicals, etc appropriately.

Finally, a big shout out to the **Staff & Volunteers** - This is a very busy period for the greens team, and we are **very** fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer group which have been integral to being able to maintain ambitious goals for this winter. If you have spare time and can give up a few hours to help the team, please contact John Duthie or one of the Greens Team.

Happy golfing.

Billy Hudson
Head Greenkeeper
5th November 2024