



Seaford Town Council

Report 159/14

Agenda Item No:	10
Committee:	Golf Course
Date:	2 December 2014
Title:	Head Greenkeeper report
By:	Nick Stephens
Wards Affected:	All Seaford wards
Purpose of Report:	To inform of Golf Course maintenance

Recommendations

You are recommended:

- 1. To note contents of this report**
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Information

Listed below are works carried out over the past Three months in addition to normal mowing and maintenance regimes.

After a fantastic September weather wise with the beginning of October also being very warm and dry, welcome rain arrived and with it the opportunity to begin preparations for the winter months. As usual, when the rain begins it seems to go on forever but hopefully we avoid the unprecedented levels of last year. So far the course has held up well, with previously wet greens and other areas coming back into play much sooner after heavy downpours. Management of high traffic areas will be a priority for the forthcoming months.

September

Greens fed at the beginning and towards the end of the month with low levels of Nitrogen(6 units in total) but increasing the amounts of Potassium, trace elements and particularly iron to harden the turf and acidify the top layer to reduce chance of disease and worm activity. Total Nitrogen input for the year was 50 units (Kg/Ha). This is in the ideal range to encourage fine grasses, avoid thatch build up and minimise disease outbreaks.

Verti- drain contractor deep tined all greens to a depth of 10" with 12mm tines to relieve compaction and open pore spaces in rootzone encouraging denser rooting and improving drainage. All tees tined to a depth of 8" with 19mm tines and Fairways 6, 7, 14 and 15 also with the larger tines. Moving forward all fairways will be verti-drained on a rotational basis aiming for 4 to 5 per year as this is a very time consuming and thus relatively expensive process. The benefits are massive though.

Top dressing applied three times this month to take advantage of the good weather and aid recovery from scarification and tining with approximately 25 tonnes across the 19 greens. On each occasion the greens were spiked/sarel rolled beforehand to aid integration of sand into the rootzone. This is important to avoid layering in the profile and subsequent root break at a later date.

Merit turf granular insecticide applied to all greens and tees we will hold some in reserve to treat problem areas if they develop later in the year.

Fungicide was applied at the end of the month as a preventative measure as conditions were ideal for a significant outbreak. This is the first and hopefully only application of fungicide required on the course. We managed with only one application last year and this is a good indication that the greens are healthy and the management techniques employed are paying dividends.

October

Grass continued to grow very strongly during the month and kept the greenstaff very busy, presenting the course at its best. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the other members of the team for their willingness to work on occasionally when the conditions were favourable.

Preparation of winter temporary greens began with mowing height reduced to 7mm and application of 16-2-10 slow release fertiliser. Spiking and topdressing took place, to improve drainage and trueness. These are now Ground Under Repair (G.U.R.) and when not in play all balls should be lifted and placed to the side.

Greens 12 and problem area on 13 were hollow cored, overseeded with a bent/fescue mix and a free trial bag of recovery type fertiliser applied prior to top dressing. Results so far have been very good and will look to use this product for fast recovery in the future.

Regular spiking and sarel rolling of greens and tees took place to aid percolation, disease resistance and gaseous exchange.

Greens top dressed twice with approximately 15 tonnes sand giving a total application for the year of around 90 tonnes this may be supplemented with light dressing through the winter if ground conditions allow.

November

Renovation of uneven 16th tee which was planned for last year but cancelled due to the poor weather has taken place. Bunkers on this hole and the 10th are earmarked for renovation this winter, in the same revetted style as the 7th of last year, again if ground conditions allow.

New pathways installed using cockleshell media on 4th, 5th, 8th and 18th will be extended. 100mm of damaged turf removed before back filling to create firm, clean surface which is aesthetically pleasing and durable. Cockleshell has the added benefit, because of its softer nature, of not damaging expensive cutting equipment blades and cylinders. Feedback from the Golfers is very positive and adds to the manicured look of the course.

Wooden Tee marker posts, benches and litter bins are being pressure washed and will be treated with a preservative when fully dry.

Low level post and rope barriers have been installed on a couple of holes and will continue to do so over the coming months, as required, to protect vulnerable areas.

Greens aerated twice so far this month with 9mm pencil tines. These narrower tines keep the surface open whilst giving the minimum of disruption. We will vary the depth each time to avoid a "pan" developing in the rootzone.

Pace of growth is finally beginning to slow now so height of cut will be raised in all areas to protect turf and build up reserves in the plant for the winter period. Generally Greens will be cut at 6mm, Tees and aprons at 14mm and Fairways at 18mm. Banks/surrounds, Semi rough and cut Rough will remain the same at 38mm,38mm and 75mm respectively.

Budgets 2014/15

The current budgets for Ground maintenance non contract, Vehicle & equipment maintenance, Staff protective clothing and Staff training are workable if additions are made to account for inflation.

My main issue is with the equipment purchase budget for the foreseeable years.

Having previously purchased a large amount of machinery in two lease agreements 4 to 5 years ago, some of this equipment will be due for replacement over the next few years.

A new Greens mower was purchased this year at a cost of £30,000 and will have an efficient lifespan as our main greens mower of 6 years. The Fairway mower – which is our single most expensive piece of kit will be due for replacement at the end of next season at a cost of appx.£48,000 and our utility vehicle will be due for replacement shortly after at a cost of £12,000. Along with the Wide area rough mower, Tees and surrounds mower, Cushman sprayer/topdresser, and Tractor in the following years.

In total, to replace all of our equipment over a 7 to 8 year rolling programme will cost in the region of £230,000. This is the average for an 18 hole golf course.

A figure of around £33,000 needs to be allocated to the machinery purchase budget in the future with the ability to carry over un-used amounts to the following year/years to purchase higher value items.

Some of the equipments lifespan will have to be extended more than ideal, but this is possible in this instance to allow us to stagger future purchases.

With the standard of the course increasing and now the clubhouse, having the most efficient and up to date machinery will allow us to compete on a level playing field with other Clubs as well as ensuring safety requirements are adhered to.

Contact Officer

The Contact Officer for this report is Nick Stephens.

Head Greenkeeper

Town Clerk



