

HUNLEY

Golf Club

WINTER PROGRAM & COURSE REVIEW 2023/24



Introduction

As we come to the end of another season, we have made plans for the program of work to be undertaken before the start of the 2024 golfing season. It is also a good time for me to provide a quick review of how the course is developing and how the Greenkeeping operation is coping with the many challenges that are presented on and off the course.

Progress

An enormous amount of progress has been made on the course over the last decade and in more recent years we are really seeing work begin to pay dividends.

Whilst the overall product still isn't quite at the level we are aiming for, the one very pleasing aspect is that we have been able to maintain consistency throughout the year with even the minimum achieved standards being of good quality.

The club continues to grow, with membership, driving range use and playing guests increasing again this year which is hugely positive.

With all that in mind we have another busy winter ahead, making further improvements to the facilities for your enjoyment.

Course Condition

The greens have been as good as ever before over the last 9 months. The fine grass dominance of both bent and fescue within the greens turf means we can offer excellent putting surfaces year round without the need for any disruptive maintenance.

The main issues have been with Leatherjacket activity in early spring (more of this later) and then later in the summer from the fungal disease known as Dollar Spot.

Dollar Spot comes when the climatic conditions favour the onset of the disease, but also because it affects the fescue grasses and in particular slender creeping red varieties of which we have an abundance.

We have got good measures in place now though and the issue is one more of aesthetics rather than performance.



Fairways and approaches have certainly never been so good. The extra rainfall this summer has had a big impact on that, but the density of turf is now superb across the course.

The downside of the wet summer has seen the fringing rough thicken more, with an extra cut needed this year as growth has been particularly strong. These areas have needed two cuts this season as opposed to the normal single cut which would typically come mid season.

Overall bunkers have been well presented, but this is still an area we would like to improve upon, with daily raking not always possible.

Tees have been better, with rainfall helping divot repair, but this area will be discussed more later in this report.

The driving range usage has again increased and at times we have struggled to meet that demand. Despite the odd minor issue though the team have coped and we do intend to make changes over the winter to how the range is managed, in order to eliminate any disruption to its use heading into next season.

Planned Work

Alterations to Morgan's Mound

Hole 5 on the Morgan's course and hole 14 on the Jubilee course, is known as Morgan's Mound.

As outlined in last month's update, 2 projects are being merged into 1, with a new pond being created to the left of the green and also an extension to the green itself.

Soil excavated from the new pond will be used to mound up and landscape the surrounds of the green complex, which will allow the width of the green to be increased from only 260 m² to 400 m².

At the same time as this work is being carried out we will also be raising the pathway running by the tee on Wetlands, which tends to hold water currently after rainfall.



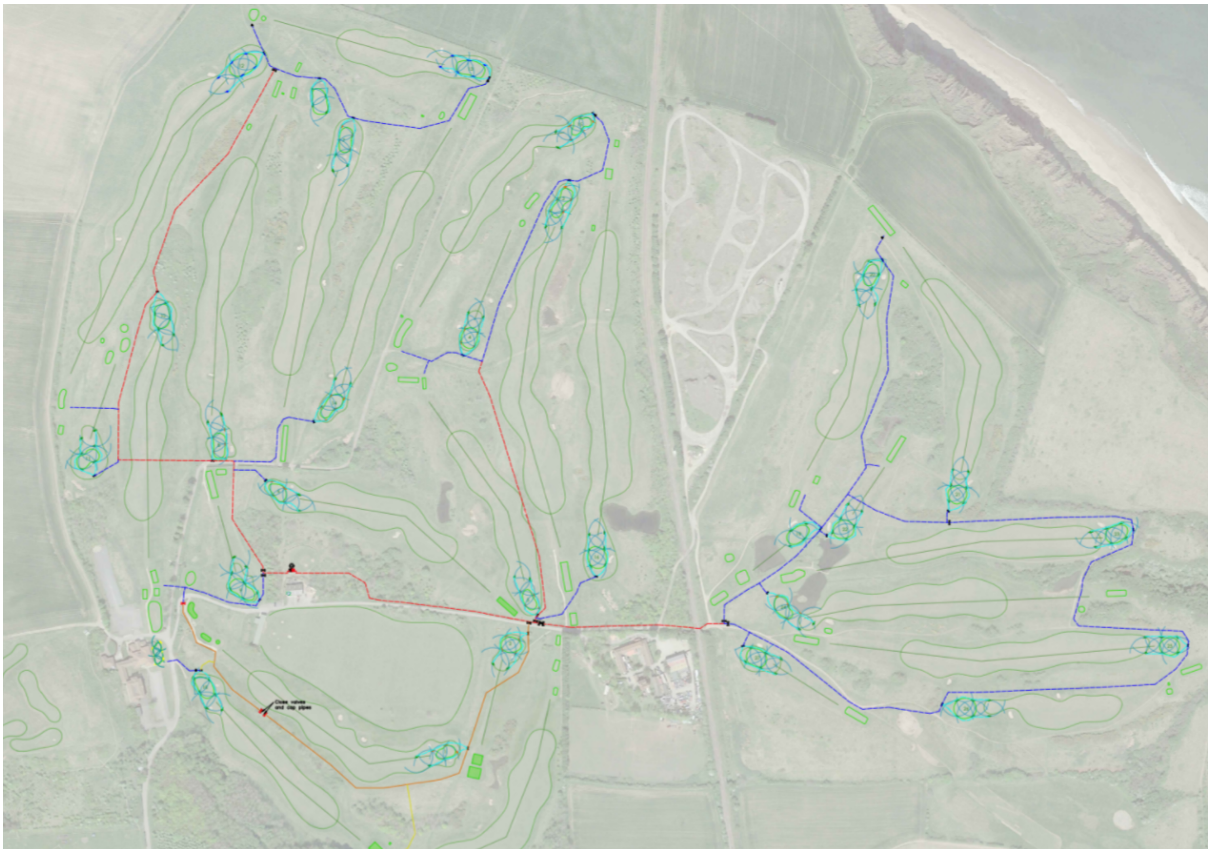
The image above, whilst basic, gives an idea of where changes are to be made. The new pond is highlighted in blue, with the dark green areas where new mounding will be added and the lighter green showing the green extension,

Irrigation Upgrade

As most of you will be well aware, the upgrading of the irrigation system will ramp up significantly this winter.

With a third of the mains pipework on the Morgan's course already installed, we intend to complete the entirety of the main pipeline this autumn. This will mean no more of the old PVC pipe will be under pressure come the beginning of next season.

In addition we will be upgrading pipework and sprinklers to a further seven greens and approaches, having completed four earlier this year already.



The map above shows where pipework will be run, with red and blue showing the mainline. The bottom section in orange has already been completed and our aim is to do the seven greens above the public bridleway seen in the top left of this image.

Teeing Grounds

Whilst much work has been carried out on the course over the years, mostly to playing surfaces on the course after a tee shot has been hit, we are now able to focus more on the teeing grounds themselves.

Our rationale behind this approach has been that the tee is the one place on each hole where you can choose where to place the ball. Therefore we have until recently focused on areas such as greens, aprons, fairways, bunkers etc as more of a priority.

We have already begun to upgrade tees in the last year or so, with Pennington's, Morgan's Mound and Warsett white tee being newly constructed for example, with Metcalfe's Ace and Fox Covert also being levelled and sand capped for improved turf condition.

This winter we are aiming to do more significant improvements on the following holes:

- Warsett
- Jaws
- Gray's Tor
- Snaith's
- Mclean's

Some of these involve new tee locations such as Gray's Tor, but most will just be increased in size and be levelled using sand for improved turf and playing characteristics.

At the moment we hope to undertake changes to all of these but the availability of time and resources may curtail work somewhat.

Leatherjacket Treatment

As many of you will be well aware, we use very little in the way of pesticides to manage the course and haven't for many years now.

However, you will also be well aware of the problems we have faced over the last couple of years in the early part of spring caused by Crane Fly larvae known as Leatherjackets.

As a new chemical has recently been granted full approval to be used safely on golf courses in the UK, we have decided that we will be using it on the greens. This isn't ideal but we feel the disruption caused to playing surfaces justifies the use on the greens only.

This will be applied in the middle of October as the timing is crucial for the success of the product. Peak flight for Crane Flies was mid September for us and the recommendation is a month later when most larvae will have hatched but will still be very young and susceptible.



Remedial Repairs and Maintenance

There are always some small remedial repairs to areas of the course. This includes but is not limited to:

- Thin areas of turf around greens
- Some areas of returfing that have subsequently sunk or died and need lifting and replacing
- Deep spiking will be carried out on closely mown turf from tees to greens
- All Tees will be renovated to aid recovery after winter tees are introduced to play throughout.
- Bunker rebuilds will be undertaken on those still to be upgraded or where revetted faces have deteriorated

Machinery Maintenance

Every year the machinery needs to be prepared for extensive use during the growing season.

General servicing, blade replacement and sharpening makes up the bulk of the work which will be carried out in January and February.

In Summary

Above sets out our intentions for the forthcoming winter period and also some of the reasoning behind the changes. We hope to complete all planned work, but such is the nature of our unpredictable climate, this may not be the case. For the same reasons, timing of the work is subject to change but we will keep you updated as things progress.

Any questions are always welcome, so please get in touch. My email is gregf@hunleygolf.co.uk

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