

Longside Golf Club

Course Report March 2017

Introduction

Apart from a very wet (42mm rainfall) beginning to the month, March has been relatively dry with only 15 mm rainfall since the 7th. Throughout this period the course has drained well and river level has dropped to the lowest I have seen. Ground Conditions however took time to become stable enough to allow a great deal of progress in finishing tidying up work at 14th, back end of 18th tee and debris at open ditches. On the 20th of March with the new season only 2 working weeks away I was forced into the decision to get the majority of the course cut and shaped into a very playable 18 holes for this time of year, planning to complete the afore mentioned over the next few weeks as time allows. My usual thanks goes out to volunteers, **Sandy Gerrard, Jake Gall, Donald Mutch and Alistair Scott** for their assistance.

Recent Work

All greens have had a light level of Nitrogen Fertiliser applied.

All greens have been top dressed and brushed up to 6 times. This initial dressing is a month ahead of when it was carried out last year.

18th tee turf was sprayed with a high phosphate application to encourage root development and hence stability. The tee was also overseeded with a rye/ fescue mix and hand top dressed. The turfed area was also cut and rolled on Friday 31st at 1 inch and opened to boys and ladies sections.

For a 2nd time this winter Vertidrainage has been carried out on fairways 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 to aid drainage and drying process and hence assist with fairway maintenance.

Bunkers have been raked and golfer's rakes put out and are in play. A few will need a small top up which is to be done soon.

Winter tee markers have been removed and replaced with summer ones.

Ladies Red Discs have been sunk into tee surfaces and most of their signs removed. There are around 6 signs on new side which have been concreted which remain in place.

New flags have replaced old worn ones on pins.

Fairways have been mown up to 6 times, Rough has all had at least one cut, some parts more. The tees have been cut a number of times and all banking areas have had an initial mowing.

Machinery

As the committee requested we don't use Toro Workman without brakes myself and George Cantlay have started to try and resolve this. We have been trying to source suitable but much more affordable parts. This will be ongoing to its resolution but at this stage it looks like costing in the low hundreds instead of £2500 for parts from Toro.

The club was offered our new Toro 5610 Fairway Machine for a very reasonable £6250 + VAT if we undertake servicing ourselves. This has been agreed and with the Service Pack (filters and bottom blades) still to be supplied from Fairways GM we will carry out in due course. I am in negotiations with George about when he may be able to sharpen units. The machine is very good as it is and still cutting well. This is a great replacement for Jacobsen LF3800 and will be an asset to our fairway mowing regime.

Other Matters

George Kinghorn will start working with us on Monday April 3rd and will, once trained be a great help in the maintenance of the golf course. I plan to initially get George competent in using specific machinery especially for greens mowing so he will be 'up to speed' when we start Sunday morning greens mowing.

Stewart Kidd

I was saddened by hearing of Stewart's decision to stand down from his position as Greens Convener. Stewart has helped me personally in developing into my role as Head Green keeper and we worked well together. He should be thanked and congratulated on the job he has done over the years.

Moving forward I welcome and await a new appointment for the role of Greens Convener and look forward to working alongside the person appointed.

There were questions in relation to the condition of the course by members prior to the season start and can be clarified as follows:

1. The South Ugie has flooded the course 3 times since the New Year, giving spells of unworkable ground conditions.
2. There are only 2 full time green staff .
3. The amount of work undertaken during the winter period has been greater;
 - (a) As well as major tree removal work at 14th and car park, every tree on the course has been suitably pruned to help with playability, ease of course maintenance and most importantly, tree health.

This was clear to me as being long overdue and extremely necessary due to a period of neglect, however this work has produced a large amount of arising (branches) to be removed.

- (b). The open ditches had been neglected I have been informed for at least 6 years adding to the

workload with required tidy up. Due to ground conditions I chose to await drier conditions hence less extra damage etc.

(c). The bunkers on the course had not been properly edged for a decent period of time. 43 of the 45 have been edged. When new side was opened there were still 7 bunkers with edgings left inside at 6th, 7th and 12th holes. Due to wet and soft ground conditions green staff were reluctant to drive vehicles necessary to remove these until conditions improved hence not making more damage to be repaired.

Here is to a longer less interrupted happy golfing season ahead with good and caring on course etiquette!

Iain Elliot

Head Green keeper