

## Greens Committee minutes 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

Due to COVID-19 the committee decided to meet outdoors whilst conducting a walk of areas agreed to inspect and discuss proposals for general maintenance, including winter work previously proposed.

Attendees: Andy Hall-Richard Carter- David Crampton (HGK)  
Gary Pritchard (Professional)-Andy Bell-John Whiteley -Bryan Harvey and John Stirling.

**Apologies:** Harold box, Club Captain.

1. The committee met at the HWH, starting at the 9<sup>th</sup> large greenside bunker. We all agreed this is one of the worst areas of drainage, how we fix this was discussed, the following points for further investigation and future proposal.
  - a. The large GS bunker is too deep and would benefit from being remodelled into two separate shallower bunkers, raising the level by 2 to 3 feet installing gravel and drainage within.
  - b. Herringbone drainage from the left of the fairway into the woodland right of the green is proposed, it has proven successful elsewhere. A sump or soakaway would be dug, into which the drained water from fairway, bunker and rough areas would be diverted into.
  - c. Part of this project may be better placed in the hands of an official drainage company, GP has spoken with a contact in the industry whom we will meet in the near future on site to further discuss this. It is unlikely to be in this year's plan, however it features in our 5-year plan, but it may be possible to commence this large project early in 2021 given the right circumstances and we are keen to do so.
2. Tees are to receive extensive attention prior to next seasons play, specifically to improve the grass quality and playing surface generally. We have several very large tee boxes, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> were two we looked at but others also need attention.
  - a. The general plan is to spike regularly, feed and top dress with sand and seed. Many of these we do not utilise the full available tee due to the ever-maturing and expanding treelines.
  - b. These trees are planned to be cut back to increase the available usage area of each tee.
  - c. Defining and shaping tee boxes into rectangles where possible, tees such as the 13<sup>th</sup> are slightly more restrictive.
  - d. The idea is to cut the teeing off area to a normal short length, but grow a fringe of grass in surrounding areas.
  - e. Many Tee boxes have sloping edges or sunk areas which may require greater intervention at a later date, similar to the work on the 4<sup>th</sup> a few years ago. This

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shaping will mainly eliminate these uneven areas, presenting the better available surface only is the intention.

- f. The HGK will pay greater attention to the these newly defined areas, those parts left to grow longer to semi rough will not need the same attention, this will save time and materials.
  - g. This is a large area requiring maintenance, it will take a good while to get the surface we would wish for, please be patient and allow the plan to develop, the summer of 2021 should show positive results.
3. The path development plan is ongoing, it's hoped to create several more new, including extensions to existing paths before next season, materials were held up after the lockdown but are now available.
- a. The path on the 5<sup>th</sup> looks fantastic, the next section will run the length of the 6<sup>th</sup> Tee's to the wooded archway, this then runs to the rear of the ditch via a woodchip pathway.
  - b. Other footpaths are planned for this winter, we hope to extend the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the fairway and 11<sup>th</sup> to fairway, these including the 12<sup>th</sup> done in October would achieve almost 500yds of footpath extra.
  - c. The 13<sup>th</sup> green to 14<sup>th</sup> Tee will remain wood chip surface, the use of woodchip free and ecological, in keeping with the tree covered route and will be regularly topped up by a plentiful supply of our own virtually free woodchip.
4. The 8<sup>th</sup> hole is one we have concerns about safety, recently we have had reported stray balls onto people's property on the A642.
- a. The OOB posts have been brought inside the fence, redefined along the whole length as a measure to remind golfers of the consequences of hitting that stray shot, there is no perfect solution to this problem.
  - b. The planting of more gorse along the fence line where in time the OOB posts could be removed and the fence once again becomes the OOB line.
  - c. You will notice the fairway has been slightly modified to give a landing zone offering a short iron shot onto the green.
  - d. The large bushy tree at the lake edge will be removed very soon, this will allow greater utilisation along the left side of the 8<sup>th</sup> tee, a measure to improve the quality of Tee surfaces around the course by allowing the spread of use over the whole available surface.
  - e. Long term planning for the 8<sup>th</sup> may include moving the bridge slightly left and running a path through the trees towards the 9th, detail yet to be agreed and finalised.

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- f. Meanwhile we may rope off green side which is suffering from high footfall, these ropes intended to encourage players to walk further away from the greens and offering more landing area once mud has subsided.
5. The Walls to the 13<sup>th</sup> pond have collapsed, now roped off and sprayed to define the hazard, players should refrain from crossing the hazard roped off area for their own safety. This pond will need extensive work to rebuild the banks, we are considering utilising a stone cage design as can be seen on the 18<sup>th</sup> waterfall near the bridge, planning is ongoing. This is not within budget for this year's work, therefore a quote will be sought to complete this work and planned according to finances.
6. There are many trees in the woodlands around the course, many were planted over 20 years ago well over 20,000 in fact. These were intended to be thinned but many have not been to date, where they have been you will see good results, like on the 3<sup>rd</sup> successfully over the last couple of years. Cutting is tree maintenance and helps with grass growth, this is normal husbandry for a maturing golf course. We also remove trees which we are aware could be deemed as a reduction in difficulty. This is never the intention of tree cutting, the club Professional is always consulted on any perceived change as to how the hole might play if changes are made.
  - a. The 6<sup>th</sup> hole has been identified as one of the next areas where we will try and improve the tree and grass health and return the hole to how it was originally designed. About 7 years ago a professional reviewer wrote.

"The sixth is a sweeping hole with bunkers glaring at you in the middle and right of the fairway and a brook down the left hand side which encourages you to try and bite off as much as you dare to leave a shorter approach."

- b. The sweeping nature of this hole is becoming much less of the case as the trees mature, in fact it has become a blind dog leg. Given the shape of the fairway this is a real shame, and each year becomes less of a feature hole that it once was.
- c. We have identified several trees that need to be thinned that make tree growth difficult and both tree and grass health poor, these have been spot marked and will be cut at some stage along with others. Also identified are trees and bushes on the left looking from the tee, these have now begun to encroach too far across the tee off and need taking back.
- d. Also identified are trees which may need taking out marked with an X, a final decision on these will be made after the trees on the left are thinned to open the view from the tee. The total fall from the 6<sup>th</sup> tee to the far side of the ditch is well over the height of any ditch side trees, in other words where you stand to drive is higher than the trees in front of you. If your shot carries you have no worry of hitting the tree, but if your shot is falling and strikes the tree, it is likely it would have fallen in the ditch should the tree not save it. Removing these trees is not making the hole easier, it is returning the line of the hole to a sweeping feature

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dog leg, where the far fairway can be seen from the rear Tees and any falling shot will either end up in the ditch or carry should you be long enough.

e. Other changes are to try and get more sunlight to the tee, South is 4 o'clock from the Tee when looking forward. This will involve lowering the conifers and removing lower branches, the safety aspect from the trees will be maintained as trees behind are now mature.

7. Wear and tear on the LH bank at the 3<sup>rd</sup> green is a perennial problem, in the short term we have asked the HGK to rope it off as the only access and sand it regularly over the winter, returning it as GUR in the spring. We know from experience this will regrow early spring and will be playable in time for the season again
8. Minor damage on the greens is being treated, micro tinning and chemical treatments are constantly being applied weather permitting. We do not use temporary winter greens at NGC, our greens are good to excellent all year round. We have some slight damage due to the recent hollow tinning, this is being addressed and are confident next season they will be back to the quality of summer 2020.
9. It is only a few weeks since late summer golf, the change in climate hasn't made us forget our dry season issues. The rear right of the 18<sup>th</sup> Green is in constant review and is improving quickly. The aprons and tees in places were dry where irrigation was failing to reach these, this is still part of our winter plans and will receive attention over the winter.
10. Roping off of areas prone to poor drainage is a measure we need to take to protect the grass, most members will be familiar with annually roped off areas such as the right of the 13<sup>th</sup> green. We have extended the use of roping off to protect the course from churning, please respect all areas roped or marked as restrictions, replacing any posts you may need to remove to take your shot.
11. The Greens Director report frequency will change to a quarterly event, points in these committee minutes cover all issues. The next GD report will therefore be March 2021.

This outdoors meeting of the greens committee was found to be very useful, it may be we continue to use this format in the future. You will notice the minutes therefore read more like a commentary or discussion by the members as we walk the course.

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<b>ITEM</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>UPDATE or ACTIONED</b>	<b>RAISED/UPDATED</b>
Stint readings	DC	Rescheduled for 2021	09-12-2020 01-04-2021
Funding plans	AH & RC	Budget agreed	07-09-2020
Footpath Surveys	AB & JW	Ongoing Plans in place	09-12-2020
TORs BOD agreement	AH	Embedded online. Access via NGC web page	06-08-2020
Drainage 3 <sup>rd</sup> GS	DC	Roped off and sanded over winter.	09-12-2020
8 <sup>TH</sup> Hole development	AB & DC	Planning in progress OOB in place	09-12-2020
Bunker survey	BH & JS	Planning in progress for 9 <sup>th</sup> Greenside	09-12-2020
Dustbin replacement	DC & AH	3 new bins to be installed winter 20/21	09-12-2020
Tree thinning	DC	Winter work Planned	09-12-2020
Trial Ball retriever 18th	AH/DC/GP	Implemented on 18 holes	09-12-2020
Repainting of T and distance markers	DC & AB	Partially implemented/ Some winter work req	08-09-2020
OOB and hazard stakes repaint	DC	1 <sup>st</sup> 10 <sup>th</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup> repainted	08-09-2020
Signage inspection 7 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup> 16 <sup>th</sup> new warnings to golfers of public ROW	BH/AH	1 <sup>st</sup> 7 <sup>th</sup> 13 <sup>th</sup> 16 <sup>th</sup> in place, new map and no public access WIP	08-09-2020
Erect new warning signs 16,13 and 7 <sup>th</sup>	AH	done	06-08-2020
50 Volunteer sandbaggers	AH	In place, needs more support Bags removed for winter.	08-09-2020 09-12-2020
Clangers 5 <sup>th</sup> 6 <sup>th</sup> & 1 <sup>st</sup>	AH	All In place	09-12-2020
Reduce grass cutting	DC	Suspended for winter. SR to be cut to 2inch conditions permitting	09-12-2020

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Practice Area & Putting green tidy up	DC/JW	Practice areas tidied up- WIP	08-09-2020
Install extra holes in winter Tee mats	DC	WIP	09-12-2020
Tree maintenance	DC	Thinning and pruning various holes	09-12-2020
13 <sup>th</sup> pond wall	DC	Quote required for repair	09-12-2020
9 <sup>th</sup> GS Bunker	DC/GP	Quote for drainage	09-12-2020

Next meeting to be held outdoors, a date is yet to be agreed in January 2021.

Andy Hall, on behalf of the Greens committee.