



NORMANTON GOLF CLUB

Greens report February 2021

Members: 2021 has started like 2020 finished, very wet and occasionally snow and ice. The Pandemic has meant that the Greens Committee will not convene in February, we have all shared our ideas and information from informal, individual visits to the course. We have planned ongoing work and are preparing for a return to golf soon we hope.

Staff: The golf club has had to make some difficult decisions, furlough had to be taken advantage of to enable our outgoing costs to be minimised, to ensure the long term future of our club. All greens staff have been on two half days during the week since the 3rd lockdown, we have all five staff working, the club is currently advertising for a sixth to join as an apprentice. We have carried out a review of the working routines of the greens staff, they have accepted some changes that we feel better reflect the needs of the club and course. From April 2021 greens staff will work an average 37.5 hours per week, this will then be set against a seasonal requirement for more time in the summer against less time in the winter. Broadly speaking they will work 41.5 hours summer and 32 hours winter over five days. We feel this better represents the needs for the course and better value for the club. The greens staff are also required to provide weekend support of 4 hours each day summer and as required in the winter, starting times will reflect seasonal demands.

The apprentice: A new member who will work broadly the same, however we have gone further and reduced this position to 35 hours basic, again tending to work 41.5 hours summer the remaining being a reduced winter work schedule, saving valuable funds for the club. We believe this split in effort represents a good balance, and will give greater emphasis of work for the summer when workloads are highest and allow savings during the quieter months of winter. The advert for this position is on the club website and published widely on social media, applications to http://www.normantongolf.co.uk/mem_green_vacancy.php

Winter work: Pathways have continued to be developed, we are extremely pleased with progress made. The access from Tee to fairway on some holes has proven challenging when the weather is inclement, this is becoming more frequent due to persistent, reoccurring heavy periods of rainfall during late Autumn and through Winter. These paths not only give better access but open up opportunities for buggy use where previously it may have been restricted. This is an investment that benefits members playing experience as well as bringing financial returns in the longer term from buggy hire and its increased use. Some of our own members play only while buggies are on, we hope to extend this availability over the coming years to interconnect the whole course. **Paths:** Total completed to date since the end of the season 2020 will amount to approximately 400 yards, from tees to fairway, and through known wet areas where drainage is overwhelmed at times. The 3rd, 5th, 6th, 11th and 12th are almost completed, work will soon take place on connecting the HWH to the 9th & 10th junction.

Tees: Some winter tees need attention, we are mindful of the location, size and tee hole access on some, this issue is being addressed, we have listened to feedback from members. The 6th mat has been placed 20yds rearwards behind the red Tee, this fits in with the development of the path from top to bottom of the grass tees removing the unsightly bare ground that was present from high footfall. The 10th tee mat will also be moved to a more suitable position away from the path, without altering length of the hole.

Drainage: An area neglected since installation, it is a perennial issue at our club, we must be realistic the cost of replacing it in total is prohibitive, for this reason a staged repair is continuously being applied. You will recall the 7th and 9th fairways, the replaced drainage here has virtually solved this areas flooding. Similar targeted fixes will need to be made in a prioritised way to fit our budget. Areas such as the right of the 2nd, 9th and 13th greens, we are aware of other prevalent wet areas, these will need planning along side our intention to deal with persistent flooded bunkers.



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Bunkers: The club has changed several bunkers over recent years, many being too deep and too large, drainage from these being difficult without addressing the main issue of size and depth where appropriate. The 9th greenside bunker is a classic example of the problem, before lockdown we have had discussions which will involve substantial work to rectify and may involve external contractors. This and other identified bunkers will receive attention to help alleviate water retention, the size and depth of some will need altering, drainage away will need careful management so as to not create problems elsewhere.

Tee boxes: Before we returned to golf after the first lockdown we had ten virtually dry weeks, ironic because it rained most of the months prior to the lockdown in 2020. This dry spell accompanied by the reduction of manpower due to furlough and two staff medically shielding. These events resulted in some tees becoming dry and the grass decayed. It was BIGGA guidelines that dictated the essential maintenance we applied, Government rules dictated furlough, we did the right thing for the club financially and the safety of our staff, sadly this period allowed some decay on the course which took a while to recover by hard work from the team in very challenging conditions. The 1st Tee is an example of how easily this can happen, we regret the condition and state it fell into, but with hard work the greens team have recovered the tee to its former good condition ready for this season.

Irrigation: Ours is old and has had no large investment in over 22 years, it is a huge cost item. We plan to address deficient or failed systems in a prioritised way. Where it exists and needs expanding or where there is no irrigation and some needed, we will start to invest to repair or resolve these issues, but this will be staged and within our budget. The first and obvious areas will be done to hopefully prevent this summer being like last and previous summers, where dry areas develop, we ask you to be patient as this is disruptive and expensive work.

Greens: These will be returned to as good a pace and condition as possible, as quick as nature, time and budgets allow. Most would agree, when they are good they are quick and true, given the start we will have had, it may take us a few weeks. We have invested in a new greens mower, an essential starting point to good quality greens, tining and feeding will occur according to seasonal requirements where last year we fell short because of conditions presented by national restrictions and limitations. Annual Hollow Tinning will happen when it is seasonally best, the planning for this including normal play and competitions will be coordinated as it was in pre pandemic years. In 2021 we hope we are better prepared to work with the members and ensure maintenance and play can both fit into the calendar as it did in years before.

Investment in the course is our focus, with your support we intend to improve where we acknowledge investment has been in decline. In anticipation of your continued support, thank you for your patience and understanding. We hope to have some excellent golf together in 2021.

Andy Hall