



# NORMANTON GOLF CLUB

## **Greens Director Report October 2021**

Dear Members,

This autumn and winter there will be some disruption on the course during scheduled maintenance, this should not come as a surprise as I have raised this on several occasions in previous reports. We will try to minimise and manage this in a manner that should not intrude on your enjoyment, and keep you informed at each stage.

Very soon you will see notices in the club house and on the course advising you of the progress and any changes to your play. Please be patient while this work is ongoing, we hope the whole process will only affect play for two to three weeks, however, GUR will persist for several weeks. The renovation of the 9<sup>th</sup> bunkers will continue, and activity around the 9<sup>th</sup> tee and bunkers along with GUR could last till Christmas, but play will resume on the 9<sup>th</sup> as soon as possible, some roping and GUR to protect surfaces beyond this.

Commencing Monday 11<sup>th</sup> Oct, the greens team lead by Dave Crampton will commence the renovation of two bunkers and the filling in of a third, all on the 9<sup>th</sup> hole. Additionally, the drainage contractor will start work on the 9<sup>th</sup> hole commencing Monday 01<sup>st</sup> Nov. The work on the bunkers will be ongoing for several weeks, we will try to keep disruption to a minimum, during the period of drainage work we will need to close this hole, along with the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, during the first week of November, notices will be displayed and emails will be sent to advise and update you, please see notices at the main entrance or enquire at the Pro shop.

In August we invited an agronomist to inspect our course, STRI are a renowned specialist agronomist company, golf courses country wide use them for advice. Our report was returned mid-September, we wasted no time in commencing a plan of action to implement its advice. I will post a hard copy of this report in the clubhouse, the notice boards are pretty full, I may try to occupy the board at the top of the stairway, please keep an eye out for notices and information soon to be displayed for your benefit.

The club is investing in the course, the STRI report gives guidance requiring certain measures, these require us to acquire some increased quantities of materials and new equipment. Where practical and financially reasonable we hope to implement the report fully, this is great news for the club. We believe we have a solution to the vastly expensive replacement of our irrigation system, to replace it outright is beyond our means. Instead, yearly affordable investments will be made, starting soon with the replacement of the control system to return working sprinklers to reliable automation again. I will be updating you soon on the next 5 years plan to return the system to better state in subsequent

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reports. This investment and repair will be continuous, in years to come we will replace old piping and the hardware, such as valves and sprinklers on a hole by hole basis. It will take many years, any disruptions will be carefully managed, however, we don't think play will be affected too severely as most of the work can be done over winter when systems are drained off.

Improving our tees is high on the agenda for this winter, we will move onto winter tee mats from 01<sup>st</sup> November. The use of fairway mats will only be introduced once conditions require, along with other usual winter restrictions. Please adhere to all line and roped off areas, once the ground becomes churned and muddy it's too late. My aim is to preclude this happening this year where possible, I ask you all to use a sense of pride and keep off the traditionally wet areas, paths are never far from the greens, you can start this now and develop a habit for the whole season. For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> footpath takes you to the green and onto the 3<sup>rd</sup>, why not use it? This is the same on several other holes, please use the footpaths as far as you can from now on, they save the course and ultimately improve your experience.

Please continue to repair divots, we will top up the buckets and provide divot bags. The greens are prone to pitch marks now the wetter weather is here, please repair yours and two other pitch marks each time you walk towards your ball. This takes 20-30 seconds and should not slow play. The greens committee members will be equipped with a small bottle of seed mix, we each will be allocated 3 holes and sprinkle some mix onto repaired pitch marks. This is a recommendation by the STRI report and agronomist, he tells us that this is done by some of the top course where they have dozens of staff doing this simple thing daily to help return the green to its best.

I have had several letters, emails and comments on the high quality of the greens in recent weeks. We think it is no coincidence that since the fitting of the brush to the mower we are seeing this improvement. Again a recommendation of the STRI report, the simple use of a brush to lift the grass just prior to the cutting blade arrives give us a very smooth and true surface. We have been blessed with some fantastic weather at the beginning of this autumn, this must also affect the conditions.

We know there is always more to be done, there are some areas of the greens damaged by lack of moisture. These will be repaired this autumn and winter, you may notice these areas being replaced by quality grass from the fringes of the green, and we may even choose to mow slightly inside the usual cut to relieve the fringe where some dryness exists. The irrigation work we plan will hopefully prevent the return of dry spots, where fusarium or other disease or damage appears we will deal with it on a case by case. The hope is to eradicate the greens of brown or damaged areas, this is a very high bar we set ourselves, please be patient with the efforts of the team to raise the standard even further for the coming 2022 season.

Finally, winter golf offers its own challenges, there are parts of the course that pose some risks to both your health and the grasses you play upon. Please endeavour to stay on footpaths where they exist, please don't take short cuts and definitely don't risk injury on

slippery surfaces, especially on banked tees. Steps will be placed on the 9<sup>th</sup> tee at some stage over winter, but meanwhile a short walk 20 yds to the shallower area is the most sensible thing to do. More paths will be laid, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, and if we have spare capacity we may see more.

Be safe on the course during the ongoing work, please keep repairing divot and pitch marks.

Main points to remember:

- STRI report will be fully implemented.
- Investment into resources and irrigation.
- Disruption starting 11<sup>th</sup> Oct and drainage work commencing 01<sup>st</sup> Nov.
- Take pride and try use paths, repair divots and pitch marks always.
- Please be patient with the greens team and be safe always on the course.

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