



NORMANTON GOLF CLUB

Minutes of the Greens Committee meeting

Tuesday 7th September 2021

Attendees: Andy Hall, Chair. Gary Pritchard, Golf Pro. Rich Carter, Golf Director. Dave Crampton HGK. Andy Bell, Jayne Turner, Section reps and Members.

Apologies: Brian Harvey, John Whiteley, Captain Harold Box.

Meeting held in Hatfeild Hall 1630-1830

Agenda Items:

- RC: The committee discussed the recent survey, in particular the section on the course at length and in detail. A full report on the 2021 NGC survey will be given to members at or just before the AGM. Generally, those that did responded, about 300 in total, were both critical and positive in their comments. The following was decided in response to those areas we can affect now or soon into the winter, changes that will make a difference.
 - The Bunkers are not as good as some would wish them, this is a very large budget issue and no short cut solution is available. Drainage is being installed or renewed in 9 bunkers this winter. We propose to reduce the size of 2 greenside bunkers on the 9th, and completely fill one of the two large bunkers on the bend, 9th fairway. This bunker is the second in line of the two, the one closest to the green, with a large tree just in front which restricts almost all shots forwards. This work will start early October to allow vehicle access while the ground remains dry. All bunkers will have GUR markings whilst in repair or being filled.
 - There is a myth believed by some that 'inferior sand is used in our bunkers', and we import stones into bunkers. There is no basis for this, the sand we buy is very high quality, blended specifically for the purpose of golf. Sand is stored in the car park and next to the GKH for two reasons. Ease of access, as the bunkers furthest away from the GKH are difficult to transport tons of sand to efficiently. And because sand laid on uneven ground that needs mechanical shovelling will become contaminated from the ground it sits on. There is a shortage of materials worldwide, sand is in great demand it is becoming extremely expensive and in big demand, this trend is unlikely to reverse in the coming years. Stones in some bunkers are something we are

- aware of, most of these are from side erosion, we will slowly repair sides where the worst erosion is happening, this may require substantial funds.
- Another myth is that 'the mechanical rake compacts the sand'. It doesn't, and without it we couldn't have 66 bunkers, some very large and on slopes. Without the mechanical rake, the sand washed to the lower side of bunkers in heavy rainfall can weigh several tons, hand raking is impossible if we are to return the course back to a playing condition after heavy rainfall. Some bunkers are just too large to hand rake. The GD stated that new rakes had been installed in most bunkers, a second rake would be placed in very large bunkers. Members are asked again to use these after play from the sand, the period of non-use during the pandemic has obviously created a minority of players to feel they don't need to do so, to the great frustration of the majority who do rake their footprints and disrupted sand.
 - Long grass, that grass we have designated as out of normal play is generally accepted, with the exception of a very few members. The number of these members is so small compared with those who see it as either visually pleasing or necessary from an economical sense. This grass was never intended as an increase in difficulty on play, it was always a measure to reduce cutting or stop cutting areas that are simply too dangerous to cut because of slope. The side of the 4th and 9th tees are very steep, the GD has asked the HGK to not place vehicles on severely banked tees if there is a risk to the staff. Some trimming will be done on these two tees to tidy up the visual impact. Where long grass exists on tees it is usually on the side where it has no impact on play, for example on the left of the 6th, and several other tees. We will continue to trim and cut the long grass as necessary to give a fair and balanced finish. The area left of the 12th has been criticised as being too punishing, we will cut this by one cutters width wider at the greenside.
 - The practice area will be opened up by cutting down several of the larger encroaching trees, this area has reduced in size over several years. All tree removal is done solely for a purpose, in this case it will allow light and air into the practice area, helping to improve the putting surface and give chipping practice a larger and longer space from beyond the bunker, as members may remember from years previously when a 30 yd chipping area existed beyond the green. This will take a season to develop the bunker and practice nets will also get a tidying up.
 - The tees are not as good as we would like them, there are several things we intend to do to hopefully show results by the start of next season. Work will not stop there, tees are another area we are investing in, the quality of grass and in places the size and slope of some has for too long been poor. This is a long term issue which will take several years to improve all the areas we would like to. The first step is to improve on grass quality which we feel can be done in the first year, to do this we will use a slitter and improve irrigation, once we go onto winter mats you will see work commencing on tees throughout the winter.

- AH / RC: In August we engaged STRI, (Agronomy experts) to carry out a survey of the course, they took samples of soil and spent a day with the HGK and his deputy, AH/RC were present. Initial findings and a subsequent short report have been received, a full report is due but the agronomist has contracted C19 recently and warns us of a short delay. Findings are useful in our decisions on many fronts, funding and processes are amongst the most important, the following was discussed:
 - Extra funding will be requested to purchase a larger quantity of dressing, feed and seed each year while we redress the condition of the tees.
 - The purchase of the necessary equipment recommended by the agronomist to treat the course in order to allow growth on specialist surfaces. This includes the purchase of the PRO-CORE which is ordered, a SISIS slitter and specialist brushes for attachment to the mowers.

These devices were specifically advised as best for our use, a discussion about suitability of other greens devices concluded they were not suitable for our course at this time. A full and detailed report is expected soon, the HGK, GD and the Agronomist plan to meet again in November for an update on plans going forward. The report will advise if we are using sufficient materials on the course, such as dressings, seed and feed. Many chemicals are now forbidden, water use may become restricted in years to come, we must adapt the course to prepare for the changes that are inevitable due to legislative and climatic pressure.

- The winter work plan has been agreed, any additional work will be done if time and weather conditions permit. This is a fairly ambitious plan, weather dependant and hopefully with no disruptions from the government.
 - Drainage on the 9th, 11th, 13th and 18th will commence 01st November. AH/RC/DC will be meeting with the contractor on the 13th Sept to discuss the disruption to the course and play. We will go onto winter tees no later than 01st Nov. Work to repair the 13th pond will commence later in the month, this will all require members to accept a degree of disruption, the worst of which should be over by the end of November. We hope to have the 9th, which will have the largest proportion of work being done, finalised with turf to bunkers and play as normal, by December. Seasonally, we have all noticed winters starting later in the year, long range forecasts are notoriously unreliable for the UK. Turfing into December is a better plan than laying it in the summer, its guaranteed moisture and footfalls are lower on the course. There will be a full plan displayed in the club and on our web site, AH and RC will update members regularly on any hole closures and alternative playing status such as GUR and temporary tees on the 13th.
 - Paths. As part of our long term plan we intend to build a new path on the 8th, joining the bridges and reducing wear on the greenside. This will include the movement of the bridge so the path can travel via the trees on the left of 8th. The 18th path from tees to fairway is to be replaced, this will include a renewed winter tee arrangement, like we did in 2020 on the 6th and 10th. There may be a small amount of path tidying such as the exit from the 11th which may extend back to the side of the 9th tee, and the winter mat area of the 14th, Priority is the 8th and 18th.

- Winter tee mats. These will all be made larger and tidied up, ball washes and bins will be co-located where appropriate, such as the 14th.
- All 18 hole marker signs will be re-laid in a product known as sign safe. You may have seen this on other courses, it is a recycled base infilled with recycled resin to level and improve security of the signs from future abuse.
- Tree cutting will be conducted to improve visibility off the tees and allow full lateral use of tees. Trees are to be cut where they are dead or dying, allowing sunlight and airflow to improve grass growth. Specifically we intend to thin within small wooded areas generally, this will be ongoing through winter.
- All 18 tees will receive extensive work to improve growth, the irrigation of all tees will be worked on, installing decoders and sprinklers to enable better distribution of water in the coming summers.
- Steps will be built and installed into the side of the 9th tee, these will run to the join between the yellow and white tees, this removes the wear that can be seen on the top of the 4th. This should reduce the space the steps occupy at the summit, maintaining maximum space of the tees to be used for play. There is a H&S consideration in the use of stairs, the design will have this issue in mind.
- It is proposed to hold monthly Greens committee meetings in Sep, Oct, Nov and Bi-Monthly Jan, Mar, May and July. This formal agreement is to be written into the long term plan.
- Detail: Many members have mentioned details, such as small areas that are bald or requiring extra attention. These small touches matter, members will see many small areas hooped off or GUR'd for the winter to allow regrowth.
- The GD will report to the members as usual, the disruption this winter may be slightly more than usual. Members will be kept informed of planned works and any adjusted course plans during winter work commencing in November.
- **Outstanding and ongoing items list Reviewed 07-09-2021**

ITEM	NAME	UPDATE or ACTIONED	RAISED
Stint readings	DC	STRI report	18-08-2021
Funding plans	AH RC	Ongoing/ Agreed	01-09-2021
Footpath Surveys	AB JW	Ongoing	11-05-2021
TORs agreement Long term plan	AH	On the Website	02-07-2020
Drainage	DC	WC 01 st Nov 21	07-09-2021
Bunker survey	BH & JS	Ongoing	11-05-2021
Dustbin replacement	DC & AH	Ongoing	March 2021
Tree thinning	DC	Ongoing	07-09-2021
OOB and hazard stakes repaint	DC	Ongoing / Due	07-09-2021
Signage	BH	Ongoing	07-09-2021

HWH paths	AH DC	8 th & 18 th	07-09-2021
All 18 Tees	AH DC	Winter work 21/22	07-09-2021
Greens damage repair	DC	Ongoing	07-09-2021
Wild grass areas	DC	12 th cut 1 mower width extra	07-09-2021
Irrigation	AH DC	Funding plan	07-09-2021
Traffic lines and GUR	DC	Ongoing 8 th & 11 th	03-06-2021
6 TH Ditch weeds	DC/AH	Investigating redesign (2022)	03-06-2021
Juniors T 8 th repaint green	DC	WIE	07-09-2021
Fill bunker 9 th bend	DC	Not before WC Oct 2021	07-09-2021