



NORMANTON GOLF CLUB

Minutes of the Greens Committee meeting

Monday 11th July 2022

Attendees: Andy Hall, Chair. Rich Carter, Golf Director. Dave Crampton HGK. Andy Bell, John Whiteley.

Apologies: Jayne Turner, Gary Pritchard Golf Pro, Brian Harvey.

Meeting held in Hatfeild Hall 1630

Agenda Items:

1. Review of the STRI notes from visit 22nd June 2022.
2. Course Maintenance week 8th Aug.
3. Winter work (Course improvements) Which Paths, which bunkers for drainage, which tees for levelling and / or re-turfing. 10th Tee.
4. Tree cutting priorities: All runts (Trees not growing or dead, due to overpopulation)
5. Proposal to develop a practice chipping area on the back field.
6. Irrigation update from DC.
7. Long grass cutting to develop a more wispy consistency for 2023.
8. Wildflowers Planting 8th entrance in long grass and other out of play areas by

AH Opened the meeting by discussing notes taken from the recent STRI visit and inspection of the course on 22 June. The full report will be available soon, a copy will be displayed in the clubhouse for members to read.

AH/RC Explained. According to the preliminary report, thatch levels remain too high on our greens, they have reduced but not significantly enough. More hollow-coring is required including spiking and dressing on a bi-weekly basis.

The aim is to try to reduce thatch levels down to nearer 4% from the current levels of about 14%. The Spring coring took about 4% away from a peak of 18%, this will take several seasons, but it's not just about the thatch it's also about the condition of the grass, its quality and resilience overall. The Consistency and Trueness of the ball to roll, is slightly reduced since the last visit, this could be due to several reasons. The presence of meadow grass in the greens is creating microscopic undulations due to it being stressed in the current warm dry period, this is the meadow grass turning to seed early, seen as small light yellow speckles on the surface. We will look to add a new chemical to the spring feed which should stop this from happening. This creates a more hostile environment for this type of grass which can't be stopped from getting onto the greens, as it's continuously airborne and therefore prevalent in UK.

By adding more Bent grass to the greens after any treatments, we will encourage its growth and make it the dominant species of grass. A more resilient grass, it creates a better surface and overall consistency, to give trueness of roll on the greens.

Dressing will increase from 7 to 10 ton on a two weekly basis during summer and spring when dry, and using wetting agent when water is applied by sprinkler. More hand watering will take place, specifically on dry areas, including wetting agents to spiked surfaces to allow penetration.

Speeds should be considered secondary to both health and consistency of ball roll, i.e. the trueness. Measured speed at the time of the visit (22nd June) was about 8.5, recent measurements after Verti cutting and dressing, were just over 9.0 we consider this to be more than adequate for the balanced approach to long term care of the greens.

The whole purpose of these methods is to improve quality of surfaces, which in turn improves ball roll.

The report tells us, ironing at this time is not an option, as the thatch levels are too high and the grass will simply spring up within a few hours.

During the visit, the Agronomist used a moisture metre, this device can detect dryness and excessive moisture early, where the naked eye can't. We will invest in a moisture metre for our own frequent use, to monitor the actual conditions and allow us to target dry areas quicker and hopefully before they turn brown.

AH. Asked the committee to consider the consequences of not implementing the recommendations of the report. This means we will be coring again in the maintenance week, but due to the climatic conditions in August and a more targeted and considered dressing programme, we are confident we can return the greens around fairly quickly. A comprehensive schedule of work is planned for the week commencing Monday 8th August. We did consider a proposal to core in October, this was discussed with both DC and STRI. A major concern was the recovery of the greens in autumn, which given our climates unpredictability's of recent years, we unanimously decided against this and agreed on the August plan.

GD. STRI, wrote to us and explained, August coring is preferred, recovery is quicker. He recommends a slightly modified procedure to aid rapid recovery. This included extra measures, such as brushing back into the cores the rootzone from the cores and applying additional dressing to fill holes completely. Add fertiliser, overseed using a dimple seeder and irrigate well, also reapply dressing as required. Importantly, raise the cutting height and reduce frequency of cut during recovery period, which should be short.

This plan was endorsed by the committee, and after discussion a week of planned maintenance will take priority. Going forward we will be introducing Maintenance Mondays, this will involve the ongoing care of the greens, primarily where spiking and dressing will occur. Golfers will be notified if work is in progress, all staff working on the course will be given priority on these days, and players will be requested to walk through the hole being worked on for this one morning on selected Mondays. Further details are to be published on this new initiative.

AH/RC/DC. We are investigating the use of larger collars/fringes on some greens, all committee members will return their thoughts on which greens could sustain this, some of the larger and uniform shaped being ideal for this change. The idea being to reduce size and therefore alter the greens (interest), bringing a small change of character. But mainly to reduce the need for water, feed and manhours in care. Even such a small change as one

blades width on half of our greens, could save 1 hour each day, or one man day per week, this time then spent on the greens with detailed care such as spiking, dressing, hand watering etc. This will be discussed more fully at the next meeting in August.

AH/RC/DC. The small practice green outside the shop will continue to be improved, more flag positions installed. A sign to indicate the main putting and short game practice area will indicate the area of the nets. New nets are ordered and soon to be repaired, the chipping area will be expanded and trees cut back to give more space.

AH. A plan for course improvements over the Autumn and Winter is being formulated, final decisions on and new paths will be decided after **AB** submits his findings of a review to the next meeting. **AH.** All Tees will be inspected this coming month and a selection will be chosen for levelling or total rebuild. The 10th is widely thought to be the tee with most work needed to improve its area, and shape, where its surfaces will be made level.

AH/RC/DC. Irrigation is improving, however some debris has found its way into the lines on the lower course, especially around the 10th to 11th greens and tees. This has caused some sprinklers to remain on, when the system intends them to be off, due to debris stopping the heads to lower under low pressure. We are working to resolve this.

New sprinklers will be re-installed on all 11th tees and at least one on the area covering the apron area of the 11th green. We will look to invite quotes externally for this work, as specialist machinery can do the work better and quicker than we could.

Members will have noticed some water in unusual areas of the course, there are several reasons for this. The debris in lines is stopping the sprinklers to shut off, a short term problem we are working on. Fractures in lines due to age and therefore decay of glue holding joints and fixtures together. Where one is fixed it may cause a second weak joint to fail. We are afraid this is all part of the 25 year old irrigation system and its inevitable decay. The glued unions being a weakness, each having to be repaired when noticed. Work will commence this winter on all known wet areas caused by this issue, when we can drain down the lines.

AH/RC/DC. The STRI report will say that work on the Tees has shown vast improvements, with still a long way to go to get the condition of Tees we aspire to. Further slitting and use of the impending new Pro-Core, more applications including wetting agents, will all help to improve the grass quality on Tees.

JW Asked for the staff to continue to rotate the location of Tees left and right and fore and aft, thus dispersing the high wear we see during season. Par 3 Tees and tees regularly played by Irons, suffering most. The levelling of Tees will offer greater range of use, removing some tree growth could assist in some cases.

AH/RC/DC Discussed co-locating Yellow and Red, Blue and White tee markers on occasions and where possible withing the rules. Gary P will be consulted, but no compromised distance changes will be made. A good example of this simple measure would be on the 8th, where the four locations could be occupied by two positions, offering only a few feet of difference but saving potentially hundreds of club strikes per week.

AH. We must reduce trees which are either dead or dying, and trees that are struggling to grow because surrounding conditions are restricting growth. DC will commence a fairly large

cutting programme of small (Runt trees) this winter, this will include dead trees. We have no target number, but the number of trees needed to be removed to enable the healthy trees to thrive and improve conditions for golf and grass maintenance is in the hundreds. This was the recommendation of the experts who planted well over 20,000 trees back in the late 1990's and we haven't done this on any large scale since then. It is a long term plan, which will take us several years.

Grass cutting under canopies is difficult and time consuming, by removing identified trees in areas that are in playing areas, such as the copse between 13th and 18th and others we can save time. This enables light and air to the ground, and encourage grass to return where it is not currently growing. Grass cutting will be more up and down and less around and around, and therefore quicker. Trees will thrive when given space, air and light, and the appearance will be even more spectacular than currently.

Some crowning near fairways and over paths needs attention and can be started as soon as possible.

AH/DC. A Stump grinder will be hired in to remove stumps, the area treated and where necessary seeded, making the under canopy areas more playable.

RC. We should look at using a bunker liner on one hole to establish its qualities and if it is a method we can use. The 6th fairway bunker where stone ingress is becoming worse has been chosen for this. Work will start at the end of the season.

AH. The mechanical leaf collector arrives 12th July, it is a very versatile device. Other uses are Scarifying and cutting long grass. We will start to cut and remove all waste long grass, this will encourage the grass to grow back in a more thinned and of a wispy nature.

There are several areas of potential long grass growth, the committee agreed its appearance this year was better than when first grown long, this should improve year on year. A trial area will be selected to grow newly seeded grass to length, using a suitable grass type, this will not impact on the basic skill and ability of golfers to play a ball.

AH. The 8th hole is beginning to look better, the results of installing a path green side has improved the grass quality on the bank side of the green, once unplayable due to wear from traffic. The bridge and approach will be repaired this winter. We plan to place three birch type trees between the pylon posts and the bank. The appearance from the Tees will be that there is less reward to go directly for the flag and present a very slight dog leg approach via the narrow fairway alongside the bunker. This hole has long been seen as very uninspiring, with limited options for change. Planting this type of very slow growing tree, away from the pylons but visually in line with the posts, will soften the appearance and inform the golfer to play to the right of them. Play will be possible from beneath the branches, as we intend to keep the grass in this area to normal rough. GP has been consulted on this change and agrees with the method. It improves the look of the hole, and encourages an iron shot to the fairway. These trees will be planted in Oct 2022.

AH. The trees on the 8th are establishing and the long grass area will soon be populated with a selection of wild flower, some wetland flowers and plants will be placed in the banks of the pods where viable. The results from this can be seen on the 18th pond, where a new look and splash of yellow was seen at the beginning of summer. These ecological measures are good for the course, they give the club a good reputation for ecological enhancement

and look great when in bloom. Government measures forced farming to do similar, it's only a matter of time before similar measures are considered for land such as ours. Financial reasons have been established and proven, we see it as a win, win for the club.

AH. Meeting closed 1800

Outstanding and ongoing items list 11th July 2022

ITEM	NAME	UPDATE or ACTIONED	RAISED NEXT REQUIRED
Stint readings	DC	STRI report 8.5	22-06-2022 Aug 2022
Funding plans	AH RC	Increased on 2021. Approved	07-10-2021 2022
Footpath Surveys	AB JW	Plan for 2022/23	11-07-2022
TORs agreement Long term plan	AH	On the Website	02-07-2020 2022
Drainage	DC	Repairs ongoing	11-07-2022
Bunker survey	BH & AH	6 th to trial liners	11-07-2022
Dustbin & Ball washers	DC & AH	Donors required Sections?	11-07-2022
Tree thinning	DC	Planned	11-07-2022
Irrigation	AH DC	10 th 11 th green and tees. And areas with leaks	11-07-2022
Display STRI report & update	AH	Visited 22-06-2022 Report pending	11-07-2022
8 th Tree planting	AH/GP/DC	3 Birch type trees to be planted in Oct 2022	11-07-2022