

Craig's Question & Answer Session

24th September 2018

Firstly, I would like to thank Craig for putting himself forward to do the Q&A and indeed his green staff for the work they have put in since Craig took over as Head Greenkeeper. His plan is to do another Q&A session in the New Year prior to the season commencing.

Questions put to Craig on the evening were answered as follows:

WHEN WILL THE GREENS BE PLAYABLE AGAIN?

As you are aware Craig and the team have commenced/completed their greens maintenance through the week commencing 24th September. They spent several thousand pounds specifically on the greens maintenance which included hiring in equipment to scarify, micro hollow-tine, seed, top dress and roll the greens. It is Craig's belief that the greens will grow back to full health a lot quicker than a lot of us believe, this however will depend on the weather that is upcoming over the next several months. A specific date cannot therefore be given but Craig does forecast that the greens will be back to a more than acceptable standard (as we have known them in the past) before next season.

BUNKERS

The 11th bunker is due to be re-instated next month (Oct 18). The remaining bunkers will 'slowly' over time be addressed. This includes the sand that is within the bunkers and the hard-compacted nature of the bunkers that we find when we go in them. Bunkers will feature on the Autumn/Winter programme for the green staff but they are not at the top of the priority list at present. They will not be GUR unless they are being worked on.

MEDAL TEE ON THE 6th

A long-term project that we will not see any work done on, in 2018/2019 as there are more pertinent projects that need to be completed first.

POND/SWAMP AREA 15th – BEHIND RIGHT HUMP, CAN WE RE-INSTATE RED MARKERS

Craig was unaware this was a red staked area and is happy to find the original markers from within the 'wet area'.

CAN THE TEE BOXES BE FLATENED?

Craig will look at specific tee boxes that need the green staff's attention i.e. 18th White... etc. This unfortunately will not be a quick fix, due to the fact that flattening a tee box is manpower/time intensive but will be looked at.

FAIRWAYS FERTILISED AND TOP DRESSED

There is currently no plan to fertilise or top dress the fairways, the club does not have the revenue for such action. The fairways are actually in good condition after the summer that we have had and they were not watered.....

COURSE SPRAYED WITH WEED KILLER

Unfortunately, this question comes at the wrong time of the year, spraying weed killer now will have minimal effect due to the fact the growing season has passed. It would not be economical to proceed with spraying weed killer; however, this is promised at the beginning of next season.

CAN WE HAVE PAINTED LINES BETWEEN POST (red, yellow, white)?

No. The cost of the paint and upkeep of the lines being painted is too expensive. Specific areas such as GUR will however be marked and updated.

WINTER GREENS

Craig states that creating 'winter greens' will not help the main greens through the winter and that playing on them through the winter will not damage them any further. Further damage to the greens through the winter will come with perma-frost deep in the greens, at this time Craig may take the decision to close the course. Thick perma-frost in the greens comes after a harsh freezing spell in the -degrees for a prolonged period of time.

TREES CUT BACK ALONG 4th GREEN, 5th TEE, 6th GREEN, 7th GREEN AND 15th GREEN

As the winter months close in and the foliage on the trees dies off, work will commence to cut back the branches as detailed.

GREEN KEEPING EQUIPMENT

Craig is happy with the equipment that he currently has at his disposal, specialist equipment will be hired in as and when needed to aid in course management such as the recent hiring of the T1000 scarifier/hollow-tiner.

16th WASTE GROUND BUNKER

The long-term plan is to continue growing the grass in the waste ground and allow it to run naturally back into the lake. Red stakes have been placed in the waste ground determining a lateral water hazard and Craig will create a Drop Zone area for those balls coming to rest on the waste ground. The waste ground remains as GUR for the time being.

WHEN WILL THE PATH BE SORTED AROUND THE LAKE ON THE 12th

The path has been laid with sand and seeded, players are requested not to walk on the GUR. The grass will eventually grow and extend the fairway up to the sleepers around the lake.

PLANS TO TURN GRASS BUNKERS INTO SAND BUNKERS

The answer is Yes, but this is a long-term plan that we will not see (probably) until 2020.

REEDS IN THE LAKES

A style of 'weed killer' has been bought that will tackle the reeds in the lakes, this will be on the programme for spring next year.

GENERAL

Over the winter months certain tee boxes will be roped off, the option of switching the 9th and 13th winter tees will also be considered. Bridges are an ongoing problem with some outside players using their buggies to cross the bridges, please if any member witness's buggies driving over the bridges, then politely make the driver aware that they must drive around the lakes. Greenkeepers/Marshalls – unfortunately the green keeping staff cannot police the course 100% but will continue where possible to request for tickets and enforce dress standards/dog walkers. More rakes for bunkers has been requested and will hopefully be provided soon.

WHY ARE WE IN THIS SITUATION

So, we were already aware of the 'thatch' (hence last year's stripping of the greens) and the 3 varieties of grass that we have on the greens (most courses have these varieties-unless you are like Celtic Manor, The Belfry etc...) However, this year has seen an unprecedented hot spell, put these 3 factors together and a lack of water, this has resulted in the greens dying back (on the surface). The solution is WATER WATER WATER..... since Craig has taken over as head greenkeeper, his priority was to fix the irrigation system that was not working through the summer (hence manual sprinklers being turned on).

In a nutshell, the greens have died back due to a lack of water, but have not been helped with the thatch and types of grass.... We now have a fully automated working irrigation system that when needed can be planned to come on through the night. We should no longer have this problem in the future.

Thank you once again to Craig and his team for the work they are now doing to bring the course up to the standard we have been promised. If you do have any further questions please direct them to me either via Facebook, Messenger or email.

Richard LLOYD
aka Scouser
Greens Liaison and Vice Captain

richard.lloyd@sky.com