

Course Managers Blog

January 2026

Happy New Year to everyone, and welcome to the first course update of 2026.

January has proved challenging from a weather perspective. We experienced several periods of heavy rainfall, resulting in significant volumes of surface water. Conditions have not been ideal for golf or course presentation, that said, greens remain in good condition.

One positive to take from this wet conditions are that the drainage works on the 5th and 18th holes are already making a noticeable difference.

These areas are returning to a playable condition far more quickly than in previous winters, which was one of the key issues we aimed to address.



By contrast, December was an extremely kind month and provided excellent golfing conditions.

The course presented very well in the lead-up to Christmas and throughout the festive period. During December, we were able to aerate the greens and apply additional worm control treatments to fairways, tees, approaches and selected green surrounds.

Total rainfall for **2025** was **591mm**, making it one of the driest years of the past decade and almost **400mm** less than in **2024**.

The favourable weather allowed us to present the course to a high standard for much of the year, with minimal turf loss following a very dry and warm summer.

Rainfall remains the greatest challenge faced by greenkeepers throughout the year, for a variety of reasons, these include increased disease pressure, lush and soft growth, reduced quality of cut, and soft underfoot conditions.

These results/effects are largely beyond our control; we focus on mitigating their effects as effectively as possible. Cold winters, which are often drier, are generally more favourable to the golf course.

The start of 2026 has been both wet and cold, with approximately **123mm** of rainfall recorded up to **30th January**, alongside occasional light snowfall and short periods of sub-zero temperatures.

2nd Hole Pond Reconstruction

The reconstruction of the 2nd pond has now been completed and the area looks excellent.

We have recently re-turfed some of the wider areas that were affected during construction, outside the original work zone, and the new bunker has now been filled with sand. We will seed the right-hand side of the new path in the spring.

We previously communicated that the 2nd hole and green would return to normal immediately following completion of the works. Unfortunately, we underestimated the extent of the working area required by Profusion, which expanded from initial discussions in order to allow seamless blending of the green surrounds.

As a result, and due to the close proximity of the works to the green, the flag has remained on a temporary green to allow full recovery and for the turf to bed in properly. We appreciate your understanding and patience.

While the new layout looks fantastic, it remains young and soft in places, it is important that we do not open it too early. We do not have a fixed timescale for returning to the main green, as this will be weather and ground-condition dependent, but we hope this will be in approximately six weeks. **Please note** that this remains a flexible timeframe.



In-House Winter Projects

Our in-house winter projects are progressing well.

- All bunkers on the 5th hole have had their surrounds reconstructed, re-turfed and are now back in play (no longer GUR).
- The bunkers on the 7th hole have also been completed but will remain GUR for a short period while the new turf establishes.
- A new sleeper edge has been installed along the side of the 3rd tee, following similar work carried out last year on the 12th and 13th tees. This creates a defined edge to the tee complex, prevents path material from spreading, and provides a cleaner, more finished appearance.



- New ball washer and bin consoles have been installed on the 2nd, 6th and 11th holes, adding to previous installations around the course.
- New Huxley all-weather teeing mats have been installed on the 8th and 14th holes.

These high-quality mats closely replicate natural teeing areas and allow the use of a tee peg.

They have been positioned so both par 3 holes can be played at full length from the yellow tees, enabling winter knockout competitions to continue and providing a more consistent playing experience.

Importantly, they will also help protect natural teeing surfaces during periods of inclement weather. If successful, we may look to extend this approach to all par 3 holes in future.



The greens have recently received a fungicide application, followed by a granular fertiliser. This will help maintain turf health as we move towards our planned renovation week in March.

The reptile (newt) fencing has now been removed from the main playing areas, which has made a significant positive visual difference. Out of bounds markers on the 3rd hole have been moved back to the tree line, those extra few metres do make a difference!

Our course helpers continue to do a fantastic job. In addition to leaf clearing and divoting tees, they have been refurbishing patio tables and chairs in the greenkeeping facility during wet periods, ready for the summer season.

We are extremely grateful for their continued support and commitment.

Course Maintenance

We will shortly issue a short blog outlining our course maintenance and renovation plans in more detail.

Our maintenance approach is guided by green requirements (based on soil sample analysis) and prevailing weather conditions.

We work on the principle of doing what the greens need, rather than a blanket approach, adapting our methods accordingly. This planned, agronomic approach allows us to manage each green effectively throughout the year.

Planned Works – Next Two Months

Over the next two months, we will continue with our in-house projects, including:

- Tree canopy lifting

- Re-turfing selected bunker tops
- Installation of sleeper tee edges on the 8th & 11th
- Path topping once winter conditions ease (late March / early April)
- Turfing of localised wear areas, particularly around green surrounds
- Topping up drainage lines on the 5th and 18th holes

The greens will also receive an aeration pass, with the choice of machinery dependent on surface conditions to avoid unnecessary disruption. This will be followed by a light roll using either hand mowers or the turf iron.

Spring and Summer Transition

As we move into spring, our focus will shift towards summer transition. This is one of the busiest periods of the year, with an emphasis on presentation and summer conditioning.

Further details on our seasonal plans will be provided in the next course update at the end of March.

Staff Development

Three members of the team are currently undertaking college courses, with a fourth due to begin in March. It is very rewarding to see individuals develop over time.

As a club, we are committed to developing the skills and knowledge of our team, both for the benefit of the course and for the future of greenkeeping as a profession. It is a rewarding industry to work in, offering strong job satisfaction and clear visual results.

Fingers crossed for a drier February so we can all enjoy the course.

Please follow our Instagram account **@smgc_greens**, where we regularly share images, updates and insights into the work being carried out by the team.

Many thanks for reading.

Stuart Job
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