

Course Manager Blog - March 2026

With what now seems like quite a traditional start to the year, January and February were both very wet, with **216mm of rainfall** recorded over the two months.

The main difference compared to 2025 was that the rain arrived lighter but far more frequently. With **4–5mm falling almost every day**, conditions became increasingly frustrating, and we had to place restrictions on a number of occasions.

Having spoken to several course managers in the area, it was clear we were all in the same boat — excuse the pun.

March, however, brought a welcome change in fortune, with less rainfall and some much-needed sunshine. Although frosty mornings and even the occasional flurry of hail or sleet reminded us that it was still early in the year, afternoon temperatures were reaching the **mid-teens**, which was very nice indeed.

WINTER PROJECTS

The major course improvement project during the winter was the **reconstruction of the 2nd pond and surrounding green area**.

This work had to be completed during **November and December** due to the presence of **Great Crested Newts** (GCN) in the area. Not ideal for major ground works such as this but luckily November was dry, enabling Profusion to complete works on time.

We remain under licence with Natural England for 5 years after building works (Phase 1 & 2), this to monitor GCN populations, as GCN's hibernate outside water course in the winter, it allows us to carry out the works without harming them.

Unfortunately, the continuous rainfall throughout January and February meant we had to delay opening the area, as the turfed areas remained very soft underfoot. This as we mentioned in previous communications something we underestimated.

I'm pleased to say that the area has now been open for a week, and the feedback has been extremely positive.

The project has significantly enhanced both the **appearance** and **playability** of the area.

RENOVATION WEEK

Our spring renovation was completed during the week commencing **16th March**. The weather was almost perfect, **dry and windy** - which helped the sand to dry enabling us to work the sand into the profile and holes made from the aeration.

The process began with a **heavy top dressing**, followed by the **Verti-Drainer** using **13mm tines** to a depth of approximately **8 inches**. This was then followed by a pass with the **ProCore**, using **19mm tines** to a depth of around **4 inches**.



The combination of these two depths helps target both **drainage capacity** and **surface firmness**.

We then followed up with:

- roll to help settle the surface from tyre indentations from the large machinery
- multiple passes with our 'Sweep N Fill' brush to work in the sand
- a final pass with the roller, smooths and helps dissipate the sand
- a final blow to remove any remaining sand from the top surface and collars
- completing the process with a drop of water to further drive the sand into the profile

In the 7 days following completion of the works we applied a fertiliser, wetting agent and seaweed to aid recovery – recovery has been a little slow due to the cool/cold temperatures over night – nature once again dictating the pace!!

SPRING PREPARATION

As temperatures rise (we hope), we will begin our **fortnightly foliar feeding programme on greens**, using a combination of:

- liquid fertilisers
- salicylic acid
- glycine betaine
- chelated micro-nutrients
- phosphate
- ammonium nitrogen
- and a growth regulator

In short - lots of good stuff, focusing on plant health and balanced nutrition, allowing us to 'push greens' for the main playing season ahead.

With the season just around the corner, we will now begin to fine-tune our nutritional plans for all areas outside of green as well, during the mowing 'off season' we have ensured the machinery fleet is fully serviced and sharpened ready for this.

The **irrigation system** has now been primed and audited, with any issues already scheduled in for repair – you will see our Irrigation Technicians, PSI on course during the summer months, we contract the upkeep of the system to them.

Following the success of last year's **4–5 month controlled-release granular fertiliser**, we will once again apply to tees, approaches, green surrounds and walkways in the coming weeks, before April has passed.

We are also currently in the process of **solid tining and rolling tees**, which will then be followed by an application of **seed and soil**. Combined with the controlled-release fertiliser, this should help the sward fill out and thicken quickly.

DIVOT EVENINGS

We will be holding our annual **Divot Evenings** on the **13th and 20th April**.

Not only are the evenings a great opportunity to catch up with members, but they also help us start the season on the right foot, with all **tees and fairways** being divoted and repaired. We really appreciate member support and if you would like to take part, please contact golf@sandmartins.com

As always, the evening will be followed by **food and a drink** as a thank you for your support.

ONGOING COURSE MANAGEMENT

During April and May there are a lot of tasks to complete to reach summer course standards – it is the busiest time of the year for us as all tasks need to be completed at the same time – when nature dictates, it is not just about mowing grass for us. These tasks include;

Treat all surfaces with a **selective herbicide** to control any weeds that may have established during periods of stress.

Apply **monthly growth regulator applications** to tees, approaches, fairways and semi rough.

Begin our weekly 'mini maintenance' on greens – light dressing, foliar feed, brush and roll. Monthly aeration will take place too, needle tines – barely visible.

Before mowing in the diamonds on the fairways, we will use our **tractor-mounted Terra Rake** to remove dead grass and stand the plant upright to help thicken the surface, improve presentation, and allow more water and air to penetrate the profile.

Top paths with fresh red pave.

Begin our alternate week detail work on bunker edges and pond/ditch strimming/flymo – as well as paint hazard markings.

Fresh edge sprinkle heads – completed as and when required, with over 1200 sprinkler heads across the course this is no small task.

Our current course helper plans are as follows.

- Paint hazard posts
- Divot tees
- Tidy plantations on the back 9 – this will be a lengthy task carried out over the summer (holes 14, 16/17/18)

STAFF

A huge congratulations goes to **Sam Pusey**, our **Mechanic/Greenkeeper**, who recently completed his **Land-Based Engineering qualification**, achieving a **distinction** in his practical exam.

It's reassuring to know our machinery fleet is in such capable hands.

Jon Niblett, the most recent addition to the team, will be starting his **college course in April** and is raring to go.

INVESTMENT

Further investment has been made with the arrival of **two brand-new Toro 3420 tee and approach mowers**. This investment will help us continue to maintain the high standards expected across the course.



Enjoy your golf.

Stuart Job
Course Manager