

COURSE MANAGER'S BLOG

SEPTEMBER 2026

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

What an incredible summer we have had! From a golfing point of view, the weather has been fantastic, with long, warm days providing some great conditions for enjoying the course.

Behind the scenes, however, it has been a very different story for the greenkeeping team.

We have received just **377mm of rain so far this year**, making 2026 one of the driest years we have experienced for some decades. To put that into perspective, **216mm fell in January and February**, meaning we have had just 161mm of rainfall across the following seven months.

Keeping the course in good condition through such a prolonged dry spell has been a real challenge, and our irrigation system has been working extremely hard.

The welcome rainfall we finally received at the very end of August gave the irrigation system a much-needed rest and, combined with a well-timed application of wetting agent across the fairways, we saw an almost immediate response.

The fairways have started to green up well.



To aid recovery we used our tractor-mounted rake across the fairways, approaches and semi-rough. This helps to stand the grass back up, remove dead and matted material and open the canopy, allowing more light and water to reach the plant. Following this with a mow and blow has made a significant difference, and these areas have come up extremely well.

We have also applied a combination of Urea, Iron, Magnesium and growth regulator to the fairways. This will be repeated monthly through to the end of autumn to help maintain the recovery we are now seeing.

AUGUST RENOVATION WEEK

Our August renovation programme was slightly different this year because of the drought.

Rather than carrying out our usual, more intensive programme, we took a much more measured approach to minimise disruption while still giving the greens the aeration and attention they needed.

The greens were verti-drained using **12mm solid tines to approximately 7 inches deep**, followed by rolling and the cutting of new holes.



Because we decided not to apply sand this year, we were able to return the main greens to play by Wednesday, meaning the disruption was kept to a minimum.

On the Friday, contractors came to complete a double overseeding pass of **Creeping Bentgrass**. This was followed by another roll and an application of surfactant.



Tees were also aerated, this time using **19mm hollow tines to approximately 4 inches deep**. The cores were collected before applying a Rye/Fescue seed mix and a light dressing.

Once dry, the areas were brushed using our metal drag mat to work the seed and sand into the holes.

Normally, we would have relied heavily on rainfall to get the seed away, but with the drought continuing, the team irrigated the tees regularly. Thankfully, the results have

been excellent, and we have seen some really good germination despite the challenging conditions.

KEEPING GREENS HEALTHY

A large amount of work goes into keeping the greens healthy throughout the season, almost all of which happens behind the scenes.

We have continued with our fortnightly foliar-feed programme on greens and collars and have recently introduced a couple of additional products, including **Gypsum and Salicylic Acid**.

These additions help to make nutrients that have become locked up within the soil profile more available to the plant.

We have also continued our monthly moisture-management programme. With such little natural rainfall, this has become particularly important in helping us make the most efficient use of the water available to us.

As we move into autumn, disease pressure is also increasing.

The combination of mild temperatures and damp mornings provides ideal conditions for disease, particularly as we head into October and November. We have our fungicide programme in place and, combined with our wider greens-health programme, we are doing everything possible to keep disease to a minimum.

There is unfortunately no longer a simple “silver bullet” when it comes to disease management. Good cultural practices, careful monitoring and the appropriate products all have to work together. Our aim is always to prevent problems where possible rather than simply react to them once they appear.

WORKING AROUND THE COURSE

A huge thank you once again to our **Helpers**, who continue to make a valuable contribution around the course. They have been busy trimming and cleaning all the tee stones and fairway sprinkler heads, as well as keeping on top of tee divoting and looking after the memorial beds on the 7th and 17th.



Their help is greatly appreciated by the whole team.

We have also been working hard to repair some of the damage caused by the prolonged drought.

We hired a tractor-mounted disc overseeder and applied approximately **300kg of Rye/Fescue seed** across the fairways, approaches and green surrounds.

The results have been very encouraging, with fantastic germination after just six days.



Some areas cannot be accessed safely with the tractor, so these will be overseeded by hand. We will also be putting posts and ropes around some areas to protect the new growth while it establishes.

We will shortly be applying a controlled-release fertiliser to the tees, approaches and green surrounds. This is similar to the fertiliser applied in April and should provide these areas with the nutrients they need to carry them through towards winter.

The cut-and-collect work on our long rough is also nearly complete, with just a couple of areas remaining.

Interestingly, the dry summer has actually helped with this work. The tall, wispy Fescue has dried out and is coming up cleanly, leaving the rough areas looking much tidier.

LOOKING AHEAD TO WINTER

The prolonged dry spell has unfortunately taken its toll on some of the turfing projects we completed in 2025.

Having spoken to other Course Managers, it appears we are certainly not alone, with many clubs experiencing similar problems following the exceptionally dry summer.

Our winter programme will therefore include reinstating the turf that has been lost, alongside several new projects.

We will be installing sleeper edging along the tee edges on **holes 5, 11 and 15**, as well as carrying out sleeper repairs around the **1st and 9th tee complexes**.

We also have a new method of turving bunker tops that we are looking forward to trialling this winter. I will keep members updated as this work progresses. We are hopeful that this new approach, combined with more favourable spring conditions in 2027, will give us much better and more consistent results.

Other work planned for the autumn includes:

- Verti-draining the fairways and approaches
- Pencil-tining the greens (monthly)
- Canopy lifting along selected tree lines
- Verti-draining the greens (3 or more times during the autumn/winter)
- Root pruning along selected green surrounds and fairways – this aids turf health
- Leaf collection

A busy few months lie ahead for the team!

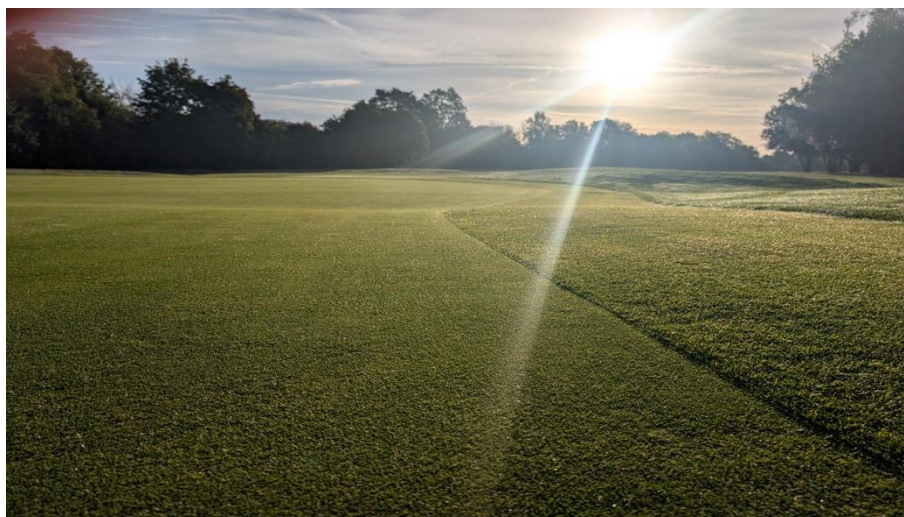
THE TEAM

The greenkeeping team continues to develop and go from strength to strength.

Cameron and Sam H are looking to complete their Level 2 college courses in the coming months, while **Jon** continues with his course, **Hayden** is due to start his in March 2027.

Lewis will be completing his chainsaw licence, while **Sam P** will be undertaking a one-day course on setting up mower units. This will help ensure our machines are correctly set up and performing at their best every time they go out onto the course.

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is watching the team develop. Everyone is gaining experience, learning new skills and taking on more responsibility, and I feel very fortunate to have such a committed group of people looking after the course.



FINALLY...

As we move into autumn, the mornings are certainly getting colder and the days are beginning to shorten.

It has been a challenging few months, but I am extremely proud of the work the team has put in to keep the course in the best condition possible throughout one of the driest summers we have experienced.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for the feedback we receive from members.

Enjoy your golf, and hopefully there are still plenty of warm autumn days ahead!

Stuart Job

Course Manager