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**NORTH BERWICK
WEST LINKS**

Course Report – January 2023

Deputy Course Manager

We were delighted to finally welcome our new Deputy Course Manager, Gavin O'Mahoney to the team. Gavin is an Irishman that has been based in Finland for a number of years. Gavin was the Course Manager at Tapiola Golf on the outskirts of Helsinki so brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. His daughter, Ida, attended University in Dundee and has since started working for a company in Dundee. Gavin and his wife, Anna decided they wanted to be closer to Ida and initially was a successful applicant for a greenkeeping position at North Berwick. With the advert for Deputy Course Manager going live, Gavin then applied for that role and was by far the outstanding candidate. He was delighted and honoured to be selected and very excited to start a new chapter in his career.

Gavin will be a great addition and will help to share his knowledge with the rest of the team. I'm sure everyone would like to wish Gavin all the best for his future at North Berwick.



Gavin introducing himself to the team.

Bunker Rebuilds

Before Christmas, we managed to turf and tie up the 2 bunker rebuilds on 5 and 12. I was delighted to get these finished before breaking up for Christmas, so we didn't have to come back and finish them after New Year. Both bunkers will be marked as Ground Under Repair until March/April until the turf has started to root down. We will monitor this closely and try to get them back in play as quick as we can.



Turfing the surrounds on 12

The rebuild of the long bunker on 17 started on the 9th of January. Chris Haspell (our Agronomic Consultant that was the Course Manager at Castle Stuart during construction) and Clyde Johnson (owner of Cunnin Golf Design that has worked at Tara Iti and St Patricks Links) came in on Tuesday 10th to do the excavation, shaping and setting of the revetted turf wall. They will be in again in the next few weeks to check on progress and to make sure everything is going to plan. Chris has shared his experience and taught the team how to revet bunkers and offered some tips and tricks.

More about the 17th bunker rebuild can be read on our blog entry here:

<https://nbwlgreens.wixsite.com/nbwlgreens/post/17th-bunker-rebuild-the-beginning-and-middle>

Course Conditions

The start of the year has thrown up a mixed bag so far with below freezing temperatures, heavy rainstorms and some very pleasant sunny and mild days. We sprayed the greens before Christmas just to give them a boost of nutrition before the Festive Period and to help combat against disease pressure. The greens after Christmas are looking nice and clean with the disease scarring from November healed and no new signs of disease.

On the 9th of January, we sprayed all the fairways with a wetting agent and fertiliser mix that will help to utilise any winter rain that we get and store moisture in the rootzone/soil going into the start of the season. This will help us greatly if we have a dry start to the year instead of trying to play catch up and applying irrigation to the fairway to combat any stress.

We also sprayed the approaches with a view to spray tees followed by greens again when the weather allows.

We managed to Solid Tines most of the tees with a handful left to do. We will also solid tine the approaches and any other areas that are looking worn when conditions allow. Along with some other remedial works on the worn area such as overseeding, topdressing, fertilising and watering, we will look to improve some of these areas during the course of the year.



Richard Thorburn Solid-Tining the tees.

New Machinery

We will take delivery of a Vredo Overseeder and a Wiedenmann GXi8 in the coming weeks. Last week, a new trailed 3.6 metre brush and a set of unit chassis', both from Greentek were delivered. The brush will make a huge difference on fairways by standing the grass plant upright before a cut, helping to refine the fairway sward, leaving a much tighter and cleaner lie. Adding another set of chassis' will allow us greater flexibility on what attachments/tasks we can do on the greens, such a verti-cutting, scarifying or sarrel rolling.



Demo of the Wiedenmann GXi8.

We have also ordered a new JCB mini digger with EngCon Tilt-Rotator bucket which will be a great addition to the fleet for projects in the future. We will be demoing semi-rough mowers in the next few months before making a decision on which one will suit our terrain best. The committee have

shown great support to us by getting these items in and supplying us with the tools we need to really improve the conditions on the West Links.



Our new Mini-Digger (the small one at the front).

British Turf Managers Exhibition

Gavin (Deputy CM), Richard (Mechanic) and myself will be attending the British Turf Managers Exhibition (BTME) during the week of the 23rd of January. This is the largest Greenkeeping trade show in Europe which showcases new machinery and products from all of the leading manufacturers and distributors. The British and International Golf Greenkeeping Association (BIGGA) which run the show, also run 4 days of classes, seminars and workshops to further educate and develop the skills of Greenkeepers. It is also a great chance to network with other Greenkeepers from around the UK and to share stories and information with peers.

Team Development

As we start a new year, 3 members of our team (Richard, Luis and Scott) will be starting to study towards a SVQ 2 in Sportsturf Maintenance through SRUC Elmwood College. They will be doing this via distance learning on the College's online portal with mentoring from Gavin and myself. We are delighted to be able to offer them this opportunity and it will also help to develop the teams collective knowledge and skills.

We are also looking to put members of the team through Spraying courses (Pesticide Application 1, 2 and 6) as well as mini digger certificate (up to 5-ton). We want to be a department that promotes opportunities for our team and help to develop their skills. If we want to retain and attract greenkeepers to work at North Berwick, we have to support them as best as we can.

Kyle Cruickshank
Course Manager