

## Course Report – June 2025

### **Current Conditions**

Firstly, congratulations to all the winners and finalists from the recent Club Championship weekends. It was fantastic to witness such high-quality golf, particularly in challenging weather conditions at times.



*Figure 1: Championship ready.*

I am pleased to begin this month's report by confirming that we have finally received some much-needed rainfall. Since May 23rd, we have recorded 79.5mm of rain—exceeding the total rainfall received from January through April. While the rain was welcome and helped alleviate drought stress, its timing was not ideal. Some downpours arrived just before the Scottish Amateur Open and the North Berwick Club Championships, softening surfaces more than we would have preferred. In particular, 24.5mm of rain fell on the Saturday morning of the North Berwick Championships, impacting green speed noticeably.

With more consistent temperatures now in place, we are seeing improved turf growth and stronger definition throughout the course. We applied a curative wetting agent to the greens and approaches two weeks before the Scottish Amateur to help rehydrate the soil profile. This was supported by approximately 15mm of irrigation applied over four nights to assist in moving the product into the root zone.

In hindsight, our approach to irrigation during the dry period may have been too broad. Attempting to stretch limited water resources across the entire course likely detracted from the main playing surfaces. Watering fairways during periods of high evapotranspiration—up to 4mm loss per day—

proved ineffective. Between March and June, we used approximately 8,000m<sup>3</sup> of water, which accounts for over half of our projected total for 2024.

### Championship Season Recap

Hosting a major event brings its own pressures, and preparing for three consecutive championship weekends was especially demanding. We focused heavily on the first event, understanding that success there would set the tone for the rest.



*Figure 2: Hole cutting and double cutting.*

We pushed the greens to firm and fast conditions, using dry, windy weather to our advantage to provide a genuine test for the world-class field in the Scottish Amateur. The course closure on the Wednesday prior allowed for double-cutting and rolling the greens in the morning and evening to achieve tournament speeds. I am pleased to report that we exceeded the target green speeds across all three days while maintaining control—something that can be difficult on our greens.



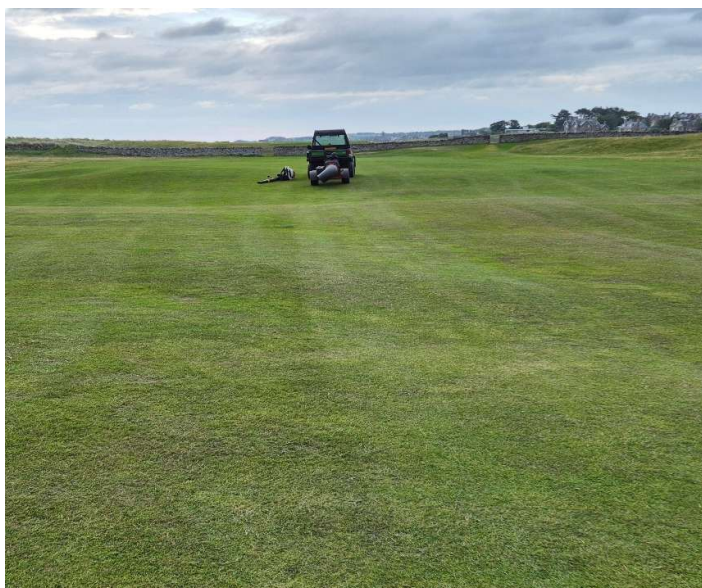
*Figure 3: 1st Tee set-up*



The Tantallon Club Championship followed, and with the benefit of recent rainfall, we were able to continue refining surfaces with daily double-cutting. By the time we reached the North Berwick Club Championship, the team was operating like a well-oiled machine. We maintained speed through continued double-cutting and also applied wetting agent and fertiliser to fairways to assist in drought recovery.

Weather played a prominent role throughout the events, with a full range of conditions—heavy rain, strong winds, and sunshine—adding to the challenge.

Following the championships, we carried out needle-tining to improve air and water movement through the greens, which had seen minimal disruption in recent months. We also began verti-cutting greens and surrounds to further refine surface quality.



*Figure 4: The dark stripe following a verti-cut, the light stripe mowing following the verti-cut.*

We still have one final event in the championship calendar: the Bass Rock Club Championships in July. I want to extend a huge thank-you to the entire greenkeeping team for their commitment and excellent work in presenting the course to such a high standard.

### **Shed Extension Update**

We remain on track for handover of the upgraded building and facilities on 2nd July, which we are very much looking forward to. As many of you will have noticed, the cladding colour issue has been resolved—thanks to the contractors for taking responsibility and correcting the error.

Remaining tasks include:

- Fitting of internal doors, skirtings, and facings
- Completion of electrical installations (sockets and switches)
- Final painting and decorating
- Health and Safety updates for compliance
- Final snagging

It has been a challenging period operating from temporary welfare facilities, but we are nearly there and look forward to moving back into the upgraded premises shortly.



*Figure 5: The replacement cladding being installed.*



*Figure 6: The wrong colour of cladding before replacement.*





*Figure 7: The new cladding from the golf course side.*

### **Autonomous Mower Trial**

We have recently begun a one-month trial of the Husqvarna Ceora, a fully autonomous robotic mower. These units have been gaining traction across the UK, with clubs like Loch Lomond, Taymouth Castle, Turnberry, and Hillside Golf Club reporting promising results. Hillside's Course Manager, Chris Ball, has shared regular updates via [his LinkedIn](#).

Our trial has initially focused on the 8th, 9th, and 11th fairways, where the Ceora has already shown its capabilities by reducing stalk height beyond what our cylinder mowers can achieve. It is currently cutting at 10mm—lower than our current setup allows. We plan to redeploy the unit to the 1st/18th and 2nd/17th fairways next week.



*Figure 8: The Husqvarna Ceora in action – cutting a lot of grass!*





*Figure 9: The underside of the Ceora with the small stanley knife cutting blades visible.*

### Borehole Update

We appreciate your patience regarding the unfinished areas around the boreholes. The start of the year has been incredibly busy for both our team and the external contractors assisting with the borehole integration.

We still need to complete a pumping test to confirm the boreholes' yield and water quality. This test, which requires SEPA approval, involves 24+ hours of continuous monitoring. The proposed methodology has already been submitted to SEPA, and we await their response.

While there is still some landscaping and final connection work required, please be assured that we are actively working to complete the project as soon as possible.

### Rainfall Chart

*As of the 25<sup>th</sup> of June.*

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
January	80.0	20	26.2	48.1	39.6
February	51.0	66	33	47.2	16.2
March	24.0	19	78.4	73.6	8.4
April	3.0	41	34	98.4	6.8
May	69.0	48	24.39	98.8	33.2
June	38.0	24	43.6	34	46.4
July	39.5	36	48	46.8	
August	44.5	21	37.4	71.6	
September	39.5	67	50.4	36.6	
October	155.0	56	152.6	72.6	
November	23.0	94	89.54	26.6	
December	109.0	23	108.4	49.8	
Total	675.5	515	725.93	692.2	150.6

**Course Manager**  
**Kyle Cruickshank**