



1832

**NORTH BERWICK  
WEST LINKS**

## Course Report – March 2023

### **Current Conditions**

There were some days in February when we felt Spring was well and truly on its way, albeit for March to come in with some cold, damp and windy days – but at least the afternoons are getting longer and it's nice to be able to finish our shifts and have a few hours of daylight to enjoy the rest of the day in.

Growth is still very much at a minimum as the temperatures are still not conducive to good growth, but all surfaces have been cut over the past month, with the greens being rolled most days to help keep pace on the greens and improve ball roll. We are still cutting greens at 6mm until we see a bit more consistent growth then we will start dropping this incrementally down as the growth increases.

All surfaces have been sprayed with a Wetting Agent. We have been applying a penetrant to the greens to help push any moisture down into the profile during the wetter months. The fairways were also treated with a penetrant as well as a fertiliser application of ammonium sulphate, ferrous sulphate (iron) and seaweed. The tees had an application of wetting agent which helps to penetrate and hold moisture in the soil and give an even spread across the rootzone.

Greens, tees and approaches have also received an application of fertiliser. Lawn Sand 5.0.0 + 2Fe (Iron) was applied on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March with the iron content leading to a slight darkening of the greens which is normal. The nitrogen content will help to give the greens a boost of growth ahead of our maintenance week to aid recovery. The tees received an application of 8.0.0 +3.3MgO+3Fe which again will help to give them a boost of growth for recovery after the colder months. We timed these applications perfectly as we received a good dose of rain to help wash it all in – sometimes we are thankful for a bit of rain.

### **Coastal Erosion**

The coastline along the West Links has taken another heavy hit following the recent high tides. It is concerning to see this, and it feels like the stormy weather and high tides have been relentless. We have carried out some small repairs and clearing works at the mouth of the Eel Burn and also re-covered the geotextile sandbags at the 11<sup>th</sup> green which had been exposed. If these geotextile bags are exposed for extended periods, they will start to degrade so it is important to continually monitor this area and carry out repairs when required. We have provisionally booked a contractor to come in with a digger to restore the coastline bank to an angle of 45<sup>0</sup> as was conducted in November 2023 but we are just waiting on confirming dates. We are also in continual contact with Envirocentre to make them aware of current situations to help plan for future works.



*Figure 1: The exposed sandbags at the 11<sup>th</sup> Coastal Protection area.*



*Figure 2: The same area as Figure 1 is built up with sand to increase the protection of the sandbags. This work will be continued along the entire protection area.*

### **Bob Taylor Ecology Visit**

Our environmental consultant, Bob Taylor, visited on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February to monitor the work that has been conducted over winter. Bob produced a monitoring report for members to view which is on the members page on the club website. Bob was pleased with the work that had been carried out and



assured us that we are carrying out the correct practices and procedures. I know some members were concerned by some of the work we did, however, I must stress that we are responsible for the management of these areas, and we would not undertake any work unless it had been advised by an expert. Continual and regenerative management of some of these sites and habitats is crucial for ensuring wildlife has a healthy food source and somewhere for creating a sustainable habitat. Bob has given us some other ideas for helping promote our ecology onsite but has also made it clear that we must make sure we implement practices or maintenance that are specific and appropriate to a coastal site.

Bob has agreed to give the members a presentation or a course walk in the latter half of the year to talk about some of the interesting ecological features we have on the course. Details of this will be shared once we have a confirmed date.



*Figure 3: Bob Taylor on his visit to North Berwick in 2022.*

### **Maintenance Week**

The course closed on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March at 1400 for our March Maintenance Week. This gave us a chance to carry out essential work on the greens without disrupting golfers. We welcomed back Ken Siems and his son, Jacob, who used the Dry-Ject machines on the greens of the main course, the 2 putting greens and the Children's Course. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> time we have used the Dry-Ject on the greens and it has made a massive difference to how the greens perform. We have gone from an average of 12.4% of organic matter (OM) in the top 20mm on the greens in 2019 to 7.1% as July 2023 and the Dry-Ject injecting approx. 45 tonnes of sand into the profile on each visit – approx. 225 tonnes in total.



*Figure 4: Ken Siems on his Dry-Ject on the 1<sup>st</sup> green.*

Overview of the spring maintenance week:

- *Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> of March*
  - Greens 1-4 and 14 were Pro-Cored using 10mm solid pot seeding tines to get a good head start ahead of the Dry-Ject.
  - Fescue seed was broadcasted over these greens using a drop seeder.
  - The seed was then dragged into the pot seeding hole.
- *Monday 18<sup>th</sup> of March*
  - Greens 5-7, 11-18 & Putting Green were aerated and seeded ahead of the Dry-Ject
  - Dry-ject greens 1-7, 12-18 & Putting Green behind the Pro-Core
- *Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> of March*
  - Finish off remaining greens with Dry-Ject (greens 8-11, Range Green & Children's Course)
  - Topdress all greens.
  - Dimple roll the greens using the Blec Multi-Seeder
  - Double roll greens in 2 directions.
  - Brush and cut fairways.
- *Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> of March*
  - Set up course for 9/18-hole Medal.
  - Roll greens and change holes.





*Figure 5: An image of the sand blasted into the green by the Dry-Ject.*



*Figure 6: The finished surface after all the maintenance works.*

We thank all members for their patience whilst this work was ongoing and recovering. We will monitor the condition of the greens following the work closely and will follow up with topdressing, fertilising or aeration works as required.

## Rainfall Chart

*Rainfall records up to the 17<sup>th</sup> of March*

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>January</b>	80.0	20	26.2	48.1
<b>February</b>	51.0	66	33	47.2
<b>March</b>	24.0	19	78.4	37.6
<b>April</b>	3.0	41	34	
<b>May</b>	69.0	48	24.39	
<b>June</b>	38.0	24	43.6	
<b>July</b>	39.5	36	48	
<b>August</b>	44.5	21	37.4	
<b>September</b>	39.5	67	50.4	
<b>October</b>	155.0	56	152.6	
<b>November</b>	23.0	94	89.54	
<b>December</b>	109.0	23	108.4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>675.5</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>725.93</b>	<b>132.9</b>

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