NEWS FROM THE COURSE.....
October 2023

Dear Member,

Please find below my latest newsletter aimed at keeping you up to date with what is happening on our golf course.

A Plea:

Following emails and verbal communications to the office this week, the subject of simple golfing etiquette has, once again, arisen. Despite the many requests that have been made to members asking that they REPAIR PITCHMARKS ON GREENS along with REPLACING DIVOTS ON THE GOLF COURSE, the requests seem to have fallen on deaf ears. As we go into the winter months and the course starts to softenthese SIMPLE tasks will become even more IMPORTANT. It is difficult to understand members who are either stubborn or lazy in not repairing damage to THEIR course. It is YOUR golf course and YOU are the people who will suffer. Perhaps these are the people who don't read club emails, or my newsletters so, are hard to reach. I know many don't by the questions I get asked, answers to which have been already communicated. **So, if you are playing with someone who ignores the etiquette of repairing pitch marks and replacing their divots, please, ask them to do so.**

General Update:

Toro Pedestrian Coring machine

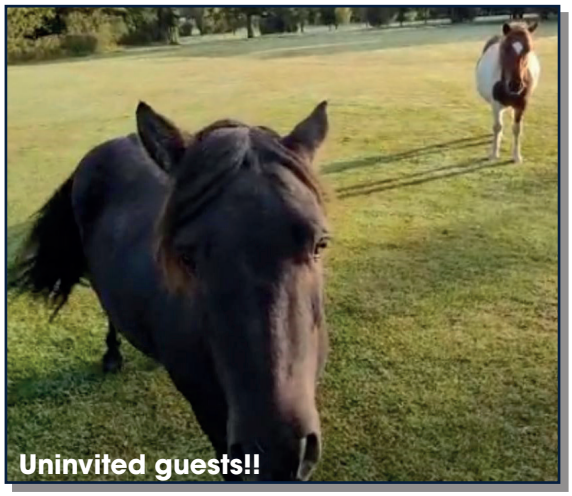
Toro Greens Mower

- Since I last wrote to you in June, the weather has played a major part in what could or could not be done on the course. July started dry but ended extremely wet and this carried on into August. Having curtailed our April maintenance programme, due to wet weather, a successful August programme was critical. The work was scheduled for the week commencing 7th August but again the rains came and put the maintenance work in doubt again. We deferred two days and fortunately the greens dried out sufficiently to hollow core and sand fill them. The greens staff worked extra long hours to complete the work in three days in order to avoid a clash with diary commitments the following week. We later scarified the greens and later still, managed to hollow core the approaches to the greens. All have recovered well.
- The equipment we use on the course is important and the existing coring machine is approaching twenty years old and needs replacing as does one of our greens mowers. In January 2022, we ordered a new Toro Pedestrian Coring machine which is able to reach places other coring machines cannot, thus avoiding damage to the course in bad weather. We also ordered a new Toro Greens mower at the same time, both of which we are leasing. They finally arrived at the beginning of September. The mower is in full operation and the first job for the coring machine will be to hollow core the tees immediately after the Autumn Meeting.
- Unfortunately, one of our mowers developed a hydraulic leak on the 17th green which has caused damage to the grass. These things do happen from time to time but this was a bad one. The green keeper driving the mower can't see this is happening until he reaches the end of that run and turns to go back on the next strip.
- Work to the 15th green has now been completed. We have marked an area at the bottom of the back slope as GUR as ground recovery is slow due to the adjacent trees taking all the moisture in the ground. We plan also to do a similar treatment to the 8th green next year as we did to the 15th but the bunker on the 8th will be retained.

- You will have noticed that we have had to temporarily close the practice green in the corner on the way down to the first tee. This is because again, we had a complaint from the resident of the corner house that flying golf balls were going into his garden, one being close to hitting his daughter. He has also built a rather expensive green house in his garden and whilst he is quite within his rights to do so, this also places a duty of care on the golf club. It is thought most errant golf balls come from the bunker at the bottom side of the green and persists even after previous complaints and our erecting netting. It is with regret that the Club Committee have decided that the bunker will be filled in, long pitching to this practice green will be banned and chipping and putting only will be permitted. **Two chipping mats have been installed so that members can still chip if the ground is wet and chipping will take place from the right side of the green as you approach it and away from the houses.**

New Chipping mats

- We recently had an unannounced visit from two horses on the 9th fairway and green, belonging to a neighbouring farm. They caused minor damage, but deputy head green keeper, Gary Sargent, quickly repaired it.


Uninvited guests!!

Work Plan and Proposed Projects:

- Repairs to the Practice Ground netting will be carried out shortly. The contractor we commissioned let us down, but a new company has now been found to carry out the work.
- Hollow Coring tees as previously mentioned.
- In week commencing 9th October, the paths on the 7th, 8th (top end) and 10th (from the bottom of the slope) will be resurfaced. This may cause some disruption to golf, but members will be advised of any temporary restrictions once we receive the contractors programme of works.
- All ditches will be excavated to assist with drainage of both fairways and greens.
- Our own greens staff will be making improvements to the path from 5th green to the 6th tee.

The family of robins

Nature:

I mentioned in my last newsletter that our friendly robin redbreast and his partner that live in the Greens' Sheds hatched three chicks that did not survive. Undeterred, they built another nest outside the sheds in the hedge and hatched three more chicks all of which successfully fledged.

Golf Awards:

We had our half yearly inspection by our consultant agronomists STRI (Sports Turf Research Institute) at the beginning of August, just before maintenance week. Not only were they pleased with the progress we are making, although there is still more to do, they have written to us suggesting that the Club enters the international awards competition for environmental achievement: The Golf Environment Awards (GAE). Agronomist Michael Boyes said in his email that "some observations amongst others, on the day included:- Water course management, clearing lakes of vegetation for improvement of habitat and water quality, increase in fish populations, Coots and Moorhens. Dormouse boxes, wildflower areas, tree management for logs, bug hotel piles and, mitigation through the planting of indigenous new trees. Evidence of Buzzards nesting and Kestrels last year and, of course, the friendly robin". Michael said it is a big tick for our environmental stewardship and the "green" profile of the Club. I am thrilled that an organisation such as STRI recognise this in our club and are supporting our entry. Win or not, its great to be in the mix!

The Golf Environment Awards

Bob Walden, Course Member.