

**Minutes of the Greens & Environment Sub-Committee Meeting Held in the Boardroom,
Links House on Thursday 18th May 2023**

Present: K Daly (Greens Convener), C Yule (Chairman), I Frier, E Kelly, S Duncan

In Attendance: M Wells (Chief Executive), K Stott (Links Superintendent), D Cairnie (Course Manager, Championship), M Reynolds (Course Manager, Burnside & Buddon), S Sutherland (Irrigation & Services Manager), R Windows (R&A Agronomist)

1. Apologies

L Gordon, P Goudie, R Wardlaw, A McCartney

2. Declaration of Interest

None

3. Introduction

The Greens Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Richard Windows, R&A Agronomist, to the sub-committee.

4. Action Points

A general discussion regarding the status of Action Points resulted in an amendment to the action point regarding Martin Ebert plans. Following an internal discussion resulting in an operational consensus, a one topic meeting will be held. The action point is to general note of interest from golfers/STH prior to the meeting.

5. Links Superintendent Report

Discussion regarding water fountains on the golf course was led by a trustee enquiring why only one on the 16th was working. The Irrigation & Services Manager confirmed that the

water fountain at 13th is now also in operation with hope that the fountain on 4 & 14th will be in use imminently. The Links Superintendent highlighted long term plans to bring water dispensers to the course, to cut down on single use plastic bottles and encourage players to bring refillable bottles to the course. Timescale TBC.

6. Course Manager Reports

Championship

The Championship Course Manager reviewed his report and confirmed the course is in a great position. A trustee asked about bunkers missed in this year's winter works. The Course Manager highlighted they were missed due to irrigation work demanding the expertise of the Championship work force but will be maintained this summer and re-built as a priority in this year's winter works.

A trustee enquired about an area beside the 8th looking stressed – the Course Manager confirmed that area was in discussion with his team, and they were to now avoid cutting the area. The Course Manager mentioned that this area experiences high footfall/trolley usage which contributed to this.

A trustee then asked about the walkway between the 12th green and 13th tee where turf had been removed. The Course Manager confirmed that this would be tidied up and returfed in due course.

Buddon & Burnside

The Burnside & Buddon Course Manager also commented on the great condition of the courses and explained the heights have been dropped over the last few weeks. This along with predicted higher temperatures forecast will aid in the greens smoothing out further.

Irrigation

The Irrigation & Services Manager reported that the install on the Championship course was completed by the end of March, with the installation of the public putting green, Nestie and new turf nurseries completed and operational this week.

With issues regarding the new bore holes, contingency methods have been put in place to ensure the new pump system is in use by pulling from existing bore holes to allow the irrigation system to work to its full capacity.

Long term, another bore hole will have to be drilled.

7. Richard Windows

Richard introduced himself to the sub-committee once again, giving a synopsis of his role as an Agronomist within the Sustainable Golf Team for The R&A.

Richard applauded the work done on the Championship course and confirmed the long-term plan of intensive overseeding will conclude after this season.

Richard highlighted 3 areas of attention.

1. Surface Firmness – this is dependent on the type of sand used and the method of injection.
2. Better biodiversity of species in rough – through working with Dr Bob Taylor and Sophie Olejnik to incorporate a variety of grass types and wildflowers.
3. Reducing co2 levels

Discussion ensued regarding sand, with highlight given to our sand sources. The Chief Executive confirmed we are in the early stages of discussion with the MOD to explore the possibility of utilising indigenous sand in their land for use on course – which results in sourcing a quality sand whilst also reducing co2 emissions of transporting sand from elsewhere in the country.

The Chief Executive confirmed we have issued an RFP looking for a contractor to measure our carbon use and create a plan to reduce emissions at all levels. A trustee enquired about John Deere equipment and their future of reducing the need for fossil fuel. The Links Superintendent confirmed John Deere have more electric mowers in the pipeline and Carnoustie will have the return of an electric mower in July.

Trustee asked Richard Windows if he feels the Buddon and Burnside course could improve to the same standard as Championship. Richard Windows explained that botanically, the Buddon and Burnside courses have always been superior to the Championship but is happy to say the Championship has now caught up to the others. Richard also explained that each of the courses have different compositions of grass, but each are in fantastic condition and not one is botanically better than the other. The Links Superintendent commented that both the Buddon and Burnside courses will have extra sand injection to establish firmer playing

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surfaces. The fact play is up 25% on the Buddon has also made a positive difference to playing conditions on the course.

8. Any Other Competent Business

Distance Markers

A trustee asked when distance markers would all be in place, with the Irrigation & Service technician confirming they would be in place by Wednesday of the following week.

Scarring

A trustee raised interest in the scarring of irrigation works, with the Championship Course Manager confirming that the scarring is minimal, but extra feed was planned to be used on all surfaces in the coming week which will reduce the scarring even further.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1450 hours.