



# Knighton Heath Golf Club

## Greens Report

December 2022

Graham Hastie  
Course Manager

### Greens

Maintenance carried out-

Greens cutting height raised to 8mm as winter sets in  
Hand mowers used to cut greens when weather allows  
Greens brushed to clear dew on days of no cutting or rolling  
Winter turf hardening applications (non pesticidal) to prevent disease occurrence  
Holes changed twice per week  
Greens blown of leaves and debris every morning  
Switching and blowing of worm casts everyday  
Daily checks to ensure greens are playable  
Pitchmarks repaired when spotted

### Course

Tees have been cut at 12mm twice this month  
Approaches cut at 12mm twice  
Daily bunker raking  
Full rotavate, distribute sand and rake of bunkers when weather allowed  
Strimming of bunker edges as and when required  
Strimming of yardage markers as and when required  
Rough cut once this month  
Tee banks cut this month  
Fairways cut once this month  
Semi rough cut twice in December to encourage definition and improve presentation  
Side of chipping green maintained at 7mm cutting height  
Blowing of all areas, greens, tees and areas on fairways  
Winter mats continue to be cleaned and placed out on the course  
Winter mats which are being used were brushed twice through the month  
Tree work completed to the left of 1<sup>st</sup> green  
Stumps covered and area reshaped with some mounding and Heather plugging  
Tree work completed to the right of the 12<sup>th</sup> green

### Data-

**Rainfall recorded:-** 131.5mm

**Max temp:-** 12.8° (31/12/22) **Low Temp:-** -6.3° (11/12/22)

**Course closures:-** 8 days

## **Weather update**

Needless to say, the weather has not been overly kind so far this winter. From extreme cold to flash floods. I am sure I did warn you all early in my time here, that as a true Greenkeeper I do spend a lot of time moaning about the weather. As I look back on 2022 there have been great extremes in all four seasons this year. From the cold dry spring, to the extreme heat and prolonged drought of the summer months. December also saw some of the lowest temperatures I've ever worked in, as we were arriving in the mornings our cars were showing temperatures down to -6°. This cold snap was followed by 37mm of rain overnight which turned the course into a great ice rink! Temperatures remained low and we remained closed for a week as the course was simply far too dangerous to allow play. Then as we saw out December it seemed we would never see the sun again; rain rain rain was all that was on the menu in the lead up to Christmas.

Best part of the extra cold weather was that we were able to get on with some woodland management/tree removal. Two of the first areas we tackled were around the 12<sup>th</sup> green and to the left-hand side of the 1<sup>st</sup> green.

There were two separate areas around the 12<sup>th</sup> green which required some work, firstly we took two birch trees down to the left of the green. This was primarily to allow the 13<sup>th</sup> mat to be used without forcing golfers to aim at the left-hand side of the fairway.

Then we moved over to the right-hand side of the green, there were three large oak trees which had begun to cast shadows over the green at this time of year, also the leaf drop from the oaks were damaging the heather and causing the drainage ditch to become filled with leaves which could block the drains at times when we must ensure all drains are running as smoothly as possible. Removal of these oaks should allow for some new heather growth and allow more sunlight onto the green and surrounding areas. We still need to finish the tidy in these areas with our Rytec machine. This machine is a cut and collect flail machine which will remove much of the vegetation and leaf mulch in this area to hopefully allow some heather regeneration.

As we moved up to the first green, there were a row of leylandii trees level with the green to the left-hand side. These were creating a shadow over half of the green at this time of year. To improve some air flow and increase the amount of sunlight the green receives will hugely improve this green over time (along with some much-needed drainage). Once the leylandii were removed we decided we needed to fill the area with some interest as it looked a little bare on the fence line. In order to complete the job quickly and to maximise our own materials we used some fescue grass and some heather turf from our driving range. When transplanting heather and any long grasses we will always try and make these areas look as natural as possible. This new areas to the left of the 1<sup>st</sup> green will need to be kept watered for 2023 to establish these as new heather mounds. We will do this in two ways, firstly we will hand water these with the hoses as and when required. We can also use our fantastic new irrigation system to temporarily include the new mounding. Once all is established, we can start to strim round the heather and ensure it remains prominent and continues to be the feature of this area.

As well as the tree work completed, we have been working on clearing as much of the leaf drop as possible. Now that all trees have dropped their leaves, we can concentrate on clearing them effectively with the knowledge that once we have done that area we won't need to return. Many areas still need some attention, these will be collected and cleared but some areas require tractor blowers and sweepers, we just haven't been able to get to these areas without causing some serious damage recently. Once we have some drier weather, we will get back to these. An example of this is the area from the path up to 5<sup>th</sup> green, across the 8<sup>th</sup> path and carry, down towards the 9<sup>th</sup> fairway. There is a considerable number of leaves but it has remained either extremely wet or frozen.

Through the cold and wet winter, we have had so far, I have had the great experience of learning how to use our own grinders. Adrian has been showing me how to use them and between us we have sharpened all of our cylinder cutting units apart from the fairway units. These will be done before the season starts but we want to get a couple of cuts completed before doing so as the fairways are covered in worm casts which will blunt off the units very quickly. We believe the machine which will benefit most from being sharpened is the Toro 3100 Sidewinder. This is the machine which cuts our semi rough and you have probably seen Daniel out on it last season. To gain some definition it is vital this machine is cutting well and so I'm sure this will have a positive effect (when we can get back out and use it).

On some positive news, the course is looking in great shape heading towards spring time. Once we are able to get our mowers back out onto the course, we can whip it back into shape in no time.

I enjoy the winter in my job but you can all rest assured, nothing can beat a warm spring/summers day when the golf course looks good and there are plenty of golfers out enjoying the great work our Greenstaff produce.

**Graham Hastie**  
**Course Manager**



Some small clearance jobs around the course, like here at the front of the 13<sup>th</sup> tee. Left shows before clearance



After a little trim and tidy. Brambles and nettles removed; grass should take over in the spring



An unfortunate familiar sight in recent weeks. Photo taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> December



An early morning picture showing the Leylandii trees to the left of the 1<sup>st</sup> green which were to be removed



A picture from a fine day showing how much light will now reach the green and surround on the left-hand side



Guys working to create some mounding to the left of the 1<sup>st</sup> green in order to give area some interest now Leylandii have been removed



A picture of the finished article. We will work on the surround between the mound and the green in the spring when conditions allow us to create some definition between the rough of the mound to the sharpness of the green



Showing some of the leaves we have been clearing recently. As mentioned above, now that the trees have dropped their leaves we can clear them well away now





View looking from the lefthand side of the 12<sup>th</sup> green, across the green and up towards the 17<sup>th</sup> tee



View once we have removed some of the oaks which were dropping leaves onto the heather. We have left the best formed oak to flourish



This was the state of majority of our pathways in the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> December. While the course itself was safe, these pathways were absolutely not safe and so the decision to remain closed was tough but completely necessary



Daily struggles of worm castings. Picture above left shows how most of the greens look in the mornings before we clear them. A combination of blowers and shivsh canes are used to clear them. As well as dew removal each morning



Picture below left is how the greens look once they have been cleared of dew and worm casts

A beautiful picture below of how the course was looking after a night of freezing fog

