



Knighton Heath Golf Club

Greens Report

February 2024

Graham Hastie
Course Manager

Greens

Maintenance carried out-

Greens cutting height maintained at 6mm for winter
Hand mowers in use to reduce weight of machinery over greens through winter period
Greens only able to be cut once per week
Greens rolled once this month after slit tine aeration
Greens brushed to clear dew on days of no cutting or rolling
Winter turf hardening applications (non pesticidal) to prevent disease occurrence
Applications of penetrant wetting agent to move moisture deeper into rootzone, keeping surface firmer
Holes changed twice per week
Greens blown of leaves and debris every morning
Switching and blowing of worm casts everyday
Disease monitoring daily

Course

Daily monitoring of roped areas
Daily course inspections to check on course status
Divotting of all tees including animal damage and wear areas
Tees cut twice through January
Approaches dry enough to cut twice this month
Daily bunker raking
Full rotavate and distribution of sand in bunkers when weather allowed
Strimming of bunker edges as and when required
Strimming of yardage markers as and when required
Rough cut as required
Fairways cut once this month
Semi rough cut once, some steep banks and slopes left through winter months
Blowing of all areas, greens, tees and areas on fairways
Storm clear up on pathways and clearance of tree debris after storms
Winter mats brushed and blown once a week through the month
Tee holders in mats cleaned out once per week
New 1st tee sign installed
Gorse clearance in certain areas

Data for February 2024-

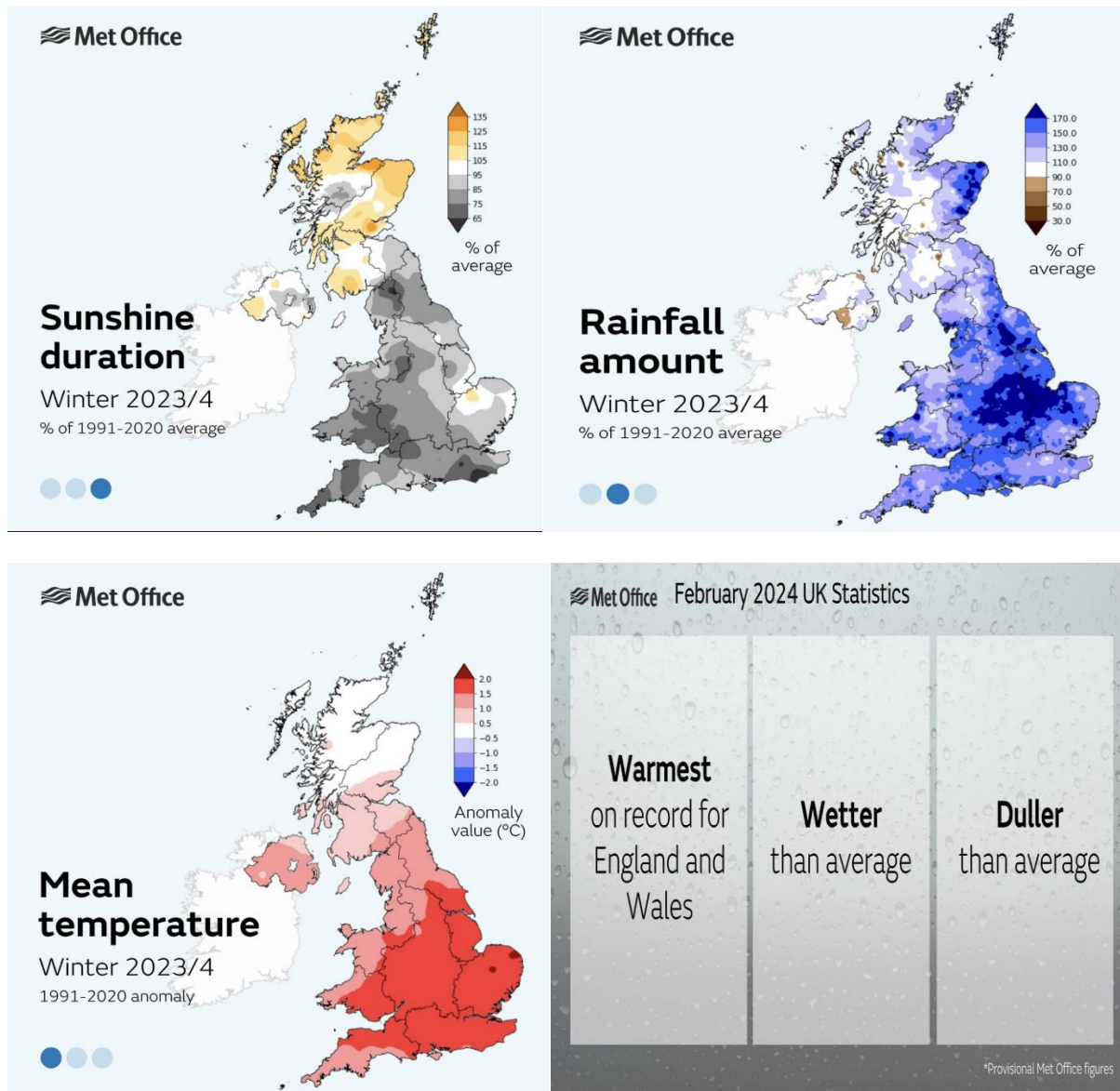
Rainfall recorded:- 147.5mm (Feb 2023:- 11mm)

Max temp:- 16.3°C (18/2/24) Low temp:- 0.9°C (24/2/24)

Course closures:- Full day:- 5 Part day:- 0

Weather update

Does anyone need an update as to how the weather has been through the month of February 2024? How about some facts and figures from the weather world..



All of the above images are taken from the Met Office's official Twitter account. The last image above really sums it all up very well, if somewhat depressingly. It has been a tough winter for us.

Roughly

- 85% of the average sunshine
- 150% of the average rainfall
- 1.5°C warmer

Working with our own data we can tell you that we have had 242.5mm (9.5") of rain this calendar year (up to the end of February), at the same time last year we'd had 140mm (5.5"), to be 102.5mm (4") of rain up on last year is worrying. I know we dry out here at Knighton Heath rather quickly but we are unable to store any of this rain currently, the ground is full and all that is falling from above now is not beneficial.

As you probably all know now, it won't be long until we're praying for rain but that is just part of our job and I wouldn't at all be surprised if we saw another hot, dry summer with record breaking temperatures as mother nature has a habit of evening things out.

Natural England and Forestry Commission course walk

This month myself and Greens Chairman Trevor Townsend had a meeting and a course walk out on some areas we are looking to improve with a representative from both Natural England (Mollie Boyce) as well as the Forestry Commission (Robert Greenhalgh). Purpose of this walk was mainly to show our plans for the 2nd hole tree removal. These works had been pre-approved by the Forestry Commission but the local tree officer was quite intrigued by our application that he wished to come and visit the site to give us some advice as well as look at potential future work. Unanimously they both agreed that the tree removal will be beneficial to our golf course as well as wildlife and the natural plants in the area. It was agreed that this should be a continuation of the Heath creating a better transition from Heath to golf course. One recommendation is that we check the trees and surrounding area for Bats before we go ahead with the removal. Trevor has kindly contacted the Dorset Bat association who we are in discussions with to come and survey the area for Bats to ensure we don't disturb them, as always, we will update you when we have anymore news on this.

While we had Mollie and Robert on site, we thought it wise to show them some other areas for future work. Two main areas to show was the copse of trees between the 4th, 5th and 6th holes and the area between 10th white tee and the 13th fairway.

Walking between 2nd hole and the 6th hole both Mollie and Robert were amazed at how diverse the area our course sits on, Robert amazed at how many specimen trees we have on site although was not overly happy that the overwhelming amount of Monterey Pine we have, moving forward he would be happy for us to remove some Monterey Pines but also like us to replant some trees. These don't have to be planted in the immediate areas where removal has taken place and so the boundary is a good option for any future planting to take place which will also help our security issue. He also mentioned that in certain areas trees need thinning so they have a chance to grow into mature trees rather than be stunted by competition.

Mollie was amazed by the amount of Heather we have growing happily on site, not only the amount but size of some areas which have been dedicated to Heather, some courses have Heather but don't allow large areas to colonize. She sees our site being a barrier from industry and housing onto the Heath, if we can be, we can claim grants for tree work, scrub clearance as well as pond renovations and the priceless advice from specialists.

While on the area between 4th, 5th and 6th it was clear there is huge potential for some large-scale work in this area, both Robert and Mollie can see the removal of most trees to allow the native Flora to flourish. As this would be hugely beneficial to the local wildlife, we believe we can get most of this work done using grants and so the cost to Knighton Heath should be minimal. Applications for grants of this type do not open until the summer, once applications are being accepted again, we will be making our case but again more on this as we go through the process.

New Machinery arrival

A great day was enjoyed by the greenstaff in the month of February (it was another wet day) when the first of our new machinery arrived. We proudly took delivery of our new TORO 4300 Rough mower and our TORO 3100 Semi Rough mower. After waiting nearly 12months from order date it has been a while coming but we are very happy to have them in the shed for the season ahead.

We have managed a test run around the first tees and the putting green but were unable to venture any further due to soft ground. This test run showed just how good the TORO 3100 will be at continuing to improve our green surrounds, these areas have had a good fertilize and so when we are able to get the mower out on a regular basis these areas are going to go to the next level with the aid of these sharper cutting units as well as its ability to cut tight to the bunkers. All of this new equipment will help continue to deliver the course presentation we all look for out on the course, we will have great definition with different heights of cut on show.

These two mowers are just the start of the investment by the club to continue delivering the best course we can, with a new TORO 3575 Fairway mower as well as a TORO 3400 greens mower along with 2 utility buggies. While the replacement greens mower is exciting, the best part of a new greens mower is that the old greens mower will become the Approach mower. We have received some great comments over the last 2 years as to how good the approaches are and so this is another way of improving the conditioning of these areas.

Delivery dates for the rest of our order has not been confirmed as yet but we are hoping to see them before the season really starts. We will of course keep you updated as and when we hear of potential delivery dates.

Rytec work

Over the last couple of months, we have been busy with our Rytec machine, for those unaware or interested in this machine, it is a tractor trailed flail and collect machine. This allows us to quite brutally clear areas of gorse in single passes. Unfortunately, any gorse we clear will be able to re grow if left but once it is down it can then be managed and prevented from becoming tall which should give golfers a chance to at least find any wayward shots which may, or may not occur. In the future and moving forward we will look to use a powerful herbicide to eradicate some of the gorse in selected areas around the course, we will select these areas based of the density of gorse as well as finding popular landing areas of golf balls. For example, the area to the right of the 4th, we have cleared some of the larger gorse at the bottom of the footpath (an area we know is popular for the 'over faded' shot). Now this gorse will begin to grow once again this season but as we know this to be an area which can collect a large number of golf balls, we will look at hitting this area with the Herbicide during 2024 in order to begin eradicating the gorse. This process has to be undertaken using a back pack knapsack sprayer and so will be a time-consuming process. It must be done carefully as the Heather which is growing underneath the gorse is also affected by the product and so focus and precision is required when applying the product. Once we have some good spraying windows to get this work done, we will inform you and keep you posted.

We also ran the Rytec over the 10th carry, we have reduced the height of the carry down to around 4 inches, hopefully we can maintain it at this height. Due to the amount of Heather in the carry we cannot cut this area regularly but we can look at cutting it once a year to start with and monitor how it reacts. Now it has been reduced in height please do not use this as a pathway! If people do start walking though this it will turn to grass and we will lose the appeal of this carry quite quickly. While on the 10th carry, we cleared the tall ugly gorse behind the 13th tee, flattening the gorse, removing roots, smoothing the soil and incorporating the Heather seed taken from the 10th carry. We hope to see this area covered in Heather but will take some time for germination.

Heather Bed near putting green

A small project but hopefully one which will make an impact around the entrance to the course and putting green. We have removed the long tatty grass around the Les Tanswell memorial tree and are nearly finished in transplanting some of our own heather into this area. This should give more of a Heathland welcome to the course as well as reflecting what our course looks like beyond the putting green. This will be a low maintenance area once the heather has established. It will require daily watering through this season but once rooted we can begin to cut the heather to ensure we have some differential growth in the area. It should flower in the summer and so have a lovely purple colour around the putting green and clubhouse patio. There is also a rectangular area which has been edged in wood at the front of the Heather bed, this is where the memorial bench will go. In this shuttered area is currently some compacted type 1 sub base material, on top of this will be rubber mulch for the bench to sit on. Once finished, it will set this area off nicely, keeping it tidy with a reduced amount of maintenance required and of a theme which is reflected throughout the course.

Coming soon...

Though the month of March we should be completing our winter projects, due to the weather we have struggled to get though too many of our projects this winter but there have been a few exciting jobs going on. We have nearly completed a few jobs around the putting green including the Heather bed as mentioned, we have started to create a new area around the ball shute, we have rubber mulch in stock ready to lay around the ball shute as well as the bench base, a rubber path around the new nets and hope to fill some small areas around the patio to prevent weed growth and keep everything in a uniform look. We would have liked to have completed the laying of rubber before now but we must lay the rubber in dry conditions and it requires a minimum of 48hrs dry to cure. Not sure we have had 3 consecutive dry days at any point through the winter but we will catch up soon.

We removed the artificial grass path beside the 9th green early in the winter due to it becoming very slippery and planned to turf the pathway soon after. Unfortunately, we have struggled with the supply of soil and turf due to the wet weather. We were due the delivery this week of turf but once again the turf field was flooded and so we have been postponed another week. We have to stay positive and believe our next delivery date will happen. To complete the job, we need to remove most of the sand which was laid under the artificial grass, level with some rootzone soil and lay new turf over the top. There are some worn patches just off the pathway which we will tidy up too.

It is planned that we will have the Ventrac machine in towards the end of March, we hired this machine last year, if I remember correctly it was a very popular machine. It was used (and it will be used again) to clear the undergrowth of some wooded areas, we will re visit all we completed last year as well as a few new areas. As with all of the above, we will keep you posted when this is booked in.

Thanks as always for your patience with course closures and restrictions, Covid restrictions proved that maintaining a golf course for no one to enjoy means our job is not very rewarding. We want our members to be out and enjoying the work we are doing but as you all know; we have to protect this work as and when we feel it is likely to be damaged or conditions are unsafe. We are still hopeful the weather will break soon as the course is primed, all that is required is a few cuts on areas and this winter will be a distant memory.

See you all on the course soon

Graham Hastie
Course Manager



