

The 2026 season has now started, although it has been quite cold, but the glimpses of the sun shows what we hopefully can look forward to!

We all know how wet the winter has been, and the result is that our roads are full of serious pot holes. Well your green is constructed in a vaguely similar way! So you have a gravel sub bed, with drainage pipework laid on top, that is then covered with clinker, that would have probably come from the now defunct Ringwood Gas Works, then maybe 8 inches or so of root zone. When the green is at maximum water holding capacity, which it was for a large part of last winter, parts of the construction can be flushed away, resulting in a bumpy green. Yes, as the green started to dry out it definitely was bumpier than usual, and several greens in the area have reported that they too are bumpier than before. I took the unusual step to get the roller / turf iron into action before one would in a normal year. Luckily this has paid off and at this time the green is playing well for the time of year. Well I would say that wouldn't !!!!

The cold nights and cold winds have delayed spring growth so some parts of the green are a little thin. I was tempted to apply extra nitrogen to try to force some growth, but resisted. Now we are getting some steady spring growth and the fully organic fertilizer that I am using is resulting in the growth patterns I am looking for, namely short inter nodal length, shorter leaf stems to you, and it favours the type of grasses that I am trying to encourage.

Most people think it strange that I am trying to encourage more members to use the green, and more frequently. The green will definitely improve with use. That is why we are playing in only one direction to try to force some improvement. Any day soon I will set up the green in a North / South direction, and then we will be playing 4 days East / West and three days North / South. Just to clarify, after discussion with the men's captains, all the men's teams will be playing North / South and the ladies East / West.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the teams, all members an enjoyable and hopefully memorable season, but above all enjoy and smile!

I was reminded the other day about the rules and regulations that apply to all greenkeepers, and others that may carry out work on Council owned property.

From my point of view In my role as primary RBC greenkeeper I have to be aware:

- To just work on any Local Authority land they stipulate a minimum of £10,000,000 Public Liability insurance. I have submitted copies of my insurance to all the Local Authorities that I carry out work within their area.
- I have also taken and passed my PA1 and PA6 application by means of a knapsack and / or boom sprayer. I have also submitted copies of my certificates to the relevant local authorities.
- The PA1 and PA6 cover the health and safety aspects as well as the correct way to use the sprayers. This will include wearing full protective clothing, i.e. full face visor, suitable disposable boiler suit, nitrile gloves, rubber boots, hat, etc.. One should also keep a diary of date, time, chemicals used, dilution rate, weather temp, wind speed and direction, name of operator. Also a full Risk Assessment, making sure that no one can access the green as per the chemical label, not to spray within 5 metres of a ditch / water course, to tape over any drain cover, manhole cover that will be within 1.5 metres of the area being treated, etc.. Also all sprayer washings to be collected and disposed of safely, not washed down any drain.

The two above points are usually rigidly enforced, but there are many others that seem to be somewhat optional, or the Local Authorities turn a blind eye to:

- Mowing, the operator should wear steel towcaps at the very least.
- Whilst mowing any green, the green area should be fenced off where possible, but in any case signs should be put out at all entrance points prohibiting anyone from going onto the green as dangerous machinery is being used.
- The same goes for all other procedures such as scarifying, strimming, rolling, etc...

I would expect that the Club's own Public Liability insurance will cover members who undertake unpaid work at the Club as long as the basic health and safety guidelines are adhered to.