Course Manager Update: March 2018

As I sit here writing this update 'the Beast from the East' is about to land, which seems an apt time to reflect on this winter's work and the challenges the weather, in particular, has provided to the greenkeeping team on the course!

The team have worked tirelessly through some pretty adverse weather to complete stage 3 of our 5 year plan put together by golf architects Mackenzie & Ebert. This year we tackled the 14th, 15th and 16th holes and, for me personally, I think this stage has been our best work yet turning this part of the course, which in the past has been criticised for being uninteresting, in to something which is now strategic and visually stunning with the introduction of bare sand areas and dune slacks to replace the invasive scrub.

14th Hole

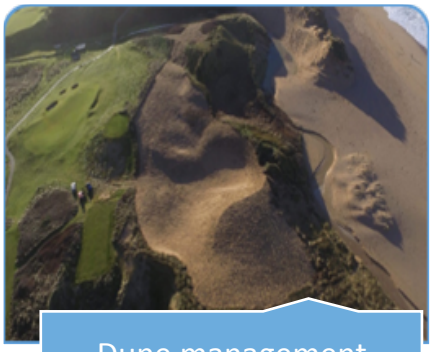
15th Hole

16th Hole

Talking to a number of our Members over the winter months I was often asked, "*what are you doing over there?*" with regards to the bare sand areas and dune slacks. At times it felt like we had never ending piles of sand stockpiled and we weren't getting anywhere but it was all for good reason and I will try to explain it now.

In January last year we decided to consult STRI senior ecology consultant, Bob Taylor, to undertake a 5 year ecological management plan for the Championship Course and surrounding dune systems. Bob and I walked the course for 2 days with his dictaphone making notes on every area of the course, recognising the importance of the site for nature conservation, the notable habitats and species represented and the need for appropriate management required to conserve the designated interests.

His recommendation for invasive scrub, such as brambles, blackthorn and buckthorn is to physically grub them out and bury in situ, capping them with at least one metre of sand so there is no re-emergence. In time these areas will naturalise and more desirable species will emerge. In addition to this we have created some dune slacks by digging down to the water table. These are not intended to be water hazards (although the widest of golfers amongst us may visit them from time to time!) and will go up and down in size with the water table. These should encourage a wide range of different habitats.



Dune management towards Constantine Bay

Dune Slack Behind 16th green

Before and after pictures of scrub removal

I'm sure you are all aware in recent months we have experienced problems with the new 4th green, its surround and even parts of the new fairway. This was particularly tough to take for myself and the rest of the team after all of the hard work we put in to improve the hole and nurse it along in such a short period of time from laying the turf to opening the hole. Unfortunately, due to this short period, the turf never had chance to build an efficient root system and once storms Orphelia, Brian, Caroline, Dylan and Eleanor (to name but a few) had deposited much of the Atlantic Ocean over the fence, combined with salt laden winds, the fescue turf which we laid could not cope any longer – and so it thinned out and died.

The green has been rested since Christmas and we intend to bring it back in to play in April for the Cornish PGA Festival. In order to do this we have seeded the green with an ultrafine rye grass (Bar Olympic) which will germinate in temperatures as low as 4 degrees and has exceptional salt tolerance. Once this stabilises the surface and temperatures pick up we will reintroduce slender creeping red fescues and spray a graminicide to eradicate the rye grass if necessary. We have also invested in a further 8 germination sheets, totalling 2700m2 of coverage, to speed up the process.

4th green EGU national finals 28th september

17th October after Storm Brian paid us a visit!

26th January fescue thinned out and Annual meadow grass surviving

Germination sheets in place for protection against 'the Beast from the East!'

Although the work on the Championship Course has come to an end for this winter we still have a couple of exciting projects in the pipeline over the next couple of months.

Firstly, we are re-designing the short game chipping green (clubhouse side of the road). The bunker will be removed and the green made much bigger, so the green can be used as an alternative putting green.

We will also be stripping the remaining turf on the back field of the driving range with a 'koro topmaker' and reinstating the turf nursery from scratch. We are working with 'Barenbrug', a major seed company, to conduct trials on new cultivars in our environment as well as creating a turf nursery for every area of our course from greens to walkways. For good measure we will also be installing irrigation. This will be a huge asset for us for many years to come.

In the sheds we are always looking to update our fleet of machinery keeping up to date with the latest technology and innovations on the market. Last September we purchased a new Iseki tractor and Vredo disc overseeder. This is already starting to help us be more efficient with intensive

overseeding on greens and fairways and we will be using it on all areas of the course throughout the year.

You will have noticed recently we have topdressed all the fairways with native dune sand mined from the sand area near the 17th tee. After the deluge of rainfall throughout December and January, it's a little ironic we haven't had a drop of rainfall since we dressed the fairways to wash it in to the canopy! Unfortunately as the Dakota Fairway topdresser we used was on demo we were restricted to this timeframe of use. Working with the STRI's lead agronomist, Alastair Beggs, we have been working hard on improving grass composition within the fairways. We have used a graminicide to eradicate unwanted broad leaved grasses, introduced a full wetting agent programme and the last component to this would be to topdress fairways a few times per year. This dresser is now on my wish list!

Lastly we have had a few changes within the team. So I would like to take this opportunity to wish Alex Osborne the best of luck in his new venture starting his own gardening business in the Padstow area. Alex was with Trevose for 15 years and his knowledge and experience will be sorely missed.

After a year away from Trevose we welcome back Steve Gunner after his brief spell back at Wilderness Golf Club in Kent. I'm sure he's going to get plenty of grief after the wide range of leaving parties we had to throw him but he's got broad shoulders so I'm sure he can take it.

We have also acquired the services of Darren Livett, a greenkeeper/mechanic from Tyrells Wood Golf in Surrey. Darren has relocated to Cornwall with his Cornish wife for a better way of life (who can blame him!) and I'm sure he will settle in well with the rest of the team.

With Carl Burley, River Rojano and Ben Browning about to complete their NVQ level 2 qualification and Kelvin Snell working towards His NVQ level 3, we are trying to give the team education opportunities to better themselves as greenkeepers for themselves and the Club. In 2017 Kevin Paterson and Sean Williams ventured to Prague to volunteer at the Czech Open and Alex Graham Brown volunteered at the Turkish Airlines Open. This tournament experience will be invaluable to them and to Trevose with future big events in the pipeline! Watch this space.

Should you have any questions or concerns about any of the course works please feel free to pop down to the sheds and see me – or contact Nick and he will arrange a suitable time to meet up to give me time to shower and put on a clean set of clothes! I am very proud of what's being built at the Club but, equally, value all feedback received from our Members.

Happy golfing.

Best,

Neil Ivamy
Course Manager, Trevose Golf & Country Club