



2025/26 Course Winter Works Review

We started off early and did our disc seeding, drilling in 10 bags of fescue into our 19 greens which was a great success. This year coming we are planning in October maintenance days to drill 20 bags of fescue into the 19 greens.

In October 2025 we started off with air injection into the greens down to a 12-inch depth and full pressure. We followed up after this with a sarrel roll spike and a top dressing. Greens during the whole winter have had a mixture of sarrel rolling or pencil spiking at different depths ranging from 3 inch to 6inch and a top dressing after. We then took the choice to verti drain some of the wetter greens in winter down to 10 inch, greens 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 were chosen as they can hold a bit more moisture in them.

We followed this up with disc seeding the drought affected fairways where we could and normal problem areas where we struggle to get fairways to grow. That's why this winter we roped off big areas on 12th & 13th fairways to help over the winter which I think has worked well and this winter coming we will look to rope off more big sections to give us every chance for improve our grass coverage on problem areas. The course was closed this Monday and Tuesday (16th & 17th) for course maintenance during which we again disc seed poorer fairways with 15 bags of ultra fine rye seed again to try and improve the surfaces.

All fairways received a verti drain down to 8 inches which we have not done for a good few years. We also were able to verti drain our tees and approaches down to a similar depth which again has not been done for a good few years. Again, we will hopefully see the benefits of better drainage on tees.

We cut down all the long rough throughout the course in the usual problem areas with our cut and collect machine. We are now in a stage where we only have 1 or 2 problem areas over the whole course, which for this size is a great achievement over the last 8/9 years we have been doing this. Reshaping some fairways and rough has also helped us control these areas more i.e. moving the 16th fairway more to the right has stopped the troubling thick rough we used to get on RHS after the burn.

Bunker work this year. We were extremely lucky when ex Nairn greenkeeper Paul Ross offered to help us, volunteering to build bunkers at 1st green , 3 bunkers at 3rd green and 2 at 14th green. He has been a superb help and all comments have been very positive

with regard the quality of his work. We were also able to rebuild 2nd fairway bunker , 2 fairway bunkers RHS of 16th and remove the middle bunker on 16th fairway. The practice ground bunker has been rebuilt in preparation for the summer ahead and reinstalling the chipping area. Stage 1 is also completed at the 7th green with the old bunker filled in and returfed ready for stage 2 this coming winter.

We have also extended and relevelled some tees around the course. The 7th lady's tee has also had poor grass coverage so this was chosen to remove all old turf, rotovate and bring in sand and relevel the ground before returfing. We have extended the 2nd medal tee as this hole for modern day technology and distance golfers hit it now is no more than a drive and a flick so we have extended it by around 12 yards which hopefully into a wind will make the big hitters think more and hopefully bring the fairway bunker more into play. We have widened the 15th tee to give us more teeing ground to the RHS of the tee as you play the hole. Hopefully this will take pressure off the green staff come September/October after a long season when the tee has taken a battering. This is a tee in future years we could look to widen on opposite side to make 1 huge tee. The 16th medal tee was extended again with the thinking it had become a relatively easy par 5 for most golfers today. Hopefully in years to come we can reposition the LHS bunker in fairway to make golfers think more. The new tee we built last year at 17 will require some more seeding work due to the drought we had last year that basically killed off 50% of the grass. We will look to work on this during the coming season so it can be ready for the North of Scotland amateur in 2027.

Tree thinning and gorse removal has happened a lot over the course. We had Willie Lean in removing massive clumps of gorse in front of 9th tee which then carried into the 9th trees RHS with gorse removal on the dune and de branching and cutting down small growing trees. This area is much tidier. Willie Lean also cleared gorse from LHS of 12th hole which we then carried on removing the holly bushes and removing selected trees and de branching along the whole length of the LHS of the hole and with cutting the longer grass below 12 green has made a huge improvement to the look of this hole. The 16 out of bounds bank was then cleared of gorse and grass cut down along with jaggy bushes. This has now tidied up the RHS of 16 but also shows how man made this bank looks. We will look at possibly re-shaping in winter 2026.

Tree thinning and branching has continued down LHS of 4th hole and around 4th green where we had some storm damage trees blown over which have been tidied up. We also tidied up the tree behind the 5th green but on closer inspection we found the tree had more damage than first thought, with a huge crack down the middle of it so we decided to take it down on health and safety grounds and then when it was removed we took down the gorse/whins behind the green to open up the back of the 5th green.

Irrigation works were upgraded on the 9th hole. New sprinklers were added which is a huge relief as before it was a hit or miss if the 9th hole irrigation even worked and if it did

work usually we would find 1 sprinkler stuck on. However these had been in the ground for over 25 years. Our main voltage issue around 1st fairway which knocked out a whole zone has been fixed with a new power cable installed. We were also lucky when Callum Chalmers was on site with machinery, we decided to add irrigation to our practice ground tee and chipping green which means this will no longer be left to either burn out due to no water or not get grass to grow so again this is a huge improvement we can offer as a golf club now.

All in all it has been a great winter program completed by the team and with more air injection in greens on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th March we hopefully be going into 2026 season in a good place.

Graham Burnett

Course Manager