WOODLAND MANAGEMENT REPORT

October 2024

INTRODUCTION

Following the completion of the woodland risk assessment in 2023, the Club has adopted a structured approach to managing its woodland. This assessment serves as a foundation for future woodland management decisions, striking a careful balance between three key elements: health and safety, ecology, and the impact on course architecture and performance.

As we've communicated previously, while the risk assessment offers a clear and thorough report on managing woodland from a general perspective, it does not account for the unique context in which our woodland resides—namely, that it hosts a golf course. For our course to perform to its full potential, the management of the surrounding woodland must take into consideration factors beyond just ecological health and safety.

Key Considerations for Woodland Management

- Health and Safety: Ensuring that trees do not pose a risk to players, staff, or visitors is a top priority. Trees that are damaged, leaning, or otherwise unstable must be managed to mitigate any potential hazards

- Ecology: Maintaining the natural biodiversity of our woodland is essential for sustaining a healthy ecosystem. However, this must be weighed against the needs of the golf course.

- Course Architecture and Performance: The performance of the course is a vital element, and trees that obstruct key features, reduce light and air flow to playing areas, or damage course infrastructure must be managed accordingly.

The 11th Tee

The 11th Tee

PLANNED WOODLAND MANAGEMENT FOR WINTER 2024

With these three elements in mind, the Club has decided to proceed with the removal of several trees that present ongoing issues. Each decision has been carefully considered to optimise the course's performance, improve safety, and ensure we meet our ecological responsibilities.

- 1. Willow Tree between the 1st White Tee and the Lower Car Park
- Risk Assessment Recommendation: Pollard by 50%.
- Current Issue: This large and mature tree restricts air and light from reaching the first tee, negatively affecting the condition of the playing area. During the playing season it obstructs view form the White tee to the Red tee. The tree is also significantly leaning, which presents a safety hazard, and its large canopy obstructs the view of the lower car park, compromising security.
- Decision: Full removal of the tree to enhance visibility, improve air flow, and increase security.
- 2. Two Willow Trees to the Right of the 18th green
- (as you play the hole)
- Risk Assessment Recommendation: Marked as poor specimens.
- Current Issue: These trees prevent balls from entering the back right bunker, which disrupts the intended playability of the hole. Additionally, their roots have infiltrated the three greenside bunkers, leading to performance issues within the bunkers themselves.
- Decision: Complete removal to restore bunker performance and improve the playability of the 18th hole.

The 18th Tee

The 18th Tee

4. Ash Tree behind the Red 18th Tee
   - Risk Assessment Recommendation: N/A
   - Current Issue: This tree, although a decent specimen, blocks the route for tee shots off the 18th winter tee, which is due to be located to the right of the main tee. Moreover, there is a likelihood that this tree will contract ash dieback, which would pose a further hazard and management challenge in the future.
   - Decision: Full removal to ensure playability from the Yellow and Green 18th tee during the winter. The removal will also increase the performance of the Red tee.

5. Copse behind the 11th White Tee
   - Risk Assessment Recommendation: Fell/Pollard
   - Current Issue: This copse is over dense and thus none of the specimens are thriving. Its over dense nature is preventing light and air from reaching the 11th White tee. Over population is exhibited by the lack of grass cover under the trees and the misshapen varieties.
   - Decision: Several trees to be removed from the copse leaving sufficient space for the remaining specimen to recover and thrive, whilst allowing much needed air and light into the 11th White tee.

6. 3 trees to the back of the 13th Green.
   - Risk Assessment Recommendation: N/A
   - Current Issue: The roots of these Cherry trees, make the surrounding grass vary bare. Any golfer that hits their approach long, is faced with an already difficult shot, but has the added disadvantage of a bare lie. This bare covering also makes this steep slope very slippery during the winter months.
   - Decision: Three cherry trees to be removed to improve the performance and health safety of the area through the Green.

Timelines

Tree removal that can be done in house, will start immediately. The work on areas 1, 2 and 3 above, will be undertaken by a subcontractor and will commence week commencing 25th November 2024.

Conclusion

In all six cases, the Club has taken a balanced approach, considering health and safety, ecology, and course performance in its decisions. The removal of these trees has been carefully thought through, prioritising the long-term sustainability and functionality of the course.
The removal of these trees will take place over the course of the next few weeks, and we are confident that these actions will improve both the health and safety of the woodland and the performance of our golf course.

The 18th Tee

The 13th Green