

## Report for AGM 2017

The season started after another wet winter with a cold spring and slow growth particularly on greens. We had three weeks of summer which required watering back in May then we had dry days and wet nights through June, July and August which created unprecedented growth with rough almost uncontrollable. Of course during this period is when our roughcutter breaks down and luckily we managed to hire a replacement for a week as always at a cost. Thankfully most other equipment has behaved and has needed little other than small breakdown and servicing expense. We continue to try and do most machine maintenance in house where possible saving what is the costliest part of a breakdown, an engineers time.

The requirement for a high level of presentation unfortunately means operating expensive machines. It is increasingly difficult to find funds to replace this type of equipment even second hand as demand has increased in clubs who would have in the past bought new. Increased costs are not confined to machinery as we have had several chemicals withdrawn in the last two years to be replaced by more environmental or organic products and as you know once you prefix anything with organic it immediately increases cost. We have the minimum wage and living wage which have increased by much more than most wages meaning the annual manpower budget doesn't go as far as it did. Everyone has felt the increase in fuel costs and although we use lower vat rated diesel we go through it at an alarming rate especially during a very heavy growth season.

However it is not all doom and gloom.

The inaugural Greenkeepers revenge was a success albeit with horrendous weather. There were a few teething problems which need to be addressed for next year and if anyone has any ideas that would be great.

We decided after the issues regarding 2016 championship that I would decide if play had to be suspended or cancelled and the weather made this necessary on the first day of ties, Dave Gribbin and I made the decision by lunchtime, everyone was contacted and ties rearranged. I think it is important to make decisions in time so people can change plans.

We had the course rated by Scottish Golf to determine our standard scratch and while there was a tense wait for the outcome it was pleasing to know that we would remain at 68

Without being smug I think the course has been in great condition, perhaps some may disagree but I would ask everyone firstly before complaining, think! There is usually a reason why something hasn't been done or is not to the desired standard. No one wants a course which looks unkempt especially me. All involved with the course take a pride in what they are doing and want Melrose to be a credit to the membership. I would ask everyone if they have an idea, a suggestion or a complaint, tell a committee member that's what they are there for.

Just a quick update on what's going on just now and what's planned.

1 winter work is mostly ditch clearing and fixing leaks at the fifth.

2 a putting green is currently under construction beside clubhouse and will be seeded in spring

3 In the spring it's hoped to core and sand greens and overseed. I would ask for patience during this.

Finally I would like to thank my helpers Jim Fleming who volunteered his services this year and has battled valiantly with the rough which at times has been more like a silage field. Douglas Pollock who has improved our storage facilities again this year (have you noticed the more storage you have the more you need. How did we get everything in one shed before.) Keith Grieve and Derek Grant who helped repair the cattle damage caused on the first and ninth. We are putting up a fence down the side of the road to hopefully prevent this intrusion again. Graeme Hannah for his course tidying and general inspections over the season. Dave Campbell for his daily report on what I've missed. Gary Craig who continues to come up with materials at no cost. The Captain and the Committee for their support over the year. Last but by no means least the members of Melrose Golf Club who make the whole thing possible