

## **RLTCC Maintenance Report for 2016 AGM**

The budget for maintenance work has increased over the last few years due to price rises and extra work being done on the grounds. Most work we do is needed to continue to maintain the club at as high a standard as we can. Professional work was needed on the irrigation system this year but we now have spare parts which we should be able to install in house if necessary.

Other projects undertaken when time and money allow include clearing of the allotment areas, making it easier to find lost tennis balls, and providing more level ground which may be utilised for mini tennis in due course. This was initially costly but we are now able to keep the undergrowth under control with our volunteer maintenance team.

The condition of the croquet lawns over the last couple of years has noticeably improved, particularly after the episodes of heavy prolonged rain we have had recently. No longer do we have ducks swimming in a pond! We feel that the drainage system we laid, along with the annual spiking programme, have been major factors in this improvement.

We have two other areas of concern. One is that there are still some residual areas of "Dry Patch Disease" visible in the summer and the Croquet committee has decided to continue with the use of wetting agents and be particularly vigilant with regard to irrigation during dry periods. The second problem has been lawn damage caused by rooks who are hunting crane fly larvae buried in the ground. A chemical spray has been used this year. We will monitor the results and if not successful may apply nematodes next autumn, which infect the larvae and prevent them developing. This is a slightly more expensive option.

As there appears to be no immediate prospect of obtaining funding to convert the grass tennis courts, more work has been done this year to maintain a reasonable playing surface. In retrospect we were slow to irrigate during dry weather last summer and more attention will be given to this.

David Fothergill is advising and working closely with our new part time grounds man, Steve, particularly with regard to treating moss and algae on the Astroturf, the build up of which looks unsightly and affects the playing area. David informs me that he is concerned that due to the prolonged wet periods dirt and debris has come to the surface of the tennis courts and he is enquiring about professional cleaning again. I have also spent time with Steve regarding the lawn cutting and line marking programme.

Last year it was decided to “deep clean” the clubhouse, and professional contractors spent a day there which seemed very worthwhile and it is planned to repeat this annually.

We will follow the same format for the work-in during March as in recent years, under the supervision of Stuart Peters. Team leaders will be appointed for various jobs and members are asked to volunteer to take part at a time to suit them. This achieves the object of sprucing everything up for the new season.

Fortnightly working parties take place throughout the summer months. They are held Monday, Wednesday or Friday, depending on weather and availability of volunteers. We do ask you to come and help when you can as our upkeep costs would be very much higher if we had to pay contractors. Ring John on 01983 566040 or Stuart on 01983 882546 for times and details.

After many years of sterling work for the club Philip Kennerley decided that the time has come to finally park the tractor and mower in the shed. The tennis and croquet committees send their thanks for his diligence and reliability and hope he now has more time to play the sports he enjoys.

Thanks as usual to all the maintenance committee and other club members who have given time and effort in the past year, not least those professional people who have provided their expertise in club projects without charge.

John Sim

January 2016