

RLTCC Maintenance Report for 2017 AGM

Our new groundsman, Steve, working closely with David Fothergill, has now settled in to the routine of brushing and caring for the Astroturf, as well as mowing allotments, banks and lawns. Throughout the year there have been a number of complimentary comments about how he has tackled these tasks, introducing measures which, although perhaps initially labour intensive, will be very helpful over subsequent seasons.

We have devoted time and effort to cutting and clearing undergrowth in the allotment area behind the tennis courts. A chipper was kindly provided by a club member and a large working party spent the morning moving all the old cuttings and debris that had accumulated over a number of years so that it could be put through the machine. The small amount of debris that could not be shredded was burnt by John & Lesley Ball. This has all been a great financial saving to the club as in 2013 we had to employ a contractor to do the same work at a cost of over £600, and even with the use of professional tree felling this year the total cost is about £200.

Overall, the planned 2016 lawn maintenance programme has produced excellent results, with only a few minor problems such as red thread and fusarium, which we had to have specially treated by the contractor, causing unexpected increase in expenditure. The chemicals applied to kill crane fly larvae in October 2015 appear to have been helpful, in that we had a lot less lawn damage from rooks seeking a tasty meal. We will monitor the situation this season and decide whether we need to apply further treatment in the autumn, either chemicals or nematodes if we can afford them.

“Dry patch disease” has also greatly improved. This is thought to be a combination of applying wetting agents regularly, cutting to the correct height for weather conditions and watering more diligently during dry spells.

A small area of lawn near the flagpole has had further drainage work carried out to improve an existing section which puddles easily, and it is hoped that any excess water from the new patio will also be able to be accommodated by this drain, although the small west/east fall is not helpful.

I have suggested that one or two edging bricks at the middle of the north side of each of the tennis courts could be removed to assist drainage during and after heavy rain. This would also allow a gap to clear accumulated sludge from the asphalt surface which we could clear by power washing the boundary edge. This could be looked at in collaboration with the Tennis Committee in the coming season.

There will probably not be a need for a major work in this spring as so many jobs are now being done routinely. However, the benches will need repairing and painting as well as the stop boards. The large shed will also need some attention as the sub frame is rotting in some sections, along with the exterior boards at the back and side. This is due to the shed leaning slightly and it is planned to fit a gutter to clear rainwater more effectively. I would hope this will extend the life of the shed for another five years but we must plan to replace it in the longer term.

Due to health problems, Karin has had to give up her role as “garden and tubs officer” and I would like to thank both her and Rolly for all the hours they have spent on this work over many years. We are grateful that Gill Lloyd and Jan Collins have volunteered to take over this role.

Can I once again thank the usual people for their help with the many maintenance tasks through the year, not forgetting “Bob the Bins”. Their contribution has saved the club a large amount of money by their volunteer labour.

As there will no longer be a covered veranda, there will be a need for an area for the croquet players to assemble during tournaments. A tournament office could be constructed inside the end of the large shed, if all the tennis equipment is removed to the new coaches' shed or the freezer shed. The cost of this could be included in that of the proposed repairs to the large shed, which will come from the contingency money allocated in the maintenance budget.

John Sim January 2017