

Nailsea and District Croquet Club
Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2019

Present: Graham McCausland, Meriel Forshaw, Mike Tracy, Linda Shaw, Brian Roynon, , Peter Dyke.

In attendance: Joan Timmins

1. **Apologies:** Andrew Wimshurst, Coral Harrison
2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd April 2019:** agreed and signed as a correct record.
3. **Matters Arising**
 - a) New Toro/Fire Extinguisher (5: 3-4)
Toro – No further problems.
Fire Extinguisher – has been returned and is now in the garage.
 - b) Youth Croquet with A&S Police (11)
Graham has now been in contact with the co-ordinator of the above and dates have to be agreed. This event would probably take place on a Friday evening with the support of James and Ryan, plus other volunteers.

Action: Graham
4. **Treasurers Report:** discussed and noted
The water expenditure is now under control.
A plan/programme for re-seeding over the winter months still has to be agreed
Brian to liaise with Swift re cost of hedge cutting for this year.

Action: Brian

Concern was raised at the lack of volunteers to share the cleaning of the club house. Thanks were expressed to Joan, but with only a minimal number of members willing to help her, the situation is not sustainable. The committee may have to consider employing a cleaner on a regular basis, which could then increase the club fees to members. Meriel will send another email to the members asking for more volunteers and stating the financial implication if no one comes forward to help.

Action: Meriel
5. **Property Report:** discussed and noted
 - 5.1 The committee wished to thank Tony Willoughby for repairing the bench. The proposed work morning will now take place on the 7th June starting at 9am to 9.30. Volunteers are needed.
 - 5.2 Motorbike Parking - the committee agreed that the area below the kitchen window could be made available for the parking of motorbikes. Linda may have some slabs that could be used for this purpose and she will contact Geoff Hughes.

Action: Linda

5.3 Social Bookings - More social bookings have been received.

James Sutherland will hold a corporate event on the 4th June –Brenda, Polly and Kathy are the volunteers.

On 20th June Nailsea Guides will use the lawns 7.30-9pm with 22 guides and 4 adults. Cost £5pp. Volunteers will be needed.

On the 26th June the 41 Club will bring 12 people; Meriel, Graham and Peter Longden have agreed to volunteer for this evening 6pm to 8pm. Cost £7.50 pp.

Marcus will hold his event on the 26th July.

6. Dishwasher

Robin has offered the club a dishwasher free of charge. Following a detailed discussion based on previous advantages and disadvantages of having a dishwasher, the committee decided not to accept this offer. Brian will express the committee's thanks to Robin and inform him of the committee's decision.

Action: Brian

7. Membership Report

Peter had received three completed forms and payment from juniors/parents.

Safeguarding – Parents need to be aware of the back of the form which needs to be completed and signed and returned to Peter. This gives permission for their child's photo to appear in any club publicity.

Action: Peter

8. Lawns Report: discussed and noted

Autumn reseeding- requires further discussion.

Over seeding- requires further discussion.

Dimple seeding- the committee agreed that it appeared to be cost effective to hire the equipment for 2/3 days at a time for a minimal extra cost.

A suggestion has been made, that during the winter period two lawns remain unused and four small lawns used.

9. Website: continues as work in progress

Mike brought to the committee's attention the problems with the 'contact facility' on the first page. Six hundred plus emails had been generated in a very short time, the majority of which were irrelevant and some threatening 'to take the website down'. Mike suggested that unless Alison can find a solution to this problem then the facility should be removed from the site. The committee agreed.

The committee is keen to get match reports on to the website and into the press. Mike has now obtained a list of all team captains and will contact them.

When reports are received, John Hancock has agreed to be the contact person for the Press and James Galpin will put the information onto the website.

Action: Mike

10. Coaching

Members are attending the coaching sessions with Ryan and David. Individual members are organising/receiving coaching from more experienced members. Linda suggested offering 1/2hr training sessions on strategic points on Wednesday afternoons before games begin. Linda will draft a letter for approval by the committee suggesting different ways of managing Wednesday club afternoon draws.

Action: Linda

11. Committee Diary – Role Profiles: Work in progress.

There are two different aspects, - Club Calendar which Linda has started working on and a Committee Diary. Mike will put together information that needs to be in a committee diary; the information will show which areas the committee needs to be regularly involved in, in order to make decisions accordingly.

Action: Mike/Linda

12. Recruitment Report: discussed and noted.

The 'Hoops for the Hospice' day was a great success and raised nearly £500 for the Children's Hospice. The recruitment drive was not so successful; however, it did significantly raise the profile of the club within the community. The committee thanked everyone for their hard work in making this event such a success.

The club will have up to eleven beginners on the next course. Kathy and Erica will contact those people who completed forms.

Mike suggested we might have to adopt a more flexible approach to recruiting beginners. We already accommodate beginners where possible during the year.

13. Club competitions: Competitions are progressing.

GC Handicap Singles and Doubles were played on the 2nd June and despite the rain all games were completed. James did an excellent job of managing the day.

14. C Level GC Tournament

We have until September/October to make a final decision on whether to hold this competition in 2020. This would be a one day event, 16 entries maximum, handicap 7 and above. Peter has looked at dates and only two appear as possibilities, - 12th June 2020 and 26th August 2020.

The committee members raised several questions, which will need to be discussed before a final decision can be made.

15. League Fixtures Report: discussed and noted

Peter has sent out the results.

16. Any Other Business

16.1 On line booking of lawns - on going; keep on the agenda.

Linda has asked Ray Ransom to write an article on online booking for the next issue of the Cygnet magazine.

16.2 Mike now needs final numbers of those hoping to attend the BBQ on 28th June. Mike will be sending another email to members.

16.3 AC C Class Tournament – Mike will be managing this event on Saturday 8th June 2019. A great deal of work goes into organising this two day event and few volunteers have been forthcoming. The event next year will require a new manager.

16.4 The committee agreed that beginners who complete the course and then wish to join the club would pay a £50 membership fee for the remainder of the year.

16.5 Citation – This has now been completed and is ready for submission.

Action: Graham

16.6 Winter membership – Several considerations need to be given regarding those who join the club for the winter period only. To be on agenda for discussion next meeting.

DONM: Tuesday 9th July 2019 10.00hrs

The meeting closed at 12.15hrs

Signed as a true and accurate record

Name.....

Signature.....**Date**.....

Reports

Treasurer's report for NDCC committee meeting 3rd June 2019
This report has been prepared on 27th May 2019.

Spreadsheet for the financial year attached. You can print the summary page if you wish by going to the High Level Actuals worksheet tab.

Balance at the bank less unrepresented cheques is £12,913.73

The surplus for the year is £3,199.97. Without the £5,000 loan we would be £1,800.03 in deficit.

The 6 monthly water charges statement showed that our deficit has reduced from £822.64 to £246.63, which of course includes the water charges accrued since the last statement. If we continued to pay £115 pcm (as suggested) I calculated that we would clear our debt in about 3 months time and then start to climb steadily into credit, so I suggested that we pay of the debit balance and that our direct debit payments should revert to £30 pcm. This was agreed and has been actioned.

Looking forward, our insurance premium will set us back about £1,000. Lawn maintenance costs in the autumn may not come into this financial year but will still have to be met. Current thinking is that all four lawns should be overseeded using a dimple seeder using either a contractor (Talbot) or hiring a machine and doing it ourselves. The higher cost of the contractor is compensated by the lower cost of seed from Talbot, but finding a date when the conditions are right may prove to be a problem. Two lawns will receive extra treatment but this will be more labour intensive than expensive (e.g. intensive overseeding around hoop positions). We will have to deal with the hedges at some point. A decision will have to be made as to when this should be done and whether or not to engage a contractor.

We are due in the order of £500 from SWF in lawn hire fees for the short croquet teams weekend and about £800 from the CA for the Treasurer's Tankard. I will endeavour to obtain these payments in time for inclusion in the year end accounts, but that may not happen.

In view of these uncertainties we will have to decide how much of the loan to repay later in the year, but I would like to clear some of this debt.

M Tracy

27/05/2019

Property Report

Center Bench

Tony Willoughby has repaired the central bench seat and the seat on the North Boundary

Proposed Work Morning

The edges are growing rapidly and we need a work morning. I would suggest Monday the 10th of June at 9.30am. But I will not be able attend.

Hedges.

The hedges need cutting again. Do we do it ourselves or pay a contractor?
Last year cost £660 by Swift Tree Surgery.

Bikes parking on slabs in front of Pavillion

Geoff has raised concern about the potential access problems with motor bikes being parked on this area.
He is suggesting that we put some slabs outside the kitchen window spesifically for the bikes.

Social bookings.

We currently have a 5 bookings confirmed and 1(Marcus) awaiting finalisation.
The first one is an afternoon corporate event organised by Esme's dad on the 4th June.

Report for June meeting 2019

Recruitment

The Hoops for the Hospice day was a great success financially and we gave nearly £500 to the Children's Hospice. However, from a recruitment point of view it was a dismal failure. We had over 50 visitors in total but many of them were very young children or families or friends of existing members. These family members/friends were interested to see croquet and to support the Hospice but never had any intention of taking up lessons. Other visitors were already having lessons or had become interested through members and would have found us in any case! After the huge amount of work, and £150 spent on posters it's very disappointing. The Club profile may have been raised but a different tack is clearly required!

We do have up to 11 beginners but only two came as a result of Open Day. 5 are friends or contacts of Andrew, one is a friend of mine and one is a friend of Violet. Another couple walked into the club the Sunday after Open Day and will probably sign up. They have just moved into Birdlip Close. We are still pursuing a few who took forms but probably nothing will come of it.

One of the beginners is going to join the Club next week and is a promising player.

Tournaments & Club Competitions

We made a joint entry with Bristol CC to the AC All England Handicap Competition. 3 entries from Nailsea and 1 from Bristol. The Bristol member kindly offered to play all his 3 matches at Nailsea.

Numbers at AC tournaments are all still low but the tournaments are viable.

Request

Please could we have a supply of envelopes in the Clubhouse- for passing on match fees, visitors fees, fees for lessons/membership (from newcomers who hand it to coaches or others). They could be used envelopes that are still intact or unwanted reply envelopes - or just cheap new ones.

Kathy Wallace 29- 5- 2019

Fixture Secretary's Report

Results of matches played since our last meeting:

Association Croquet

Advanced League Div 1

Cheltenham A	3	Nailsea A	6
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Advanced League Div 2

Home match against Sidmouth postponed. It will now take place on 11 June.

Advanced League Div 3

Cheltenham B	4	Nailsea C	3
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Nailsea C	1	Cheltenham B	6
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We are currently in first position in the Division 1 and in third position (out of three teams) in Division 3.

Federation League Central

Bristol	4	Nailsea Central	3
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Taunton Deane	3	Nailsea Central	4
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Federation League South

Sidmouth	3	Nailsea South	4
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Nailsea South	4	Exeter	4
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Both of our federation league teams are in third position each having won one match and lost one.

Intermediate League North

Nailsea North	3	Weston-super-Mare N2	
Kington Langley	2	Nailsea North	5

Intermediate League Central

Camerton & Peasedown	3	Nailsea Central	1
Wellington	4	Nailsea Central	1

Nailsea North is in first place and Nailsea Central in sixth place in their respective league tables.

Golf Croquet

Level Play League

We had no matches in this league in May. We are currently in fourth place out of six teams having drawn our match against Bristol in April.

Handicap League North West

Broadwas 7	13	Nailsea NW	
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Beckford are unable to raise a team. This match will now take place on 3 August.

Handicap League North East

Nailsea NE 11	9	Bath NE	
Swindon 8	12	Nailsea NE	

Handicap League Central

Nailsea Central 10	10	Bath Central	
Nailsea Central 14	6	Weston-super-Mare Central	
Taunton Deane 9½	10½	Nailsea Central	

North West team is currently in sixth place out of seven teams, North East and Central teams are both in seventh place (7 teams) in their sections.

High Handicap League

Nailsea	12½	Weston-super-Mare
7½		

Our high Handicap team is lying second equal with Taunton Deane in the Central Section of the High Handicap League. Dowlish Wake is currently in first position with their distinct home advantage. We play them next at Dowlish Wake.

Peter Dyke
(01/06/19)

Lawn Maintenance Report -June 19

1. Lawns

The weather continues to be on the dry side with average temperatures. The result is that average rainfall is less than 1mm/day whereas water loss due to evapotranspiration is around 2.5mm/day. The lawns are therefore slowly drying out and are likely to continue to do so throughout the summer. The four weekly Revolution spraying is timed to coincide with rainfall (26 April and 27 May in this case) as this assists penetration into the soil without the need to irrigate.

More generally there are no plans to irrigate during dry weather unless the situation becomes extreme. The intention is to rely the Revolution spraying to keep the grass green. The only exception is the North boundary which was flooded last week as it was showing signs of drying out and killing off the new grass established over the winter. One of our new potential members is a geologist and he commented on the fact that the water table across the lawns would be curved, not constant. Where the ground falls away the beyond the lawns the water table will naturally be lower. This is particularly true along the North boundary and West boundary and it helps to explain why these areas tend to dry out first.

The first liquid bio spray was applied on May 7th. As is the norm it was applied in two passes to get the correct dilution. However, the result was a rather streaky effect caused by the Countax and Sprayer tyres re distributing the spray from the first pass during the second pass. The effect is exacerbated by the extra wheels recently added to the sprayer to minimise lawn damage when the surface is soft. To avoid this uneven application of fertiliser, the liquid bio spray will be applied in a single pass on two separate days. Thus the first spray will be applied this evening (June 1st) followed by a second spray on June 6th. The June 6th spray is supervised because of the Primo Maxx 11 growth regulator that is incorporated.

Weeds in the form of lesser trefoil have been common this year and his taken repeated applications of selective weed-killer to kill it. The dead weeds have caused some bare patches on the lawns which are not easy to reseed at this time of year with the lawns in use.

A few spots of red thread disease have also been observed. Duncan Hector suggested spot treatment with soluble Iron. This seems effective but one or two new spots were observed this week.

Generally , the sward is slowly thickening but it remains thin in many areas, particularly around the hoops. The most important defect remains the Annual Meadow grass (AMG) clumps. These particularly obvious at present as they tend to die in the dry conditions that exist at Nailsea. The resulting playing surface is relatively poor where the AMG is present. The long term solution to AMG lies in the cultural practices advocated by Duncan Hector. The following links provide a detailed explanation :

<https://finegolf.co.uk/what-is-fine-golf/soil-biology/poa-to-perennial/>

<https://finegolf.co.uk/what-is-fine-golf/soil-biology/performance-greens/>

How long the progression to all perennial grasses takes is not specified!2.

LAG Meeting re Autumn Lawn Programme and Winter Lawn Closures.

As mentioned last month the Lawn Advisory Group (LAG) met on 19th April to discuss the Autumn lawn work and Winter Lawn closures. The notes from the meeting are attached. The main conclusions from the meeting were:

1. For the next two years, two lawns would be closed for the Winter to facilitate lawn maintenance work. This may involve playing on four small lawns on the two lawns that are open - a practice common at other clubs that rests the main hoop areas.
2. No top dressing would be attempted during the next two Winters.
3. Over-seeding of the closed lawns would take place using either dimple seeding or broadcast seeding/coverage with green waste. As the latter is technically difficult the default plan is to dimple seed.
4. Selective killing of the AMG clumps using a modified sprayer and commercial strength glyphosate was a possibility - subject to experimentation during the summer.

Subsequent to the meeting, a small experiment to kill AMG using the modified sprayer was conducted on the edge of lawn 5. The blue dye showed exactly where the glyphosate had been applied. However, all the surrounding grass also died - presumably because of spray spread when the spray head is lifted after spraying.. More experimentation is needed before this technique could safely be applied to the lawns.

The purpose of killing the AMG (followed by heavy overseeding) is to accelerate the effects of the cultural practices described in the links above. However, if there is any risk to the existing rye grass the glyphosate option will not be implemented.

Timing of the dimple seeding was the subject of much debate at the LAG meeting as the ground conditions are critical to the success of dimple seeding. The ground needs to be soft but the grass dry to allow the seed to be brushed into the dimples. As October weather can be wet or dry booking equipment hire or contractors is difficult. Autumn leaves are further complication.

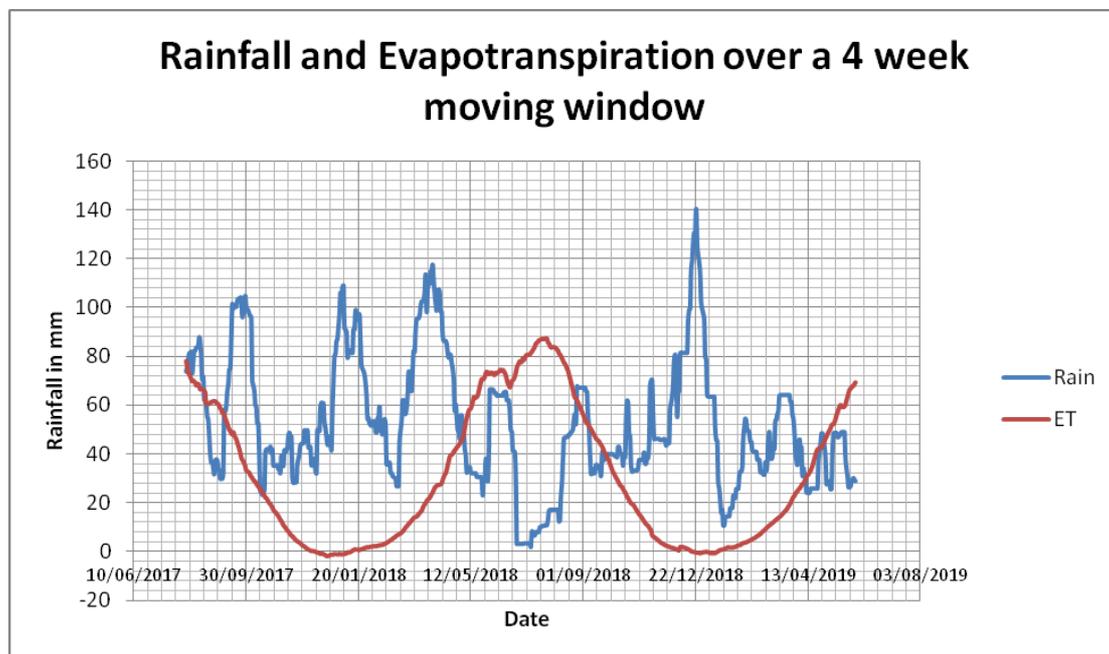
Since the LAG meeting, it has occurred to me that we could simply plan to heavily irrigate the lawns for a few days prior to dimple seeding. This solves the problem of soft/hard ground but of course rain on the day could still cause a problem. As hiring a dimple seeder for three days is not much more expensive than one day this may be the most flexible option that minimises the risk of wet grass due to rain.

My current thinking is that we should close two lawns as soon as finals weekend is complete, hire a dimple seeder for three days and plan to irrigate for three days prior to dimple seeding if the weather is dry. This maximises soil temperatures (better germination) and minimises the autumn leaves problem. If the weather remained dry some light irrigation post dimple seeding might also be useful.

The LAG will meet to finalise these arrangements later in the month.

JNW 1/6/19

Figure 1 Rainfall and Evapotranspiration



APPENDIX 1 : LAG MEETING NOTES 29/4/19

1. Winter Lawn Closures

Two reasons for winter lawn closures were identified:

- a. To rest lawns
- b. To carry out maintenance work

No decisions were made about resting of lawns but for the next two years it was agreed that two lawns would be closed over the winter for maintenance work (subject to committee agreement). The possibility of splitting the 2 open lawns into 4 small lawns over the winter was also discussed. This technique is employed at other clubs as it rests the normal hoop hole areas.

2. Sand Top Dressing

This would involve spreading approximately 5 tonnes of sand over each of the two closed lawns and then using a wide lute to smooth the sand out to fill any minor dips in the lawns. The LAG generally felt that there was no need for this work to be carried out. Therefore this option will not be pursued for the time being.

3. Over-seeding

The need to thicken the sward by overfeeding was identified as a key priority. Three ways of over-seeding were considered:

- a. Plant pot seeding using the GA30 tining machine and brushing seed into tine holes.
- b. Dimple seeding
- c. Broadcast seeding with green waste covering (as per last winter)

3.1. "Plant pots"

The "plant pot" approach was quickly discarded because of the distance between wide tine holes that results in widely separated tufts of new grass. Colchester used to employ this method but have abandoned it because of the uneven grass distribution.

3.2 Dimple seeding

Dimple seeding was considered to be the default option as it should result in grass tufts that are about 3.0 centimetres apart. This is not ideal but is much better than "plant" pot spacing. Dimple seeding requires the ground to be soft but the grass dry. Such conditions may well occur at particular times during October and November but make the operation weather dependent. Tying the correct ground conditions in with a contractor or equipment hire is a challenge as bookings have to be made months ahead of time.

There are two dimple seeding options using a contractor or hired equipment:

- Dimple seed of 4 lawns using a contractor

Costs	Labour/machinery	£550
	Grass seed (4 bags)	£400

		Total	£950
Problems	Control over timing		
- Dimple seeding of 2 (closed) lawns			
Costs	Machinery Hire (2 days)		240
	Delivery/return		156
	Seed (2 retail bags)		280
	Total		676

In theory play can continue on dimple seeded lawns but the surface will be bobbly for a few weeks and the new grass may not thrive on lawns that are being played on. Dimple seeding would need to take place in either early October or mid November to avoid the Autumn leaves.

Hiring a BLEC Uniseeder requires about 6 weeks notice whereas booking a contractor requires several months notice and the timing is subject to delays on other contractor jobs.

Overall, dimple seeding of the 2 closed lawns looks to be the better option as it is cheaper, a bit more flexible and avoids the problems of the surface of the two lawns in use being uneven during October/November while the dimple holes are present.

3.3 Broadcast seeding covered by green waste.

This is the technique employed on the North and West boundaries last winter. It produces the ideal random grass patterns and can be carried out any time once the Autumn leaves season has passed. However the cost and difficulties in delivery, manhandling and distributing the green waste over large areas presents significant problems.

Green waste comes in two forms

a. 25L bags	50 bags (1.25 M ³ volume)	£250
b. Dumpy bags	1 bag containing 1.0 M ³	£100

To cover a lawn of 800 M² to a depth of 2.5mm requires 2.0 M³ so the cost would be either £200 or £500 per lawn. However the Dumpy bags are difficult to handle compared with the 25L bags and there is a risk of the green waste becoming moist and thus becoming impossible to spread evenly. A 5mm layer would obviously double the cost.

To employ this method requires us to establish a method of handling and distributing the waste using some form of drop spreader. Experiments with our current spinning spreader were not successful. The LAG will continue investigation into other options

4. Annual Meadowgrass

Annual Meadow Grass (AMG) is a known nuisance in amenity lawns as it can die under drought conditions and is prone to disease. It also produces a different surface to rye grass and hence a mixture displays an uneven ball rolling characteristic.

Duncan Hector's twice yearly granular fertiliser contains mycorrhizal fungi and the Liquid Bio Fertilisers contain bio-stimulants which encourage mycorrhizal fungi growth. Science papers suggest that this encourages the perennial grasses (dwarf rye in our case) to flourish and outcompete the AMG. Thus if the AMG can be contained in the short term, longer term control should be possible through agricultural practice rather than chemicals.

In practice, attempts last spring to kill the AMG with commercial glyphosate were not totally successful, possibly because of the small quantities delivered to each plant. Nor does glyphosate kill the seed in the ground. Thus, the Autumn laborious efforts to effectively dimple seed the dead AMG clumps were not effective. Re-growth and new AMG seedlings have re-established AMG in each lawn.

To overcome this JNW has manufactured a special acrylic tubing spray guard for a back pack sprayer and slightly stronger glyphosate solution suitable for backpack spraying. To mark where spraying has taken place a special blue dye will be added to the solution. It should thus be possible to give each AMG plant a much bigger glyphosate dose and kill the majority of clumps and new seedlings.

The recommendation is to spray in early October when there is still plant growth and new seedlings have germinated. The sprayed AMG can then be heavily over-seeded and covered with green waste (by hand) just as the North Boundary bare areas were over-seeded last winter. However, the over-seeding is probably best left until mid November when Autumn leaf fall has ceased and regular rainfall keeps the green waste (and hence seed) moist.

Depending on the success of the general over-seeding programme it may well also be advisable to heavily over seed the immediate area around each hoop hole and cover with green waste.

It is difficult to estimate exactly how much green waste would be needed but a delivery of 50 bags with 12 used for hoop holes should be sufficient to cover the AMG clumps. One bag of seed would be sufficient to cover two lawns. The overall cost would therefore be :

50 bags of green waste	£250
1 bag of Bar Ultrafine (retail)	£140
Total	£390

This cost would be in addition to the overseeding costs.

5. Overall Default position

A solution to the handling the green waste for over-seeding may not be found. The default plan is probably therefore:

Dimple seed 2 lawns using hired BLEC Uniseeder	£676
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AMG and hoop hole overseeding	£390
Total	£1066

This is reasonably cost effective and employs proven techniques. Timing of the dimple seeding remains the biggest problem.

JN Wallace 30/4/19