

# WINTER 2025

## Drainage | Robotics | Course



LILLESBALL HALL GOLF CLUB

### October/November

Completion of the intensive treatment programme on the greens coupled with the over seeding of the around the greens. Hollow Tining and slitting was completed just before the real bad weather set in.

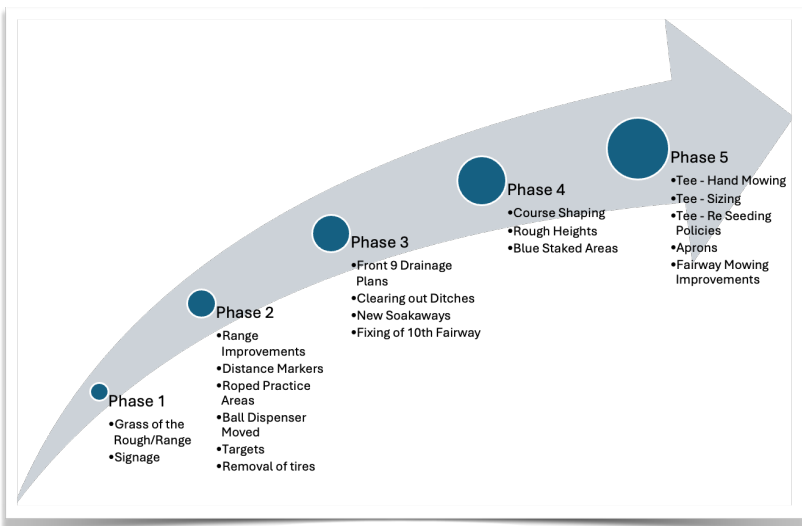
### December

Completion of the improvements to robot docking station area with new tracks and concrete pads by the practice ground. The final round of leaf blowing should be completed for season in the next few days.

### January

Slitting of the fairways weather permitting and work to complete the 9th path extension. Tree felling and pruning will start in earnest with over 30+ trees to be removed.

Winter robot re-mapping will be taking place. There will be hole closures whilst this is completed.

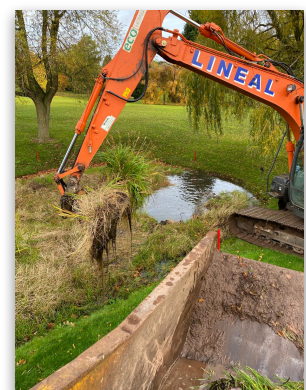


### Cold Spring, Summer Droughts and Winter Deluges

Well its been an interesting year. The season started with a cold spring which stopped everything from growing then the summer was a very dry and killed off everything. Now? I hear the reservoirs are back to full capacity. We've had enough rain on the course for the rest of the winter season! All those dry bare patches are turning to mud.

John and the team have been hard at work on the tee, greens and approaches but yet to tackle the fairways. The work on the greens has delivered some of the best winter greens we have seen for many years. However, good dose of weedkiller is required across the course along with some intensive slitting and fertilisers over the winter/spring period to rejuvenate the fairways.

The team had the big digger on site to clear away the tree stumps from the 12th, clear the 3rd pond and complete the 1st phase of the landscape work at the back of the 8th to name but a few small jobs.





A massive shoutout must go to Jonathan Smith who has been working hard to clear all of the rough areas along the woodland edges along with the blue-staked areas. So if you see him around the course please thank him for the volunteer work he has been doing around the course loaning not only machinery but manpower as well.

John's seeding techniques are working well and the fresh green shoots are appearing across the course. This is only the start of the repair work needed from last season.

## Update on the 5 year plan

### *Phase 2 - Final Range Improvements*

As you might have seen that the range car park has seen a tidy up with a new bank being created to clearly define the car. The debris has been cleared from drive and a new grassed storage area has been created for Mark.



John will be planting a new hedge on the new bank and grassing over the storage area in the spring.

Correction to the fitting of the ball machine will be completed in the next few weeks ready for the new season.

Fitting of new guttering and water butts to aid the cleaning of the robots will be fitted shortly which should help to prevent rain from getting into the teaching bay.

### *Phase 3 - Finishing Touches to the Drainage*

Improvements to the 9th tee path are underway. The new direction of the path is designed to steer us away from the collection low point in the course. It will also allow us then to improve the carry on the 9th which the ladies have been requesting for some time.

Steve and Mark have completed the work on the 6th ditch transformation. This repairs the broken pipes, recreated the washed out bank and laid new pipe. All the work got completed just before the rain really started.

The major landscaping has been completed at the back of the 8th green. The soil needs rotavating, levelling and turfing but John is waiting on the rain to stop to get at the muddy banks to complete the transformation.

Once the drain lines have had one final top off and seed we will then have completed ALL of the planned phase 3 work.



### *Phase 4 - Course Shaping*

Planning is underway for the first part of the phase 4 Course Shaping Work. Discussions with key stakeholders are on going.

Planning has started for the first major stage of the 10th transformation including more drainage. The aim of which is to transform the 10th from an always closed hole to an iconic part of the course. The transformation will be a multi-year project with the first stage kicking off during 2026 with completion in 2027.

Smaller projects are actively being considered as part of phase 4.

The redefinition of the green sizes is a major part of Phase 4 and planning for the enlargement of the greens starts in earnest in the new year which depending on the weather and potential irrigation adjustments will kick off in earnest during the summer.

### *Phase 5 - Robots and Cutting Practices*

The robots have completed the first season trials. The lessons learned from our first season have been endless. These range from programming techniques, fleet management ideologies, cut heights, docking station issues to weather related cleaning issues. There have been many testing cycles using different techniques and you will have seen this as you are wandering around the course.



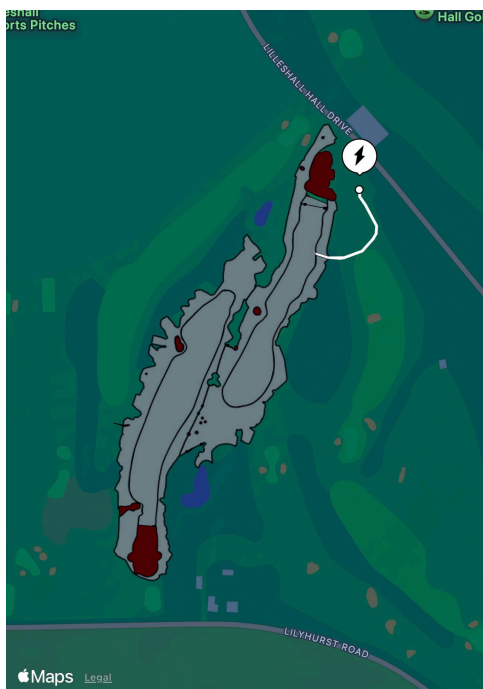
Kress responded mid to late season to our raised issues with retro-fit kits which improved cutting, brushes and golf ball impact protector screens. Kress also issued multiple software updates for us fixing the issues we have experienced. These were direct benefits of the Kress LightHouse program.

The ball deflector plate we got for the practice ground robot worked well but not perfect. However, it did mean that we were able to re-task the robot back onto the practice ground. We still have residual issues on the practice ground itself which will need to be ironed out first if the robot is to return to the practice ground.

Late on in the season the 4th and 5th were finally mapped once the drain lines had grown over a little. This new mapping technique tested out new methods to prevent tracks forming.

Tests were also conducted on the 18th to work through mobile signal issues which occur on the back 9 when programming. The solution will be deploy a StarLink mobile satellite internet link during the programming stage. Green side ropes which are removed and thrown to the ground whilst playing became an issue.

These got tangled in the robots so for next year we need to understand how we mitigate this.





The plans for 2026 are now finalised and execution on the plan is already underway. The robots have been shutdown whilst we get the transformations around the docking stations and last mile of transit completed.

Diggers are out to complete a new concrete dock station base at the back of the teaching bay along with re-enforcements to the dirt track at the back of the practice ground. This is stop the churning of the grass into mud by the docking stations and transit paths. The constant turning of the robots has churned the wet grass into mud which prevented the robots from docking correctly. Once this work has been completed then the docking stations and wiring will be put back. We are hoping that the clearly defined path will assist users of the summer practice to not practice on the robot tracks or block the robots which then forceable stop the robots continuing until the team can manually restart them. Too many days of cutting time have been lost to this issue.

Massive changes to the programming will be undertaken incorporating all of the lessons learnt ready for the new season. Every hole will need to be remapped in January depending on the weather. This will lead to efficiency improvements alongside the key reliability enhancements which are required. Holes will be closed whilst this work is underway for safety reasons.

In 2026 we are introducing a further 4 robots. These robots whilst principally will allow us to complete the rollout on the front 9 it will allow us to make progress on the back 9. We will introduce a new type of robot the '237'. The 237 has been engineered specifically for fairway use and includes wider stripe support, higher speed cutting blades to ensure grass is cut cleaner and cuts at a faster pace. We will purchase a single 237 which will be tested on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd fairways.

As a final note in the spring we will be co-hosting a media event at the club with Kress showcasing all the efforts of both the green staff and myself demonstrating to golf course representatives from around the UK how we delivered the first real world robotic cutting of a golf course in the UK . We should be proud of what we have achieved as a club.

## Thanks

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May I take the opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from both myself and the Green's Staff.