



Making great sport happen



# ASHBURNHAM GOLF CLUB

## Advisory Report on the Golf Course incorporating the STRI Programme

Report Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017  
Consultant: Paul Woodham

Date of Visit: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Visit Objective: Review of course condition and agronomic performance.

Present: Tim Priestland – Greens Director, Damion Gee – Club Manager  
Martyn Williams – Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Paul Woodham – STRI Ltd  
Richard Wing – STRI Ltd

Weather: Dry following heavy rainfall two days in advance of inspection. Soil temp 14°C.

### Headlines

- The positive feedback the Club has received this year is very much echoed in this report. The course was very well presented and the greens were running smooth, true and well-paced.
- The Club is one of the few who have come out of winter in good condition. Winter disease pressure has been managed well allowing the greens to start the season with full sward cover. There is also a distinct avoidance of the invertebrate activity and damage which has plagued many South Wales Clubs.
- Superficial blemishes in the form of stubborn pearlwort weed colonies offer no more than a visual distraction, annoying to the greenkeeping team but disruptive to performance. Nevertheless, an ongoing strategy for selective herbicide control is required.
- Continued improvement strategies for greens playability and botanical composition is gathering momentum. Moving the main overseeding and renovation window to August achieved good results along with a continuation of sand dressing through autumn/winter months.
- The use of Air2G2 compressed air deep aeration has also received good feedback and is seen as an effective method to support strategic verti-draining and routine upper profile aeration venting.
- Bunkers remain very rugged and are on the last few inches depth of revett walls. The reconstruction of the practice bunker has gone well using turf harvested on site from the redundant practice ground.
- The foundations are ideal for this area to be conditioned and turf prepared for bunker reconstruction for many years to come. Some refinements are required but the area is a valuable resource.
- The other main playing surface areas are in good shape for the season ahead. Tees are well presented and green approach and surrounds are seeing significant improvement thanks to improved protection through previously trafficked areas and increased maintenance of sand dressing.
- The work to create sand scrape roughs to improve habitat is an exciting and valuable project. Weed growth is quickly returning suggesting that the depth of scrape needs to be deeper.

### Key Actions

- One off application of potassium to correct chemical status deficiency sampled in greens.
- Continue and ideally increase sand dressing throughout the greens and surround areas. Extend the dressing period well into winter months.
- Repeat use of Air2G2 deep aeration and focus additional work on the weaker and wetter greens. Apply this in tandem with a strategy of increased dressing into these areas to narrow the gap in soil moisture contents.
- Re-contour the left edge surround at the 15<sup>th</sup> green to allow run-off water to shed from the green.
- Repeat application of selective herbicide to control Pearlwort in greens.
- Turf preparation and refinement (additional dressing, managed mowing and rolling) in readiness of harvesting turf for bunker renovation.
- Persevere with buggy traffic protection through green surround/approaches and pinch point areas.

## Objective Measurements

Measurement	Average	Target Range
Soil Moisture (%)	31% (range 21-47)	15-30%
Hardness (Gravities)	98 Gravities (range 78-108)	85-110 g
Smoothness (mm/m)	18.9 mm/m	<25 mm/m
Trueness (mm/m)	10.9 mm/m	<10 mm/m
Green Speed	9ft 8in	8ft -10ft 6in
Organic Matter 0-20 mm (%)	10.4%	4-6%
Organic Matter 20-40 mm (%)	6.6%	<4%
Soil pH	6.7	5.0-6.0
Phosphate (P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub> )	42 mg/l	>10 (mg/l)
Potassium (K <sub>2</sub> O)	27 mg/l	>30 mg/l

Key:      In Target      Marginal Variance      Out of Target

## Photo Observations and Comments



Figure 1: Presentation through the greens was first class. Surfaces were running smooth and true, even with a recent increase in height of cut from 3mm to 3.5mm. Hole cups were sharply cut and well maintained. Excellent work from the greenkeeping team.



Figure 2: At a time when many courses have struggled with winter disease activity and scaring, it was so pleasing to see Ashburnham greens looking superb in the sunshine with full sward cover.



Figure 4: Pearlwort weed colonies are a discrete blemish, not disruptive to performance, but still in need of the ongoing strategy for control using timely applications of selective herbicide.



Figure 4: A few areas of leggy and procumbent native bentgrass growth could be seen i.e. on the edge of the 8<sup>th</sup> green. Plant growth is coarse and tufted when brushed against the grain. These areas would benefit from more intensive grooming and brushing against the knap of growth.

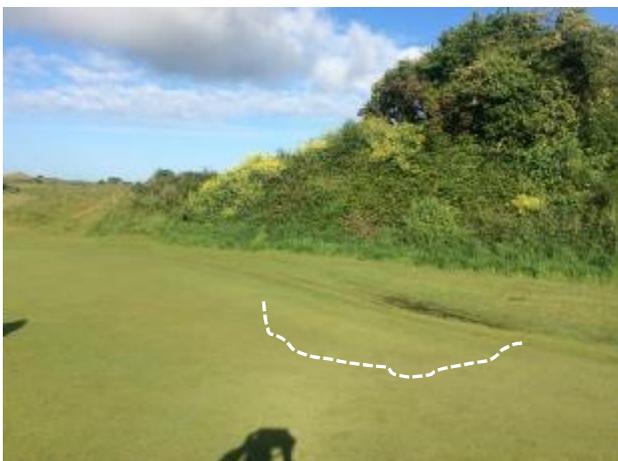


Figure 5: Surface run-off water is too readily collecting in the low point on the left-hand side of the 15<sup>th</sup> green. Consistently moist soils are choking out the preferred finer grass species.



Figure 6: The approach areas have certainly improved since the Club has extended and maintained buggy protection ropes. Excellent work!

## Photo Observations and Comments (continued)



Figure 7: The extension of focused maintenance into the approaches can now drive forward continued improvement to create a seamless extension of performance between fairway to green.



Figure 8: Much of the extended seeding and maintenance work is set to improve sward texture and grass species in the first couple of metres out from the green. There are several approaches where unsightly coarse textured rye grasses infest small areas.



Figure 9: Bunkers were as tidy as can be but still rugged and worn. The latest edging has taken the existing turf revett walls to their last depths so a project to reconstruct these is much needed.



Figure 10: The practice bunker has been the first to be reconstructed. This is an excellent turf and with some refinements can be rolled out onto the course hole by hole.



Figure 11: The redundant practice ground is an ideal resource for preparing and harvesting turf to be used for revetting.



Figure 12: The turf is thatch enough to be used but needs a little more refinement with sand dressing, better maintained shorter cut turf, and ideally heavy rolled as ongoing maintenance.

## Photo Observations and Comments (continued)



Figure 13: Sand scrape areas offer the prospect of improving the aesthetics and natural habitat. The first phase of work has been trial and error but the project is worth continuing.



Figure 14: Weed growth is returning to areas cut back. Chemical treatment would not be ideal so unfortunately it's a case of mechanical cultural clearance of new growth but with revision allowing for deeper clearance in the first instance.



Figure 15: The agreement for licence to remove trees opens up many possibilities for managing the wider areas of the course as restoring links.



Figure 16: Superb!

## Recommendations

### Greens

- Maintain and ideally increase annual quantity of sand top-dressing using reclaimed dune sand. More is better!! Continue to strive to apply winter dressing also where disease pressures allow.
- Additional deep tine aeration and sand top-dressing to weaker greens and localised wet spots on greens.
- It would be of benefit to the playing surface to recontour and lower the collar on the left side of the 15<sup>th</sup> green. This should allow for surface run off and help maintain a more consistent water content throughout surface.
- Continue as planned with the arranged playing season renovations. To include overseeding with fescue to further strengthen the botanical composition of the sward.
- Localised refinement of the surface through grooming against the grain will help maintain a consistent cut and playing surface in areas where growth is becoming coarse and procumbent.
- Schedule a repeat application of a selective herbicide to treat pearlwort. Praxys was used last year with positive effect but the weed has bounced back. A repeat application is needed when in a period of stronger growth (from June) and further treatments planned over the next three years or more complemented by localised intensive overseeding into the treated colonies.
- Hand painting treatment of cushion moss with Headland Seamac Ultra Plus (Liquid Iron).
- Supplement feed of a Potassium e.g. Farmura Premium K to correct deficiencies highlighted in soil analysis.

### Green Collars, Surrounds and Approaches

- Continue with the increased quantity of sand dressing out into approaches.
- Intensify the overseeding practices onto the approach and into areas of coarser grass species. All this is in preparation for considering applications of selective Graminicide (Rescue).
- Continue with the traffic management and protection, most certainly at times of weak growth and stress, through sensitive areas of green approach and surrounds.

### Ecology Management

- The sand scrapes that have been established thus far have begun to revegetate with unfavourable species. This is likely to be due to not scraping deep enough in the first instance. Royal Porthcawl had a similar issue when they first began to create sand scrapes. Ideally the scrapes should take away any underlying seed and substrate to expose a clean sand. It is not advised to apply any chemical control to the vegetation as the sand scrapes are to benefit burrowing species such as mining bees and beetles.
- With regards to tree removal, it is advised that only pockets of 3-5 trees are removed at any one time to phase the complete removal. This is to ensure a more managed loss of habitat thus negating significant effects on the local fauna.

### Bunkers

- Develop a plan over coming winter to start on renovation of the bunkers. This will be done through the construction of revetted walls using turf from the turf nursery. Attention should be given to the angle of the faces to increase playability and durability.

- The preparation of the turf nursery will extend the life of the bunkers compared to the cost of importing sub-standard heavy soil based turf. All this preparation work should provide sods that will be less susceptible to shrinkage and provide a stable, durable wall.
  - Measure an area that will be used for this coming winters work.
  - Reduce the height of cut to remove the excess vegetation, down to a height 8-10mm maintained mowing.
  - Apply sand dressing to improve texture.
  - Roll to provide compaction to the soil.
- For ongoing maintenance the use of a soft flame blowtorch to burn the vegetation on the faces and a light brushing of sand splash in dry conditions will extend the life span of the bunker. The least disturbance to the face the better after construction.

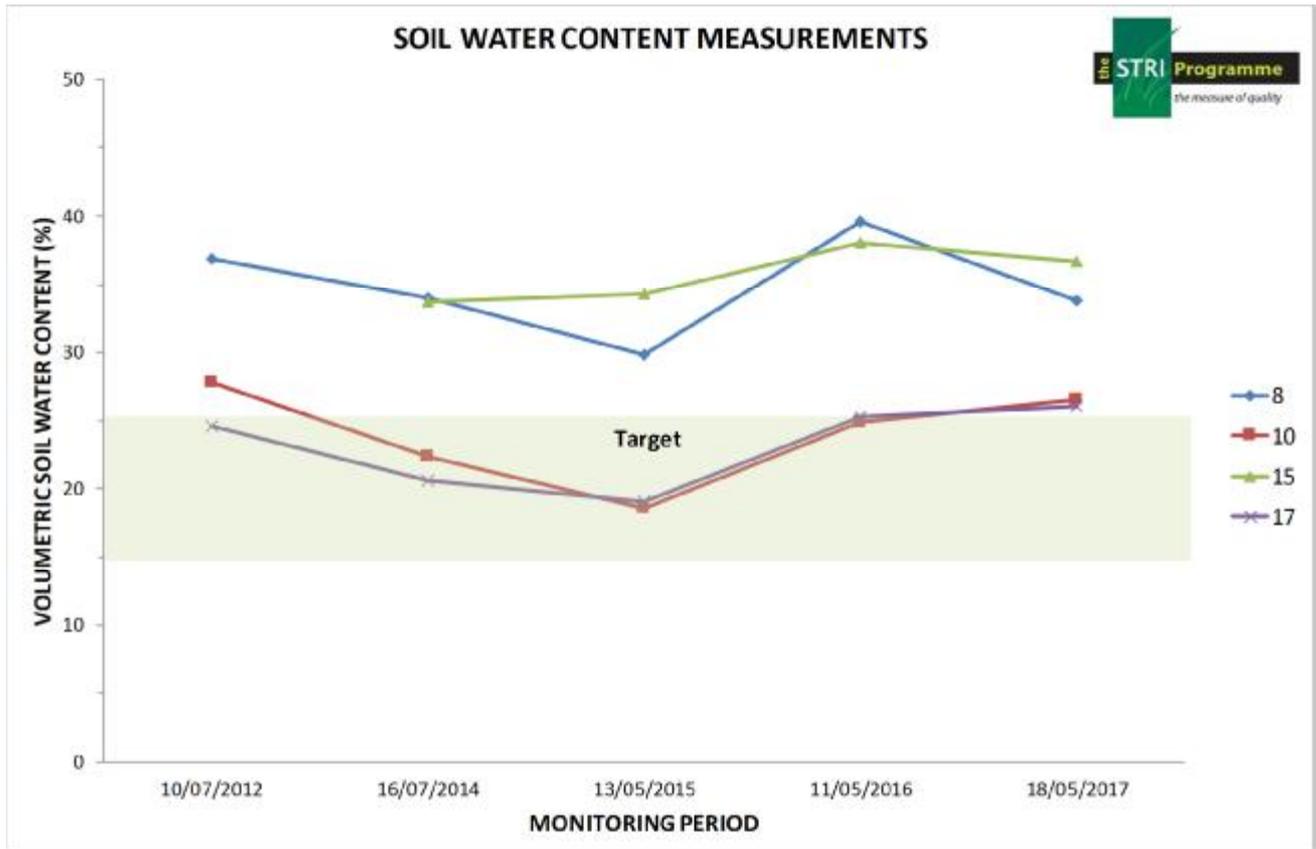
Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Woodham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

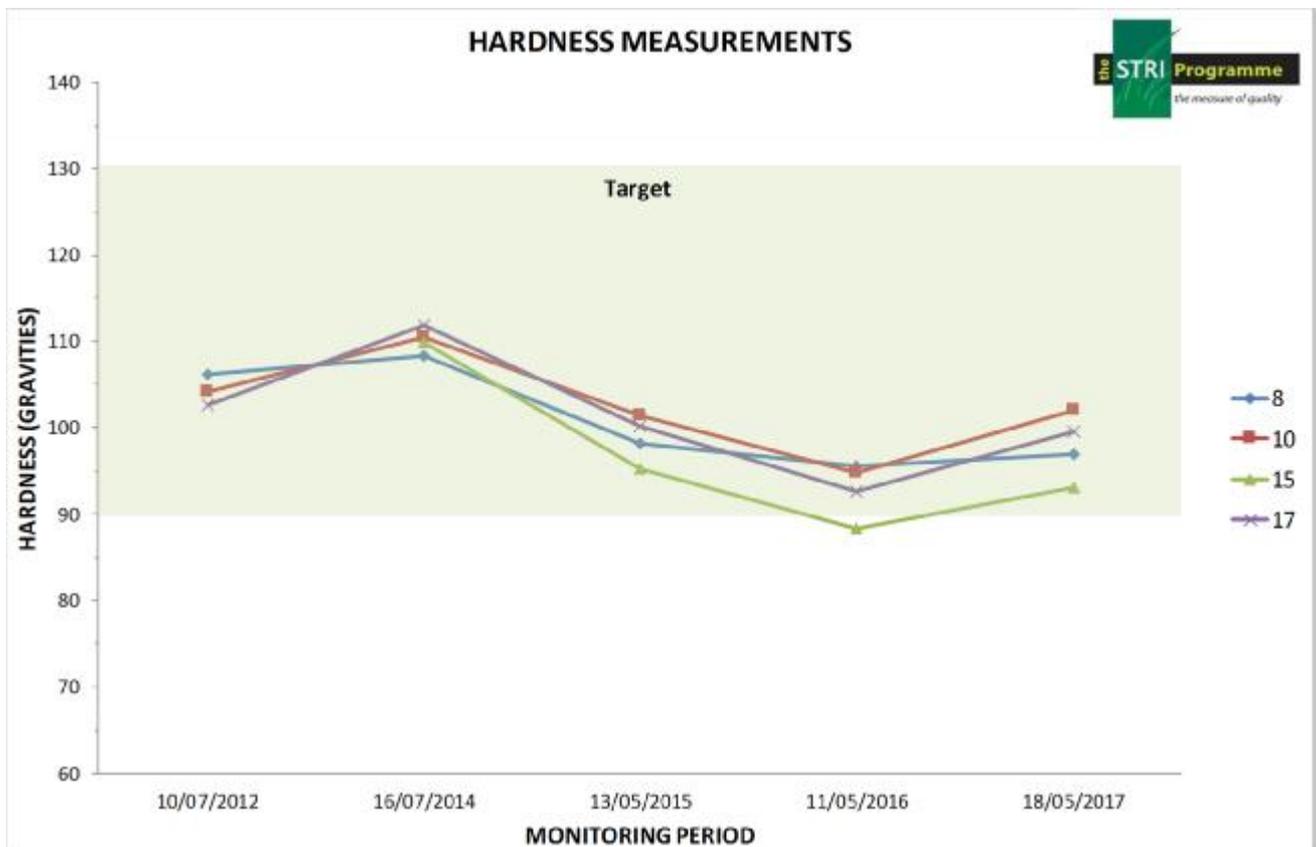
Paul Woodham BSc (Hons), MBPR  
Agronomy Services Manager  
t. +44 (0)7841 051954  
e. [paul.woodham@strigroup.com](mailto:paul.woodham@strigroup.com)  
[www.strigroup.com](http://www.strigroup.com)

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# Objective Data

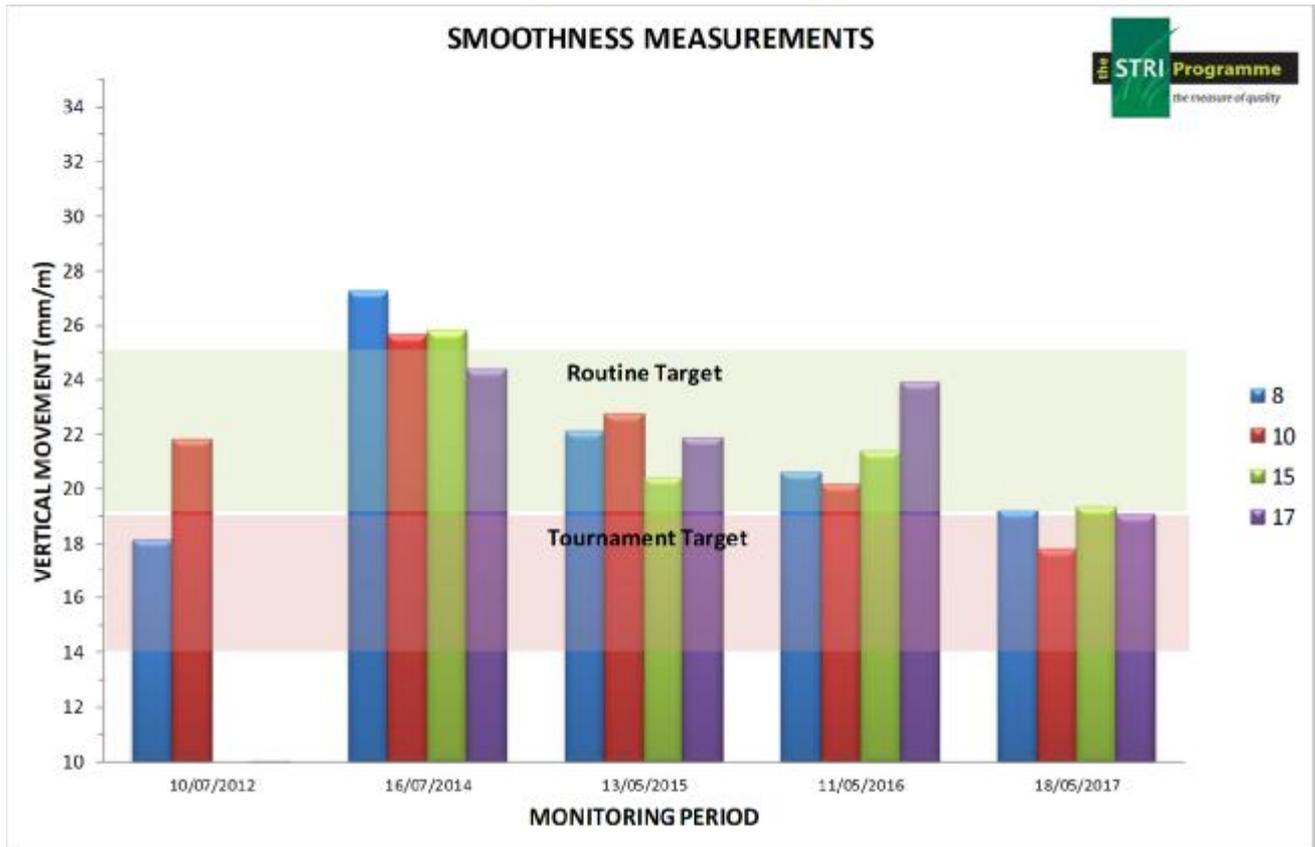


Soil moisture content was similar to past results, all dependant on the weather conditions at the time of inspection. The trend and difference between the weaker, wetter 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> greens and the drier 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> greens remains the same. The objective should be to narrow this gap by increasing sand dressing and deep aeration.

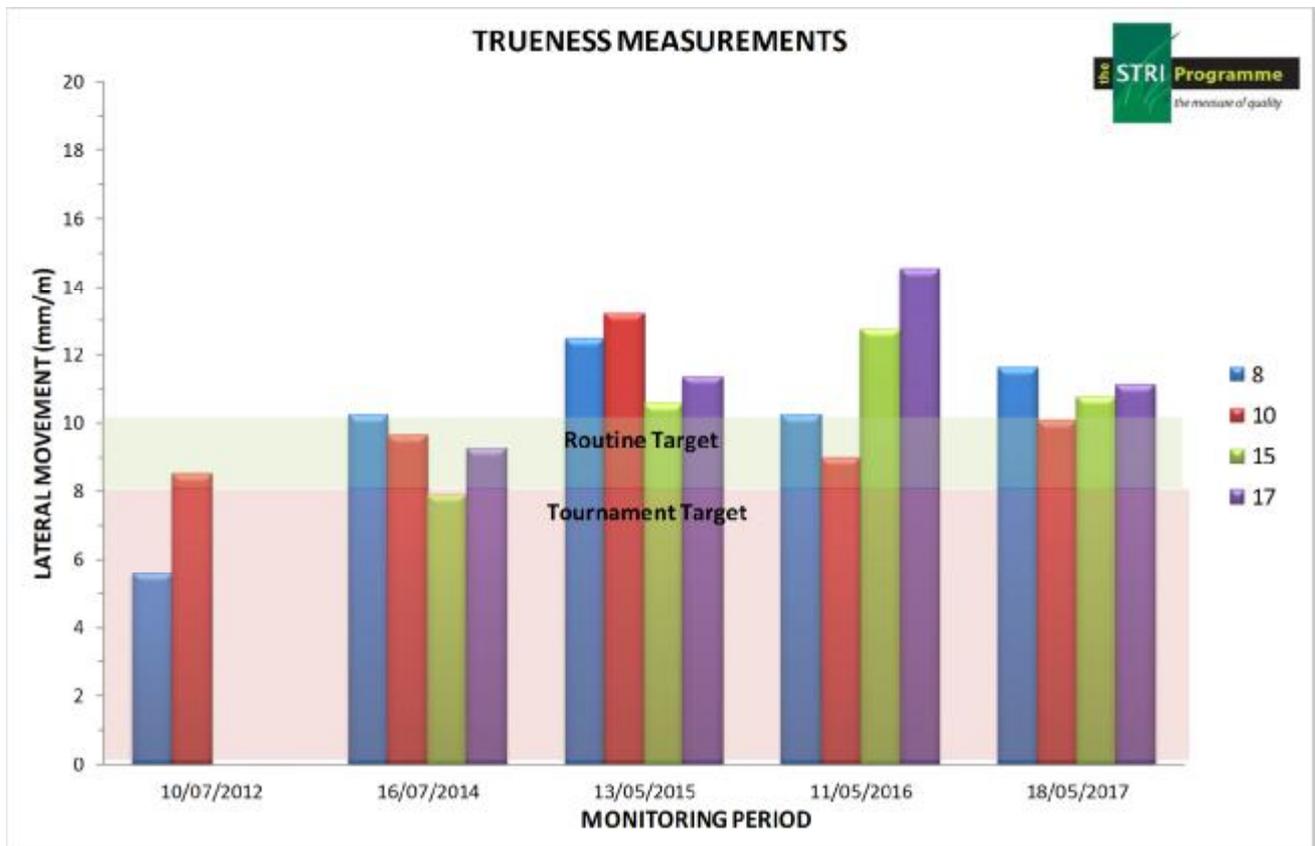


Firmness remained in target despite the recent heavy rain.

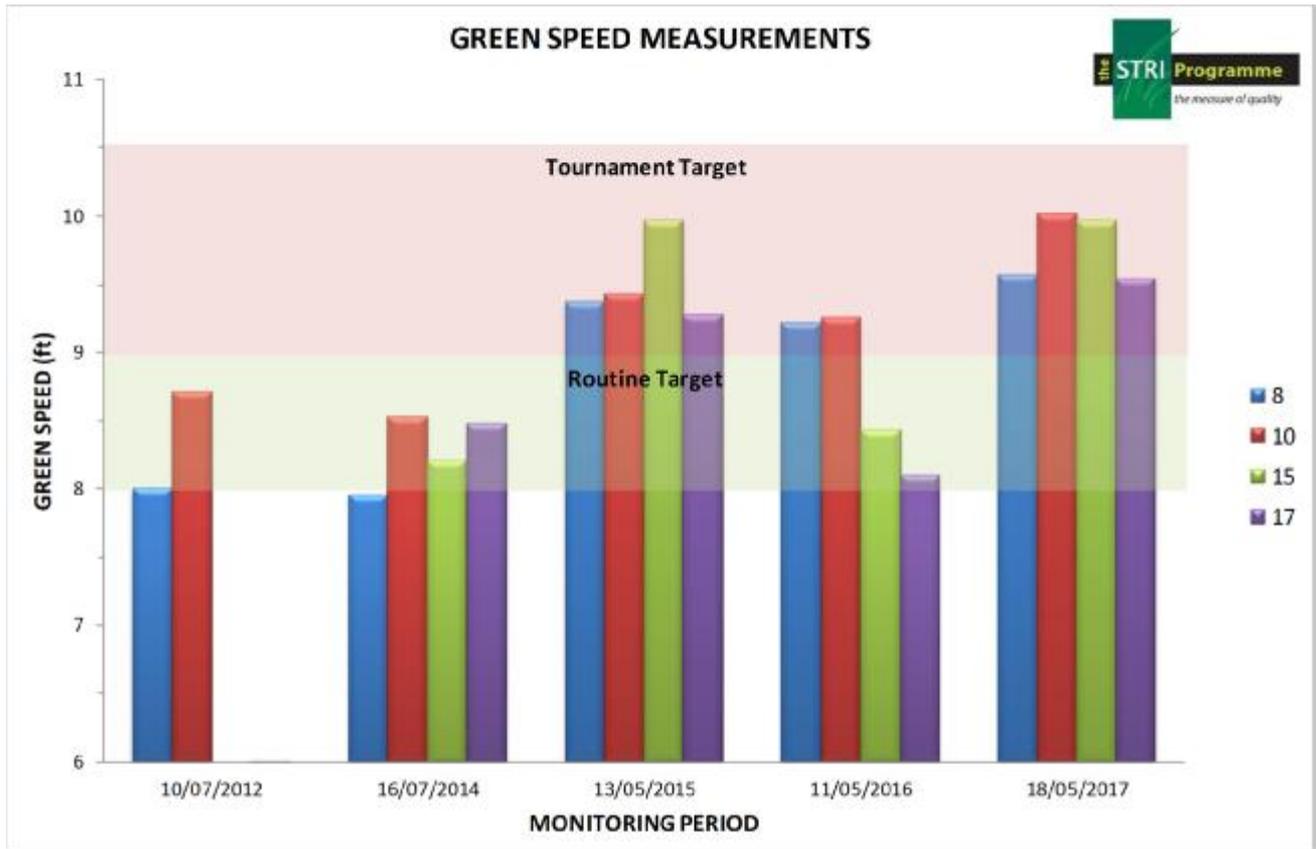
# Objective Data (continued)



Smoothness was very consistent and on the cusp of tournament target following a cut at 3.5mm height and roll using the turf iron. Trueness was just on the edge of this very challenging target but showing an improvement upon measurements taken last year.

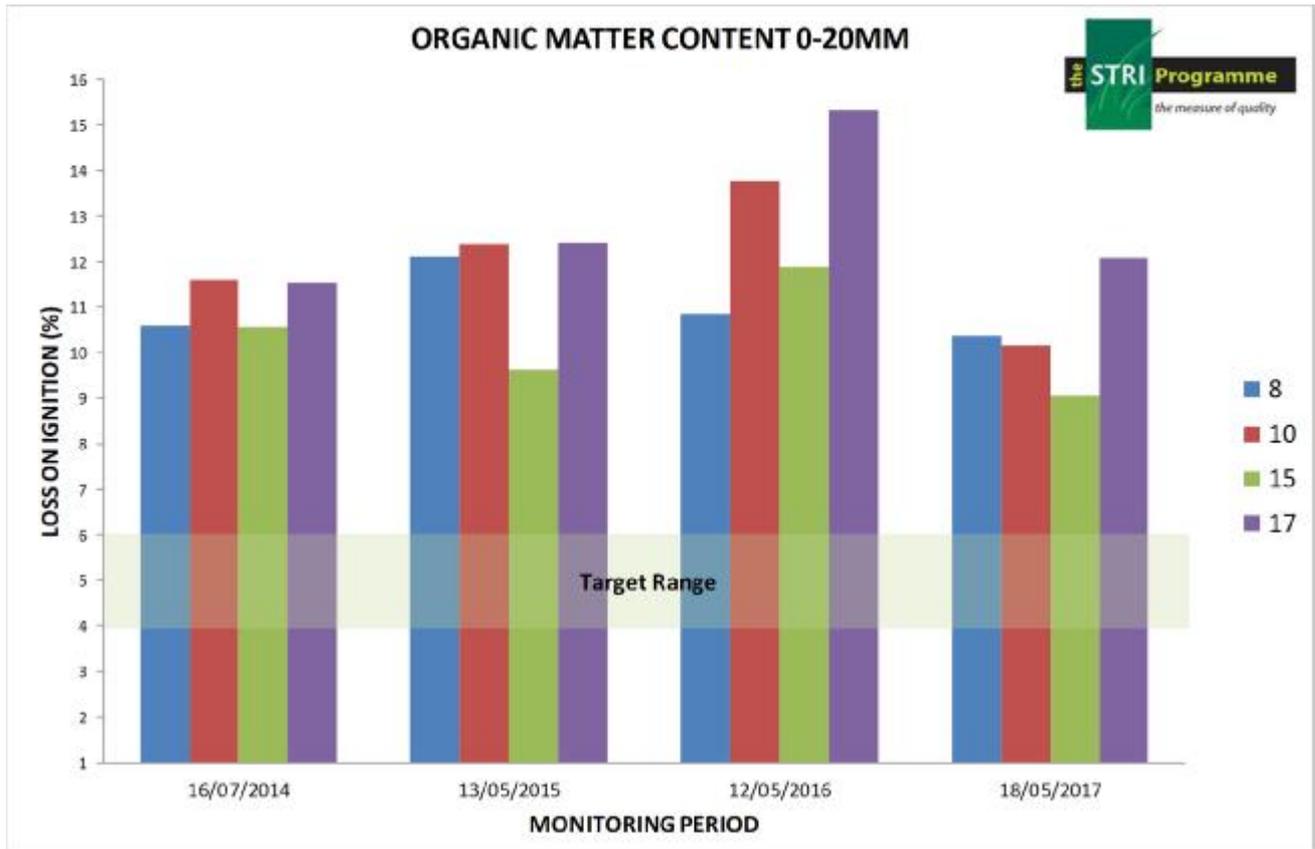


Objective Data (continued)

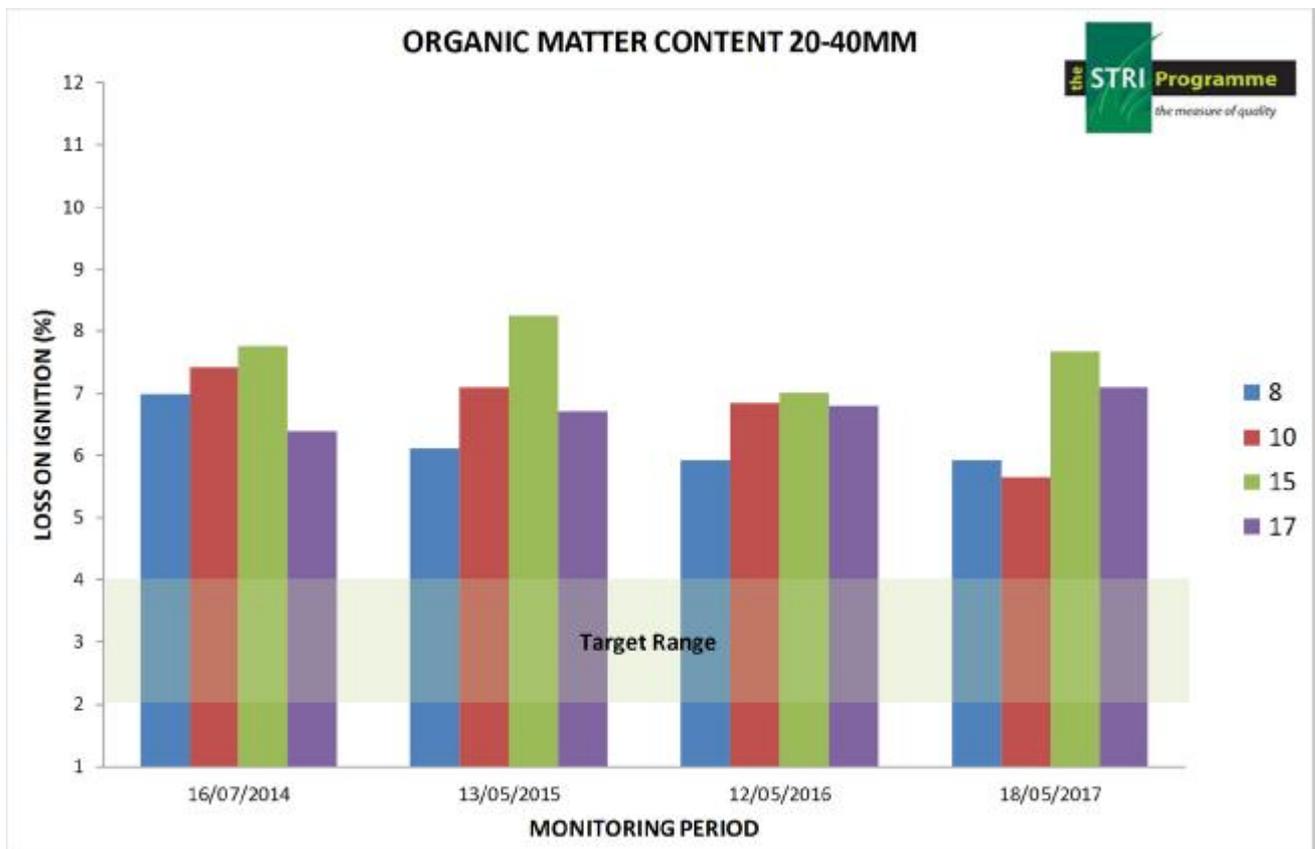


Green speed was spot on.

# Soils Laboratory Data

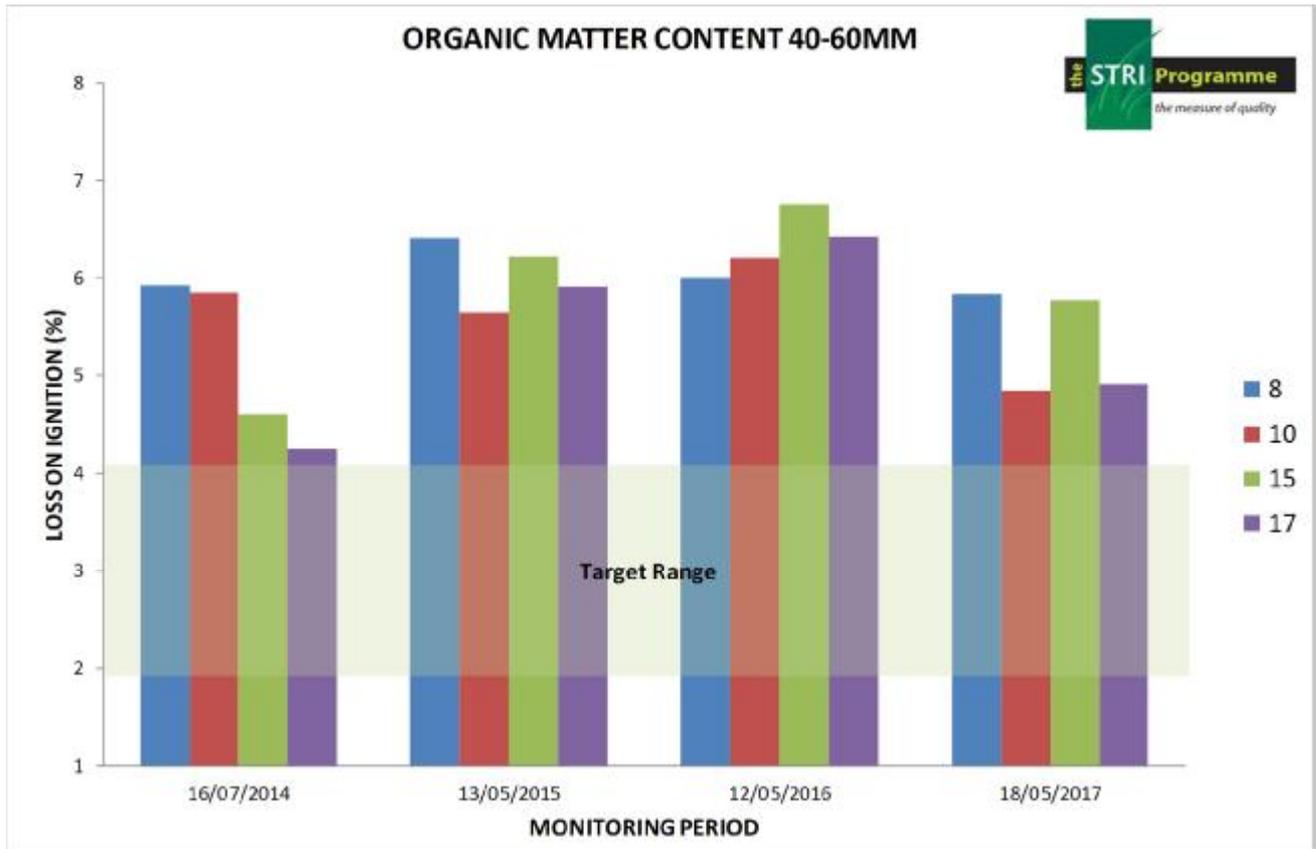


Organic matter levels have reduced in the top 20mm since the last visit. This is encouraging. The density of excess organic matter is well diluted although noting some layering in the thatch.

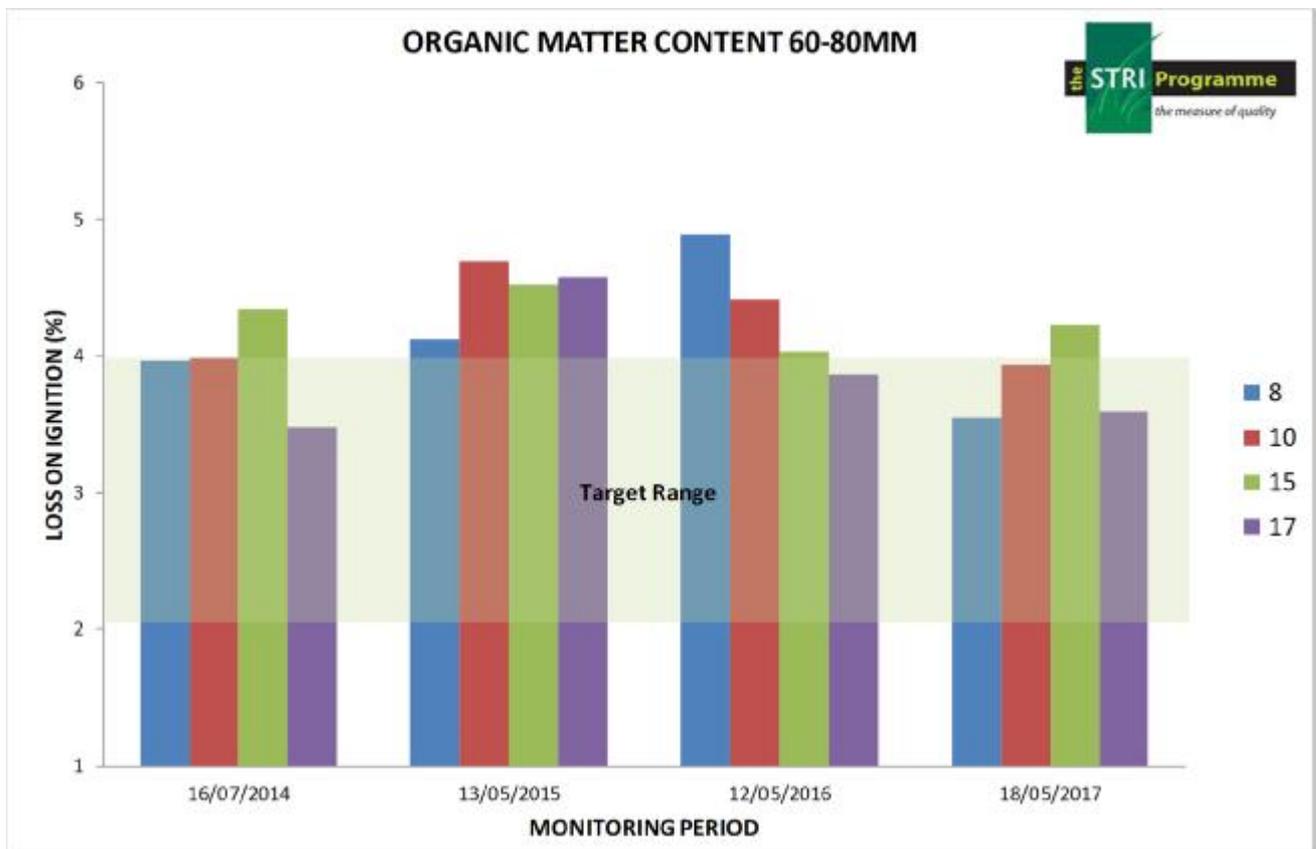


At depths below 20mm, the nature of organic matter remains the same. In the case of Ashburnham, the physical influence of organic matter is not too restrictive on the drier greens.

# Soils Laboratory Data (continued)



Soils Laboratory Graph 3:



Soils Laboratory Graph 4:



St Ives Estate, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1AU  
 T. 01274 565131 F. 01274 561891 E. [info@strigroup.com](mailto:info@strigroup.com) [www.strigroup.com](http://www.strigroup.com)

# ORGANIC MATTER CONTENT



CLIENT: ASHBURNHAM GC  
 ADDRESS: CLIFF TERRACE,  
 BURRY PORT,  
 CARMARTHENSHIRE, SA16 0HN

DATE RECEIVED: ~~12/04/17~~

DATE REPORTED: ~~02/05/17~~

RESULTS TO: PW

TEST RESULTS AUTHORISED BY:  
 Michael Baines, Laboratory Manager

CONDITION OF SAMPLE UPON ARRIVAL: MOIST

SAMPLE NO	DESCRIPTION	LOSS ON IGNITION (%)*
A15778/1	8	0-20 mm 10.35
		20-40 mm 5.92
		40-60 mm 5.83
		60-80 mm 3.54
A15778/2	10	0-20 mm 10.14
		20-40 mm 5.65
		40-60 mm 4.84
		60-80 mm 3.94
A15778/3	15	0-20 mm 9.04
		20-40 mm 7.66
		40-60 mm 5.77
		60-80 mm 4.22
A15778/4	17	0-20 mm 12.09
		20-40 mm 7.09
		40-60 mm 4.92
		60-80 mm 3.60

\* ASTM F1647-11 Standard Test Methods for Organic Matter Content of Athletic Field Rootzone Mixes (Method A)

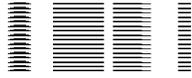


Testing Certificate 2159 - 01

THE RESULTS PERTAIN ONLY TO THE SAMPLE(S) SUBMITTED AND TESTED



# STRI



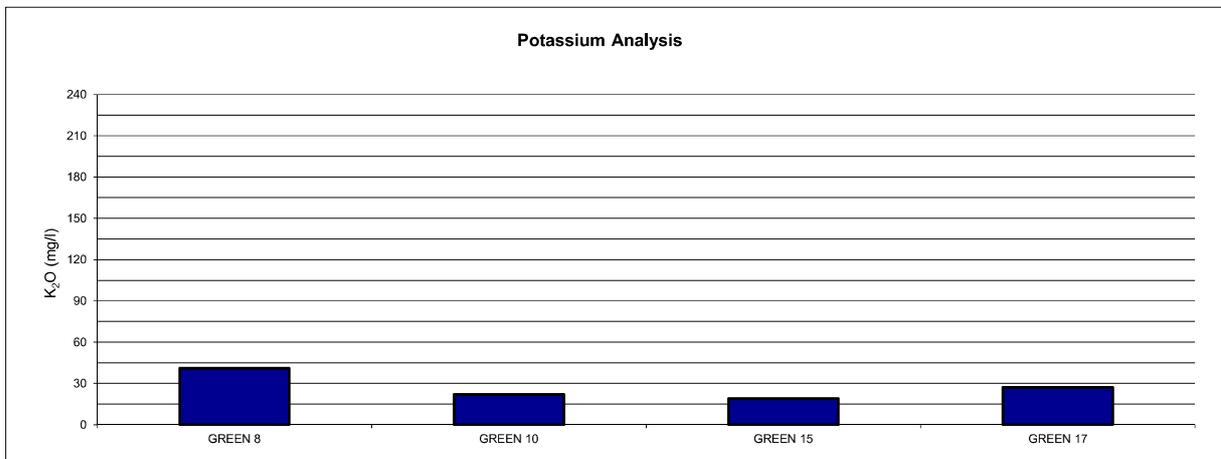
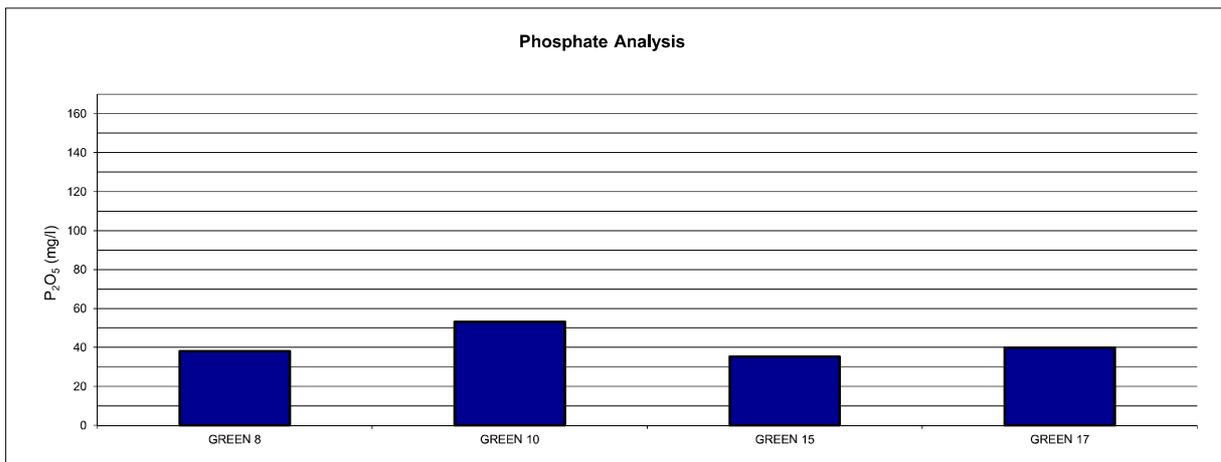
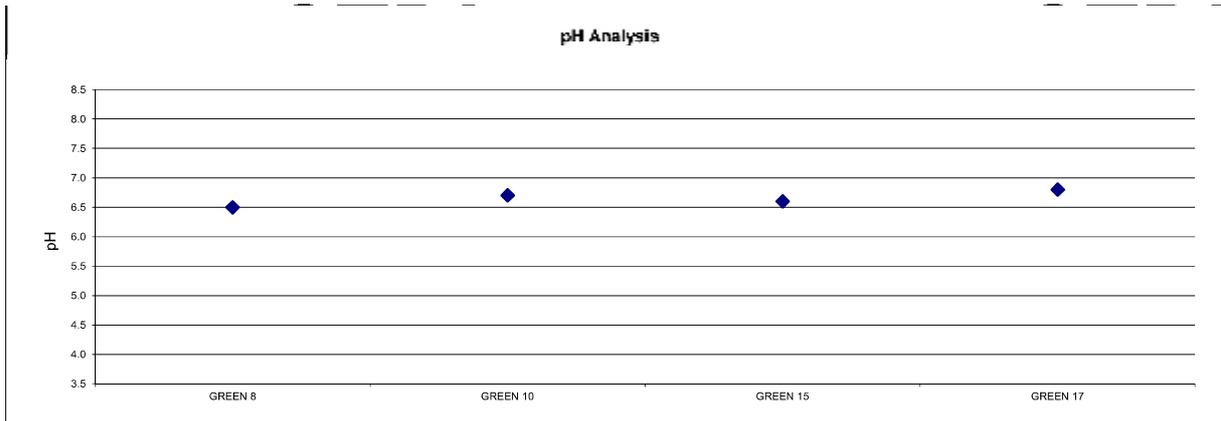
St Ives Estate, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 1AU  
T. 01274 565131 F. 01274 561891 [info@strigroup.com](mailto:info@strigroup.com) [www.strigroup.com](http://www.strigroup.com)



## SOIL CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

ASHBURNHAM GC

Date: 12/04/17



THE RESULTS PERTAIN ONLY TO THE SAMPLE(S) SUBMITTED AND TESTED.