

The cheap option?



Matt Plested

Matt Plested, Course Manager at Muswell Hill Golf Club, talks about the benefits of employing a contractor to undertake selected winter projects

This time of year can bring a sigh of relief for some course managers, that the summer is drawing to a close, and they and their course has survived the summer madness. But, it's not too long before they start to think about the winter renovation and course improvement programme.

For some course managers, this fills them with excitement at being able to do the project that will enable them to make a positive difference to their beloved course but, with budgets being constantly squeezed at many clubs, this can bring with it the fear that they aren't going to be able to achieve the results that the members and committees want with the budgets available.

It is often a misconception by committees, and some course managers, that, by keeping everything in-house, they'll be able to save money. Yet, intelligent outsourcing can sometimes prove the better option, especially when it comes to tee construction and re-construction projects.

Whilst you can still use your own greenkeeping team to do sections of the work, outsourcing key areas of these projects means that expert contractors can save you time, money and materials on the bulk of the project. This frees up your team to undertake other projects.

Often, contractors will give a fixed price for a project. This enables the course manager to have greater control over the

planning of budgets and staffing requirements, without fear of running over budget due to unforeseen circumstances. For example, we all know how unpredictable the weather can be in the UK!

Matt Plested, Course Manager at Muswell Hill Golf Club, recounts; "Our tee construction projects could take anything from one to four weeks, depending on weather and ground conditions. This made planning and budgeting very difficult. So we looked at employing a contractor to undertake the work, choosing Senior Golf Construction (SGC). Now, we are much more efficient over the winter period, and have been able to complete more projects to a better standard."

With many clubs tightening their budgets for renovation works, they are increasingly looking at ways that they can make the biggest impression of investment in their course for the least money.

Laser Tee Renovation is increasingly becoming the answer. By undertaking a programme of having all the tees laser graded over a three or four year period, a club can make a dramatic difference to the course for a moderate cost. This tends to give the club a competitive advantage over clubs in the local area, whilst members also like to see that their club is investing in the facilities. Having happy members always make the job of a course manager and the greens committee that little bit



SGC laser grading a tee

easier.

"When members see the work achieved, they are consistently amazed, by both the quality of work and the number of tees that we completely rebuilt in the space of a just week," says Matt.

The benefits for golf clubs of using laser grading to construct and redevelop tees include:

- easier to plan labour requirements over the winter period
- reduction in labour costs
- eliminating the guesswork associated with levelling tees
- allowing 100% use of the tee surface
- allowing for the recycling of original soil to reduce cost and environmental impact
- time savings, meaning that the course is back in play sooner
- less disruption for members
- savings of thousands on the construction of new tees

It is part of the ethos at SGC to enable clubs to spend their money wisely. The company are always communicating with customers to see what problems they are facing and how they can provide cost effective solutions.

One such solution is their Laser Topdressing Service. The company has now laser levelled over one thousand tees around the UK and Europe, and the maintenance of the perfect level of these tees is important to the protection of their customer's investment. Again, just like the

tee construction and renovation, topdressing can be done in-house, but it can usually be completed more efficiently by intelligent outsourcing.

With conventional topdressing of tees, even on a laser levelled one, the surface of the tee will deteriorate over time, and crown due to the uneven wear and distribution of topdressing material. This, in turn, greatly reduces the effective playing area of the tee. This results in members over-using certain areas of the tee and causing further wear and tear.

The most effective way of preventing this deterioration of the teeing surface is to include laser topdressing into the annual maintenance programme. This works by accurately applying an even and perfectly levelled topdressing to 100% of the tee surface, which will eliminate the points of wear and refresh the surface, ensuring that 100% of the tee surface can, and will, be used.

The main advantages of Laser Top Dressing are:

- less time and labour
- less materials used
- 100% accuracy of surface
- reduced costs

"When planning your winter programme, I would say that it is always advisable to get a second opinion on projects from a reliable contractor, as you may be able to achieve much more for a lot less than you anticipated," concludes Matt.



A successful laser tee renovation at Royal Liverpool