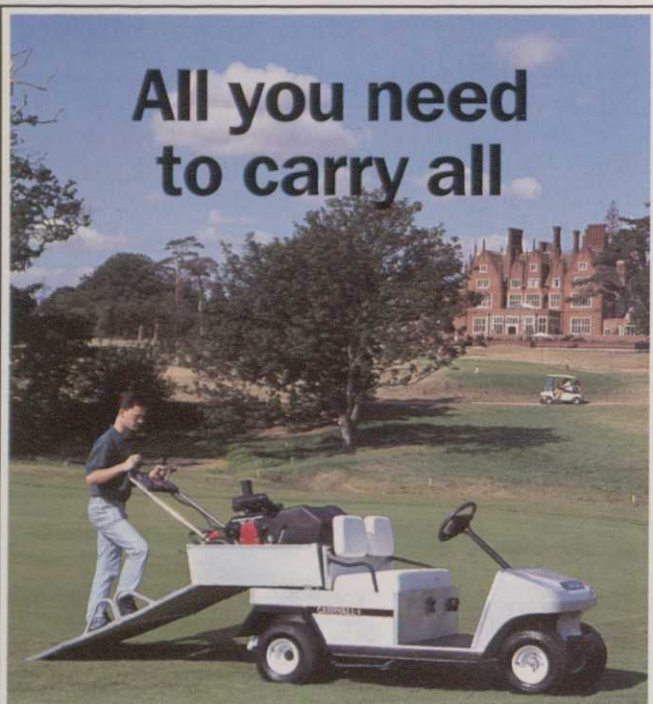


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It's the little things that count...

Good housekeeping ought not to be regarded as a chore. Think of it instead as a means of instilling greater interest in the job and pride in the workplace, helping improve the appearance and running of the golf club for the benefit of staff, club members and visitors alike.

Every golf course will have a list of "housekeeping" jobs which will need to be carried out alongside the routine turf maintenance tasks. Some clubs will do them on a regular basis while others will put them off to a time when turf maintenance is impossible. Whatever your approach, always bear in mind the well-used adage that "there's no time like the present".

During the course of a year, the consequence of staying on top of the job can mean a great deal less time and effort expended by staff and a better appreciation of the golf course and its surroundings by all who use or visit the club.

Always remember that you are involved in the running of a business and, like all businesses, you



face competition. In striving to present the best possible playing surfaces, greenkeepers can overlook the fact that a misplaced sign or a muddy path can have a more lasting impact on visitors than the run of the green.

Your club is "under the microscope" from the moment a visiting golfer first turns into your driveway. You may never see that golfer again but his or her adverse impressions and comments can have a negative effect on other potential visitors and possible future members.

The following list is designed to



Replenish bare or thin patches on paths with fresh wood chips

way you want the traffic to flow and it will usually comply. Keep all signs clean and freshly painted. Similarly, ensure that hoops and posts are clearly visible and well maintained.

Natural paths wear over time and can become messy in wet weather. A layer of timber chippings spread over walkways will minimise such problems and help keep turf and hard surfaces looking tidy. Check the chippings regularly and top up any thin or bare areas. Digging a small natural kerb will help prevent chippings spreading onto adjacent turf.

The pin cups on golf greens will look much neater if regularly repainted. If you have no time for painting during the season, then wash the cups with warm soapy water before reinstalling.

Pin flags will show signs of wear and tear over time. Even if you do not have a spare set of flags, it can pay dividends to regularly remove, wash and dry the flags, replacing them at the next morning's mowing. Also, wash and wipe down the pins regularly and repaint them at least once a year.

Complete bunker raking should be carried out as a matter of course. A neatly-raked bunker will be appreciated by golfers and will encourage them to rake out their footprints after playing a recovery shot.

Divots will always need repairing. Consider "employing" local people or the family and friends of golfers to come in regularly to walk the fairways, replace soil and reseed divots. A reward might consist of a complimentary round of golf or a match involving divot repairers. Why not have a divot session for two hours on a Saturday afternoon followed by a match?

Course furniture will quickly deteriorate if not maintained. Apply preservative to wooden items such as seats, bins and palings. De-rust, wash down and repaint metal items and ensure that broken, worn or bent components are repaired or replaced. Don't forget to maintain the tee markers and course information signs and boards.

■ Many thanks go to staff at The Wentworth Club and at the RAC Country Club for their invaluable assistance with the preparation of this article.

act as a reminder and guide to some of the "good housekeeping" practises that can help bring long-term practical and economic benefit to the golf course.

None of the suggestions demands the use of specialist equipment, a large labour force or a bottomless bank account. However, all require a little planning and the understanding and co-operation of the greenkeeping staff.

Anyone prepared to involve all of their staff in these daily, weekly or monthly tasks will find that routines will fall quickly into place, the work will be completed faster and more effectively and the whole golf club will benefit. There is every chance that you will be pleasantly surprised at the difference and the compliments that result.

Look at all physical aspects of the golf course with a critical eye, adopting the point of view of a visiting golfer or ideally, ask someone unfamiliar with your course to present their overall impressions following a round of golf. Their comments and ideas can be most helpful.

If you have responsibility for maintaining the "off-course" parts of the club, drive your car through the main entrance to the club from time to time, remembering that what you see (or don't see) is the impression gained everyday by members and visitors.

Are the entrances to the club and to the car parks clearly signed



A freshly-painted or thoroughly cleaned pin cup will present an excellent impression to golfers as they putt

and is there any confusion over where people should drive their vehicles or where they should park? Introduce new signs where necessary and clean and re-paint regularly direction arrows and parking bays. Are exit signs clear and could you assist visiting golfers by indicating at the exit from the club the direction to the nearest motorways or towns?

Keep roadways, pathways and other hard surfaces clean and tidy using a blower or vacuum, remembering to grit icy surfaces and to clear away grit and salt later. If you have a large tarmac area to maintain, consider engaging a local contract vacuum-sweeper service.

Ensure that all on-course direction signs are clearly visible and



Not just a job for the winter. Tee markers will benefit from regular cleaning and a fresh coat of paint

well maintained. Keep bollards, posts, fences and railings clean and tidy. Use of a sponge and bucket of soapy water can transform appearance as can regular repainting.

Equip all tractors, vehicles and powered machines with refuse sacks. Check and empty litterbins every day and wash out as necessary. Remove and collect stray litter, leaves, twigs and other debris from roads, paths, fairways, greens and tees. Also, regularly check the condition of ball washers and replenish the water.

Are all pathways and trolley routes clearly signed? If you want golfers to follow a particular route, you will often require more than just hoops or ropes to guide them. Indicate with signs which