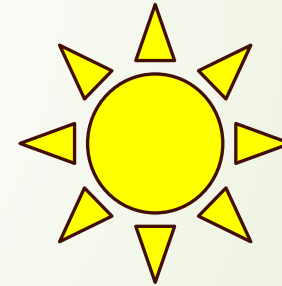




'Ben on the Course'



**Welcome to my
Summer 2026 Update**



It's been a hot one !

‘Ben on the Course’

Welcome to my Summer 2026 update. It has been a hot and very dry few months with some of the lowest recorded rainfall for many years together with prolonged periods of heat.

Many golf courses are struggling to keep moisture levels to an acceptable rate, resulting in dry fairways, some tees, approaches and run-offs. It's been one of the most challenging periods for greenkeeping up and down the Country. We are fortunate to have a decent size irrigation reservoir, but this year we have had to pump water reserves from the ‘horseshoe’ lake, situated on the left of the 18th tee, into the main reservoir to help the situation.

Our daily irrigation sequence consumes **1 million litres of water** on the course (yes, 1 million). Of that massive amount of water, **we lose 25% per day through evaporation alone through high temperatures and soil warmth.**

Our course is keeping its colour and we are very fortunate to have a substantial irrigation resource, but as summers get progressively hotter and rainfall gets progressively lower the issue of water to irrigate golf courses will become an increasing pressure.

‘Ben on the Course’



These past months we have seen **Rory McIlroy win The Masters** at Augusta and achieving the Grand Slam – and only last week we saw **Ryan Fox win The Open Championship** at Birkdale.

I was interested to see two contrasting golf courses – the evergreen “Augusta National GC” and the firm and fast (and somewhat brown) conditions at Royal Birkdale.

Currently Ingrebourne Links lies in between these types of presentation. As an inland links style course, we encourage the ‘ground game’, pitch and run, putting off the fringe etc. and my aim is to set the course up to accommodate that style of play. I hope you are enjoying it....



Rainfall Pattern 2026 – A Wet Start Followed by a Prolonged Dry Period

SOME RAINFALL FACTS:

2026 began **exceptionally wet**, with 210 mm of rainfall during January and February. Those first two months accounted for 65% of all rainfall received during the first seven months of the year.

From March to July, only 115 mm of rain fell, averaging just **23 mm per month**.

The March–July average for 2023–2025 was approximately 210 mm. In 2026, the same period received only 115 mm (around 55% of the recent average).

April recorded just 4 mm of rainfall, whilst July produced **NO** measurable rainfall. Although June (79 mm) briefly interrupted the dry spell, the **overall trend remained significantly drier than normal**.

Conclusion: The annual total appears unremarkable, but the distribution of rainfall resulted in a prolonged shortfall throughout the principal growing season.

As I mentioned this time last year, I rely on my moisture meter because **moisture management is the key element during these warm summer months.**

Getting the correct moisture levels, we can maintain our cutting heights producing the best surfaces we can. Just like humans, greens can suffer from lack of water, and it is critical to monitor their levels throughout the day.



Below 12% moisture and you will see the grass starting to wilt. **At this point greens can become 'Hydrophobic' where any water is repelled by the grass.** At this stage we must apply wetting agents which reduces the surface tension of the water which allows it to penetrate the soil. It's all a very fine balance !



‘Ben on the Course’



We are in full season greenkeeping mode now !

Our greens are currently being cut at approximately 3.5mm which is offering us a **Stimpmeter measurement of circa 9ft.**



My preference is to keep the greens at this speed. In firm conditions and with any form of breeze, cutting the green lower than 3.5mm could make putting very challenging and would inevitably slow play down.

We have already hosted the East Anglian Open, our annual Pro-Am and the upcoming Clutch Tour event later this month and green speeds have been consistent throughout – and we continue to receive many positive comments.



Our long wispy grasses really shape and define each hole.
At this time of year, they 'frame' both the tee shot and the approach shot.

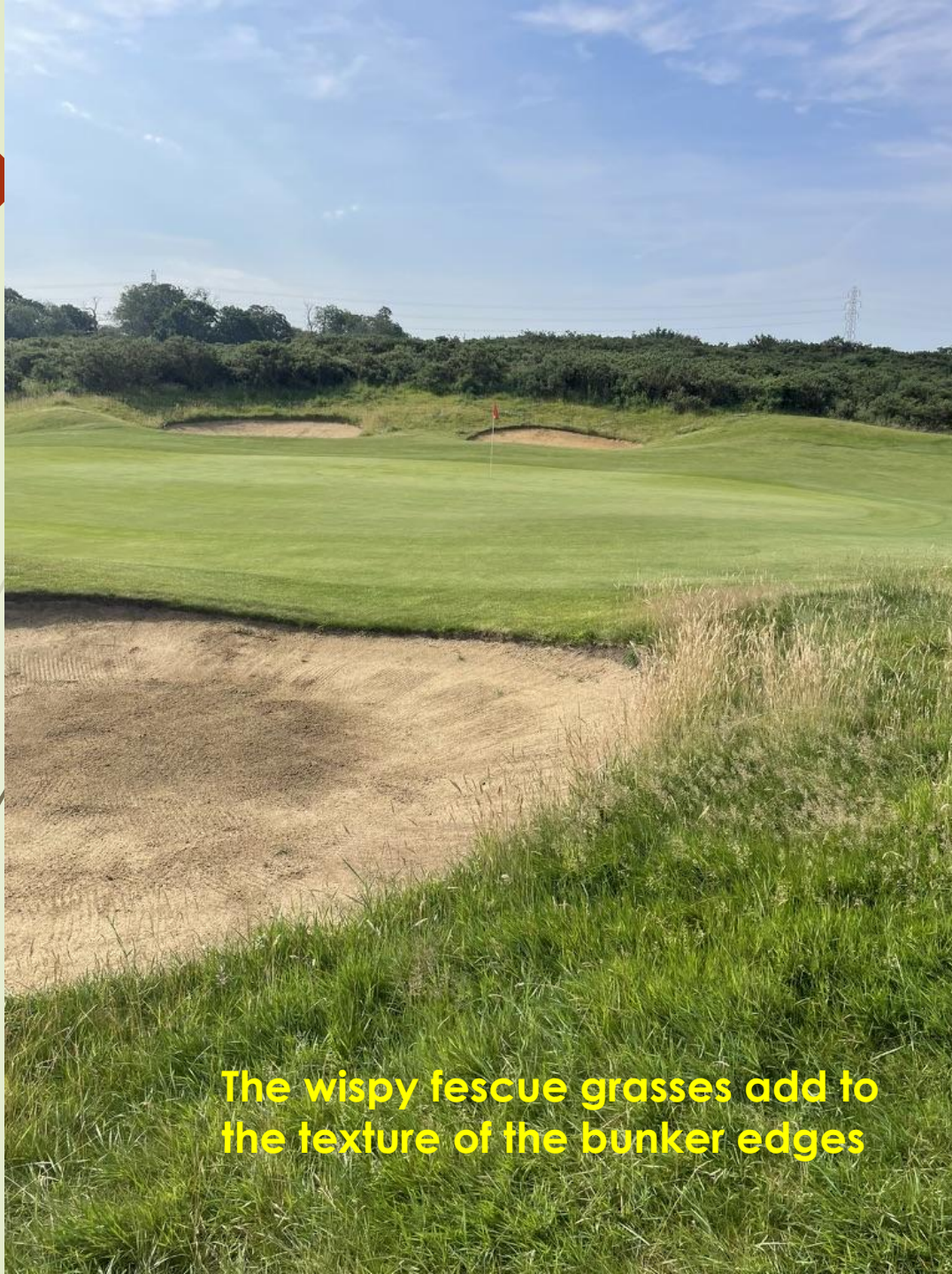
The longer 'fescue' grasses are very drought tolerant so are perfectly happy in hot and dry conditions.

We allow these types of grasses to grow in areas of the course that are generally not in play, but everyone's idea of 'not in play' is different !

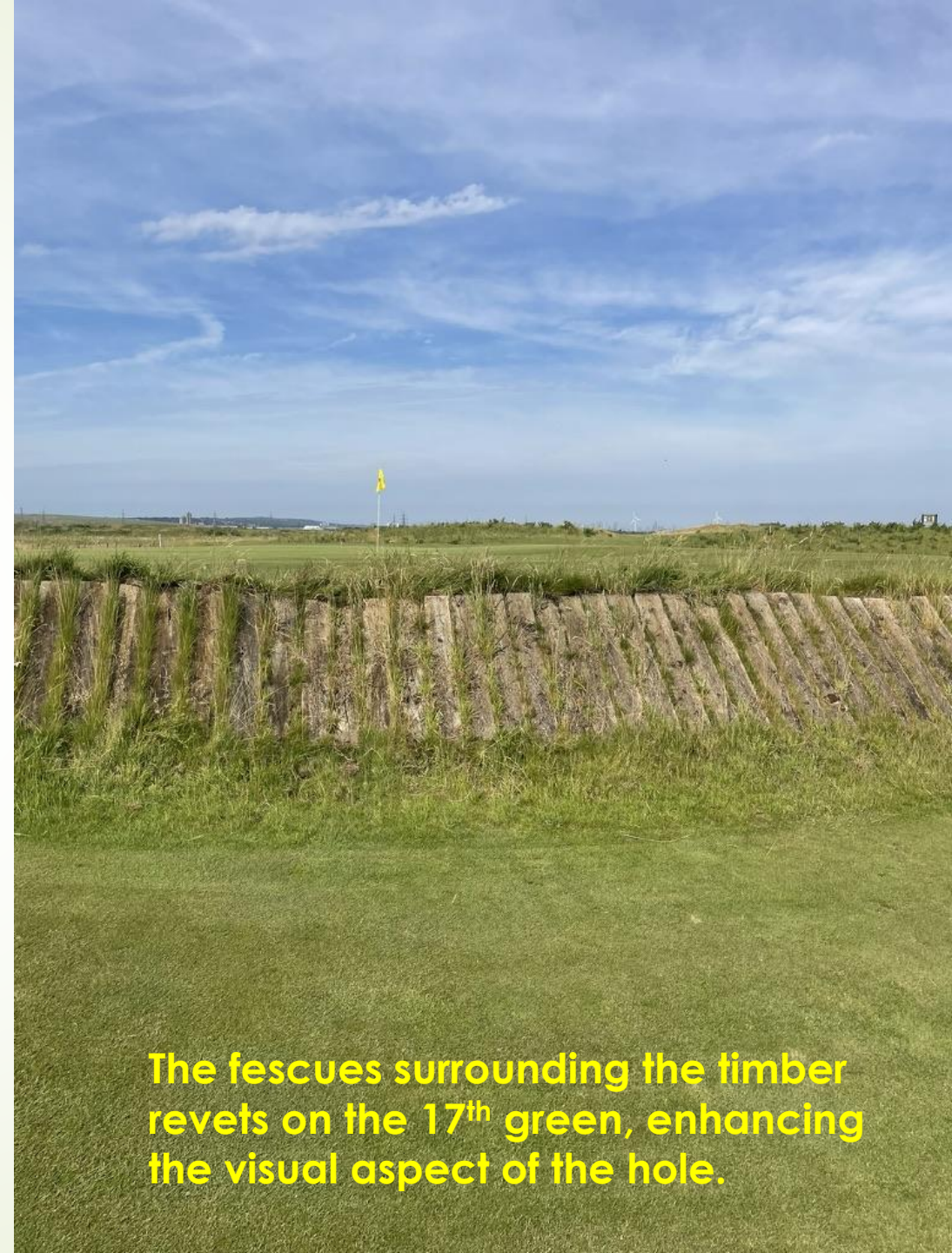
They look great at this time of year, and we enjoy that 'wispy' look for a couple of months.

'Ben on the Course'





The wispy fescue grasses add to the texture of the bunker edges



The fescues surrounding the timber revets on the 17th green, enhancing the visual aspect of the hole.

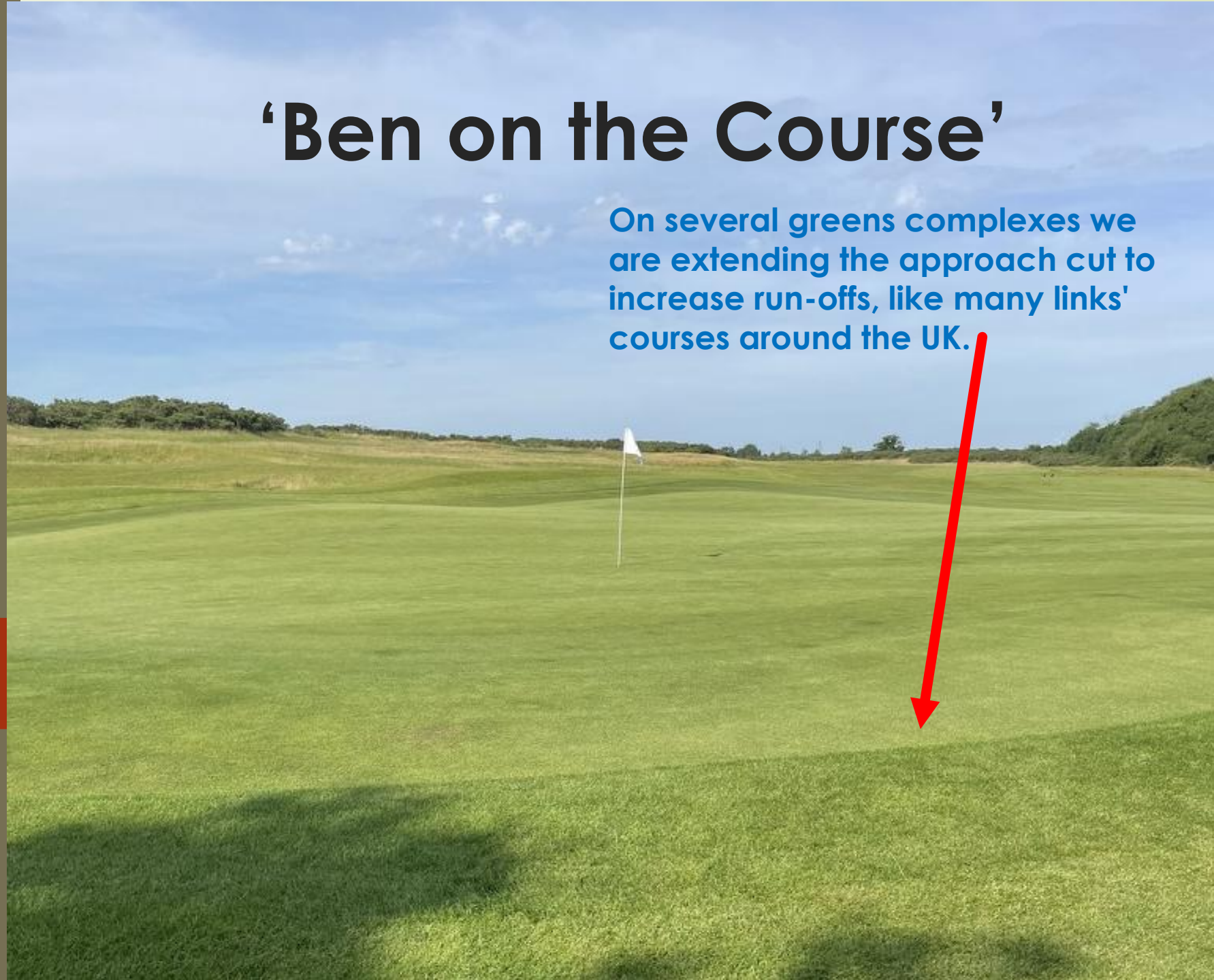


Our mowing heights for the Summer period are as follows:

- Teeing Grounds – 11mm to 14mm
- Fairways - 15mm to 17mm
- Semi Rough – up to 50mm
- Rough – 65mm
- **Deep Rough – uncut !**
- Approaches – 11mm to 15mm
- Greens – 3.5mm
- **Stimpmeter – 9ft to 9.5ft.**

‘Ben on the Course’

On several greens complexes we are extending the approach cut to increase run-offs, like many links' courses around the UK.



‘Ben on the Course’

We will continue to micro tine and light top dress our greens throughout the 2026 playing season. We have done this for several seasons and have found this is the best approach for our green surfaces.

This practice is one of the main reasons why we can play to our greens all year round.

Although the process is very mildly invasive the greens will continue to putt well and be firm and healthy throughout the remainder of the season.





‘Ben on the Course’

Our gorse plantings on the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th are doing well. In some locations they have really grown well with other areas slightly behind, but only a little.

Gorse survives and thrives in many types of dry soils and craves sunlight. The bushes play a vital role in the ecosystem providing food and shelter for many bird species.

It's hard to believe that all the gorse on this entire course was hand planted ! We are, and continue to do, ‘our bit’ for the environment. In the next couple of seasons these newly planted areas will play their part in playing golf at Ingrebourne and supporting the environment of the entire site.

I ask that you do not pull your golf trolley, or even worse, drive your buggy into these areas.

‘Ben on the Course’

**This will be a great
golf event !**

We are looking forward to hosting the
CLUTCH Tour Tier 1 event on 18th to the 20th August

The Clutch Pro Tour is Europe's and Middle East and North Africa's leading open-access professional golf development tour, created to provide a genuine pathway for talented professionals and elite amateurs progressing towards the DP World Tour, HotelPlanner Tour and the highest levels of the game.

Tier 1 events are open to Professionals and Elite Amateurs
(Scratch or better)

We will host a 54-Hole Tournament with a £50k prize purse

Clutch Tour past winners include USPGA Champion **Aaron Rai**, DP World Player **Andy Sullivan** and **Robert Rock**, and US Tour **Marco Penge**.

The CLUTCH TOUR is where champions are made.





Just want to thank our superb course marshals, headed up by Ronnie, who not only manage the daily tee sheet but fill divots, pick up course rubbish, repair pitch marks, monitor speed of play and generally make the course enjoyable to play.

We are fortunate to have such a great team.

'Ben on the Course'

During the summer season much of our day-to-day time is taken up with course preparation, mowing, bunker raking, machinery maintenance and irrigation.

Our team is fully occupied with daily responsibilities and tasks to make the golf course a special place to play.

We continue to spray for perimeter weeds, and you will have noticed that some larger weeds have been cut back on the extreme margins of the course.

Back in our Maintenance Area we spend considerable time sharpening cutting blades, setting up our mowers, general machinery maintenance, health and safety updates and the like.



‘Ben on the Course’



The remainder of the year presents a busy and exciting calendar, with key events to prepare for. Foremost among these are our **Members’ ‘Major’ competitions**, which remain a central focus and a valued tradition in our golf event calendar.

I am delighted to see the course gaining recognition as a first-class venue both to play and to join as a member.

You will notice that recently we have been removed from the top 100 courses in the Essex region, as we have been moved to the **Greater London** section up against some of the very best courses in the UK. We will still hold our own !

My staff and I are committed to improvement, always seeking ways to elevate the quality of the course and the overall experience for our members and guests.



'Ben on the Course'



May I once again respectfully remind all golfers to repair their pitch marks on the greens.

Despite repeated requests, some continue to overlook this simple yet essential courtesy, even, regrettably, some of our own members.

Please play your part in helping us maintain the highest standard of putting surfaces by repairing your own pitch marks and any others you may come across – It only takes a few seconds to do.

I would also urge everyone to replace their own divots. This small act not only greatly aids the condition of the course but also upholds the etiquette and spirit of the game. Thank you."



**RESPECT
IN GOLF**

'Ben on the Course'



Thank you for taking the time to read the **2026 summer edition** of my 'Ben on the Course' communication - It is always much appreciated.

Special thanks go to my Deputy Course Manager, Joe, and our outstanding greenkeeping team, whose dedication ensures the course is presented in the best possible condition day after day – give them a wave when you're next on the course and a thumbs up will be gratefully received.

And finally, I hope that every time you walk onto the first tee you can see the pride our team takes in presenting Ingrebourne Links.

Thank you for your continued support and enjoy the rest of the golfing season.