

## **Seasonal Guidance: Summer Pitches (typically, Cricket, Bowls, Tennis and Croquet)**

**Issued: January 2021**

Grassroots playing facilities will again currently have many questions about the current and potential restrictions the Government may impose to reduce the transmission of Coronavirus with regards to summer playing surfaces, their ongoing maintenance and what works may be carried out to provide a fit for play surface, or keep a surface ticking over, particularly if all play has been suspended.

**Please ensure you always follow government guidelines ([www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)) if you work either as lone workers or as part of a team.**

**Grassroots playing surfaces may be maintained by the following categories:**

- Professional managers and staff are advised to continue to actively consult and discuss working practices with their employers.
- Self-employed grounds staff or contractors are advised to follow the latest Government guidelines, formulate an agreed plan that includes your safe working procedure, and clearly communicate with clients in advance and agree safe working procedures.
- Volunteers should follow latest Government guidelines and not put themselves or others at risk.

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**This document sets out basic guidance – for the coming months.**

**It's the little things that matter at this time of year.**

### **Mowing:**

**Regardless of whether sport is played or not mowing is still a key task – if you can get on the surface.**

1. Wet or saturated soil – if you leave a footprint do not continue
2. Frozen or thawing soil / grass – if you leave a footprint do not continue
3. If you can get on to mow then only clip the grass, this will stand the plant up and expose it too much needed sunlight
4. Remove all clippings – again, this will expose the plant to light, thus aiding photosynthesis
5. **Before you do any of the above, is there any debris? This could be leaves, twigs, branches etc – they will need to be removed prior to mowing**

**What have you achieved so far?**

**Hopefully you have been able to carry out some aeration to the playing surfaces.** This will improve future water and nutrient uptake, reduce future compaction and improve the tolerance to drought stress.

You have also hopefully managed to take care of any localised repairs through forking and when possible some light overseeding prior to the cold weather.

### **What to plan for next?**

Although play may not be taking place start to think about the coming spring when the climate warms the soil and grass growth begins again.

- Continue to keep the surface free from debris
- **Plan** for possible repairs with seed, topdressing and fertilisers and where appropriate rolling.
  - (Caution will be required with fertilisers as grass growth will be encouraged when it may not be possible to mow as frequently as you would like)
- Think about keeping the grass slightly longer than you would plan to, but short enough so you can mow to a suitable playing height.
- Take chance now to make sure your machines and storage facilities are safe and fit for purpose.

### **Remember!**

If the ground is too wet, thawing or frozen you will create more problems by going on it.

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### **Closing statement**

Please always ensure you adhere to up to date government guidelines ([www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)) regarding the current situation.

The GMA's core message to summer pitch ground staff / volunteers is to ideally continue with all, or most, of the typical good maintenance practices but at a reduced intensity to meet the needs of your particular pitch.

An ongoing dialogue with your club and leagues will be necessary to ensure sufficient lead in time to get the surface safe and match ready.

### **Additional grounds management support/ resources**

For volunteers looking to gain further knowledge of maintaining pitches at community levels, the GMA's Level 1, 2 and 3 online training course provides an overview of basic tasks to help upskill volunteers. See below for further details

<https://thegma.org.uk/learning/training>