

## GOLF COURSE FAIRWAYS THRIVE WITH RECYCLED COMPOST

### Background information

Keen golfers at Loughgall Country Park golf course in Armagh, Northern Ireland have BSI PAS 100 compost to thank for the improvement in the quality of the fairways and tees.

Opened in 2000, the municipal 18 hole golf course is set in the grounds of the magnificent Loughgall Country Park and is one of the first in Northern Ireland to specify the use of compost.

The par 72 course is set in mature woodland and includes strategically placed bunkers, sloping terrain and water hazards which add to the character and excitement of play.

Previously the site of a Department of Agriculture research centre, the ground had been subjected to different levels of chemicals, such as fertilisers, and its poor condition made maintenance a challenging task.

In 2004, Country Park manager, Greg Ferson, approved a trial of BSI PAS 100 compost after

hearing about the success of a similar project at Epping Golf Course in Essex.

Sourced from accredited producer Natural World Products, where the golf course already sent its grass cuttings and clippings for recycling, the compost was applied to three fairways and one sand based fairway landing area.

Greg explained: "We selected four different areas of the course with varying soils so that we could establish the performance of the compost in different conditions. On two of the fairways chosen we had an issue with the grass growth and colour and hoped that the compost would rectify this. All suffered from uneven and unhealthy growth in addition to low nutrient levels."

Compost screened to a maximum particle size of 10mm was applied using a Dakota 412 spreader.

"Within a couple of weeks the results were



already visible. We directly compared the areas which had been applied with BSI PAS 100 compost with those where no compost had been

used. There was a significant difference in the growth and colour of the grass," said Greg.

### Key Facts:

- The compost provides nutrients such as nitrogen to the ground in a slow release form that greens up grass without leading to excessive grass growth. A good supply of potassium is also present that will aid grass hardiness and suppress disease
- Compost will supply organic matter that improves soil structure, water infiltration rates and water holding capacity. The compost can also increase grass seed germination and regrowth in divots on tees and fairways, which is always a concern for greenkeepers
- Many of the microorganisms present in compost are able to suppress the pathogenic organisms that cause turf diseases
- The optimum time to spread compost is during the autumn or spring when the weather is warm and the soil moist



### Comment:

**Loughgall Country Park golf course Country Park manager, Greg Ferson**

"We're delighted with the results of the trial and will be continuing to use compost around the course, especially on the areas where there is a high clay content as the compost improves the soil structure by introducing more oxygen and improving its water holding capacity.

"As we are a council-owned course, it is excellent that we can demonstrate our commitment to recycling by putting compost back into the course in a way which is improving its quality and playability."

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