

Drystone wall (drystane dyke) restoration

Drystone walls provide attractive features within the landscape of a golf course. In places these walls may be in need of repair, both to ensure they remain intact as features and for aesthetic purposes.

Drystone walls are also beneficial to wildlife. They provide a valuable habitat for plants, animals and insects. Many varieties of flowering plants, ferns, lichens and mosses find these walls an ideal habitat. They may also provide nest sites for birds such as Pied wagtail, and havens for small mammals such as voles, mice and shrews as well as their predators the stoat and weasel. The sunny face of the wall is desert-like, but the shaded side favours moisture-loving plants.



Stoats and weasels can be valuable allies on the golf course. They predate heavily on rabbits as well as other small mammals and birds. They can play a significant role in rabbit control. They favour rocky crevices and burrows as habitat. Creation of rock piles in rough grass and shrub thickets, along with maintenance of dry stone walls / dykes will contribute to a healthy population of both species. Any restoration works would be best carried out in early spring or late summer to prevent disturbance to nesting birds in late spring and summer and avoid disturbance of hibernating amphibians and reptiles over winter.

TCV Scotland, formally BTCV (<http://www2.tcv.org.uk>) and the Field Studies Council (<http://www.field-studies-council.org>) can provide training for greenstaff, in order that they can carry out much of the work in-house, resulting in cost savings for the club.

The Drystone Walling Association may also be able to offer advice or put you in touch with local drystone wallers. www.dswa.org.uk.

Further reading and funding:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=691877c6-bed8-4803-bdd1-a59500bb2828>