

SIGNIFICANT FACTS

Prior to becoming a golf course, Malkins Bank had been a salt works, a chemical dump for large companies, and also used for unregistered dumping.

The land was reclaimed and became a golf course in 1976.

By 1981, the grass was suffering die back and would not grow in 4 of the 18 holes. Additionally, there were drainage problems on 6 of 18 holes and the drains need to be rodded. A 3 year programme was set out to try and rectify this.

In 1995 Inchcape Testing Services were asked to determine why the grass would not grow.

A series of boreholes were drilled and soil tested. It was determined that sodium chloride (salt) was present in the soil and was killing the grass. The level of topsoil was 15cm – the absolute minimum for grass to develop roots.

In 1998 it was noted that there was seepage of underground waste on to the 6th green, and the Council looked at top dressing solutions.

The council sought funding for contaminated land from English Partnerships in 1998 but were unsuccessful.

The Environment Agency during regular sampling in 2000 were concerned by the levels of phenols, cadmium and manganese which could be entering the water course.

Following nearby resident complaints about odour, the Environment Agency undertook testing of the drains flowing into the Birchenwood Brook and also the catchpits on the site for the drains. Many of the catchpits which form an essential part of the course drainage could not be accessed, were completely dry or were silted up. Only 58% of the areas could be sampled. If the drainage worked, they would not be dry.

In 2007, Atkins were commissioned to test the site with more boreholes, soil and surface water samples. By this time the topsoil was 10cm or missing in places. They noted the presence of contamination, the presence of saturated ground, clay and an underground reservoir where the liquids cannot sink past an impermeable layer. Any water will mix with the contaminants coming from the waste and will fan out sideways spreading the contamination. This is worse after heavy rain. They were not asked to determine if the pollutants were a risk to human health.

By 2011 another report was commissioned, the Nicholson report. This was published on 29 September 2011 just before the lease was transferred from the council. It concluded that the land was contaminated, and placed on the contaminated land register.