

Gardening Report - 19.6.13

Higher temperatures during the last weeks have proved challenging. STV Increased the watering frequency from two to five days a week & this extra 'pressure' on the irrigation system highlighted a number of issues.

Pilot Lamps & Valves - Some areas were not being irrigated at night - Inssoltu were asked to investigate & they detected that in the area next to El Cason there was a problem with the pilot lamps in two pressure valves. Normally the pilots close down when the water pressure increases & should open again once the water pressure stabilises & this was not happening. One valve irrigates Phases 5 and 1 & the other valve irrigates Phases 2, 6 and 7. It was important to get the problem fixed as quickly as possible as a wide area of the resort was not being irrigated. Inssoltu replaced the valves & pilots last Wednesday at a cost of €1,370.

Contractors - A company doing work in Atlantico damaged a water pipe cutting the water supply to half of Phase 7. This problem was identified when an owner arrived in Block 60 & reported his grass was going yellow. The company paid for the pipe to be repaired.

This incident does highlight the need for outside contractors working around irrigation pipes to liaise with STV & I would recommend the irrigation is checked after the work is finished. Also, many green areas are dug up by contractors & the turf is not replaced correctly leaving ugly, uneven trails across the grass. STV are happy to replace the turf after the work has been completed & again I suggest Resortalia should notify STV when work is being carried out in order to avoid these ugly channels appearing.

De-coder Programmer - The programmer brought over by Nigel last year is not working. The company thought it might be the charger & a new one was purchased, still it's not working. As the programmer is under guarantee it's been sent back to the UK this week for further investigation. This means that when sprinklers stop working we are not able to re-programme them manually & the gardeners are carrying out manual watering in these areas.

DIU's - This software includes four DIU's which are used to run the irrigation on site & is provided by Toro NSN. DIU 4 controls the irrigation on Phase 4 & this has not been working correctly so the phase has been watered manually. To repair this device is expensive, costing between some €1,500 - €4,000. Earlier this year we took out insurance which has covered the cost of the repair & is now working correctly.

Irrigation Taps - In the past few weeks I've inspected areas where grass is turning yellow & it's because the irrigation tap has been turned off & in one example the tap was turned off three days running. In some cases taps will be turned off by gardeners & not turned back on or by Security when leaks are reported. **Many owners know how the system works & have mentioned that they have turned water on & off & also set up their own irrigation feeds. It's essential owners do not tamper with these boxes & out of hours leaks are dealt with by Security.**

Irrigation Leaks - Riversa carried out an inspection of our system. Basically their comments were; 'Preventative, corrective maintenance was essential. The number of leaks was usual for a resort of this size & when sprinklers continue irrigating it could be due to debris in the pipes. The decoders & solenoids needed replacing after a useful life & the installation demands permanent maintenance.' These are all general comments which could apply to any watering system & no real evidence of what causes our leaks. A few have occurred due to staff error, generally it's the joints split due to water pressure. I will check with STV that the correct maintenance is carried out on the pipes.

Conclusion - Despite all of the above, I feel that the majority of the resort is looking good & the challenge is to keep it that way over the coming months. I have noticed many of the Oleander plants keeling over in the wind & will speak to STV to sort out a solution. . Please let me know of any gardening problems on your phase & I will inspect the area

In forthcoming meetings with STV I will be asking that they:

Review green areas before mowing & cut the grass only when needed - use the extra time to weed!!
Prune hedges as & when required. Set up a robust system to identify irrigation problems & ensure green areas & plants are being watered, don't wait until the grass has turned yellow & the plants have died & ensure the weekly planning schedule is accurate.

On Friday, 5th July we have a Gardening Coffee Morning from 10 - 12 noon in the Community Room. Alfonso from STV will be there to answer gardening questions. If you are lucky enough to be at HR please come along & join us for a cuppa & cake.

Viv Church