Easier way to pay subscriptions

BIGGA, in conjunction with Premium Credit, is now able to offer members the opportunity to pay their subscription by direct debit in 10 equal monthly instalments.

All renewal forms will be accompanied by a bank/building society mandate authorising Premium Credit to collect the monthly instalment from the member's bank or building society.

Members wishing to take advantage of D/D will, however, need to return the completed mandate and renewal form BEFORE their membership expires. The first instalment will then be collected one month after the membership is renewed. Therefore, members with an expiry date of 31 December will not have to make a payment until 1 February and their last payment will be 1 November. Please note that if forms are submitted late, that is to say after the expiry date, the first two or three instalments may well be collected together to bring the remaining payments into line.

Any new member wishing to pay by direct debit can contact headquarters for a direct debit mandate which should be returned with the application form.

There is a small service charge (7%) made by Premium Credit in order to offer this facility and so a typical membership subscription of £49.00 would, therefore, work out at Subscriptio, £49.00, Service Charge of 7% + £3.43. Total payable = £52.43, making each monthly instalment £5.24.

This facility is available to all members and may be used by individuals, clubs and companies.

Anyone requiring further information before returning the renewal form should contact John Pemberton or Janet Adamson on 01347 838581.

Euro campaign backs environment pioneers

On the final morning of the 1997 Ryder Cup, European golf was given top level backing for its environmental activities when European Commission President Jacques Santer, launched the "Committed to Green" campaign. This is a new initiative by the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, supported by the R&A and the PGA European Tour. The campaign aims to encourage everyone involved in golf to participate in improving the environmental quality of golf courses.

In welcoming this move by Europe's golfing bodies to address environmental issues, Mr Santer expressed the hope that "Committed to Green" will lead to golf courses being seen as role models for good environmental practice. He emphasised the need for Course Managers to work together with independent environmental specialists and local interest groups, to improve dialogue and to seek mutual solutions to environmental management questions.

Mr Santer congratulated the Ryder Cup organisers for their vision in incorporating a green dimension to the event. He also paid tribute to the example shown by Valderrama, in presenting a top championship golf course together with maintaining high standards of environmental care. The Commission President stressed the importance of long-term commitment to environmental care, and the need to encourage sustainable development through partnership and shared responsibility. The "Committed to Green" campaign will offer golf clubs the opportunity to demonstrate such an approach.

Speaking on behalf of the European Golf Association and the other golfing bodies present, Ecology Unit Executive Director, David Stubbs, thanked the European Commission for its encouragement and for recognising the role golf can play in fostering environmental awareness. He went on to say that, "To be 'Committed to Green' is to demonstrate environmental awareness and responsibility. The aim is to increase awareness of the environmental attributes of golf courses, and to demonstrate how well-managed golf courses are of benefit to the environment and the community. "The game still faces many environmental challenges – we have to be good conservationists; we need to address water resource and pest management issues; we want to ensure that greenkeepers receive appropriate training in ecological management; and we must communicate these points throughout the golf industry and to the golfing public. 'Committed to Green' will be a major step forward in achieving this."

The campaign provides a structured programme through which golf clubs can demonstrate their environmental credentials. It is a fully inclusive campaign, open to all types of golf facility on a voluntary basis.

Emphasis is placed on continual improvement of environmental performance. For clubs which achieve high standards of environmental performance, there will be the opportunity of public recognition through the "Committed to Green" Award for Environmental Excellence. To ensure objectivity and credibility, the setting of environmental criteria and awarding of recognition will be subject to independent verification.

"Committed to Green" is co-ordinated at a European level by the EGA Ecology Unit. The campaign will be operated on the ground through a network of National Ecology Officers attached to their respective National Golf Federations.