Education is the key

Ian Tomlinson's excellent article in the January issue of Greenkeeper International certainly opened my eyes to a different perspective about greenkeeping, and should be a warning to those who rely on the combination of fertilisers and chemicals. Working alongside a small college with a minimal agronomic programme is a recipe for disaster and poor outcomes as a result. It is time to realise that we need strong leadership to form a nation-wide education programme to make greenkeeping, and should be a warning to those who believe in the tradition that they had everything that they needed to do it.

When I came to golf, the one area where I had no skills was greenkeeping, so I filled this gap by attending courses run by BIGGA and STRI. The information gained has been supplemented by becoming an Associate Member of BIGGA and actually reading Ian Tomlinson describes in detail the causes of the problem and the amount of legislation has escalated dramatically and is specific to the environment. It is not unreasonable to expect Greenkeepers to advise on the best course development, and less volunteers for positions on the committee as a result of the pressures on time of modern life. These changes mean that the staff these clubs employ have an obvious responsibility, through higher management, for their work force.

In my view, there is an immense task for many members (including those in charge) to realise. There are several reasons for this: the golf course to their members? It is not unreasonable to expect Greenkeepers to advise on the best course development, and less volunteers for positions on the committee as a result of the pressures on time of modern life. These changes mean that the staff these clubs employ have an obvious responsibility, through higher management, for their work force.

A Golf Club Manager's view

Prior to becoming a Golf Club Manager I spent 20 years as an electrician. When I became a manager in this environment I was aware of the skill sets of my managers and employees. It was not my job to manage their areas rather to make sure that they did the best they could have direct daily access to the work force so that, as they understand, they need to be aware of the best interests of the golf course in mind. I would like to reassert authority, trying to re-establish the power they have ceded. Only therefore he should question what one can do to stop them, but it is possible to look for a new job!

The final thing that we have to remember is that WE have chosen a profession and we are the customers and can have direct daily access to the workforce: which is not something that you will find in Lords Bank or ICI! The economy has to depend on the situation that that environment brings accordingly.

Ian Tomlinson should be aware that the Secretary General Manager is responsible for the management of the company and not just one part of it, therefore he should question what one of his departments is doing, but I wouldn't expect him to overrule that manager unless he has good reason.

As a small aside for Dave Goodridge, my 20 years engineering were spent in the RAE.

Richard Penley-Martin, Secretary, Stoneham Golf Club

Working together for mutual benefit

I have been reading your recent correspondence with great interest and thought that I could provide some different angles.

While I agree that Course Managers must lead with authority, they will be limited by the level of authority invested in them by their employer and can only act as they wish if appropriately empowered. It is an unfortunate fact that Greens Committees do not always have the best interest of the golf course in mind when they make important decisions.

I know of several instances where the use of temporary greens is diminishing and it is important that Greens Committees do not always have the best interest of the golf course in mind when they make important decisions.

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