TAKE ADVANTAGE OF "BEST PRACTICE"

February saw the birth of a venture which may prove to be one of the most important and useful the game of golf has seen in some time.

The launch of the R&A's Best Practice Guidelines - Website www.bestcourseforgolf.org - gives all those golf clubs, which are looking to do the right thing but are unsure of the direction in which to go, a real steer.

It will also give Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers, struggling to pull their clubs in the right direction, a useful ally and pointer when it comes to tackling those in the club who feel they know best.

Many people within the game had felt that the R&A needed to provide a lead in such matters and it was R&A Chief Executive, Peter Dawson, who three years ago grabbed the nettle, formed the Golf Course Committee and challenged its members to come up with a method of helping clubs to go about things in the correct manner, not just in Britain, but in large chunks of the world as well.

"Best Practice" is defined as "Management of golf courses in an environmentally and economically sustainable way".

As you will have seen from last month's magazine what has been produced is a user-friendly website which gives assistance in five areas of real importance to golf clubs - management, greenkeeping, environment, planning and development and advice and research.

Of course, you can have the most useful tool in the world but if people don't take advantage of it the benefits are rendered null and void so it is pleasing to hear from Steve Isaac, Assistant Director of Golf Course Management, that the first month on-line has been very successful.

A total of 337 clubs have registered, 15 national Golf Unions and Federations have signed up. Also encouraging is the fact that 18 clubs have actually started and Ireland. Of these, 18 clubs have actually started to golf clubs, which are looking to do the right thing but are unsure of the direction in which to go, a real steer.

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A total of 337 clubs have registered from 40 countries with 62% of them coming from Great Britain and Ireland. Of these, 18 clubs have actually started the process laid down by the site, in showing the commitment to bring Best Practice to their clubs.

In addition 15 national Golf Unions and Federations have signed up. Also encouraging is the fact that 3,442 visitors have taken a look at the site and there were over 150,000 hits in the first month.

"Our Committee is delighted with the response in the site's first month on line but would encourage more clubs and Federations to register," said Steve.

I would endorse that. It costs nothing to take a look and I'm sure that if you were to register and get involved in the site, three things can happen, all good:

1. If you are struggling with a particular problem the site should be able to help you towards a solution.
2. The R&A name carries a lot of kudos and clout and it might be the catalyst needed to move the course in the direction you wish.
3. It might just rubber stamp the fact that you are on the right lines. Having that in your back pocket when you next attended a Green Committee would be a nice little piece of insurance.