The series aimed at celebrating the great work done by dealerships up and down the country.

Three kings

The ‘Golf Club Management Partnership’ recently celebrated its first anniversary. Sandy Jones charts the progress made so far and looks ahead to the future.

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Each of the parties to the Golf Club Management Partnership understands how companies can benefit from the skills and diversity possessed by the different bodies involved.

The Golf Club Management Partnership (GCMP) has been set up by the PGA, BIGGA and the GCMA to provide a co-ordinated approach to the management of golf clubs.

We chose a particularly appropriate time to join forces, as golf clubs feel the effects of the economic situation and adapt to changing attitudes to leisure activities.

In every golf club there are three providers of services to the golfer – the manager, the professional and the course manager, and it makes sense to work together and ensure that these services are provided at the highest level.

This has proved essential as golf club committees consider ways to cut costs in order to survive the recession when in fact they should be looking to add value. There is a temptation to simply chop out areas of the operation, often because committees may not fully understand how the club is run.

The difficulty is that often those people providing the services don’t consider themselves part of the core team, and the committees may not fully understand how the club is run.

One of the greatest advantages of the Golf Club Management Partnership is that each body has comprehensive knowledge and information about the golf course, the pro shop and in the clubhouse.

We believe that our role is to communicate the significance of golf to the wider community, and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

In every golf club there are three kings:

The golfer and the club is the ultimate winner if we can understand each other better, take our message to the club owners and to amateur boards, and to the English Golf Union (EGU) over the next 12 months.

We are also aiming to create models to show how clubs can operate more efficiently, considering the whole operation rather than just staff costs. The club must engage with its manager, its professionals and greenkeeping team – as they are the first point of contact with members and visitors – to ensure that the golfers’ needs are met, on the course, in the pro shop and in the clubhouse.

Our unit approach is already benefiting clubs – after the severe winter we produced some recommendations to help tackle claims relating to health and safety in bad weather which have been backed up by professionals for managers dealing with those situations.

We have also set up a network to tackle credit card scams affecting pro shops, getting the word around to clubs after an incident, and this has led to the arrest of offenders.

The internet will become increasingly important in the communication process, and we are already looking at the latest technologies for the delivery of education programmes.

The Phasedolooked ways of sharing expertise between the PGA, GCMA and BIGGA, and capitalising on common ground while accepting individual strengths. All three have comprehensive education programmes, but some subjects that have previously been taught separately to professionals, managers and greenkeepers – such as health and safety – can easily be brought together.

This also leads to a closer understanding of each others’ abilities and provides an opportunity to share ideas.

There are other opportunities too – PGA members have given lectures on BIGGA and GCMA courses, and at events such as BIGGA’S Harrogate Week, many of the seminars will be applicable to all sectors.

Marketing is a further example – the professional and the course manager can contribute as much to marketing the club as the manager.

Another goal will be to communicate the significance of golf to the wider community, and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

This is one area where the Americans are ahead of us, producing statistics on the industry and creating allies. Clubs work best if all parties communicate the significance of golf to the wider community, and to the government, to put us in a better position to lobby for support.

Managers and professionals must not see each other as rivals – it is understandable that a manager would see a professional who gains managerial skills as a threat, but they can be much more effective as allies. Clubs work best if all parties use their skills together, rather than in isolation.

The GCMP has also looked at ways of encouraging golf clubs to set up websites to promote golf. We have also set up a network to tackle credit card scams affecting pro shops, getting the word around to clubs after an incident, and this has led to the arrest of offenders.

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