In trying to keep you updated on the Government’s current thoughts and policies for education and training, it is a little like trying to hit a fast moving target!

The GTC’s role is to lobby various Government bodies or funding support towards the qualifications and schemes we are involved in developing and reviewing.

Over many years employers and learners have benefited from the generous support given by the Government approved qualifications including the apprenticeship scheme but as we all know nothing is safe in the present economic climate, education has not escaped.

Our colleagues in both colleges and private training Centres are all seeing a reduction in funding support from the Government, with very few exceptions.

However, we must remain positive and seek out every opportunity for funding to ensure the ‘poorest’ gain access to the best courses and qualifications we have to offer.

I know many Course Managers have overall responsibility for their staff training but I still hear that some clubs operate without a budget item for staff training or, even hold Green Meetings without the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper present.

The best case scenario for green staff development has to be where the employer is the involved and the Course Manager is at the very centre of the training programme for their staff.

The best results are when a relationship is built with the chosen Centre whether it is a college or private training provider. It is these Centres who are able to access funding which often makes the course and qualification a very cost effective investment.

I have to report that employers will have to prepare for making a contribution towards staff training, new schemes may well be launched to entice employers to take on apprentices.

Many employers and Head Greenkeepers are involved in staff training. This I have to say I find disappointing even allowing for the fact of how difficult it can be times for Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers when the pressure is on to present the course in top condition every day of the year.

All I will add is that you don’t get involved with your staff training it could cost you and your employer a lot more in the future.

I would also like to mention Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers who, in ensuring their staff do develop, sometimes forget their own personal development (CPD). Please remember to keep yourselves up to speed on the subjects relating to maintenance and management. Attend as many courses as you can and remember home study is an option to gain those formal qualifications.

The GTC are in regular contact with our Quality Assured Centres including colleges and encouraging the use of modern technology to assist with the notes, recording and recording of evidence eg: e-portfolios online learning.

That moves nicely onto Higher Education and nobody can have failed to have noticed the large number of universities deciding to charge student fees albeit this differs depending on which country you live in.

All I will add is that The R&A with its Burnside Scholarship programme are both tremendous opportunities for those students considering entering the Higher Education qualifications.

The GTC is proud of the fact the sector has both a structured work based route to train staff and also a more academic option including on-line learning for Higher Education students.

Employers, usually in association with their Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper should always open a training budget and with the subsidies available both through the GTC’s work with Government agencies and from bodies like BIGGA and The R&A, it need not be thousands of pounds!