Chairman’s Word

Happy days are back again

Some welcome relief has come for many regarding hosepipe bans with exemptions being made in several areas.

Thanks to everyone who contacted HQ to share their concerns and provide useful information to help us address the water issue. We are continuing to work on this, as it is not something that is going to go away. Access to this vital resource will ultimately be a significant issue for all of us.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, many in the North have seen some long awaited glorious sunshine and with it increased soil temperatures meaning we finally get some good growth and the ability to bring the greens on. Happy days!

In the last few years I have watched with some interest the developments in some regions, where “consultants” have advised golf clubs that they can replace the need for a full time Course Manager or Head Greenkeeper. I’ve resisted the natural urge as a Course Manager to simply decry and criticise this development, but now wish to share some views and observations that I feel are relevant.

The golf course in most instances is the most valuable asset a club has. It is usually the most influential factor in attracting and retaining membership and visitor income to that facility. There are some exceptions, but generally speaking the condition of the course, specifically the main playing areas, greens, fairways, tees, bunkers, all feature highly in the golfers mind when they evaluate their experience, how much they enjoy the game and decide where they will play again.

Most clubs employ or engage a team of people to manage the day-to-day business and to best satisfy the needs of the members and visitors. The Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper, the Golf Professional, the Secretary/Manager, and Food and Beverage Managers all apply particular skills and knowledge to their area.

The members are represented in most instances by their committees and appropriate sub-committees who seek to create the policies, strategies and general direction the club will take to best satisfy their membership.

We have all witnessed the increased expectations and standards required by golfers whilst the rise in the number of golf courses and the difficult economic climate have resulted in increased competition for custom. As clubs have struggled to create the necessary income to maintain these increased standards they have started to look closely at how they can cut costs.

This has led many to consider the role of the “consultant” versus, as opposed to alongside, the dedicated Course Manager. They desire to emulate the success of golf clubs that they can replace the need to have dedicated Course Managers/Head Greenkeepers to ensure that their asset is professionally managed. They recognise the benefit an educated, professionally trained person brings to that operation in ensuring they present that asset to its full potential, making the best use of all the resources available.

They benefit hugely from sharing knowledge, skills, and resources across their facilities, and perhaps this is the area clubs should be considering when looking to become more effective, get better returns on their investment, and manage their costs.

BIGGA is working hard to ensure you have the very best support, resources, education and training, and to enable you to share your achievements and difficulties with one another.

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