The successful applicants for the inaugural Jacobsen Future Turf Managers' Initiative have been announced by BIGGA.

Twenty greenkeepers from across the UK are now looking forward to an intensive two days of seminars and workshops covering a range of subjects designed to equip them for success in their future careers. These include in-depth courses on communications, budgeting, organisational politics, CV writing and interview techniques plus breakout sessions looking at other key subjects.

BIGGA's Learning & Development Executive (Technical) Stuart Green added: “There has been an excellent response to the initiative, with 45 applications received. This made the process of selection all the more difficult as we felt that all the applicants would have benefited. However, this is just the end of the journey for the successful applicants but the beginning of the next phase in their future turf manager careers.”

Many thanks to all who applied, and look out for coverage of the event in next month’s Greenkeeper International. For the full list of successful candidates please turn to page 14.

NEIL BAKER APPOINTED COURSE MANAGER AT LITTLE ASTON

Neil Baker has been appointed the new Course Manager at Little Aston Golf Club in Sutton Coldfield.

He has been Course Manager at Tandridge Golf Club in Surrey for the last seven years, and takes up his new post after working to bring Tandridge back to its original Harry Colt design roots.

He said: “My new position fulfills a career goal, and my main aim now is to help the club further enhance its very special golfing environment.

With its history and private feel I couldn’t turn down the chance to join this esteemed venue.”

A spokesman for the Club said: “We were very impressed with the professionalism of all the Course Managers we interviewed, however Neil was the clear choice. “We are sure he will lead the greenkeeping team so that we continue to have an outstanding golf course enjoyed by members and visitors alike.”

FULL HOUSE AT BIGGA SCOTTISH CONFERENCE

Was it good planning or good luck? Neither, it was the quality of the speakers that drew a fantastic 210 delegates to the Scottish Conference on 5 March at the Carnegie Conference Centre, Dunfermline.

Iain MacLeod, Conference Chair, welcomed delegates by promising an excellent array of speakers and providing details of the format for the day. He then introduced the first speaker, Ronnie Malcolm, who presented ‘The Role of the Modern Head Greenkeeper’, concentrating on the methods of management available to course managers and head greenkeepers to cope with current work pressures.

Grant Frogley from The Roxburgh Hotel and Golf Club then told his story ‘Taking the Next Step’, the journey he has taken over the last 12 months from being in a Deputy’s position to that of Course Manager.

Our final speaker of the morning was Chris Haspell, Head Greenkeeper at Castle Stuart Golf Links. The audience were enthralled as they listened to the kinds of problems experienced during the 2011 Scottish Open and the fantastic effort of the greenkeepers to get the course available for play on the final day - then to hear of the great success that was 2012.

After lunch Andy O’Hara, Scottish Regional Chairman, stated his ambition of improving education opportunities for all and to make BIGGA a must join association. He then presented the Harry Diamond Award to the Scottish Student of the Year, Chris Watson.

The afternoon session provided technical presentations for the audience. Firstly Bill Lawlor from the Nct Group hosted a Q&A session on the importance of Health and Safety for greenkeepers. This was followed by Dr Christian Spring from the Sfbi presenting an excellent seminar on ‘Earthworm Control and Developments in Turfgrass Pesticides’.

Next up was John Bambury, Links Superintendent at Trump International Golf Links in Aberdeenshire. It was a very detailed presentation on the creation of the championship course and his team.

John also provided insight into the workings of the Trump Empire and how he enjoys being part of this organisation.

One highlight was when John explained the requirement to trim 35 acres of rough each fortnight - which drew an audible gasp from the audience.

Andy O’Hara closed proceedings by thanking our speakers and indeed the delegates for making the day extremely successful.

A special thanks was extended to Peter Boyd, former RA for Scotland for interning his retirement to provide support throughout the day.

Elisabeth Coutts from Greens Progress said: “I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and I felt that all presentations flowed together very nicely”.

Gordon Muir, Director of Greenkeeping at St Andrews Links Trust, added: “I haven’t been to all the conferences over the past five years but I thought this was one of the best I’ve attended. “There was a great variety of seminars and presentations - something for everyone”.

Looking forward to 2014, an exceptional line-up is already being put together for the conference on Tuesday 4 March with Steve Chappell of Glenelgues booked to provide the run up to the 2014 Ryder Cup. Look forward to seeing you there.