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Greenkeepers increasingly becoming pressure or even being made

Recently, I’ve heard of many greenkeepers coming under severe pressure or even being made redundant, but I want to see the greenkeepers increasingly becoming regarded as the most important figure in the club structure; the person to whom the club look to for leadership, especially in difficult times.

I’m aware of what sometimes goes wrong in Committee and Board Meetings and I’d like to look at how the Greenkeeper/Manager can not only avoid the pitfalls, but start to take charge.

Last year, I attended an evening to recognise the environmental success achieved by a famous club in the South of the UK. About 40 delegates enjoyed several presentations charting the progress of various environmental initiatives and discussed the issues encountered along the way.

However, during the Q&A’s a visiting Secretary stood up. “This is all fine and good” he said, “but it’s only working well here because this club wants it to work. At my club, I’ve spent six months working with my Course Manager, Catering Manager and Pro to form an Environmental Policy for our club.

We dealt with everything; wildflowers and composting, re-use of waste cooking oil, disposal of cardboard and stationery, energy, lights - the whole lot. I presented it to the Committee, who gave it a quick two minute reading and then threw it out with the comment “the ruddy staff are starting to run this place”.

Another Secretary added: “That’s because some clubs are still not being run as proper businesses.”

He added: “At my Board meeting last week we had a twenty-five minute debate on the appropriate length of socks to be worn on the course this summer. Long socks, short socks, football socks, nylon socks, red socks, white socks – the list was endless – I tried to minute it, but we didn’t reach any firm conclusions.

“The next item on the agenda was the purchase of a £26,000 tractor, and that went through in less than a minute.”

Now this all set me wondering…my experiences as a volunteer director taught me meetings don’t just happen. The Chairman and Managers’ inputs into the agenda are vital, and the agenda is the most important document.

Preparation is everything and disputes and discussions around anything remotely sensitive or controversial need to have been resolved well in advance. In other words, individual members of the committee often need to have been won over sensitively outside of the meeting by lobbying and discussion.

Let’s take another look at those two examples. It’s not realistic to expect a far-reaching Environmental Policy to be accepted and embraced by volunteer committee members on the hoof. This laudable policy making should, right at the outset, have involved the input of the Chairman of the Committee.

He must run it by every single member of his committee in advance of the meeting and iron out any sticking points or concerns. It should not have been included as an agenda item even for discussion, never mind a vote, until the Chairman was assured of the support of the meeting.

Likewise the socks issue is not an appropriate matter for a Board of Directors to waste valuable time debating at length during a formal meeting. The Chairman should have asked for notification on any issues which may require attention at least a month in advance.

When the dress code issue was flagged up, he would have had time to refer it straight to the General Manager, who would then be able to confer with a couple of other local clubs and source an appropriate existing policy. The easily reworded document is then circulated well in advance of the meeting for comment. Come the actual meeting, a new policy for the club, previously agreed and proven to have worked in a similar background, can be formally signed off without any undue delay.

Relieved of lengthy discussions over trivia, the Board then has the sufficient time and energy to properly consider the important tractor purchase. To summarise: the input of General Manager and Greenkeeper/ Course Manager into the meeting agenda is vital.

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Discuss and resolve any remotely controversial matters with all committee members prior to the meeting to ensure there are no lengthy debates or nasty surprises.

We, the greenkeepers, need to identify our professional objectives for the meeting and work to achieve them. The Chairman will very soon recognise us as the professionals – because we make his job easier.
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Paul Worster, recently elected onto the board of FEAGA, takes a look at Golf Club Committee Meetings and states how, by helping to steer them, the Greenkeeper can become more central to the needs of the golf club business in today’s difficult times.
Recruitment

Vacancy for Assistant Greenkeeper

Pannal Golf Club

SEASONAL ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER

Pannal Golf Club, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

In line with our business needs and aims, we are looking to recruit an experienced Seasonal Greenkeeper from late April to late September 2013. Greenkeeping Certificates would be an advantage. Own transport essential.

Working week 7.00am – 3.30pm Monday – Friday, together with some weekend overtime.

Please send your CV to Neil Douglas, Managing Secretary at: Pannal Golf Club (Harrogate) Ltd, Follifoot Road, Pannal, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 1RS

Or by email: secretary@pannalgolfclub.co.uk

Closing Date: 12th April 2013

Golf Course Head Greenkeeper

Melton Mowbray Golf Club

Vacancy for Greenkeeper to join its greenkeeping team.

Applicants should possess the appropriate experience to carry out routine maintenance, repairs and servicing to the club’s large fleet of turf equipment. The ability to diagnose mechanical, hydraulic and electrical faults, and to keep accurate service records, is essential. The successful candidate will also be required to assist with golf course maintenance tasks. Any experience and qualifications in this area will be a distinct advantage but not essential. Salary will be in line with CGCS recommended rates.

Closing date: 12th April 2013

Mechanic/Greenkeeper

Saffron Walden Golf Club

Vacancy for Mechanic/Greenkeeper

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Recruitment
Vacancy for Assistant Greenkeeper

PANNAL GOLF CLUB
SEASONAL ASSISTANT GREENKEEPER
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Or by email: secretary@pannalalgolfclub.co.uk
Closing Date: 12th April 2013

Golf Course Head Greenkeeper

Melton Mowbray Golf Club is a private members course opened in 1925 set in the rolling north Leicestershire county side. Arranged over 18 holes with a covered driving range and additional short game practice area.

We are seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated Head Green Keeper who must be qualified to NVQ level 3. It is essential that the individual has a good knowledge of basic IT systems. The successful candidate should have at least five years experience of green keeping, with the desire to produce the course to the highest standards.

An attractive, remuneration package will reflect the ability of the successful candidate. Please apply by email including your CV, and qualifications to: secretary@meltonmowbraygc.co.uk

Full Job Description can be supplied up on application.

Interviews will take place w/c 12th & 15th April 2013

Closing Date: 12th April 2013

SEASONAL aSSISTaNT GREENKEEPER

Saffron Walden Golf Club requires a Mechanic/Greenkeeper to join its greenkeeping team.

Applicants should possess the appropriate experience to carry out routine maintenance, repairs and servicing to the club’s large fleet of turf equipment. The ability to diagnose mechanical, hydraulic and electrical faults, and to keep accurate service records, is essential.

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Apply in writing with CV and a covering letter to:

The General Manager, Saffron Walden Golf Club, Windmill Hill Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1BX

Closing Date: 20th April 2013

GREENKEEPING VACANCY

Ransomes Jacobsen Limited manufactures and markets a range of turf maintenance equipment for the golf course, municipal and professional lawn care markets.

To demonstrate our products to new and existing customers, we have built a three-hole golf course, which is now in its fifth season.

We are currently looking to recruit a Mechanic/Greenkeeper on a two-year sponsored placement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the routine maintenance of the golf course and a 7-a-side football pitch, in accordance with our Risk Assessments and Health and Safety Policies.

As the ideal candidate you will have been working for at least a year on a golf course or four turf environment, studying at NVQ level 2 in a turf or horticulture-related subject and be prepared to continue studying to achieve NVQ level 3 in this subject.

We will actively encourage and support you in these studies and honour level 3 in this subject. We will actively encourage and support you in these studies and honour day-release obligations.

Apply in writing with CV and a covering letter to:

Carol Mellelieu, HR Director, Ransomes Jacobsen, West Road, Ransomes Europark, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9TT

email your CV to: cmellelieu@ip.ransomes.co.uk

This could be your springboard to a successful career in the turf care industry, so if you’re looking to progress and are interested in this career opportunity, please send or email your CV to:

Please send your CV to Neil Douglas, Managing Secretary at: Pannal Golf Club (Harrogate) Ltd, Follifoot Road, Pannal, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 1ES
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Advertise your recruitment here... and online for one month at www.bigga.org.uk/careers from £575+vat for an 1/8 advert

Contact Jill Rodham on 01347 833 812
As the golf season begins properly it seems many golfers will be struck by the highly contagious annual virus known as 'Augusta Syndrome'. Scott Corrigan, Head Greenkeeper at Greenburn Golf Club, grabs his stethoscope and searches for a cure.

For golf course greenkeepers, Augusta National Golf Club and The Masters is a wonderful example of what can be achieved and created with unlimited resources. I couldn't even guess at their annual course budget - but I reckon Greenburn Golf Club could comfortably survive for the next century on what they spend in a year.

We're now yet again approaching the start of a new golfing season which will inevitably be accompanied by the dreaded 'Augusta Syndrome'.

As we emerge from the wettest year on record off the back of two very wet years previously, the golf industry around the world again looks to a single date during the second weekend in April to signify the Masters tournament as the unofficial start to the golfing season.

Ever since the Masters was first televised in colour in 1967, golfers have aspired to what they thought was the next best thing, an emerald green golf course to play on every week. We all know of golfers who race back to their clubs as soon as we get to the Masters week. We all know of golfers who race back to their clubs as soon as we get to the Masters week. We all know of golfers who race back to their clubs as soon as we get to the Masters week. We all know of golfers who race back to their clubs as soon as we get to the Masters week.

But as the average golfer settles down to watch the Masters on his 46inch widescreen HD television with the central heating on full, think of the struggling superintendent and his team at Augusta National who enjoys a mindblowing budget, enjoy the use of the world's best equipment to look after the course and have thousands of man hours available each week.

Then there's the undersoil heat and sub-air systems they have on the greens, and don't forget about the large fans and lighting rigs they can utilise on those dull days with little sunlight, and all this imposed in the form of limited funds, and reduced budgets, and with the minimal manpower available.

Also be aware of the insurers that work tirelessly to produce the best courses possible with more and more restrictions imposed in the form of limited funds and reduced budgets, and with the minimal manpower available.

So golfers - please spare a thought for greenkeepers in the real world who work tirelessly to produce the best courses possible with more and more restrictions imposed in the form of limited funds and reduced budgets, and with the minimal manpower available.

Our affordable non-slip safety product for golf courses is proven to excel other methods. Installed as part of your golf clubs health and safety precautions it can help avoid slip accidents and potential liability claims.

We offer free advice with this easy to install product, that will far outlast all previous slip prevention methods. Unrivalled quality and durability means that our anti-slip panels can be installed and then forgotten.

GripClad composite anti-slip panels provide a hard wearing, long term safety solution for slippery railway sleeper steps, being resistant to spiked shoes, weather and chemicals.

A compensation claim can dwarf the cost of the solution, so why not pay a small price for peace of mind and contact Gripclad?

Tel: 023 8040 6796   enquiries@gripclad.co.uk   www.gripclad.co.uk
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But as the average golfer settles down to watch the Masters on his 46inch widescreen HD television with the central heating on full, think of the struggling superintendent and his team at Augusta National who enjoys a mindblowing budget, the pressures to prepare Augusta to perform like Rory Mcllroy or Tiger Woods.

Also bear in mind the issues that come with working with ageing infrastructure and reduced budgets, and with the minimal manpower available.

So this year, as spring approaches, have a thought for greenkeepers in the struggle of conditions that we need to anticipate and prepare for working with ageing equipment.

I hope the golfers understand it’s as realistic to expect the average golf course to look like Augusta National as it is to expect their own golf game to perform like Rory McIlroy or Tiger Woods.

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