

THE PGA PROPOSALS TO THE BGGGA

The British Golf Greenkeepers' Association, founded in 1912, is the longest established and most prestigious Association in its field. In recent years, a lack of development and poor promotion and P.R. has encouraged the formation of other Greenkeepers' Associations in the U.K. and failed to attract a large number of working greenkeepers into membership. These two factors have combined to erode the prestige of the Association and its members.

FIRST MEETING

In 1981 meetings were held between representatives of the PGA, BGGGA, and the Stewards' Associations. At that time it was felt that the climate was not right for any alliance.

More recently, the particular affinity of the greenkeeper and the Professional have become more apparent and in June 1985 the PGA invited representatives of the Executive of the BGGGA to a meeting at PGA Headquarters.

SECOND MEETING

A second meeting took place on Saturday 6th July. General agreement was reached on most issues and it was decided that the proposals should be set out in full for consideration by the Sections of the BGGGA. Once agreement is reached in principle a timetable would be evolved leading to the necessary changes being implemented within a period of 6-12 months, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors of the PGA.

The following proposal outlines plans to bring the BGGGA into the 'eighties' and give its members the status and recognition they deserve

There would be three principal objectives to the development of the BGGGA.

- (i) *the development of membership services with the aim of attracting all greenkeepers into the Association in due course.*
- (ii) *the evolution of the BGGGA into a more professional and influential organisation.*
- (iii) *the close working relationship of the BGGGA and PGA bringing a more concerted influence on golf clubs and other employers to the mutual advantage of both Associations.*

Development of Membership Services

It would be the intention to develop the services and privileges of membership to a point where everyone involved in the profession either wanted or needed to be a member.

Public Relations

The resources of the PGA, together with its existing publications could be brought to bear on a campaign of presenting the greenkeeper to the golf world as the highly qualified, dedicated and resourceful man he really is.

Magazines and Year Books

This particular aspect of P.R. could be developed immediately. It is felt that the magazine of the BGGGA could be combined with the PGA Journal. The cover would reflect the involvement of both organisations and the new publication would be a double magazine reflecting all the features and editorial of the present BGGGA magazine. The PGA enjoys having a Journal which places no financial burdens on it and it is anticipated the same facility would apply to the BGGGA. The current BGGGA magazine should be developed as a vehicle for promoting greenkeepers. A Careers Brochure should be produced similar to the one currently used by the PGA, and this too would present the BGGGA as a Professional Association concerned with recruiting the best possible assistants and offering them a thorough training and secure career.

Advice on Contracts and Appointments

A full-time Secretariat would give much greater scope for liaison and negotiation with individual clubs on members' contracts and salaries and proclaiming the case for greenkeepers in general to clubs, Golf Unions, etc. An 'Appointments' service would be offered notifying members of job opportunities and approaching clubs offering poor terms to bring them up to the standard required.

Tournaments and Members Activities

The greenkeeper is often an avid golfer and currently enjoys a programme of organised tournaments. The full resources of the PGA would be put behind developing the greenkeepers tournament programme with more attractive prizes.

Training

The training of BGGGA apprentices and members is already well-advanced and respected.

There would be no attempt to influence the training of greenkeepers and the responsibility for determining the content, frequency, location and degree of training would continue to rest with the BGGGA.

The advantage of the new alliance would be to give the BGGGA more flexibility for Managerial positions. A Diploma in Golf Management would also be available to qualified members of the BGGGA, thus equipping them with a qualification to apply for these senior positions in the future.

Expanded Services

One of the principle aspects of this proposal is the appointment of full-time staff by the BGGGA backed up by the existing resources of the PGA.

(ii) Evolution of the BGGGA

The current organisation is bottom-heavy and unwieldy. There is insufficient professional representation and the time-consuming administration of a major national Association is carried out by elected representatives trying to make a success of their own jobs and run the Association at the same time.

A similar re-organisation would lend itself ideally to the future long-term interests of the BGGGA.

Development of Regions

The present sections meet regularly and an elected representative sits on the Executive. Individual members and sections would still enjoy the same representation if the sections - still retaining their own identity were formed into four or five Regions. Each Region would then elect a member to serve on the National Executive comprising six or so members.

The full-time Secretary would attend the meetings of the Regions in order to service the Committee and bring a consistency to proceedings.

This system has brought the PGA out of the wilderness into the forefront of sports bodies in twelve years. Members still control all aspects of the Association, determine the Constitution and Regulations, Subscriptions, Training Methods, etc. The full-time staff carry out the wishes of the membership and the Executive.

(iii) BGGGA and PGA Liaison

It is easy to imagine many asking "why should they do this?" or "what's in it for the PGA".

Greenkeepers and Professionals are two essential ingredients in the world of the most highly organised club-sport in the world. Yet, in many cases they are treated as necessary luxuries at best and labourers at worst.

Clubs currently employ four basic groups of staff; greenkeepers, professional stewards, and secretaries. Each is represented by different organisations and none enjoys the support of the other in times of difficulty. An alliance of greenkeepers and professionals would do much to improve their status.

Separately, these two stalwarts are a lone voice in the wilderness. Together, they will double their influence. Their basic requirements are very similar. The growth in influence and pressure eventually available to members of both organisations can only be estimated but it is a safe assumption that in time the PGA will only play tournaments at clubs with BGGGA members just as it enforces this condition with PGA members and bring other pressures to bear in the interests of members of both Associations.

It has been suggested that the PGA is seeking an alliance in order to open up greenkeeping opportunities for its members. This is not so. It is envisaged that in the future, the pro-greenkeeper will be even less likely than now. There will be those who by virtue of circumstances are sufficiently talented to qualify in both disciplines and be eligible for membership of both Associations but these will be insignificant in number and likely to become less.

FINANCE

The proposed re-organisation could be achieved by the appointment of a full-time BGGGA Secretary, based at PGA National Headquarters supported by all the resources available.

This will cost significantly more than the present system and a basic outline of the Expenditure of the initial year(s) is set out below.

	£
Salaries and National Insurance	15,000
Car Expenses	4,000
Telephone	2,000
Stationery and Postage	2,000
PGA Admin. Charge	10,000
Audit and Legal Expenses, etc.	1,000

	34,000

Note

1. These are anticipated figures.
2. They do not represent an increase of £34,000 since the BGGGA currently incurs expenditure for telephone, postal and administration expenses.
3. The PGA Administration charge is estimated to cover a contribution towards the running of Headquarters including heat, light, rates and other services including the services of a Chartered Accountant, Computer, etc. etc.

Based on current membership numbers, an increase in subscription from the present rates to £20 for head greenkeepers and £15 for Greenkeepers and apprentices would bring increased income of approximately £8,000 - £10,000.

The main increase in income would come from an increase in the membership encouraged by the new organisation and development of membership services. If, the membership was doubled, this would cover the full costs on subscriptions alone. The PGA would be prepared to support this development of the finance for a period. The increase in subscriptions may appear significant at first but should be set against PGA members paying between £70 and £80 and Trainees £40 at present.

Additional income would be encouraged from a number of external sources and pressure brought to bear on other organisations to support the development of the BGGGA with grants and donations.

It is not anticipated that the whole burden will fall on BGGGA members but it must be understood and accepted that over a period of time they must make a greater contribution if they are to enjoy a greater return.

Retention of Finance

The BGGGA will continue to control its own finances and ALL income accruing through subscriptions, donations and funds raised through activities will belong to the BGGGA. The overall control of assets will be in the hands of the PGA Board of Directors but the Board will also guarantee the financial security of the BGGGA in the future.

This same system applies to PGA Regions and the WPGA which in every respect determine their own financial income and expenditure.

The BGGGA would be financially independent but enjoy the security of the resources of the PGA.

IDENTITY OF THE BGGGA

It is clear that a number of changes will be required to the basic organisation and the Constitution of the BGGGA if the developments in this proposal are to be achieved.

- (i) The Association will be called The British Golf Greenkeepers' Association unless the BGGGA decide to change it.
- (ii) BGGGA stationery will be used.
- (iii) Headquarters will be referred to as "BGGGA National Headquarters".
- (iv) The BGGGA Secretary will wear the BGGGA badge and tie at official functions.
- (v) The BGGGA magazine will still be recognised but as a part of a joint publication with the PGA Journal.
- (vi) The BGGGA Executive will control all aspects of BGGGA activity and, in addition, have a seat on the Executive of the PGA.

CONCLUSION

The PGA feels that it has an administrative base and resources which are ideally suited to assist the BGGGA achieve a new status in the golf world. The PGA would benefit from the additional influence this would give its members as part of an alliance of golf club employees.

To be successful, members of the BGGGA would be required to have vision and determination and accept a number of developments which would make this possible.

It is envisaged that for a period of time, membership of the BGGGA would be offered to qualified greenkeepers currently in membership of other Associations. However, if these individuals, choose not to take advantage of the situation, the plans could still go ahead unhindered.

The whole object of this exercise would be to develop an Association which greenkeepers could not afford to ignore. It is envisaged that in a few years all clubs with vacancies will stipulate Membership of the BGGGA essential in their advertisements just as nearly every club specifies Membership of the PGA for appointments of Professionals.

It is the time to consider the future not only of the BGGGA, but of every individual member. A great deal of hard work and commitment will be needed to make it successful but the benefits will far outweigh the problems.

The PGA did it twelve years ago and proved that the formula works - does the BGGGA want to do it now with the help of the PGA?