

Roland Taylor looks at a few ways of making a few extra bucks for the golf club or even yourself...

BUDGET BOOSTERS

It should be said from the onset that this feature is written with tongue in cheek. It is fully realised that readers have plenty on their plates in maintaining courses to the standards that players, management and committees now demand. There are odd occasions, however, when an opportunity arises that can save money, generate extra cash and at the same time eliminate a problem.

Many courses are built in old parklands or include large areas of woodland and these require some form of management. Sometimes these sites are the responsibility of an estate manager but they can come under the jurisdiction of a course manager. While outside sources may be brought in to carry out the tree work the residues from these operations can often be put to good use. Wood chippings are ideal for pathways, especially in areas, which become water logged and muddied with all the through traffic.

At this stage it should be pointed out it is not being suggested that one should buy the equipment to carry out the operation, since hiring is usually the more cost effective option. Most tree specialists will have their own chip-

pers so it is therefore just a question of making sure the resultant material is left so it can later be easily transported to the required site.

One point worth mentioning is that when using chippings, it is a good idea to contain them in the area by putting down some edging. This can be simply made from suitable branches pegged down to form the path's borders. If large amounts of chipping have been generated they could be offered to members for use in their gardens.

This also applies to leaf mould. Every year large piles of leaves accumulate and gradually rot down, and the result is an ideal soil conditioner and mulch to suppress weeds in the shrubberies and flower beds that may surround the clubhouse or hotel complex. Again, members may be induced to buy quantities of this valuable natural product for their own gardens.

If large branches and tree trunks are available they could be sawn into logs for use in the clubs or hotels where a fire is part of the heating system. Likewise they too can be offered for sale.

For a logging operation there is a mobile unit available from Charterhouse Richmond the Lumbermate. This portable sawmill is a one-man operation with the saw bed at ground level so loading timber is safe and easy. The standard bench handles logs up to 13" and 28" in diameter. As the saw head is manually fed the rate of cutting can be adjusted to suit the timber.

Another possibility is having woodland areas coppiced. This could generate some return as timber from these is used in charcoal production and hurdle making. It also has another advantage in that by removing the tree canopy, light reaches the woodland floor and a wide variety of plants and flowers will become established. On the downside, this generates a poor return and the rotational cycle of coppicing, depending on the species of trees, can be up to 15 years.

Where new areas of trees are being planned Christmas trees could be a consideration. Again, any returns are going to be long term, but by introducing a planting cycle, a harvest could be established ever year.

Other possibilities Regrinds

Apparently there are some clubs already offering the service of regrinding members lawnmowers. Modern in-situ grinding equipment makes this operation very quick and where a club has this installed it looks a relatively good idea. However there could be a major drawback and that is the fickleness of the mower owner! It is possible that a great deal of time could be taken up dealing with what amounts to be something very petty. Also there has to be an infrastructure introduced to recover payments. Unless the workshop personnel have a great deal of patience, tact, diplomacy and time this service could create problems.

Knowledge

Greenkeepers have a wealth of knowledge and experience on turf maintenance so why not put this to good use by imparting it to others (for a fee). Anyone who is prepared to give up their time by talking or lecturing to other parties could generate extra income. It is never going to be a fortune but it can be very satisfying and enjoyable, especially if you like meeting people.

Ways of using your knowledge include:

Relate it to lawns and talk to gardening clubs in your locality.

There are plenty of amateurs who look after bowling greens that are desperate for information on how to get the best out of their patch. The same applies to football and cricket clubs. Looking after pitches often falls to a part timer with limited experience.

On the downside, you could find that all your spare time in the winter is taken up addressing these audiences.

As said at the beginning there are opportunities if one chooses to look for them, but it is very much a personal choice and careful thought needs to be taken before embarking on any ventures outside ones normal field of operation.

