



## David Golding, Education Director, seeks to inspire Course Managers and Head Greenkeepers to keep their glasses half full rather than half empty.

The grass maybe slowing down in certain parts of the country but every year the golfing season just seems to carry on well into the autumn. Indeed, as most Course Managers will tell you, we have to treat golf as an all year round sport. Members and visitors quite rightly expect the best possible conditions when they turn up on the 1st tee. You might say its easier said than done but I am witnessing some exceptional talent taking on the Course Manager's role at very high profile golf courses.

Without naming these 'young' people, credit goes to them for taking on the challenge to present their courses to a very high standard as demanded by their employers. But what are these standards? Who sets these standards? Who approves them? Who monitors them? There has to be an agreement or policy by which everybody is working to, otherwise there will be personality clashes and nobody knows what the aims and objectives are.

The GTC's representative bodies have all fully supported the use of a Course Policy Document and if your course does not have one I would suggest you visit the R&A's website, [www.bestcourseforgolf.org](http://www.bestcourseforgolf.org), and via the link to the English Golf Unions Golf Services website page a model policy document maybe downloaded. Your employers could then use this model to develop their own.

More and more clubs are adopting a sensible, responsible attitude to course maintenance and management and involving key people in writing the policy will help eliminate stress on both the Chairman of Green/Green Convenor and the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper. Some clubs that retain the services of an Agronomist should include them in drawing up the policy document.

The model policy document has all the main headings and it is then up to each club to set out its own policy. Again, access to best principles and practices can be gained via the R&A website. Most commercial golf resorts and an increasing number of private members clubs have reaped the rewards of engaging Course Managers who have promoted the use of a policy document.

Now for the half empty or half full glass! Where do you put yourself?

Are you a positive person? When driving into work in the morning are all the benefits of being a greenkeeper clear in your head or are you really hoping that all the problems you will encounter during the day will disappear by magic?

For some years now the GTC has promoted the short specialist training courses to improve the communication skills of greenkeepers and I know through the BIGGA Sections funding, which can be accessed via

Headquarters, to arrange more sessions. We all have our moments both in our work and domestic lives when we feel the glass is not just half empty but totally drained! However, by attending training courses and setting personal and operational goals we can start to become more confident in our lives. This is then reflected by improved communication with employers, colleagues and loved ones.

All too often we hear of disciplinary issues at golf clubs, which could and should never have come to an irretrievable situation. All that was needed was better communication between the different parties at an earlier stage. I sincerely hope that more and more young people enter the profession, as one of the great success stories in greenkeeper education has to be the appointment of 'young' Course Managers by the more forward thinking employers. All credit to the clubs who have appointed them and, of course, to themselves for taking up every opportunity to acquire the knowledge, experience and interpersonal skills required of today's top Course Managers.

### SUMMARY

Does your club have a Course Policy Document? If not, visit [www.bestcourseforgolf.org](http://www.bestcourseforgolf.org), where a model Course Policy Document may be downloaded. Please note there is a link to the [www.englishgolfunion.org](http://www.englishgolfunion.org) site and via the Golf Services Committee - Club Services page you will find the Model Course Policy Document.

Is your glass half empty? If so, contact either your BIGGA Section Secretary or Sami at BIGGA HOUSE, [sami@bigga.co.uk](mailto:sami@bigga.co.uk), regarding when and where the next communication training workshop is being held. You may need to contact colleagues in your area to ensure there are sufficient numbers to run a course, but surely the demand should overwhelm the funding available for these types of courses?



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