



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Peter Todd, gives his thoughts for the month

For many years BIGGA has been working away at raising the profile of the profession but it can't do this without all of us playing our part in the process.

We all wish to be treated as professionals in our specialist field by players, owners, senior management, committees etc with our ideas, suggestions and views sought in decision making. Raising our profile and gaining wider recognition for our work is very much down to us and the effort we put into shaping this by our own actions.

There are many things that help us to achieve a higher level of professionalism and project this to others -communication, image and appearances, technical and managerial expertise etc. Getting all these right requires a continued effort. We are facing an increasingly competitive world with a constantly altering work environment - changes in technology, legislation



CPD demonstrates commitment

and scientific understanding in our field. To meet these challenges we need to regularly update our skills and knowledge through what is commonly referred to as Continuing Professional Development (CPD). By adopting this approach it is possible to keep up to date with the latest developments and help inject enthusiasm and ideas into your club.

CPD will benefit you personally in your career development, helping you to gain a competitive advantage as well as your club's business. For those seeking higher rewards CPD allows you to demonstrate your commitment to continual improvement. 'Raising the bar' is what it is all about and by delivering higher standards and greater professionalism you are in a much better position to seek rewards that reflect this. Along with the financial benefits CPD will also improve self confidence and help to raise your profile in the industry.

Accreditation schemes linked to membership categories are commonplace in many professional bodies. Different terms such as Class A or Fellow can provide a series of stages that allow members the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to CPD and their level of achievements. The current Master Greenkeeper certification is different in that once achieved it is not an ongoing learning scheme. Moving to link CPD with our membership structure would send a

stronger message about the level of professionalism of members and that Learning and Development is the keystone to BIGGA. This topic is firmly on the agenda for the next sub-committee meeting and your input to the discussions would be welcomed.

Aside from CPD what else can you do to help project a more professional image? - Like it or not people do judge by appearances. It really boils down to looking businesslike and conducting yourself accordingly, if you really want to be taken seriously.

Writing reports isn't a familiar task in a mainly hands-on working environment and an experience that doesn't always come naturally to some when required to do this, so training can prove invaluable. Documents that are submitted for approval such as budgets, recommendations, technical reports etc will carry far more weight if they are carefully worded, well laid out and presented.

Meetings and presentations all require verbal communication skills and offer an opportunity to get your message across. They should be seen as a chance to show how well you have prepared, know the facts and inevitably will display to others your level of confidence on the subject matter. There is no doubt that doing your homework is paramount but equally learning the skill of presenting effectively can make

a difference. If this is an area you would like to improve on then take advantage of the presentation workshop available at Harrogate in January.

Computers and the internet have made the job of working in a more professional manner so much easier - searching for information, corresponding, on line learning, constructing documents and keeping records. For those still trying to manage without an internet connected computer in their workplace it will prove much more time consuming and less likely that you can achieve the same results. It is now a tool that has become essential to do your job professionally and this message needs feeding through to those who can speed up the provision of facilities to your office. BIGGA is providing on-line courses to assist with training in the use of computers at very modest costs to members and I hope these prove useful.

Helping members to be viewed by all concerned as true professionals continues to be an important objective of BIGGA. Gaining that recognition will only result from working together to raise standards across all aspects of our work and demonstrating this by actions. Take full advantage of all the learning opportunities available on a regular basis for you and your colleagues to keep up to date, improving and ahead.