



# Chairman's Word

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

**As the season draws to a close and winter approaches there is more time to accommodate additional staff training and education into the diary. It's important to review the team each year and plan a programme of training and education that will expand their skills.**

We all need to develop experienced, well motivated greenkeepers and this can't be achieved without investing time and money.

I think of staff as the club's biggest asset, not the buildings nor the machinery and so allocating time and funds each year to improve the team is always a priority and a good investment.

Learning and development is such a broad subject when related to our industry but for planning/budgeting purposes I tend to look at it in several distinct areas.



Peter listening intently during a Workshop at this year's Harrogate Week.

## Make the Most of Learning and Development Opportunities

On operator training, what we must do - essential certificated training such as NPTC pesticide application that is required under regulations, what we would like to do - certificated training such as NPTC ride on mower operation that is desirable but not obligatory and in house training.

Greenkeeping education can be delivered from a wide range of sources including in house learning, college courses, seminars and BTME and Continue To Learn during Harrogate Week.

Spreading the opportunities across the whole staff and meeting all their different individual needs is the challenge, working within budgetary constraints.

Many forms of education are available at minimal cost other than the time commitment, ranging from in house learning to visiting fellow greenkeepers at other courses and attending seminars sponsored by the trade.

We are hosting one at the club this month with key speaker Karl Danneberger, Turfgrass Professor at Ohio State University.

BTME and Continue to Learn during Harrogate Week this year provided a whole range of workshops, seminars and opportunities to improve you and your staff's knowledge including many of which were available at no charge to BIGGA members

or at a reduced cost. Lots of you took advantage of these and more is planned for this January with an expanded programme to accommodate the increasing uptake.

Every year there are many opportunities to be a volunteer at a number of golf tournaments up and down the country which can provide staff with a valuable opportunity to experience course preparation for professional events and mix with greenkeepers from lots of courses at the same time.

Taking all your team on visits to other courses helps them gain an understanding of different conditions, resources available and expectations.

These visits are easier to fit in during winter and can also be reciprocal arrangements with other clubs.

Swapping staff with other courses both here and abroad can also broaden their horizons or allowing staff unpaid leave in winter to work for several months in the warmer parts of the world can all help with their development.

This sharing of ideas, experience and knowledge with each other is one of the key ways that we all learn and improve. Creating opportunities for all your staff to meet other greenkeepers can bring the same learning benefits that predominantly Head Greenkeepers and Course Managers gain from their contacts.

When dealing with an issue or problem on your own it can be a great relief to know that you can call another greenkeeper and talk it over.

Having regular contact with others gives you the chance to keep things in perspective, get someone else's opinion and keep you open minded to all the options available.

Particularly during times when everyone is under pressure to deliver more for less it is useful to benchmark with others and discuss solutions.

Don't isolate yourself - get along to seminars, BIGGA events etc and take all the opportunities you can to meet and learn from others.

Harrogate Week this January will be a great opportunity to meet with fellow professionals - the Continue to Learn programme is available to book and I looking forward to joining as many of you as possible in what is always a great week and time well spent.

**Peter Todd**  
National Chairman