



# Chairman's Word

Halfway through his term, BIGGA Chairman, Paul Worster, looks back at performance and forward to success

So far, so good?

**Six months of my term as Chairman have now elapsed and the messages people kindly send to talktopaul@hotmail.co.uk have prompted me to consider where we are now and where we need to be going.**

By way of brief explanation BIGGA has an elected (volunteer) Board who are responsible for policy making and implementation. The Board determines the duties of the Chief Executive (CE) who then administers the Association's affairs under the general instruction of the Board, i.e. the CE produces a Business Plan and supervises the professional HQ team to achieve the Business Plan.

It is an honour for me to serve this Association and to work with the Board and the HQ team. At the AGM in January the members attending indicated that they wanted me to take an active role in the business and gave me their mandate to work with the HQ team and our hard working volunteers to make BIGGA the best membership organisation anywhere (See my March column).

I freely admit - this is a rather 'all-encompassing' vision and one that will need continuous effort and attention. However, six months ago I expressed the belief that we already have the leadership, the professional HQ team and the infrastructure (populated by really great volunteers) to achieve this goal and I still feel the same.

My confidence that we can achieve this aim was reinforced recently by Tracey Maddison at HQ who kindly gave me an excellent brief on how we can all contribute to recruiting more members. Her great ideas, and more, will feature in a later column and I hope will become a major drive for the Association. For now let's look at some success measures and consider what might still need to be done by your Chairman and Board.

At a FEGGA Seminar in February, I gained insights into how successful membership organisations are measured. These measures assess the way an association operates as

a business, and make no mistake – BIGGA is a business – and like any other it needs to be managed well.

## 1: A Customer Service Culture

I am grateful to the Chief Executive for his efforts; particularly the personal example he sets with his customer focus. Our trade partners are also our customers as are our volunteers at all levels.

Let me be clear now – your Board and staff members are deeply committed to ensuring that we continue to improve the ways we offer our services and interact with our members. *Please also see my April column.*

## 2: The Alignment of Products and Services with the organisation's mission

Our mission statement reads – 'BIGGA is dedicated to the continuing professional development of its members and in serving their needs will strive through education and training for standards of excellence in golf course management throughout the greenkeeping profession'.

Your Board are keen to advance the profession through CPD and, with the expert guidance of Sami Collins, the Learning and Development Sub-Committee are working energetically to expand the take-up of CPD. See my June column.

I will continue to strive to meet this 'take-up' challenge through key activities like: the (soon to be updated) BIGGA CPD Accreditation scheme; and a specific event for Assistant Greenkeepers at Harrogate Week 2011. *See my May column.*

## 3: Data Driven Strategies

I am also grateful to Board members for their often heroic efforts to formulate clear strategies and make wise decisions. I will continue to encourage Board members and HQ staff to gather the key data that our three-tiered structure makes accessible to us.

It is so important that the Board makes informed decisions based on up-to-date information from a wide range of sources.

## 4: Dialogue and Engagement

I am grateful to the Board for all that they do to represent the aspirations of their members at all levels.

I will encourage Board members and HQ staff to ensure that we respond to this key challenge by supporting local volunteers with events like BIGGA Regional Open Days; BIGGA Volunteers Workshop at Harrogate Week 2011.

*Please also see my March, April and June columns.*

## 5: CEO is a broker of good ideas for the Board

I am grateful to the Chief Executive who has not only brokered good ideas but seen their wider potential e.g. expanding the 'Careers Clinic' at Harrogate Week into a 'Careers Fair' complete with Job Wall.

## 6: Organisational Adaptability

Although a small outfit like BIGGA HQ may be vulnerable to sudden skills shortages requiring an up-to-date Succession Plan and cover for key roles - its size means it can move swiftly: - adapt to unforeseen market conditions; - optimise the way it delivers its services.

I will actively encourage your Board to ensure that the Association's organisation and resources, as well as its products and services, are aligned to its mission.

## 7: Alliance Building

I am grateful to the Chief Executive for his hard work over many years to build meaningful partnerships with key trade and sporting bodies.

I will actively encourage your Board to ensure that we continue to form advantageous alliances with organisations in the golf sector.

So far, so good.

In closing let me mention that your Board recently honoured Cecil George with the BIGGA Lifetime Achievement Award.

The vision of Cecil and people like him (who helped develop formal training for Greenkeepers) continues to help BIGGA to be where it should be i.e. in the forefront of the advancement of the greenkeeping profession.