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GREENKEEPER INTERNATIONAL

The official monthly magazine of the
British and International Golf Greenkeepers
Association Limited.

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IN PEOPLE



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ISSN: 0961-6977

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Greenkeepers Association Limited

WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



A golf club without a golf course is what..?

Boy, has it been a difficult year. No, it's not an extract from Tiger Woods' diary, but a feeling that has been around for a while.

Having entered the year deep in recession we then had a General Election which culminated in an announcement that, while we all knew we were in a bit of a mess financially, it was, in fact, worse – much, much, worse and we would all need to bite a very large bullet for a very long time. Everyone, that is, except the bankers who got us into this mess but who were, all of a sudden, announcing record profits and trousering huge bonuses once again.

For the rest of us, we shall be looking over our shoulders trying to avoid P45s and wondering what sort of affect 20% VAT will have on us on a day to day basis.

Amid all of this golf clubs will have to make ends meet.

I've never served on a Golf Club Committee but I can fully appreciate how difficult it must be to sit around a table knowing that you are spending more than you are taking in. In those circumstances there are two ways forward – generate more income or make cuts. In the current climate the quicker method is the latter.

The biggest expenditure at any golf club should be the maintenance of course, so it is likely that the course would be identified as the area where cuts could be made. When push comes to shove most budgets can be squeezed a little, and capital expenditure projects mothballed for a period, but it all has an impact on the finished product.

But recently we have heard tales of golf clubs making their Course Manager redundant and the responsibility for the maintenance of the

course being passed on to the committee or another, non-greenkeeping member of staff.

Now you wouldn't decide to cut your holiday costs by removing the pilot and flying the plane yourself on the basis that you'd watched Top Gun twice, or have a go at removing your partner's tooth on the back of info you'd picked up from the Internet, but for some reason everyone thinks they can look after a golf course.

The long term prognosis for any golf course managed by non-professionals cannot be good, and a downward spiral is notoriously difficult to reverse, but unfortunately stupidity is not a crime and if a club decides to take this path, if it abides by employment law, there is little to stop it.

I would urge golf clubs to protect the fundamental reason they exist and, wherever possible, retain the staff who can ensure the best quality golf course, given the level of resource available. The alternative is not worth considering because a golf club without a golf course is what...?

Work with your Course Manager to produce as good a product as possible over the medium term, knowing that when better times return you will be best placed to step up a gear and grab the new golfing business that is out there.

Scott MacCallum
Editor