



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Andrew Mellon, gives his thoughts for the month

Come rain or shine

I was very saddened, as a great many of you will have been, to hear about the passing of two of our colleagues, Ian McMillan, and Sid Adam, who worked at Walton Heath GC and Hamilton GC respectively.

I am sure that all our members would like to share their sincere condolences with their families and friends during this difficult time.

As the Golf season gets well and truly underway, Greenkeepers and Sports Turf Managers throughout the industry will all be facing up to the challenge of producing the best conditions possible at our respective Golf Courses and Sports facilities.

As ever, Mother Nature will be playing her part, and whether it is too much rain, or too little, too windy, too hot, or too cold, we have to come to accept that it is our task as professionals to work with what we get, and make the best of it with the resources we have to hand.

The resourcefulness, adaptability, and initiative demonstrated by those working in our profession never ceases to amaze me, and the dedication to their work and pride in the results is something we seem to have an abundance of within our membership.

In last month's magazine the anonymous article demonstrated the frustration felt by some, when dealing with employers and customers who choose to be critical of the course, or as it was portrayed, interfere in the management of the course.

This presents a dilemma.

I have come to accept that, no matter what you do, you will never satisfy everyone, all of the time.

Some will always choose to identify and pick up on what they perceive as the faults.

What we need to accept is that sometimes these matters can be genuine concerns, and we need to work with our employers to clearly identify the real issues, if they exist.

It is crucial that we remain open to, and willing to accept criticism, but that we react positively and constructively to identify real issues and show how we can address them.

Describing our customers as "amateur" in what will probably be perceived in a negative manner, may not be the best approach

if we want the customer and employer to recognise our frustrations, far better to show interest and engage with the customer and get to the real heart of the problem.

Communication is the key, and setting expectations, communicating what is being done, what impacts matters both within and without our control are having on the end product, will ensure that the employer recognises that you are producing the best you can with the resources made available to you.

Sharing these difficulties through our network, for example, on our bulletin boards, or at meetings and seminars will give you the opportunity to discuss and share positive ideas and gain from the experiences of all your fellow members.

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We are all too well aware that many businesses are facing tougher financial conditions and that many are being asked to tighten their belts.

I'd encourage you to be proactive in this regard in making sure you are putting forward sensible proposals which can contribute to the overall picture.

The managers of the business, including the Greenkeepers, need to be in a position to make informed decisions, aware of what the potential benefits and consequences of those decisions are.

It is far better that you put the business in a situation to do that, and be respected for being practical.

When you are not coming up with solutions, someone else might, and it may be too late to change them.

Working together within your team and

in collaboration with the other departments at your operations through the Golf Professional, Clubhouse managers, Secretaries, Committees, and General Managers, we can all pull together and ensure that the best possible use is made of every resource.

Remember that the Golf Course in most cases is the greatest asset of most clubs, and the employers and customers have every right to be concerned about its wellbeing.

They rely on you to be the custodian of that asset, to help them realise its full potential.

Communication is the key in showing that you are just as committed to that cause and that you are making the best use of their resources.

We have reached final interview stage for

our new CEO, and hopefully by the time you read this we may have made an announcement in that regard.

At BIGGA we also need to be in a position to make informed decisions, and I'd encourage anyone who has any concerns, or hopefully positive ideas, to contact us.

You can do this either through your section or region, where you can garner support, or direct to myself below or any of your Board members.

We are looking at how we can learn more about what the members want from BIGGA.

As we move forward, members' input is critical in ensuring the continued success BIGGA has achieved in the last 25 years.

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