

# Greenkeepers Training Committee

David Golding, GTC Education Director,  
with a monthly update



**Happy New Year everybody. Those of us lucky enough to be in employment and returning to work after the festive break, will no doubt face ongoing difficult times as the UK economy still seems to be stuck in a deep economic rut.**

We hear more and more golf clubs are struggling to stay afloat and some radical measures are having to be taken to keep the business going.

The GTC sincerely hopes that employers look to maintain and improve the standards offered at their clubs by investing in staff development.

At the majority of golf clubs, certainly in Europe, a small team of multi-skilled operatives, led by a qualified competent Course Manager has managed to work its way through previous recessions (showing my age now!).

The British greenkeeper education and training system supports those employers willing to invest in staff skills with Government funding being available through the Apprenticeship Scheme and other funding initiatives.

The Scottish and Welsh Governments have introduced schemes to support employers considering recruiting new apprentices and more recently the UK Government has proposed a Youth Contract, which again is designed to give employers funding to support the employment of apprentices.

Scotland has Employer Recruitment Incentives and Flexible Training Options available and while it is often difficult to keep track of new initiatives such as these and they are often subject to change at short notice we do encourage employers to contact their Quality Assured Centres for the most up to date information.

Greenkeepers themselves can also apply for funding for Scholarships and Bursaries available through organisations such as BIGGA and The R&A as well as individual funding initiatives such as the ILA in Scotland.

I hear more and more stories of

professionalism by Course Managers when developing their course maintenance and development budgets for their employer to consider.

"Making the case" for new equipment, materials and staff isn't easy at the best of times but all of these skills can be gained through training and a well presented case can engage an employer especially when they see the projected benefits from the proposals.

While we would always prefer golf club employers to recruit sufficient full time staff to maintain and managed the golf course to the highest possible standards we also have a tradition of using part-time and volunteers to aid the Course Manager/Head Greenkeeper.

The standards now expected at the majority of golf clubs are at levels which put demands on both employers and their employees have never been greater.

Why have standards been set so high? Clearly golf courses chosen for the televised tournaments ensure adequate resources are provided for their staff to present excellent playing surfaces for the leading golfers in the world to show off their skills, but without knowledgeable skilled greenkeepers, the game at all levels would undoubtedly suffer.

The GTC has maintained a career structure which can be used for apprentice greenkeepers to progress but also every other person employed or volunteering to play their part on and off the golf course.

I know many of today's top Course Managers have had to learn so many skills far beyond the apprenticeship and together, with helpful comments from those Course Managers who have stepped up to becoming General Managers, we must now ensure our Quality Assured Centres and Training Providers support the next generation, with quality education and training courses aligned to the National Occupational Standards recently agreed for the sector.

How can we ensure these training courses are available?

The National Occupational Stan-



The GTC is funded by:



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dards cover craft, supervisory and management skills and the knowledge required and are written in a format which can be transferred into short training courses or full qualifications.

The GTC promotes both formal and informal education and training for both greenkeepers and golf club employers.

The National Occupational Standards are sometimes better explained as UNITS and all can be delivered through training courses but to date are mainly used to cluster Units together to make up the vocational and college based qualifications.

So whether you are an apprentice, assistant or deputy greenkeeper, Head Greenkeeper, Course Manager, volunteer or Chairman of Green, the GTC can assist you to have a meaningful contribution to supporting your golf clubs business aspirations.

The GTC Quality Assured Centres are available to assist employers access all of the new Government funding from Apprenticeships, Youth Contracts to other schemes as they become available to assist trainees develop their skills and knowledge and for employers to employ "more hands"

Check out the National Occupational Standards and the GTC's Quality Assured Centres and Training Provider network on the GTC's website [www.the-gtc.co.uk](http://www.the-gtc.co.uk).