



Chairman's Word

National Chairman, Tony Smith, gives his thoughts for the month

Retirement reality hitting home

Having returned from The Open, and after a very busy couple of months for the Association, it dawned on me that this was now the first summer in half a century that I haven't been working on maintaining and improving a golf course.

It is a strange feeling to have no course or staff to manage and no club championships or major events to prepare for. I'm sure anyone who has retired will recognise that slightly unusual disconnected feeling – not only do I miss the work itself and the pride all greenkeepers take in preparing a first-class course, I also miss the daily communication (and fun) with the team, members and visitors.

No longer can I throw myself into course projects, renovations and all manner of other work.

I'm fortunate this situation is on my terms having made the conscious decision to take early retirement from Teesside, but it has led me to think about any of our members who currently find themselves out of work or who feel the potential threat of redundancy or difficulties at work.

I want all members to understand that the Association is here to help, we have specific Member Benefits that are always available - the Legal Assistance Helpline (0800 177 7891) or our Lifestyle Counselling Helpline (0844 770 1036) – but perhaps more importantly we also have a network of staff and members who can offer advice and support.

The first port of call should be your Regional Administrator who can listen to the problem, and help you find solutions. Recently the Association has heard of employment problems when the situation has progressed too far, and sadly the opportunity to genuinely assist and make a difference has passed. If you know of someone in difficulty please bring it to our attention as soon as possible.

The Association is doing all it can within the industry to improve general employment conditions for its members, but individual situations need individual, tailored help which is out there – so please get in touch at the first sign of a problem.

On a lighter note - clearly turf management is firmly in my blood, for as



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soon as I retired I found myself managing bowling greens and am currently in demand for all sorts of lawn consultancy!

By time you read this I will be in Windsor for IOG SALTEX. For a variety of reasons last year's show was considered a disappointment, but I'm hopeful for an improvement this year as the industry needs healthy, strong trade shows.

As always I'm looking forward to meeting Association members, our friends in the trade and catching up with the latest innovations.

For the third year running we have organised some excellent seminars to be held during the event. Whilst SALTEX is mainly aimed at the IOG's Groundsmen membership it is an important date in the general turf management calendar.

We are delighted to support our friends at the IOG and provide an opportunity for our members in the south east to take part in some excellent education.

The presentations are on subjects

as diverse as greens drainage, the management and construction of bunkers on limited budgets and dealing with winter disease on greens and I know it will be an informative and entertaining day.

Once SALTEX ends all the focus switches to our own exhibition, BTME in January. The team at HQ has done a superb job ensuring all the allocated stand space is now sold, and excitement is already building for this the 25th edition of our flagship event.

As we head into autumn after a good summer at last – probably the first decent one since 2006 – I hope you have all enjoyed the warm, sunny weather which we so desperately needed after last year's relentless downpours and have got plenty of work done on your courses.

I'm jealous!

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