



# Greenkeeper International



## ■ Practical Greenkeeping

Woburn's John Clarke on hosting the G4D Open

## ■ From Your Association

Our First Green initiative reaches the Home of Golf

## ■ Sustainability

We meet the award-winning team at Colmworth

## From The Gambia to Dorset

Mo Bah describes his extraordinary career journey to becoming course manager at Meyrick Park



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The magazine for BIGGA members  
Greenkeeper International exists for you, our members. Since 1987 BIGGA has helped thousands in golf greenkeeping to progress their careers, find inspiration and get involved in our varied and vibrant community. This magazine aims to reflect the passions and preoccupations of our members and we'd like you to be involved. Please drop us a line, send us a picture or post on our social media pages.

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# Welcome

I'm particularly proud of this month's magazine as it showcases the increasingly diverse nature of the golf industry. There's still a long way to go, but improved diversity will only enrich our profession and so I read with great interest Mo Bah and Tilly Vesely's stories. Likewise, our article on how the Woburn team adapted the Duchess Course to host The G4D Open for disabled golfers has some fascinating learnings that, if adapted elsewhere, will make the sport more accessible to all.

Our First Green initiative is a clear step in that direction and it has been encouraging to see the excitement this project has engendered. You only have to look at the events that have already taken place to discover what a diverse audience First Green can appeal to. I truly believe such innovative projects can overcome the issue of attracting potential greenkeepers into the profession. All it takes now is for you to get involved.

Additionally, it is clear the wider game is endeavouring to broaden its appeal. The feature on The G4D Open demonstrates the opportunity we have to encourage more people with disabilities into the sport. Accessibility has been a hot topic

“There's still a long way to go, but improved diversity will only enrich our profession”

for many years, particularly around buggy use, and many greenkeepers will be alarmed to see images of motorised transport on putting surfaces and in bunkers, but the experience of the Woburn team shows that allowances can – and perhaps should – be made. Either way, it is wonderful to see people who would naturally assume that golf isn't for them getting the chance to enjoy our great sport.

As the sport continues to enjoy the upturn in participation brought about by the pandemic, demands on greenkeepers remain high. This edition also contains news of BIGGA initiatives designed to improve knowledge and skill and I hope you find something to get involved in.



Jim Croxton  
BIGGA Chief Executive

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09



# Contents

August 2024



14



26



36



40



44

## First Cut

### 09 • Volunteer Support Team attend 152nd Open

The team prepared for their match-raking responsibilities

### 10 • GB&I Golf Forum funds Careers in Golf project

The new project will showcase career opportunities in golf

## From Your Association

### 13 • BIGGA Regional Conference dates announced

Attend a day of learning and networking in your region

### 14 • St Andrews hosts a First Green field trip

The initiative giving school pupils a practical introduction to greenkeeping has the support of The R&A Foundation

### 20 • FTMI delegates for 2024 are revealed

20 BIGGA members will take part in the programme

## Member Interest

### 25 • Get Golfing Courses Manager Ross Jones

Jones on his journey from apprentice to his current role

### 26 • Greenkeeper Files: Mo Bah

The Meyrick Park CM credits his career to one man

## Practical Greenkeeping

### 36 • Hosting the G4D Open: Woburn Golf Club

CM John Clarke describes his preparations for the event

### 40 • Managing trees on the golf course

Canterbury's CM Ray Goodsall explains the challenges of maintaining a course with an abundance of trees

### 44 • Celebrating Golf Environment Awards winners

We take a look at past winners, starting with Colmworth





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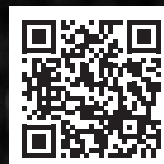
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# First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- GB&I Golf Forum funds Careers in Golf project
- A round-up of BIGGA events taking place this month



## A dream come Troon: Volunteer Support Team gather for 152nd Open

The 51 volunteers who formed The Open Volunteer Support Team gathered at Royal Troon on the eve of the championship for a demonstration of how to undertake their match-raking responsibilities.

With this magazine going to print during The Open, we will bring you some images of the BIGGA members hard at work in next month's Greenkeeper International.

You can also head to our social media channels for posts about what happened during the week.

With 96 bunkers on the course, including five protecting the Postage Stamp, the members of the support team were kept occupied throughout the championship in Ayrshire.



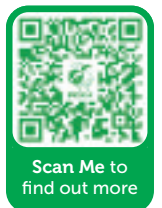
Following an introduction by The R&A's Richard Windows and Conor Finlay, Royal Troon's deputy course

manager Garry Ross demonstrated the correct way to rake a bunker for the championship. You can watch this on the BIGGA YouTube channel.

This year marked the 10th time Troon has hosted golf's oldest major, having first had the honour in 1923.

Henrik Stenson won there in stunning fashion in 2016, when a final-round 63 saw him edge out Phil Mickelson by three strokes. Their titanic final-round tussle has gone down in history as one of the greatest climaxes to a major. **GI**

**How do you rake a bunker at The 152nd Open at Royal Troon?**



## The BIGGA Calendar

August: Jake Austin, Royal Wimbledon

Download the desktop calendar by scanning the QR code



## GB&I Golf Forum funds Careers in Golf project

A new project aimed at broadening the appeal of a career in the golf industry has been launched with the support of the GB&I Golf Forum.

The Careers in Golf project is seeking to grow the industry workforce in the face of challenges, particularly in relation to shortages in the areas of greenkeeping and hospitality.

It will provide a showcase for the vast array of career opportunities available within golf and introduce the sector to new audiences.

The GB&I Golf Forum is a collaboration of leading golf organisations from across Great Britain and Ireland.

The CEOs and senior executives meet regularly, with a commitment to working together openly and productively on shared priorities for the benefit of the golf industry.

Programme Manager Jack Cole is optimistic about the impact the project will have.

"The Careers in Golf project is a new initiative funded by the GB&I Golf Forum," he said.

"The idea behind this project is to unify the way the industry

recruits and attracts people into the many varied roles we have available.

"As the programme manager my role is focussed on engaging with a wide range of people in the UK and Ireland who maybe hadn't previously considered a role in golf.

"This is done through school workshops, university engagement, veteran group outreach and engaging the general public at a range of careers events.

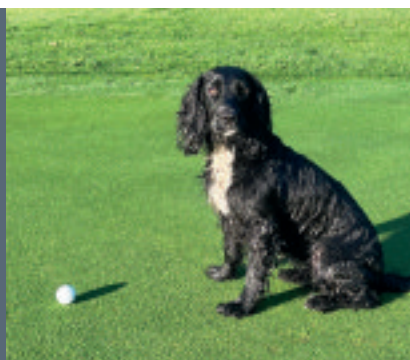
"The project is also looking to build a new website which will feature information and advice on all the careers in the sector so that people can get a clear picture on what a career in golf looks like and this will span from events, hospitality, greenkeeping, through to roles at your local golf club.

"This is a great initiative from the Golf Forum and will help golf clubs and associated golf companies recruit in the years to come in what is a very competitive employment market.

"The industry has so many great career opportunities and it is my job to make sure everyone knows about them and where to find them". **GI**

## A greenkeeper's best friend – Luna

Owner: Jake Field  
Club: Edgbaston Golf Club



**Breed:** Sprocker spaniel

**Age:** Three

**Favourite treat:** Ham

**Favourite spot on the course:** In the Lake on the 12th

**Naughtiest moment:** Picking up member's golf balls

**My dog is happiest:** When chasing geese



## What's on this month



### Dates for your diary

#### 1 August

BIGGA South East Regional Golf Day – West Surrey Golf Club

#### 7 August

East Midlands Par 3 Competition – Beedles Lake Golf Club

#### 21 August

BIGGA North West Section Summer Golf Day – Vicars Cross Golf Club

#### 22 August

BIGGA Scotland/SGCMA Managers Education and Golf Day – Kilmarnock Barassie Golf Club



Kilmarnock Barassie Clubhouse

#### 22 August

BIGGA Central Scotland Section Golf Day – Stirling Golf Club

#### 27 August

BIGGA Scotland/SGCMA Managers Education and Golf Day – Turnhouse Golf Club

#### 28 August

First Green STEM field trip – Dudley Golf Club



Dudley Golf Club



# BIGGA

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**Warren Bevan, Carus Green Golf Club**

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# From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

■ First Green initiative field trip visits the Home of Golf

■ Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists announced



## Dates for your diary: BIGGA Regional Conferences

This November sees the return of the BIGGA Regional Conferences, offering a memorable day of learning and networking in a leading venue.

Each of the five regions hosts its own event with a programme boasting high-class speakers and outstanding educational opportunities.

All BIGGA members are invited to attend and will receive a discount on tickets. Non-members are also invited to attend and get an insight into the learning opportunities offered to BIGGA members.

Full details of speakers and the schedule for each Conference will be announced in due course.

### 12 November

BIGGA Conference - Scotland and Northern Ireland  
Doubletree by Hilton, Dunblane

### 13 November

BIGGA Conference - Northern  
Toughsheet Community Stadium,  
Bolton

### 14 November

BIGGA Conference - Central England  
King Power Stadium, Leicester

### 19 November

BIGGA Conference - South West & South Wales  
Somerset County Cricket Ground,  
Taunton

### 20 November

BIGGA Conference - South East  
American Express Stadium, Brighton  
**GI**

The BIGGA National Board is comprised of the following members who volunteer their time to support the association:  
Gordon McKie, Jack Hetherington, Antony Kirwan, Andrew Laing, Iain Macleod, Lucy Sellick and Andy Smith  
BIGGA President John Keenaghan, BIGGA Chairperson Steven Lloyd

# First Green and the Home of Golf



## St Andrews plays host to a field trip as the initiative gets R&A Foundation support

**The Home of Golf joined the growing list of venues to host a First Green field trip as it was announced the initiative had the support of The R&A Foundation.**

Following on the heels of England's Royal Liverpool and Bedfordshire golf clubs, primary school pupils in St Andrews got a hands-on look at what it takes to be a greenkeeper, with the world-famous links becoming the first venue in Scotland to host one of the innovative field trips.

First Green offers interactive and practical learning opportunities, with BIGGA having designed a set of 13 lesson plans to guide greenkeepers on how to run STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) based sessions for young people aged nine to 14.

The lesson plans highlight the important and skilled work of greenkeepers in maintaining a golf course to a

high standard for players while also helping to protect the environment. Host greenkeeping staff will typically co-ordinate a two-to-three-hour showcase of their greenkeeping skills and are encouraged to utilise these lesson plans to help them.

The initiative raises awareness of the professional opportunities presented in golf and greenkeeping, with The R&A Foundation confirming First Green among its beneficiaries.

Jackie Davidson, director – golf education at The R&A, said: "We are delighted to support First Green – a golf industry initiative to inspire the next generation of greenkeepers – and promote the STEM skills found in golf.

"It is important for The R&A to support greenkeeping initiatives, and the education pathway for greenkeeping





and agronomy, given the overall importance of this sector to the industry."

Further field trips are planned throughout the rest of the year at Clevedon, Dudley and Woburn.

BIGGA members are encouraged to attend an event in their area, with CPD credits available for those who lend a hand.

Dean Butterworth, deputy course manager at Bedfordshire GC, issued a rallying call for other clubs to get involved.

"It's been great fun with the kids, and I think they've all taken something away from it and enjoyed it. We had some great questions," he said.

"We were quite out of our comfort zone to start with, but it's been great, and I'd highly recommend it to any other clubs who want to be involved." **GI**

### About First Green

First Green is an innovative environmental science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education outreach programme using golf courses as hands-on learning labs. The initiative aims to introduce young people to the career opportunities available in golf and showcase the skills required for these roles. In doing so, First Green hopes to inspire the next generation of greenkeepers.

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# Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Finalists announced



Ten student greenkeepers have a chance of winning once-in-a-lifetime prizes

The names of the 10 hopefuls in the running to claim the top prizes at the Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards have been revealed.

The nominees boast a wealth of collective talent beyond the world of greenkeeping, with a county cricketer, a heavy metal guitarist and a former IT recruiter with a love of ju-jitsu among the contenders.

Now entering its 35th year, the awards sponsored by Toro and Reesink UK have long been recognising and rewarding some of the most promising talents in the industry, with many finalists having gone on to enjoy stellar careers.

The 2024 awards will take place at Oulton Hall in Leeds from 2-4 September, when the finalists will compete in a series of challenges

designed to test their technical knowledge and passion for the greenkeeping profession.

BIGGA Learning and Development Manager Deb Burnett said: "Whether joining the industry fresh from full-time education or opting to switch after a career elsewhere, our finalists are a diverse group, but they demonstrate the extraordinary talent that is present in today's golf greenkeeping industry."

The winner of the Student Greenkeeper of the Year award will gain enrolment in an internationally recognised 10-week turf management remote study course at the University of Massachusetts' Winter School, a one-week placement at a UK or overseas golf course, and an all-expenses paid trip to the USA to visit Toro HQ, R&D and manufacturing. [GI](#)

## Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists:

- Patrick Brown, greenkeeper at Wentworth Club and student at Berkshire College of Agriculture
- Jack Chapman, apprentice greenkeeper at The Grove and student at Capel Manor College
- Matt McCreadie, greenkeeper at Tadmarton Heath GC and student at Myerscough College
- Jack Vowell, greenkeeper at Farrington Park GC and student at Bridgwater & Taunton College
- Jack Wellings, greenkeeper at JCB Golf & Country Club and student at Myerscough College

## Toro Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists:

- Morgan Bowen, greenkeeper at Nevill GC and student at North Kent College
- Alex Fox, apprentice greenkeeper at Woodhall Spa GC and student at Bishop Burton College
- William Moore, apprentice greenkeeper at Kilworth Springs GC and student at Myerscough College
- Daniel Parker, greenkeeper at Knighton Heath GC and Sparsholt College
- Cameron Redden, apprentice greenkeeper at Strathmore Golf Centre and SRUC Elmwood College



2023 Finalists



# Historic clubs to stage BIGGA National Championship 2024

This year's event will take place at two of the oldest golf clubs in the world



Two Edinburgh clubs - the

Royal Burgess Golfing Society and Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society - will set the stage for the association's biggest annual golfing event on Monday 7th and Tuesday 8th October.

A new format this year will see the field split, with half playing on each course each day - similar to the Alfred Dunhill Links, which concludes on Sunday 6th October at

St Andrews.

Prizes are available for best overall gross score, daily and overall Stableford, a combined team score, best affiliate score and daily longest drive and nearest the pin prizes.

A dinner will be held at Bruntsfield Links after play on day one.

There will be prizes up to the value of £2,000, including the BIGGA National Challenge Trophy (Scratch Medal over 36 holes) and the Challenge Cup (Stableford over 36

holes) along with daily winners from three different handicap categories.

There is also a team event on day one with the top four scores from players from each region being counted.



Entries are open now and cost £110 per person, including two rounds of golf, the dinner and refreshments across both days. **GI**

## Experienced turf educator Rob Phillips joins GTC



Rob Phillips has been appointed Learning & Development Manager - Technical at The Greenkeepers Training Committee (GTC).

An experienced turf educator and former golf course manager, Rob will be responsible for managing the technical elements of greenkeeper training in the UK, including the activities of The GTC.

Rob was previously head of

land-based apprenticeships at Berkshire College of Agriculture and spent six years as a trainer, assessor and programme manager for greenkeeping apprenticeships. Prior to that he spent 30 years as a greenkeeper and is also an independent end point assessor for the certification awarding bodies City & Guilds and LANTRA.

As part of BIGGA's Learning & Development department, Rob will work alongside the existing team

in their mission to enhance the association's various educational initiatives, the continuing professional development scheme and the wider efforts to attract people to the industry.

BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton said: "With almost 40 years' experience, including seven years focusing on the training of student greenkeepers, Rob was the outstanding candidate for this position and we're delighted he has joined the association." **GI**

# Bryson DeChambeau's praise for greenkeepers was a timely boost



Lucy Sellick, Director, South West and South Wales

In a world where negative voices are often the ones we hear most clearly, it was a joy to witness a major champion heap praise on greenkeepers.

The US Open provided plenty of drama for everyone watching, but the highlight for me came after all the action was over and champion Bryson DeChambeau was being interviewed.

He took the time to highlight the brilliant work of the greenkeeping team at Pinehurst, who produced a course befitting the occasion.

"One important thing is the greenkeepers and greens crew out here," he said while clutching the trophy. "They did an incredible job keeping this golf course in spectacular shape. Thank you very much for your continuous hard work every single day out here to keep this championship the way it needed to be – hats off to you."

To have someone of his stature using his platform, particularly at a moment when millions of people will have been watching, was a tremendous boost not just for the team at Pinehurst, but for the greenkeeping industry as a whole.

The work we do can often go unappreciated and there are times when it seems



Bryson DeChambeau

**“We want to put our skills to the test. The praise is a nice bonus!”**

the only feedback we get is criticism, so knowing that someone like Bryson recognises and respects the role of greenkeepers should make us all feel proud.

We can hopefully look forward to more of that kind of recognition when Thank A Greenkeeper Day comes around on 10 September, affording all those who love the game an opportunity to express their gratitude to greenkeepers for the vital

role they play in making it possible.

Of course, we don't do it for the praise; we love the job and do it because we want to put our skills to the test and deliver the highest possible standards. The praise is a nice bonus!

As a head greenkeeper, part of my responsibility is to make sure that my team at Wenvoe Castle feel appreciated for all the hard work they do.

This year has been a tough one at times but the expectations from the outside remain the same. I always seek to ensure my staff are working in a supportive environment and I'm there to help them in any way I can.

We have a motto that nobody's work is done until everybody's work is done, and that means everyone helps each other out. That's the essence of team spirit, and at the end of it all there's always a nice bacon and egg roll to look forward to! **GI**



# Avoncrop Amenity Products Announce New Business Development Manager



Avoncrop Amenity Products has announced the appointment of Matthew Nutter as their new Business Development Manager.

Matt joins the company with a wealth of experience in the turf industry. Following a 3-year Turf Science and Sports Grounds Management course at Myerscough College, Matt enrolled on the Ohio State

Program which provided him with an opportunity to work at the Pelican Marsh Golf Club in Naples, Florida.

Upon his return to the UK, Matt landed a position as Greenkeeper at the Wisley Golf Club before progressing through the ranks to Deputy Head Greenkeeper and Spray Technician. With a significant amount of experience in a Deputy Head Greenkeeper position, he embarked on a new challenge in the same role at East Berkshire Golf Club before quickly being promoted to Course Manager.

The past 7 years Matt has worked for ICL as Area Sales Manager. Working closely with many course managers and groundsmen, Matt has made a great reputation for himself within the industry. Matt is both BASIS and FACTS qualified and together with his industry experience offers sound advice to many turf managers.

"I am excited to be joining such a high-profile company and market leader and to still be involved in the industry I love. The past 7 years at ICL have been invaluable and I am thankful to all the team there. I now look forward to growing the relationship with ICL and other key manufacturers as well as supporting key customers and forging new ones" says Matt.

Johanna McCloskey – Managing Director, Avoncrop Amenity Products says "The whole team at Avoncrop are delighted to welcome Matt onboard. We really see the benefits he can bring to the team with his knowledge, connections, and passion for the turf grass industry. I look forward to working with Matt and continuing to grow the Avoncrop brand".



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# FTMI class of 2024 revealed

The FTMI delegates for 2024 have been announced, with the latest ambitious intake of aspiring course managers preparing to embark on a potentially career-defining journey.

Each year, Jacobsen and BIGGA invite 20 up-and-coming association members to participate in the intensive training programme, which has been credited with developing some of the industry's most influential course managers and head greenkeepers.

First hosted in 2013 as a two-day education event, FTMI has since expanded around the world, with

similar schemes now operating in Spain, Portugal, Australia and New Zealand.

Jack Wellings, senior greenkeeper at JCB Golf and Country Club, was among the 2023 intake and he revealed the wide-reaching impact it has had on him.

"It has completely changed me as a person in a positive way," he said. "From when we started in Ipswich to now, I feel like a different person."

"You go in on that first day and there's 25 people you've never met, and you come out of it thinking you've got 25 people who are going

to be friends for life.

"I knew what I wanted before and doing this whole process has made me want it 10 times more."

Delegates will be assigned mentors, who this year will all be FTMI graduates, with the programme getting under way at Jacobsen HQ in Ipswich in September.

Between October and December, delegates will undertake online educational sessions on topics including budgeting and mental health, while in January they will attend two days of intense in-person training during BTME in Harrogate. [GI](#)

## The FTMI class of 2024

**Miles Burnett**, deputy head greenkeeper, Stonehaven

**Mark Downing**, deputy head greenkeeper, Launceston

**Edoardo Fauro**, deputy head greenkeeper, Walton Heath

**Stuart Fergusson**, first assistant, Trump Turnberry

**Ryan Fiander**, deputy head greenkeeper, Lees Hall

**Haydn Gray**, first assistant, Royal Cinque Ports

**Stevie Hood**, first assistant, Crownwood

**James Hyman**, first assistant, Berkshire

**Dan Martin**, irrigation manager, London

**James Massey**, deputy course manager, Wilmslow

**Matt McCreadie**, greenkeeper, Tadmarton Heath

**Gary Morrison**, deputy course manager, Bruntsfield Links

**Sam Norman**, first assistant, Abbey Hill

**Peter Pattenden**, senior greenkeeper, Carden Park

**Daniel Robson**, first assistant, Castle Eden

**Jarno Ruscoe**, deputy course manager, Yeovil

**Andrew Sellars**, senior greenkeeper, The Grove

**Charlie Sorrell**, first assistant, Seaford

**Mark Viner**, deputy head greenkeeper, Ogbourne Downs

**Gary Wilson**, senior greenkeeper, Western Gailes



# #ThankAGreenkeeper Day – 10 September



BIGGA is proud to host Thank A Greenkeeper Day each September, when those who love golf are invited to show their appreciation to the hardworking professionals who make the sport possible.

This year's event takes place on 10 September and has been named as one of the initiatives being supported by The R&A Foundation.

Greenkeepers strive to deliver the best playing conditions for golfers while maintaining a keen focus on environmental stewardship, pouring their time, effort and expertise into tasks that go largely unseen.

Their diligent work allows people across the world to enjoy the game of golf at all levels, and this special day is when those who benefit have the chance to express their gratitude.

Utilising the hashtag #ThankAGreenkeeper, this dedicated day of thanks is a social media movement, seen

by millions of people far and wide, and creates a real positive impact on the working lives of our golf course professionals.

Last year, tributes flooded in from across the world of golf, and already in 2024 there have been messages of support from Jimmy Bullard, Peter Crouch and Joe Cole, as well as reality TV star Mark Wright, social media influencers Mia Baker and Gaz Beadle and Sky Sports personalities Kirsty Gallagher and Trey Niven.

"Big thank you to all the greenkeepers in the world," said ex-England star Cole.

"You're doing a fantastic job. Keep up the good work."

As we approach Thank A Greenkeeper Day 2024, BIGGA will be working alongside our colleagues at superintendents' and course managers' associations - representing more than 31,000 golf course management professionals in 78 countries - to make the day a success. **GI**

## Thank A Greenkeeper Day 2023 in numbers

More than

# 4,500

posts made using  
#ThankAGreenkeeper  
and #ThankASuper –  
30% increase on 2022

# 14.7

million global  
impressions – 40%  
increase on 2022

# 7

million impressions  
via broadcast media  
(BBC) in the UK

# 11.2

million impressions  
in the US through  
Golf Channel

Almost

# 30

million total  
impressions globally  
across social and  
broadcast media

# Welcome to our new members

## International

**Matthew Marsh (I)**  
Mesa Verde Country Club, USA

**Jonas Friedrich (I)**  
Golf Club Bad Ragaz, Switzerland

## Scotland

**Joseph Arnott (AGK)**  
Carluke

**Connor Eccleson (AGK)**  
**Luke Manson (DHGK)**  
Muir of Ord

**Alastair Riddle (AGK)**  
Bellshill

**Josh Lothian (AGK)**  
Luffness New

**Greig Clark (GK)**  
**Jamie Campbell (GK)**  
**Barry Anderson (GK)**  
Carnoustie Golf Links

**Christopher McCloy (GK)**  
**Jerrard Craig (GK)**  
Erskine

**Josh Patterson (GK)**  
Trump Turnberry

## Northern

**Adam Hall (APP)**  
**Lee Lowes (APP)**  
Centurion Park

**Kieran Carter (APP)**  
Blackwell Grange

**Lewis Harrison (AGK)**  
Bondhay

**Lewis Upton (AGK)**  
Llandudno

### Key

**A** Affiliate Member  
**AGK** Assistant Greenkeeper  
**APP** Apprentice  
**ATP** Approved Training Provider  
**CA** College Assessor  
**CM** Course Manager  
**DCM** Deputy Course Manager  
**DHGK** Deputy Head Greenkeeper

**FA** First Assistant  
**GK** Greenkeeper  
**G** Groundsperson  
**HGK** Head Greenkeeper  
**HG** Head Groundsperson  
**I** International Member  
**L** Life Member  
**M** Mechanic

**P** Partner  
**R** Retired Member  
**RP** Regional Patron  
**S** Supporter  
**ST** Student Member  
**SUP** Superintendent



**Jennifer Brooks (AGK)****Connor Mason (AGK)**

Blackburn

**David Jones (AGK)**

Hallamshire

**Luke Thompson (AGK)****Thomas Coote (AGK)****Pierre Clarkson (AGK)**

Rudding Park

**Reece Wilely (AGK)**

Kirkbymoorside

**Matt Stevens (AGK)**

Ghyll

**Daniel Cullen (HGK)**

Pwllheli

**Josh Simpson (AGK)**

Thorpe Park

### Central England

**Jason Barnett (A)**

Sleaford

**Scott Rowan (AGK)**

Redditch

**Oliver Maltby-Smith (AGK)****Jack Taylor (AGK)****Craig Wallis (GK)**

Sherwood Forest

**Adam Johnson (AGK)****Ben Rowland (GK)**

Frilford Heath

**Max Thomas (AGK)**

Ashridge

**Ryan Downs (AGK)**

Trentham

**Lawrence Rees (AGK)****Cam Brown (GK)**

Kirby Muxloe

**Lewis Whitehurst (DHGK)****Joe Bailey (GK)****Kieran Arkinstall (GK)**

Cosby

**Nathan Bewley (GK)****Ben Trigg (AGK)**

Whitehill Golf Centre

**Martin Sowerby (GK)**

Penn

### South East

**Charlie Steed (APP)**

Cheshunt

**Edward Sheppard (APP)**

Bishop's Stortford

**Cameron Lombard (AGK)****Robert Welsh (AGK)**

Chigwell

**Charlie Woodfall (AGK)**

Ellesborough

**Alfie Locke (AGK)**

Hindhead

**Oliver Longhurst (AGK)**

Cuddington

**Ross Angelini (DHGK)****Andrew Furness (GK)**

Brickendon Grange

**Nikki Maclellan (M)**

Swinley Forest

**Matthew Dumont (GK)**

Moor Park

### South West & South Wales

**Patrick McIlroy (A)**

The Worcestershire

**John Deakin (AGK)**

Trevose

**Michael Harris (CM)**

Royal Guernsey

**Duncan Gray (CM)**

Gloucester

**Martyn German (GK)**

Corhampton

**Josh Hendy (GK)**

Whitley

**Sam Barton (GK)**

Tynley Park

### Northern Ireland

**Michael Campbell (APP)**

Massereene



# BIGGA

## CPD

Continuing Professional Development

Congratulations to the following members who have achieved **CPD Approved status**

Elizabeth Fairweather, Wallasey

Iain Macleod, Life Member

David Ball, Thetford

James Lindsay, Stirling

Sandy Reid, St Andrews Links Trust

Sam Evans MG, North Hants

Wallasey 4th



Congratulations to the following members who have achieved their **CPD Milestone**

David Langheim MG, Woking Football Club

Richard Colley, Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society

Sandy Reid, St Andrews Links Trust

Sam Bethell, Worlebury



Woking 3rd



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# Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- From The Gambia to Dorset - meet Meyrick Park Course Manager Mo Bah
- See the latest industry job vacancies both in the UK and further afield



## From apprentice to courses manager – Ross Jones' Get Golfing journey



**Ross Jones has ascended from apprentice to master at Get Golfing, assuming the role of courses manager with the**

**charity.**

It is a role that comes with responsibility for the 13 courses currently included in Get Golfing's impressive portfolio of venues, with the organisation on a mission to encourage greater participation.

Now in his 21st year in the profession, Ross' path to the top serves as a testament to the opportunities and growth that apprenticeships can offer.

Get Golfing has over 20 apprentices working across various clubs in roles

such as greenkeeping and hospitality, as the charity also seeks to bolster the golf industry through the support and nurturing of its workforce.

It is a route that Ross can vouch for, having completed two apprenticeships: the Level 2 Sports Turf and Amenity Horticulture, and the Level 3 Sports Turf.

"I enjoy learning and had recently completed an A-level in Environmental Science," he said.

"With a keen interest in golf and a passion for hands-on work, the apprenticeship seemed like a great option. It opened up different avenues, leading me to clubs like Wentworth West Course and the construction and grow-in of Beaverbrook Golf Club.

"Working overseas at the Shangri-la resort in Oklahoma, USA, expanded my knowledge, leading to management positions and eventually joining Get Golfing as director of courses."

Having forged his career path from hungry hopeful to seasoned pro, Ross has some words of wisdom for aspiring greenkeepers and apprentices.

"Take every opportunity, attend industry events, volunteer at competitions and build connections. The industry offers diverse career paths."

Get Golfing's venues include Ansty in Warwickshire, Cobtree Manor in Kent, Pyrford Lakes in Surrey, and Warley Park in Essex." **GI**



Greenkeeper  
Files



Mo Bah





Having almost quit greenkeeping after two weeks, Mo Bah is now the course manager at Meyrick Park. He's grateful to the man who took a chance on him one June evening in 2000 as he surveyed a green at Coombe Hill Golf Club, believing it to be a carpet

Some moments can change the direction of a person's life without them even realising it. For Mo Bah, meeting Murray Long was one such moment.

They first crossed paths more than two decades ago at Coombe Hill Golf Club, a home from home for then Course Manager Murray, but a long way from home for Mo. At 24, he had recently arrived from The Gambia in west Africa and spoke little English. If his grasp of the language was loose, his understanding of golf was practically non-existent, even if he had already technically made some money out of it.

"We only had one golf course back home, and it was sand greens," he explained. "I used to go fishing near there, and I'd hear these shouts of 'fore', and I had no idea what it meant.

"Then one day a tourist hit his shot into the water, and he came up to me and said, 'If you get that ball, I'll give you five pounds' – that was a lot of money to me, so I dived in, grabbed the ball and got my five pounds.

"I ended up doing that quite a lot, and it was a good way to make money for me!"

When he came to the UK, the nearest golf course was a drastically different sight from the one he had grown familiar with back in The Gambia.

"I lived opposite Coombe Hill, and I used to go for a walk around there. One day I was there looking at one of the greens, and I actually thought it was carpet. I knew nothing about golf or greenkeeping.

"Murray came over to speak to me. I didn't know much English, so it was hard to communicate, but he took the time to speak with me. That says a lot about Murray."

The pair understood each other well enough to make arrangements for Mo to come and help out for a brief stint to see if greenkeeping took his fancy.

After two weeks, Mo decided it wasn't for him – so how did he end up staying for five years? A ride in a golf buggy – as well as some timely encouragement from Murray – proved decisive.

"Murray persuaded me to stay," he explained. "I had been strimming around bunkers and pathways, creosoting the steps and stuff like that. I didn't really know what I was doing and felt like maybe it wasn't for me, but Murray told me that soon I'd be cutting greens and using machines, so that kept me interested.

"The thing that really got me hooked was the first time I got to drive a buggy. I had never been in one before, and it was great. I'd jump in the buggy in the morning and go and clear out the ditches."

The thrills and spills of buggy driving aside, Murray convinced Mo that greenkeeping was a career that could



provide a great deal of fulfilment.

Almost a quarter of a century later, Mo is now course manager at Meyrick Park in Bournemouth and delighted he shrugged off his initial hesitancy.

"The language barrier was an issue at first, but I got my head down and worked hard, and I just loved it," he said. "It was great to be up early in the mornings, getting out there and learning all aspects of greenkeeping. I learned so much from Murray, not just about greenkeeping but about how to treat people and how to be a good manager."

The two linked up again at Sunningdale and Ferndown, with Mo working as a spray technician at the latter. It comes as no surprise to hear that Mo is quite fond of Murray.

"Without Murray I would not be a greenkeeper to be honest. I came here from a different culture, and, I can't

lie, it was not always easy to fit in, but Murray is a different breed, and he doesn't judge anyone. He gave me a chance, and I'll always be grateful for that."

It was Sunningdale where Mo matured as a greenkeeper, stepping up to first assistant and relishing the experience of being involved at such a prestigious club.

"I was working with Murray, Jamie Wilson and Steve Richardson, and it was such a great experience. I really enjoyed my time there.

"Working on a staff of 20 to 22 people and seeing how they communicate and the attention to detail was second to none. Being involved in prep for tournaments made me realise what it takes to achieve the highest standards."

In his five-year spell there, Sunningdale hosted Final Qualifying for The Open and the 2009 Seniors Open Championship, the same year in which Mo was part of the support team at Turnberry when Stewart Cink lifted the Claret Jug. With his CV now impressively embellished by those experiences, Mo was ready to make the step up to become a course manager, and Meyrick Park offered him that chance.

Opened in 1894, the Dorset venue sits on sandy soil and benefits from excellent drainage - making it playable throughout much of the year. It certainly makes a strong initial impression, with the 1st – a 244-yard par 3 – described by Peter Alliss as one of the toughest opening holes in golf.

"It's a great little track to play," said Mo, who arrived in 2015 and has made his mark on a course that packs a lot into its 120-acre site in the heart of Bournemouth. "We had a few issues when I got here relating to thatch, so one of my first priorities was to reduce that because it was impacting on the playing conditions.

"I took some soil samples so we could understand what we were dealing with, and we've worked hard to get that under control and reduce the organic matter.

"We're happy with the conditions now. The greens are nice

**“Without Murray I would not be a greenkeeper”**







and firm.”

As Mo continues to drive up standards at Meyrick Park, he remains keenly interested in broadening his skills and understanding of greenkeeping and makes a habit of comparing notes with a number of notable course managers elsewhere in the country.

He is able to rely on a small-but-trusted team of five full-time staff and one seasonal worker, with the group’s work ethic and spirit providing one of the perks of the job for a course manager who values the happiness of his co-workers above all else.

“They’re a great bunch of lads,” he enthused. “Apart from my deputy, none of them are qualified, but they are willing to learn, and I trust them 100 per cent.

“I’m always there to offer help or advice when they need it, and I tell them never to be afraid to ask questions. But it’s me who is lucky to have them, they make my job easier, and I couldn’t do it without them.

“To be a good course manager, you have to understand

people and appreciate we all have our problems and anxieties, so it’s important to treat people well and listen to them.”

Mo has continued to add to his own experience and counts his work as part of the support team at the 2018 Ryder Cup as a major highlight.

“One of the biggest thrills of my life was meeting and working alongside some of the world’s best greenkeepers during the 2018 Ryder Cup at Le Golf National,” enthused Mo, who was invited to return for the next edition at Whistling Straits before Covid-enforced travel restrictions put the brakes on that.

“It was an exhausting week of pre-dawn starts and 12-hour days as a member of that incredible team, but it was also a tremendous learning experience and an honour to have been chosen for it.”

He is settled at Meyrick Park and lives close by with his wife and three sons, but he does feel the pull of home sometimes and would like to return to The Gambia one day.

## Mo on vandalism

Meyrick Park has fallen victim to incidents of vandalism on numerous occasions during Mo’s tenure.

Earlier this year, several greens needed significant repair work after motorbikes were ridden across them.

Mo admits the mindless destruction of a course he describes as his “baby” hurts, but he knows ultimately it is down to him and his team to restore it and move on.

“It is a difficult thing to manage because we can’t stop people getting on the course, and actually we

don’t want to,” said Mo. “We want to be part of the community, and we have people walking their dogs here and so on, and that’s great. But when some other people take it too far, and they actually intentionally damage the course, it’s heartbreaking. We put so much work in, and for someone to just do that for no reason is hard to understand.

“As a manager, I have to try to stay positive and see it as just another challenge for me and my team to overcome. It’s also important that when we do see people walking around the course, we speak to them and are polite and welcoming, and then I think they will value the golf course more and respect it more.”



## Tournament experience

The Ryder Cup, The Open, The Senior Open, International Final Qualifying – The Open

## Mo's CV

2000-2005:

2005-2006:

2006-2009:

2009-2014:

2015-2015:

2015-present:

Coombe Hill  
(greenkeeper)

New Forest  
(head gardener)

Remedy Oak  
(greenkeeper)

Sunningdale  
(first assistant)

Ferndown (spray  
technician)

Meyrick Park  
(course manager)

When he does, he will spread the word about greenkeeping in the hope that others might follow in his footsteps and create greater diversity in greenkeeping in his adopted homeland.

"I would love to see more black greenkeepers because there aren't many of us, and it's not easy to explain why.

"I plan to go home to The Gambia and travel around Africa and share my knowledge, and I will tell people if they come

to the UK or Europe, greenkeeping is a great career.

"If I had the opportunity to encourage more black people to get into greenkeeping, I would. I think it's one of the best jobs in the world.

"The things you learn about nature and wildlife, the science behind producing a great golf course, the opportunity to spend time in such lovely surroundings, the fact it's good for your health – I just love it." **GI**



## The team at Meyrick Park

Mo Bah – course manager  
 Liam Harris – deputy course manager  
 David Latham – greenkeeper  
 Ben Thompson – greenkeeper  
 Henry Garlick – greenkeeper  
 Tyler McMahon – seasonal greenkeeper



### Mo's top five tips for course managers

**1) Communication is key** – make sure everyone knows what they're doing and why they're doing it. Communication is also a two-way thing, so always be open to questions.

**2) Treat people with kindness** – we all have stresses and worries in our life. People can't always switch off from their problems, so look after them.

**3) Be adaptable** – as course managers, we always have a plan for how we would like things to be, but sometimes you have to adjust to the way things are. Have a plan B and a plan C... you may even need a plan D!

**4) Keep learning** – you never know it all, and you've never seen it all, so don't stop learning. Ask other greenkeepers about their experiences and how they've dealt with issues.

**5) Appreciate the job** – the bad days in this job are still better than an average day in some other jobs. Take time to appreciate that this is a great career.

**“I think it's one of the best jobs in the world”**

# Latest job vacancies

## Professional Golf Machinery Technicians



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As a growing company, Farol are looking for experienced Professional Golf Machinery Technicians with passion and drive to join our team at our Milton Common depot. If you have previous experience servicing, diagnosing faults and repairing golf course machinery then we want to hear from you! A highly competitive salary awaits!

**To apply for the role, please send your CV to [careers@farol.co.uk](mailto:careers@farol.co.uk).**

## Head Greenkeeper

Sion Golf Club, Switzerland



Golf Club de Sion in Switzerland is looking for an experienced Head Greenkeeper for a 100% permanent contract.

We are looking for a passionate and experienced Head Greenkeeper to join our dynamic team and maintain our GEO-certified golf course all year round.

Start date: between October and December 2024, to be agreed.

**If you are interested in this position please send your CV and covering letter to [sparatte@golclubSION.ch](mailto:sparatte@golclubSION.ch)**

**The closing date for applications is 7th August 2024**

## Head Greenkeeper

Scarborough North Cliff Golf Club, Yorkshire



A fantastic opportunity has arisen for a Head Greenkeeper to join an outstanding, progressive, private members club situated on the Yorkshire coast.

The Head Greenkeeper is a key role within the club and through leading a small team of professional greenkeepers you will be responsible for the management, maintenance, care and overall presentation of the course and supporting areas.

Applicants should possess at least 5 years' experience in a similar role with a minimum level 3 qualification in Sports Turf Management or equivalent, plus PA1, PA2 and PA6 spraying certificates. Salary dependant on experience.

**To apply, please email your letter of application with CV to [info@northcliffgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:info@northcliffgolfclub.co.uk)**

**Closing date for applications 8th August 2024**

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Royal Wimbledon Golf Club, London



Royal Wimbledon Golf Club are inviting applicants who are qualified to, working towards or wish to work towards level 2 in Sportsturf. Further qualifications such as Level 3, spraying or chainsaw certificates would be an advantage but not essential as we welcome applications from any experience level. Headline benefits;

- Salary and OT package in excess of £36,000 p.a.
- Opportunity for training, education and an encouragement for CPD.
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**Applications should be made to Nicholas Paris, Course Manager at [nickp@rwgc.co.uk](mailto:nickp@rwgc.co.uk)**

## Seasonal Greenkeepers

Sorrento Golf Club, Australia



Sorrento Golf Club, located on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, are looking to employ three seasonal qualified greenkeepers to help maintain the course over the busy spring/summer period.

The period of employment is for six months, starting from 30th September 2024 through to the 31st March 2025.

Applicants must satisfy the requirements in obtaining an Australian Working Visa.

Assistance with airfare for travel to Australia will also be provided.

**For more information, or to apply for these positions please send a detailed resume (including three referees) and a cover letter to Course Superintendent, Shane Greenhill: [sgreenhill@sorrentogolf.com.au](mailto:sgreenhill@sorrentogolf.com.au)**

## Head Greenkeeper

Widnes Golf Club, Cheshire



Widnes Golf Club is an 18 hole mature parkland course with a strong membership.

Applicants should possess the following attributes:

- Recognised greenkeeping/agronomy qualifications (min NVQ Level 3 or equivalent). PA1, PA2 & PA6 Spraying Certificates.
- Deliver high standards of course presentation.
- Motivate and manage greenkeeping team.
- Be conversant with modern equipment and technology.
- Knowledge of health & safety regulations and other relevant legislation, including risk assessments.
- An ability to prepare work programmes and meet deadlines.

This is a great opportunity for a committed, hands on, enthusiastic, motivated and hardworking greenkeeper to lead and manage a dedicated team to further develop and maintain the golf course. Salary negotiable depending on experience.

**Applications in writing with full C.V to Mrs Nicola Ogburn office@widnesgolfclub.co.uk**





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**Prestbury Course Manager Mark Crossley explains why he might not be the most popular man in Cheshire this month**



**What we do in... August**

Club: Prestbury, Cheshire

It's that time of year again when we go from hero to zero. Early August is when we see the North West's best amateur golfers play in our 36-hole scratch open, which carries world ranking points.

As this is one of our flagship competitions of the year, the team are set up for an extremely busy week. This normally includes three or four days of double hand mowing, sometimes twice daily, rolling after mowing and a close eye on nutrition and moisture levels. All to create the firmest, smoothest and fastest surfaces we can.

However, within 48 hours of the competition ending, we apply as much topdressing as we can and punch as many holes in the greens and approaches as possible during our maintenance week.

As we are content with our organic matter levels, we don't feel the need to remove any tissue so we will not tend to hollow core or scarify.

Instead, we will: topdress approximately two tonnes per green and approach; vertidrain at 50mm centres using 350mm x 12mm tine; brush using the sweep and fill; topdress applying around one tonne per green; Procure using 100 x 8mm solid tines; brush and blow to tidy.

We will then apply a low nitrogen organic fertiliser to help aid recovery and hopefully seed germination. For the last couple of years, we have used ICL's 6.2.4 Gronamic.

The following week we will then generally overseed (Vredo is our preferred method) using a creeping bent, either Riptide or 007, with a light topdressing and brush to smooth surfaces again. Our total topdressing application for August is

around 80 tonnes and annual average around 200.

Of course, members are impatient and demand the quality return as quickly as possible.

Our average August rainfall is 120mm over the last six years and we aim for full recovery within two to three weeks when mowing frequency and heights of cut return to normal.

Why August? We feel it provides the best possible solution to a disruptive but necessary operation with a quick recovery prior to the real onset of Autumn disease pressure. This window offers us the chance of firming the greens up to help extend the playing season and keep them playable throughout winter. **GI**




Prestbury



**This window offers us the chance of firming the greens up to help extend the playing season and keep them playable throughout winter"**







# Woburn shines as a beacon of inclusivity for G4D Open

Woburn Golf Club hosted the G4D Open in May, having also staged the inaugural event for golfers with disabilities in 2023

Courses Manager John Clarke reveals how the Bedfordshire venue prepared for what is the premier tournament on the G4D calendar.

**How proud were you of your team's efforts to prepare the Duchess Course for the G4D Open?**


It was fantastic hosting the G4D Open for the second year running and we certainly learned a lot working with The R&A and EDGA hosting such an inclusive event.

We have a team of 43 across the greenkeeping department at Woburn and each day 18 greenstaff were involved in preparing the course for play.

The work for any major tournament starts months in advance, but with the event held in May - particularly following such a tough autumn, winter and spring - it was very challenging ensuring a safe, playable course so early in the season.

**What were some of the practical measures required to ensure the course was accessible to all players?**

We have hosted a huge number of professional events here over the years but never one where over 100 golf buggies are inside the ropes each day, with a whole sporting class of players who drive their vehicles on to the greens

 **Having inclusivity as part of your agenda ensures improvements can be seamless and a benefit for all"**



## Woburn's Managing Director Jason O'Malley

"We pride ourselves on being welcoming and friendly and this shows our level of commitment to inclusivity. My view is that while some may see 80 golfers with a disability, they're actually just 80 players with incredible ability and it's a really good spectacle.

"If you ever want to question where you think your golf is, or how testing it is or, if you want to really get deep about it, what adversity is in life – come along this week, have a watch and see what these 80 people overcome to enjoy the sport that we love. It is nothing short of spectacular, and great to be involved with."



and into the bunkers to play and putt.

Some of the practical challenges are very similar to every tournament, but for different reasons.

The greens need to be firm enough to accommodate the players riding their vehicles, without being too firm to create additional challenge.

Green speed is also a key factor as the challenge needs to be fair for all sporting classes. The nine sporting classes include three classes of standing, two intellectual, two visual and two seated classes, making up a field of 80 players.

We worked hard to preserve multiple areas of teeing grounds for the various categories, which was really challenging after a long winter, especially with only 0.6Ha of teeing ground available on the Duchess Course.

Bunker access is one of the biggest differences to other

events we have hosted, with temporary ramps being built into every bunker to facilitate safe access and ensure the integrity of the golf course.

### What did you make of the level of media interest in the event?

The media interest certainly increased this year, as did the number of spectators.

The quality of golf on display is fantastic and the stories from many of the players are hugely inspiring.

It was also great to see the next generation of G4D players here this year, experiencing golf clinics and tuition from experts at the European Disabled Golf Association.

### What feedback did you get from players and others in





“The quality of golf on display is fantastic and the stories from many of the players are hugely inspiring”

© R&A

#### attendance regarding the course?

Not only was the player feedback about the golf course spectacular, but the fact there is now an inclusive major with the look and feel of other major championships has been really well received.

Having a players lounge, on-site physio and a golf course fully accessible for all is really great to be involved in and we hope the event goes from strength to strength.

#### Would you encourage others to take steps to ensure their facilities are as inclusive and accessible as possible?

Absolutely. Some changes only need to be small to increase accessibility so having inclusivity as part of your agenda ensures improvements can be seamless and a benefit for all.

GI

### About the G4D Open

Staged in partnership with The R&A and DP World Tour with support from EDGA, the G4D Open is a truly inclusive event. It features nine sport classes across multiple impairment groups and a field consisting of men and women, professionals and amateurs. A total of 19 different nations were represented at this year's event which, in conjunction with a series of development actions throughout the week, showcased all three stages of the player pathway from sampler, to participant, to competitor.





# The beauty and the challenge of **Canterbury's trees**

Canterbury Golf Club's trees are very much part of the furniture at the Kent venue, providing an aesthetic embellishment and a tactical challenge to golfers





Trees around the 11th at Canterbury

**While the array of alder, oak, hazel, silver birch, hornbeam, beech and willow stand ready to hinder – and perhaps just occasionally help – anyone who veers off target at Canterbury Golf Club, nobody is more preoccupied by their presence than the seven-strong greenkeeping team.**

Here, Course Manager Ray Goodsall highlights the challenges of managing such an abundance of trees with a relatively small staff.

### **Can you describe the course at Canterbury?**

I think we're in a process of bringing it out of being a hidden gem. When it was first conceived back in 1927 it was described as being literally carved out of the gorse.

You can imagine this very open terrain, which was in the hands of the MOD for training use, and it would have been grazed by livestock. I would have loved to have seen it in its original state; it would've been akin to Royal County Down.

Of course, as soon it becomes a golf course, you herd all the hooved animals off the land and the ingress of the trees starts to happen. Basically, we've ended up 90 years later with a parkland, tree-lined golf course.

### **What problems do the trees pose when it comes to maintaining the course?**

We all love trees, to the members the course looks beautiful in their eyes, but I always drive home the message that grass hates trees.

There are a number of reasons for that: airflow is a big one, which promotes disease pressure; shade, another one for disease pressure; the leaves and the roots sucking up the moisture when obviously the turf needs it.

Around greens in particular, where we cut down to 3.5mm, you can imagine how all the biological processes are compromised, including photosynthesis, osmosis and evapotranspiration. If you add shade and a lack of air movement, you're really on the back foot.

**“You can imagine how all the biological processes are compromised”**





**Above:** Ray Goodsall (r) and volunteers creating a glade through some sycamore scrub

We're potentially seeing the armoury of things we've historically used to keep disease, pests and even weeds at bay being taken away from us, which does present a challenge.

I think many golf clubs are going to have some pretty hard decisions to make in the future years with regards to trees.

#### **You mentioned leaves, they must pile up?**

Most of our areas where leaves need picking up and controlling lay pretty wet through the winter, and with worm casting becoming a bigger problem now, we can't have a tractor with a big collection box behind it trundling up and down because of the damage it would cause.

We use knapsack blowers and we have a Ventrac with a turbine blower, but one of the things we want to avoid is just blowing the leaves back into the woodland. Along the periphery of the fairways, the woodland encroaches quite well into play and to have a pile of leaves just hunkered up in the trees will be ripe for collecting any balls that are just a little off line, which is not a good experience for the players.

#### **How much manpower do you dedicate to dealing with leaves?**

Collecting them up is a big job so we share that work out. It's not like I have three people who collect leaves for three and a half months, but it's the equivalent to that.

Having half of our staff just purely on leaves at a time of year when the ground softens up is tough, because it's also when your aeration takes place, and any development work that you want to do is all through that same period.

Having to commit so much time just to leaf collection does mean some of our agronomic work to nurture resilient turf is compromised.

#### **Is removing trees an option?**

We have taken trees out in some areas. We work very closely with Natural England because we've got an SSSI on our ground. We have a good relationship with them and they understand there are certain things that need to happen on the golf course.

In fact, the gorse, bracken and broom provide a richer habitat from an ecological point of view than immature woodland. For us to open up areas by cutting trees down can actually enhance the ecological value of the course.

We've got one green that's up on a hill with no trees around it and it's the easiest one to look after; it's problem-free because it's high up, the wind and the sun hit it and that nurtures good turf. **GI**







“ I always drive  
home the message  
that grass hates trees”



As the Golf Environment Awards head into their 30th year, we celebrate some of the past winners starting with Colmworth, which claimed the UK Environmental Golf Course of the Year in 2024.

"We're very different," declared Tilly Vesely when asked to describe Colmworth. The description that followed justified her conviction – you won't mistake your own golf club for this one. Built in 1991 by Tilly's grandad, she now runs it with her mum, Julie, and the family duo are ably supported by a small but dedicated staff where women are significantly in the majority.

The Bedfordshire venue enjoys a rural setting that matches its laidback and welcoming vibe, though you would be mistaken to assume its tranquility stems from inactivity; Colmworth is very much alive, woven as it is into the fabric of the countryside and teeming with flora and fauna whose presence is encouraged by the sustainable ethos that underpins everything the club does.

Tilly and her team are passionate about protecting the planet, and that starts by looking after the small patch of it over which they have agency, from utilising renewable energy solutions to a clubhouse built from reclaimed materials. The ultimate aim is for Colmworth to be entirely off the grid.

"Every decision we make comes down to this: are we fighting nature, or are we working with it? We want to work with what the land gives us," Tilly explained. "For example, when it comes to conserving water, we have a lake which we use for our irrigation. To us that seems like common sense because it's how we've always done it; we had that foundation in place from the start and it's enabled us to be more efficient with our water usage, and it's also more financially sustainable.

"We've got a lot of solar, we've got biomass boilers, our heating for the whole complex is fuelled by recycled pallet wood – all these things just make sense to us."

The four-strong greenkeeping team, with Head



### Tilly on the impact of winning

"The awards have certainly helped to establish us and make people appreciate that we do know what we're doing. We've always done things differently, we're a family-run, super-friendly club and I think some people might have dismissed us a bit in terms of being a serious example of how to do things. Now I think people are looking at what we're doing and paying a bit more attention. We'd love to spread the message for sustainability and show others there's a different way of doing things that can be of benefit to their club and to the environment."



**“Every decision  
we make comes  
down to this:  
are we fighting  
nature, or are we  
working with it?”**







## About the Golf Environment Awards

With the ever-increasing spotlight on environmental matters, it is fundamentally important for golf courses worldwide to assess what they can do to achieve environmental sustainability while continuing to maximise the enjoyment of golf.

Since 1995, the aim of the Golf Environment



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Awards has been to recognise, reward and promote outstanding individuals and golf courses, no matter how big or small, for the time and effort they have put into protecting and preserving their unique surroundings.



Wild areas and woodland at Colmworth

Greenkeeper Brad Jones at the helm, produce a course that is both a delight to look at and a pleasure to play, not to mention the fact its excellent drainage means Colmworth can cope with the worst excesses of the British weather and remain open year-round.

The team are standard-bearers for sustainability and show how golf clubs can act as stewards for the environment, not just existing within a natural setting but actively helping it to thrive, all the while still maintaining a course to a high standard.

"We employ organic turfcare and we're really minimal input, we don't use pesticides," said Tilly, who explained the maintenance programme was first tested on Colmworth's par-3 course with promising results. "That doesn't mean we don't work on our surfaces because we do, and actually we were told recently our greens are among the best in Bedfordshire by people who were rating the top 10 courses in the area.

"That's really nice to hear because we've achieved that without all the extras like constantly topdressing and hauling

in sand.

"I can't praise the greenkeeping team enough. It's such a small team but the work they do – along with everyone else at the club – is just amazing."

The site is blessed with an abundance of wild zones, creating corridors for wildlife to flourish and enhancing the area's biodiversity – another example of working with nature rather than against it.

Tilly hopes the example set by Colmworth will encourage others to follow suit, though she understands each facility is working within the limitations of its own resources, whether that be finances, manpower, machinery, or the hand that nature has dealt. However, she is confident that a sustainable approach to both course maintenance and club management can yield results across the board.

"I know we're all given different soil conditions and our own problems to manage," she said. "But this sustainable approach is doable – you just have to be willing to take that leap of faith and you'll find that looking after the soil looks after you." **GI**





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# New biostimulant promises to 'transform the care of turfgrass'

Fiata Stressgard, a biostimulant developed and manufactured by Envu, could prove a key weapon in a greenkeeper's armoury



**A new biostimulant now available in the UK promises to help greenkeepers deliver top-quality turf performance, even under high-stress conditions.**

Developed and manufactured by Envu, Fiata Stressgard has recently launched in the UK through Origin Amenity Solutions.

The product's blend of compounds forms a potent biostimulant, promoting turf health, resilience and overall performance while activating plant defence mechanisms.

A pigment in the product instantly enhances turf colour and plays a key role in long-term stress management.

By reflecting harmful light only, it also helps optimise photosynthesis and energy production, preventing the breakdown of chlorophyll.

The Stressgard technology has been developed with proprietary plant health compounds that promote turf health even under the most stressful conditions.

Phil Logan, National Account Manager, Envu UK & Ireland comments: "You can't predict the weather, but you can predict Stressgard results."

**“It will help turf thrive during stress and recover faster”**

"It's been extensively tested across a range of environmental conditions for over 25 years and is scientifically proven to protect turf all year long.

"Fiata Stressgard is the latest innovative product to utilise Stressgard technology and has been designed specifically to improve plant health and performance.

"Applied in a programme approach, it will help turf thrive

during stress and recover faster.

"I am delighted to see Mark and the team at OAS embracing the substantial benefits of this new biostimulant product and rolling it out to their UK golf customers."

Mark De Ath, Plant Protection Products Team Lead for Origin Amenity Solutions, added: "I am thrilled to bring Fiata Stressgard exclusively to the UK.

"It is a highly effective product that will help greenkeepers and turf managers promote turf grass health, colour, performance, and resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses." **GI**

## Key benefits of Fiata Stressgard

- 1) Proven to deliver elite turf performance when under stresses such as high temperatures, drought and traffic, helping surfaces stay healthy and vibrant during peak stress periods and enhancing recovery.
- 2) Complements any integrated turf management programme. The components within Fiata Stressgard have been proven to prime turf plants for stress and disease resistance by triggering stress-responsive genes.
- 3) Instant colour and long-term photosynthesis enhancement, delivering visually appealing, healthy turf. With a flexible application rate, Fiata Stressgard can be tailored to give the exact colour response required to elevate turf appearance and manage stress.



# Headline speakers announced for **SALTEX's Learning LIVE 2024**

Leading figures from across the sports turf industry have been confirmed among the line-up for SALTEX's Learning LIVE 2024

This year, over 20 industry pioneers, technical specialists and experts will speak across three stages, including the brand-new Community Sports Stage, over two days on October 30 and 31.

Sarah Cunningham, director of commercial and events at the Grounds Management Association, said: "We're incredibly excited about this year's SALTEX, especially the Learning LIVE schedule. It's always great to see so many industry-leading professionals come together to share their knowledge.

"Our aim is to create sessions where everyone feels welcome and can take something extra away with them – we believe this year's line-up of speakers and sessions will do just that. There's something here for everyone."

The Main Stage will feature discussions on the latest hot topics and issues, engaging visitors in the big conversations of the moment. Day one highlights include Lee Guerriero, UEFA stadium operations and pitch expert, presenting the 'UEFA EURO 2024 Pitch Quality Review'.

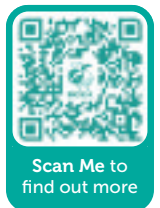
He said: "I'm excited to share the UEFA 2024 Pitch Quality Support Programme with the visitors at SALTEX. My session will cover the programme's strategy, findings, and learnings, offering insights from the main stadia to the training pitches used throughout this year's tournament."

Also on day one, Robert Sullivan, CEO of The Football Foundation, will discuss 'Funding The Future of Sport', while day two on the Main Stage will feature Professor David James, group CEO at LABOSPORT Group, delivering the 'FIFA Football Turf Quality Programme'.

Additionally, Mark Ferguson, agronomist at All England Lawn Tennis Club, will present on 'Raising Tennis Surfaces Standards – From Grassroots to Major International Championships'.

SALTEX will also see the return of the Spotlight Stage, featuring crowd-pullers in an ask-the-experts-style forum. On day one, Paul Bannister, with 28 years of experience in commercial horticulture, landscaping, and sports turf industries, will deliver 'How to Provide a Safe Working Environment – Are You Compliant?'.

Day two will see Professor John Moverley OBE, former executive chairman of the UK Amenity Forum, present 'Principles & Practices of Sustainable Amenity Management'. Geoff Fenn, Research & Development Director at Origin Amenity Solutions, will also present 'Independent Turfgrass Research – Latest Results', sharing insights from his extensive experience in turf management. **GI**



# How you can contribute to a better world

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all 193 UN Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, and you have a key role to play

Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to guide us towards a fairer, more equitable and sustainable world. These principles outline ways in which golf can become a force for good.

Every small action you take to promote nature, conserve resources, take climate action and strengthen communities all accumulate to have a positive impact across diverse areas.

## Sustainable Development Goals you can directly contribute towards



Clubs, facilities, events and many parts of the industry are hubs for education and skills development, offering apprenticeships and opportunities for lifelong learning. By providing such opportunities, managers are supporting career development.



Demonstrate sustainable production and consumption of water, aggregates and other increasingly scarce resources, integrated turf management and golf's extensive supply chain. Look for eco-friendly products to reduce environmental impact.



Support the transition of the sport to empowering women and under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Promote gender equality by ensuring equal opportunities and pay for all employees.



By reducing emissions, tackling climate adaptation and supporting ecosystem services, golf courses make a strong contribution to climate action. Strategies to reduce your carbon footprint include reducing maintained turf areas and using electric vehicles.



Implement water-efficient irrigation systems and practices prioritising water conservation, efficiencies and enhancing watersheds, ensuring run-offs to natural water courses are free of polluting chemicals and other harmful substances.



No other sport occupies and manages such large areas of land. Courses can be ecologically rich environments that meaningfully connect with other habitats. By increasing native plant areas and wildlife habitats, you are supporting biodiversity and ecosystem health.



Support the transition to clean energy, showcase renewable energy sources and the value of electrification for maintenance facilities and equipment.





## Four more key SDGs for golf



Golf fosters lifelong recreation, benefiting both our physical and mental health. And it is important to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all

staff through regular training and the use of proper protective equipment.



Creating jobs, careers and professional development, particularly in rural economies, or driving economic growth through tourism. Fostering a positive

work environment supports not only your club but also economic growth in your community,



Courses provide green spaces and improve urban air and water quality. They foster community engagement through volunteering and community-based

social and environmental enterprises and initiatives. Engaging with local communities promotes environmental education and sustainable recreation opportunities.



Collaboration, stakeholder engagement and partnerships are essential for maximising golf's impact on sustainability initiatives. Look for opportunities

to collaborate with local environmental organisations and wildlife trusts, NGOs, local governments and education partners.



Sustainable.golf is brought to you by GEO Foundation, the international non-profit entirely dedicated to helping accelerate sustainability in and through golf. Learn more by scanning the QR code.



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# Get ahead of microdochium

Microdochium patch - fusarium – was historically the major challenge for maintaining playing surface quality, and incidences are rising again

**Despite a warming winter climate highly favourable for microdochium, a better understanding of its control and effective treatments had reduced its impact for many.**

However, initial results of the Syngenta *Microdochium State of the Nation Survey* has identified incidences are now on the rise, along with disease pressure and damaging outbreaks rolling on longer each year, well into the spring.

That could be a combination of climatic change creating conditions for infection, along with some ITM actions aiming to reduce the impact of dollar spot and anthracnose making turf more susceptible to a greater impact of microdochium, particularly an increase in nutrition, along with species composition.

Furthermore, weather conditions in later spring with periods of wet and

mild conditions highly conducive to disease outbreaks, followed by cold or low light conditions where turf is unable to outgrow disease effects, has seen some hugely damaging attacks.

A microdochium dashboard created in the Syngenta Turf Advisor App provides the proven GreenCast microdochium model scale of risk, used in conjunction with weather conditions that increase the threat. That would include air and soil temperatures, coupled with periods of high humidity, rainfall and prolonged leaf wetness.

Importantly the App includes the

#### Read this for:

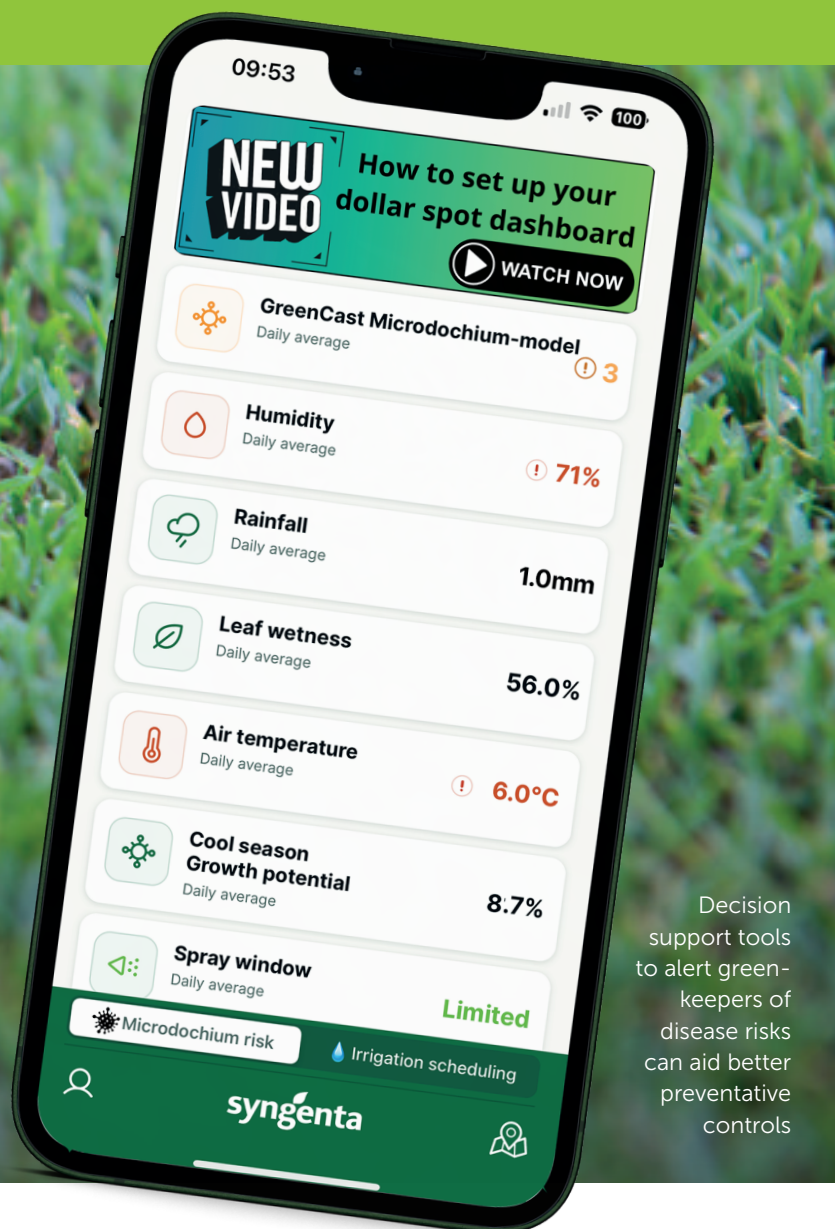
- Managing microdochium
- Fungicide timing and tips
- Developing ITM strategies

weather information for the preceding week - which will be the major influence on what is impacting on turf now - along with predicted forecasts for the coming days, in time to take preventative ITM actions.

Longer term strategies to reduce microdochium risk include management of organic matter - which can be a reservoir of infective spores - along with clearing vegetation around greens to improve sunlight and air flow that will help to dry surfaces and remove leaf wetness the pathogen needs to develop.

Balancing nutrition to avoid susceptible weak lush growth reduces risk, along with sward composition to increase the percentage of disease tolerant species or cultivars. Furthermore, any ITM actions to improve turf strength and rooting reserves, including wetting agent strategies,





Decision support tools to alert greenkeepers of disease risks can aid better preventative controls

“It’s at this point that well timed fungicide applications will have the greatest impact”



**Author:** Sean Loakes  
Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

biostimulants and Primo Maxx II programmes will make plants more resilient to withstand initial microdochium pressure.

It’s at this point that well timed preventative fungicide applications will have the greatest impact in stopping disease outbreaks.

New fungicide research at STRI has shown the preventative application using the AIM strategy (Ascernity fb. Instrata Elite fb. Medallion) consistently reduced microdochium effects and improved turf quality. Applied at 21-day intervals when disease pressure was high, from early October to mid-November, this preventative approach significantly outperformed any of the curative treatments in the trials.

The preventive approach performed significantly better in all assessments of turf health, including quality,

colour, disease incidence and NDVI measurement.

From mid-October through to the end of November, disease levels on the untreated turf hit over 25% of surface area affected, compared to an average of less than 2.3% through the entire period with the preventative AIM programme.

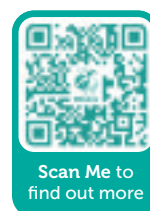
Further trials, at the Irish Sportsturf Institute (ISTI) under wet and temperature conditions highly conducive to microdochium development, the preventative AIM strategy was again the stand-out treatment, for both turf quality and disease control – suppressing disease to a far greater extent than all other treatments. Average disease incidence in over 100 days of trials was just 0.5% with the preventative applications, compared to over 12.5% in the untreated.

The *Microdochium State of the Na-*

*tion Survey*, which will be published in time for this autumn’s actions, will give a good indication of what ITM measures currently work most effectively for greenkeepers.

As the challenges of weather conditions and available technologies, along with increasing demands of player expectations, continue to change, those practices are also going to have to adapt and evolve in the future.

*Sean Loakes will be presenting Microdochium Matters as a BIGGA Continue to Learn Seminar at BTME in January. Look out for booking details.*



Scan Me to find out more



• If you would like to add to the debate then email [keri.xu@sruc.ac.uk](mailto:keri.xu@sruc.ac.uk) and your comments can inform the range of initiatives that are ongoing across the golf sector. A kind thanks to all our participants in helping research this article.

**The new Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK Government is, for the first time in history, a woman. It represents another first for women breaking into male-dominated occupations.**

How does the picture look for women now in the professional trade of sports turf, which remains dominated by men? We surveyed a range of personnel working in golf, including managers, apprentices, employers and governance, to present a picture of the current experience of women in the golf maintenance facility.

Research has found that improving the diversity of a workplace environment can have multiple benefits for the organisation, including: exposure to more varied points of view; enhanced leadership capabilities; enhanced educational aspirations; development of values and ethical standards; and an enhanced ability to

successfully adapt to change.

All our interviewees were optimistic about the future of the sector becoming more diverse and thought opportunities for women would improve over time.

But one respondent said: "We perceive golf as a male-dominated sport. It is challenging to get over that fact. From the moment you read the advert to the advertising pictures, it is generally aimed at men. There are a lack of female role models and some men in the industry fear having to make allowances for females in the workplace. Interviews are a real stumbling block too. There are only ever males interviewing. You can just feel like there is no relatable face in the place of work."

There are now 153,600 registered female golfers playing the game in the UK, representing around 12 per cent of the golfing population in UK & Ireland.



#### About SRUC

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is on a journey to become Scotland's enterprise university at the heart of our sustainable natural economy.

For more information visit [sruc.ac.uk](https://sruc.ac.uk) call 0131 535 4000 or email [admissions@sruc.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@sruc.ac.uk)



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# "Women need role models, mentoring, social networks, employer support, promotion of career options in schools and tertiary education to become better represented in the sportsturf industry"

Dr Keri Xu, Lecturer in the SRUC Golf Course Management Department, describes the current experience of women in the golf industry and explores the possibilities for the future



This could be a key factor to address. Initiatives to encourage a more balanced participation are to be welcomed. Experiencing the golf environment generates awareness of career opportunities, which can, in the future, be much more diverse than traditional practices. Data management, environmental planning and performance measurement are examples of specialisms that require new skills and perhaps a new look at the role of greenkeeper.

The report *Women, Girls and Family Participation in Golf 2018* concluded that role models are vitally important for achieving wider equality in the golf sector, while promoting more equal presence in leadership positions. The R&A *Women in Golf Charter* is having an impact in showcasing successful career case studies.

Our sample of female greenkeepers had real enjoyment and job satisfaction

from their role, with one saying: "It is a career choice with many possibilities."

There is a need for change at an early grade school level, with career advisers providing broader career explorations, breaking down stereotypes and myths about work and gender. The First Green initiative is making great strides across the UK in this area.

However, according to the women we surveyed in senior roles, it is essential that such initiatives are supported with welcoming workplaces, role models as change agents and supportive networks.

Addressing female greenkeepers, one participant said: "Reach out to anyone who offers you help. Ask for opinions and be vulnerable. Ask if you don't know the answer or are not sure. People want to help."

Women in this study, and others, provide evidence that they can overcome gender bias if they have

sufficient personal and organisational support and a clear motivation to succeed in their long-term careers. All respondents emphasised their commitment to lifelong professional development and further or higher education.

As well as teaching equal opportunities and anti-discrimination legislation, perhaps the greatest contribution education can make is creating ongoing social communities that will foster that essential network of mutual support while learning.

To successfully transition to more diverse and equitable workplaces, we need role models, mentoring, social networks, employer support, promotion of career options in schools (early grade) and tertiary education.

All of these strategies require collaboration between our Association, our education sector and our industry leaders. **GI**



# A biological programme wins LIV approval

JCB Golf and Country Club adopts a sustainable approach with the help of OAS

The prestigious JCB Golf and Country Club in Rocester, Staffordshire is preparing to host the LIV Golf UK event from 26-28 July 2024, replacing Centurion Golf Club in Hertfordshire as LIV's UK stop.

JCB has hosted events in the last two years on the Legends Tour, the DP World Tour's veteran circuit. They now join an ever-growing list of UK golf courses in connection with LIV Golf and its financial investment in the professional game.

The new Golf and Country Club opened less than five years ago in September 2019 and it's testimony to Golf Course Manager **Callum Wark** and his 33-strong team that this is already a tournament standard course, having hosted events on the Legends Tour and the DP World Tours veteran circuit.

Previously from Loch Lomond Golf Club, Callum joined the original JCB Course Manager Euan Grant

as a Senior Greenkeeper in June 2016, along with another 15 people who were all instrumental in the construction and grow-in of the course.

Kerr Hunter from Origin Amenity Solutions (OAS), which encompasses Symbio, Headland Amenity, Rigby Taylor and Turfkeeper, has dealt with Callum since he arrived at the club. Callum explains, "JCB wanted an organic and sustainable course. Euan had been working with Kerr at his former club and wanted the same results. With the active ingredients in fungicides being slowly removed from the market we wanted to proactively manage our greens moving forward and wanted to adopt a biological programme that required less input from us."

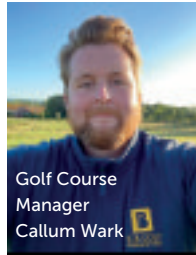
In 2018 Euan became the General Manager and Callum was promoted to Golf Course Manager. He oversaw the official launch of the JCB Golf and

Country Club, which was designed to reflect the bold, ambitious vision of Lord Bamford, Chairman of the iconic construction and agricultural equipment manufacturer JCB who wanted nothing less than the creation of a tour-ready contemporary masterpiece in course design.

Internationally renowned Robin Hiseman of European Gold Design was commissioned to create the stunning, contemporary layout in beautiful rural Staffordshire. The 7308-yard par 72 course has been designed to challenge elite golfers at full distance while allowing corporate golfers an enjoyable experience.

Callum continues, "I'm not against chemical inputs and where I need to, I do use them, but I find that by following a biological programme we only have a limited need for them. There is a high level of expectation that the course is in immaculate condition. We cannot afford for





Golf Course  
Manager  
Callum Wark

“We wanted to proactively manage our greens moving forward and wanted to adopt a **biological programme** that required less input from us”



our members to see any disease or scarring, so as a preventative we currently spray fungicide on the greens three times a year, but we are planning on reducing this to two times if possible. I see it as a safety net.”

The course is built on land close to the JCB headquarters in a mixture of established woodland and farmers' fields. The site wasn't the easiest to work on as there was a lot of clay and drainage was a challenge. Hiseman and his team moved over 400,000m<sup>3</sup> of earth to produce the course.

OAS helped with the specification of a full assembly grow-in programme to enable the course to be built with a biological base. Some of the products used included Mycorrhizal Inoculant for greens and tees and Mycorrhizal SeedCoat for fairways and outfields along with Caviar, calcium and magnesium.

Callum adds, “Today the soil is

biologically active and the course is maintained with a vigorous organic and biological programme. We have four Compost Tea brewers and use Compost Teas every two weeks to feed the soil life and enhance the soil food web. We have a full greens programme to aid in the prevention of disease and improve plant health. We have fantastic results and the OAS biological products maintain the quality. If it isn't broken, don't fix it!”

Origin Amenity Solutions is the major supplier to the JCB Golf and Country Club for their putting greens. As well as a myriad of biological products such as ThatchEater, seaweed, CMS Shoot, DegrAid, Biotabs and Liquid Aeration, Callum has been using OAS Iron products for the fairways, “it is a high-quality product and one that works with our programme.”

‘Symbio ThatchEater is a core product for us. Our members demand high-performance surfaces. They

must be firm and fast at all times. We still need to aerate regularly but ThatchEater is my go-to product.”

“The service and advice I receive from Kerr at OAS is invaluable. We have a planned programme, but we tweak it accordingly. A few years ago, I had a problem with plant parasitic Nematodes. Kerr recommended Root Repair. The problem was eradicated, and I've never had an issue since. The biological approach works for us, our greens are tournament-ready, and the club is looking forward to an exciting year ahead.”

For further information or to discuss a bespoke programme for your club contact the OAS team on **0800 138 7222** or email **[sales@originamenity.com](mailto:sales@originamenity.com)**





# At the cutting edge

Carus Green Golf Club becomes fully automated  
with fleet of Husqvarna mowers

**Carus Green Golf Club, a popular club in the North of England, is now reaping the rewards of automation, thanks to the installation of a fleet of Husqvarna professional robotic lawn mowers.**

The 18-hole course, located on the outskirts of the Lake District, embarked on its automation journey back in August 2023, following a demonstration of the Husqvarna CEORA on its driving range. Since then, the club has bought into the technology and rapidly scaled up its fleet of robotics to ten machines altogether - five Husqvarna CEORA, four Husqvarna Automower 550 EPOS and one Automower 430X NERA.

Here, Husqvarna speaks to Warren Bevan, Course Manager at Carus Green, about the club's robotics journey so far, and how they're benefitting from full automation.

**Tell us a bit about how your robotics journey with Husqvarna began?**

"We initially had a demo of CEORA on our driving range and were instantly impressed. Both myself and Graham Curtin, owner of the golf course, quickly noted the quality of the cut and finish and wanted to invest in the technology and expand it onto the course itself. We've always been progressive and forward thinking in our approach to new ideas and technology, and just after an hour demonstration it became apparent that robotics was absolutely the path we needed to explore."

#### **How long did it take to scale up to ten units?**

"Following the demonstration, we initially started with one CEORA and one Automower 550 EPOS which together managed one area of the course that included four fairways with some semi rough. This allowed us to observe the machines and plan their usage across the full course. The time from implementing those first machines to rolling a full fleet of mowers out across our whole course was





Warren Bevan and his fleet of  
Husqvarna mowers

approximately six months – a quick transition but we haven't looked back. It took some time to get all the necessary infrastructure and electrics installed, but nine months later we're enjoying the benefits of being fully automated on all fairways, rough and approaches."

#### How do the robotic mowers operate on a daily basis?

"Four of the five CEORA's are cutting the fairways at a 10mm cutting height; and those machines cut overnight, every night, whilst the course is closed so as not to interrupt golfers. The machines will then recharge before automatically changing their cutting height and commencing the rough cutting during the day at 60mm. The last CEORA maintains our driving range, split into different zones, and can cut the full range over the space of 48 hours, which has eliminated significant hours of labour a week for our team who can now focus on other tasks in that time."

"The four Automower 550's are cutting the 'carrys' from

tee to fairway around the clock on a 24 hour cycle. The last machine, the Automower 430X NERA, cuts an area just in front of the clubhouse."

#### How has the feedback been from members and staff?

"The feedback we received from the members was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the improvements in the quality of the finish, and in particular the edge of the fairways which are now immaculately maintained due to the mower's GPS navigation system. Members also commented on the reduction in noise pollution as well as the absence of tyre marks which our former ride-on mowers sometimes caused during wet conditions."

"The feedback from our greenkeeping team has also been really positive, with many of our staff now able to dedicate more time to take on and complete jobs we didn't previously have capacity to do as often as we'd like, such as edging bunkers, which has now increased from once every two weeks to once a week."

#### How has automation helped overcome industry challenges?

"There are two main issues that robotics have helped us to overcome. The industry is currently navigating changes to the climate, with more frequent wet days making maintaining the quality of the cut typically difficult, however robotics really help overcome these challenges as they can cut in any condition, whereas a conventional ride on mower simply can't. This year, we were able to mow the course throughout March and April, which we haven't been able to do in previous years."

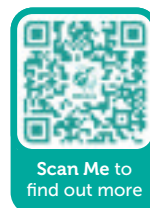
"The other challenge robotics has helped us to overcome

**“I also like that Husqvarna are conducting further research into turf health and plant response from being cut with their robotic mowers”**

is the labour shortage. The industry is experiencing a huge drop off in the number of greenkeepers, and robotics has not only helped plug this gap but has also freed up staff to do jobs that they previously didn't have time to do."

#### What led you to choose Husqvarna over other similar brands?

"When we were in the early stages of our robotics journey, we had a demonstration with a competitor brand, however the competitor's machine didn't leave the same quality finish or cut low enough on the fairways compared to CEORA. This, combined with the level of service, enthusiasm and support from the Husqvarna team ultimately led us to become a valued partner. Since introducing the fleet of machines, we haven't needed to use our traditional fairway mower at all."



# Dress to impress

Repairing and renovating tees with British Sugar TOPSOIL's soil-based topdressing



**BIGGA Education Supporter British Sugar TOPSOIL has done much over the years to provide science-based evidence that supports the use of soil-based rootzones and topdressings in golf course maintenance regimes.**

Research commissioned by TOPSOIL and carried out by STRI concluded that, when mixed with the correct sand and used as part of a professional maintenance programme, sustainably-sourced, soil-based topdressings deliver a good supply of nutrients to sustain healthy turf, whilst also delivering the drainage rates required.

Soil-based topdressings have both a natural nutrient base and the capacity to improve moisture retention in drought conditions. This helps to reduce turf stress and speed up the establishment and growth of new grass sown across repaired areas of high wear and footfall, such as tees.

## Case study

TOPSOIL's Sports&Turf topdressing is being used by Course Manager Tim Hales at Toft Golf Club near Bourne, Lincolnshire, for divotting and renovation of tees, on approaches, and, on occasion, for repairs on greens. Tim has over 27 years of greenkeeping experience and is an advocate of soil-based topdressings and rootzones.

Toft Golf Club opened in 1988 and is nestled amongst rare rolling hills in South Lincolnshire. The par 71 course provides challenge for all levels of golfer. At over 6,321 yards, the course includes four par threes and three par fives. The par five fourth hole, at 578 yards, offers a good test for the big hitters whilst the par three off the tenth is a hole that requires precision, with a lake on three sides and a river on the fourth.

The tees at Toft are quite small at

4,000m<sup>2</sup> and get a lot of wear. Tim's repair and maintenance regime includes top dressing the tees in late September (post-scarifying) with approximately 8 tonnes of Sports&Turf using an SP100 spinner-type top dresser. The tees are then dimple overseeded with A5 perennial ryegrass at 50g/m<sup>2</sup>, followed up with a 5-6 month controlled release granular fertiliser.

Approaches get the same treatment but as they cover 7,000m<sup>2</sup>, approximately 12 tonnes of Sports&Turf is used together with an A28 ryegrass/fescue grass seed mix at 30g/m<sup>2</sup>.

Tim's summer tee divot mix is less technical! Half a bucket of Sports&Turf, four handfuls of A5 perennial ryegrass and two handfuls of a humic soil conditioner deliver fast, hard-wearing repairs.

As part of an experiment, Tim is



**“Soil based topdressings have both a natural nutrient base and the capacity to improve water retention in drought conditions”**



Above: The 7th tee three weeks post renovation using Sports&Turf

**Sports&Turf**

The course at Toft Golf Club

applying Sports&Turf onto the practice greens during renovation works.

A recent soil test on the course indicated that because there are a high number of fine sands and silts on all the greens they would benefit from the addition of more coarse sub-angular sand. Sports&Turf is a blend of 90% medium to coarse sub-angular sand with 10% sustainable BS3882:2015 topsoil. No differences have been noted so far between the practice greens and the main greens, but a further soil test is lined up for February 2025. That said, Tim has found that Sports&Turf performed the same, if not better, than the previous sand/soil based dressing used on the greens.

In terms of renovations, the tees are heavily renovated in late September as Toft Golf Club boasts a measured 'Blue Course', which

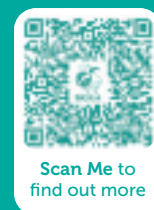
is played off tee mats (apart from the 5th and 14th tees), enabling the main tees to be rested from 1st November. The tees are then overseeded and fertilised in March to get them ready for summer play from around 1st April, depending on the weather, when play resumes from the grass tees. Approaches will also get attention in late September and March.

Tim Hales has experienced at first hand the benefits of using soil-based topdressings:

"We get brilliant results from using Sports&Turf. Being a 90/10 sand/soil blend, the added benefit comes from having the nutrient rich soil combined with a medium/coarse sand, which means we get good strike from renovations and divotting and it's a perfect choice as a free-draining top dressing for tees, approaches and fairways."

#### Find out more

British Sugar TOPSOIL carries out extensive in-depth testing and analysis of all its products and makes this information freely available from its website. Comprehensive technical sheets, independent trials reports, current testing and analysis data, soil health and fertility microbiology, and carbon audit monitoring results are all free to access and download by scanning below.





**GRUNDFOS** 

# Irrigation innovation

Feel the difference with the  
new generation of Grundfos SP  
6" submersible pumps





Although the exterior of the new SP 6" pump looks very similar to its predecessor, make no mistake about it, the interior of the new generation of SP 6" pumps has been revamped to deliver superior performance thanks to optimised, future-proof hydraulics and energy efficiency.

### Pushing the limits of what's possible within efficiency and reliability

In the constant quest to develop products to match the challenges of our customers, we have completely revamped the SP 6" pump in pushing the limits of what is possible in terms of efficiency and reliability.

To design the new SP 6" Grundfos experts have used the most advanced simulation technologies on the market to create a superior pump with state-of-the-art hydraulics, laser welds and a viable process design that makes the pump resilient and long-lasting.

**“Grundfos have completely revamped the SP 6" pump in pushing the limits of what is possible in terms of efficiency and reliability”**

Every component of the pump has been thoroughly tested to make sure that they live up to our high standards. We have tested the impellers' ability to handle the required load, the strength of the pump chambers, the welds, and the corrosion properties of the impellers, as well as the hydraulic stage performance. We have tested operation in hard booster environments, and finally, the complete pump has been tested according to ISO standards to make sure that it performs as expected with superior efficiency and reliability.

The new SP 6" is the culmination of all those efforts, and while the outside of the pump looks very similar to its predecessor, we can assure you that you will feel the difference.

### The new generation of SP 6" pumps:

- Market-leading energy efficiency
- Highest hydraulic performance achievable within 6" borehole pumps
- Designed with the most advanced tools in the industry
- Tested in the most extreme conditions
- Produced using the latest production line technology

### Revamping the interior – keeping the outside unchanged

#### Taking a look inside, you will find:

- Optimised flow with minimum turbulence
- Redesigned impeller blades
- Profiled leading edges to reduce energy loss
- Smooth laser welds
- Redesigned guide vanes
- Optimised shape on bearings
- Available with permanent magnet motor
- 10% energy efficiency increase (compared to a standard motor)

### Low lifecycle cost

The new generation of Grundfos SP pumps is fitted with new and upgraded hydraulics to achieve world-class energy efficiency. Operational costs are lower and in some stage/motor combinations, a smaller motor can be used due to lower power consumption, resulting in reduced CAPEX. Combined with a robust and reliable design, the pumps offer a trouble-free and long product lifetime with minimal maintenance costs.

### A reliable pump system for any application

Grundfos SP is a range of stainless-steel submersible pumps designed to provide high-quality water supply for agriculture, irrigation, light commercial applications and municipalities. Combined with state-of-the-art motor technology and a remote management system, Grundfos SP provides a complete submersible pump system for virtually any application.

### Future-proof operations with an SPE system

Grundfos SPE combines the SP pump with a permanent magnet motor to reach the highest possible efficiency. With a canned rotor design, increased temperature rating (60° C) and a stainless-steel rotor cladding protecting the magnets from corrosion, the motor offers high efficiency and reliability for a wide range of applications. The SPE system is the perfect choice to future-proof operations and optimise running-costs even when the demand varies.

The SP 6" comes with several accessories to make a complete submersible system that fits any needs. The accessories include both mechanical and electrical parts, as well as controls and monitoring possibilities.

### Grundfos submersible solutions

Grundfos supplies a cost-effective, reliable, and energy-optimised submersible pumping solution for borehole installations. Our pumps and pump systems are optimised for the highest performance and reliability for groundwater installations. Made entirely of corrosion-resistant stainless steel, Grundfos has decades of application expertise within public and domestic, agricultural irrigation, and livestock water supply.

Grundfos is a global water technology company committed to pioneering solutions to the world's water and climate challenges. Founded in 1945, today we are one of the world's leading providers of pump solutions with annual production standing at more than 17 million units and with over 20,000 employees.



Scan Me to  
find out more

Get more information on the benefits of a complete SP submersible pump system by scanning the QR code.

# Green revolution

Behind the scenes with the world's first all electric fleet of mowers at Le Golf National



**The 2024 Summer Games presented a unique opportunity for Le Golf National to lead the way in golf course electrification, and they put their confidence in Jacobsen to achieve it.**

The objective was simple. Jacobsen had 18 months to build on the success of their Eclipse 360 ELiTE ride-on greens mower and electrify a fleet that included fairway machines, SLF1 ELiTE, trim machines, TR1 ELiTE, rough machines, AR1 ELiTE, and walking greens machines, Eclipse 2 ELiTE, all of which could withstand a demanding two-week tournament cutting schedule.

## **Theory put into practice**

When Le Golf National Golf Course Superintendent, Lucas Pierre, was presented with the plan and timeframes by Jacobsen, his initial thoughts were, "To my point of view, they're crazy" but after a tournament with the SLF1 ELiTE and an all-hands trial in early May 2024, Lucas knew the machines were on track.

"We've had the SLF1 ELiTE since

the French Open in September 2023, and from my point of view, our mechanic's and Jacobsen's, the power is excellent," Lucas explained.

"The big deal was the length of the battery. We tested it against our SLF530 fairway mower, and the SLF1 ELiTE made the round with 60% of the battery left.

"We even pushed the test to not charge the mower during the night and sent it out the next day with 60%, and it was back to the workshop with 30% left.

"The main improvement on this machine is the traction because everything is electric, and access is much easier on this machine. There are hills everywhere on this course, but when you're going from one fairway to another, and I've been on the machine, you can go everywhere, and you don't slip or get stuck. Together, the battery and traction are amazing."

The pressure on this project was not only to provide functioning machines, but a fleet that could provide a quality cut for a tournament-level

course. Through data capture and operator feedback, Le Golf National and Jacobsen have accelerated the establishment of electric mowers and proved their capabilities on the world stage.

## **Le Golf National's fourth pillar**

Alongside sport and development, sustainability is integral to the French Golf Federation (FGF) strategy. Jacobsen's ambition perfectly matches the FGF's ecological mission statement, and for Basile Lenoir, Legal Director at the FGF, meeting sustainability goals is about turning obstacles into opportunities.

"Sustainability is one of the Federation's key pillars, along with development, sport and green transition," Basile explains. "We're part of a transition process and want to overcome and transform obstacles into opportunities.

"There's no shortage of obstacles today, and we need the best possible support to get us through the next ten years and adapt to climate change challenges.



**Le Golf National and Jacobsen** have accelerated the establishment of electric mowers and proved their capabilities on the world stage”



Above: Le Golf National's fleet of SLF1 ELITE mowers

“Electrification of equipment forms our fourth pillar” he continues, “Water management, biodiversity, and now energy are our focal points. Our energy strategy involves electrifying machines and striving for energy neutrality at Le Golf National.”

#### Electrifying the fleet in 18 months

Jacobsen already had experience with lithium electric ride-on greens mowers, but the main challenge was efficiently upscaling the larger AR1 and TR1 ELITE lithium machines while managing the weight, cost and range.

Experience with Samsung SDI Lithium technology gave Jacobsen's Global Product Manager, Lee Kristensen, and the engineering team a solid foundation on which to build.

“Le Golf National is an extreme test case, and we can do a lot with the data we get,” Lee explained. “Working on major tournament preparation at sites such as Le Golf National is a great learning case for Jacobsen because it's a big and complex environment with many machines working to their peak performance.

We're aware that's not the everyday for most courses, but that learning case builds our experience, and we can apply it as we move into more regular course maintenance.”

Pace Technology, an equipment management and geofencing system that is a screenless web-based solution, helped track data for this development. Pace Technology system and services can be accessed from any device and features real-time tracking and task management to maximize the effectiveness of operations. At Le Golf National, Pace Technology has been used to track and measure the machines' power output per hole to maximize their performance while developing a bespoke picture of how they work on the course.

Lee shared, “All of the communication data on the electronic machines is going back through the Pace [Technology] system to the engineering and development teams so we know exactly how the machines are being used, their exact duty cycle, and we can plan their

next jobs or how much charging they need accordingly, making sure we're making the most efficient use of the machines that are on site.”



#### About Jacobsen

Jacobsen is a leading manufacturer of turf maintenance equipment, offering a specialist range of mowers. With a legacy of innovation spanning over a century, Jacobsen is trusted by turf management

professionals worldwide to deliver superior performance, durability, and efficiency.



Scan Me to find out more

# We are committed to educating the next generation



Richard Windows is Head of Sustainable Championship Agronomy, The R&A

We are proud of all the greenkeepers, agronomists and golf course ecologists whose careers are blossoming

**Turf management offers a multitude of exciting career opportunities and these are becoming ever more diverse as a greater emphasis is being placed on technology, sustainability and biodiversity with roles being created around these topics. The pathway into greenkeeping and agronomy can however vary greatly and there were some excellent examples within the teams at this year's 152nd Open at Royal Troon.**

Starting with the Royal Troon greenkeeping team, there is a strong family tradition with Billy McLachlan (Course Manager) working at Royal Troon for over 40 years and a total of six Open Championships – four of these as Course Manager (1997, 2004, 2016 and 2024). Billy works alongside his brother John who is one of two Deputy Course Managers at Troon, the other being Gary Ross. The family tradition does not stop there, with Billy's son Matthew recently starting out on his greenkeeping journey at Royal Troon and working his first Open last year at Royal Liverpool as part of the Open Venue Support Team.

Scott Corrigan is a further product of Billy's and worked at Royal Troon for 18 years which included the 2016 Open. Scott studied further education (HNC) and became an R&A Scholar and graduate of the FTMI programme before, in 2021, being appointed by The R&A as Deputy Course Manager at Golf It! He then went on to become Course Manager in 2023 overseeing the final stages of course construction and establishment before opening. Scott formed part of the R&A Championship Agronomy Team this

year supporting with data collection at his second Open Championship across the revered Troon links.

Working for Scott at Golf It! are Anton Shields and Lucy Millar who were the first two greenkeeping apprentices to complete the Apprenticeship Me programme which was established by The R&A and fully funded by founding partner Toro.

This community-based programme is a unique industry first and aims to expose candidates to the very best opportunities to help lay the foundation for a successful greenkeeping career. During their time at Golf It!, and as part of the association with the Arnold Palmer Foundation, they both volunteered at Bay Hill Invitational.

Now they are working with the St Andrews Links Trust greenkeeping team for a year, which will include this month's AIG Women's Open. We are incredibly proud of this programme and everything that Lucy and Anton have achieved so far and the next two apprentices are now in post at Golf It! embarking on their greenkeeping journey.

Earlier this year, The R&A Sustainable Golf Team appointed James Walker in the role of Assistant Championship Agronomist, who was also an integral part of the team at The Open.

James began his greenkeeping career in 2015 at the African Turf Academy in Pretoria, South Africa before moving onto The Ohio State Program in America with placements at Congressional Country Club and Lake Nona.

In 2018, James moved to the UK where he worked during the final

construction and establishment at JCB Golf and Country Club before heading on to Gleneagles for four years, helping the team to deliver the Solheim Cup and Senior Open during that time. He had a season on the Old Course at St Andrews (helping to deliver the Walker Cup) before returning to Gleneagles as First Assistant.

Aiming to fulfil a career goal as an agronomist, James commenced with further education at Myerscough College and received an R&A Greenkeeping Scholarship in the process.

This is an exciting new position that aims to provide a new pathway into agronomy. The two-year position provides full funding on all aspects of agronomy including further education, BASIS and FACTS qualifications as well as training from The R&A Sustainable Championship Agronomy Team. This is likely to be a two-yearly rolling position to provide a constant cycle of training to the next generation of agronomy professionals.

We at The R&A, are committed to educating the next generation of greenkeepers, agronomists and golf course ecologists so if you are interested in pursuing these as career options, then please do get in touch.

GI



Our monthly column from The R&A's Sustainable Golf team shares news and insights on agronomy and sustainability themes. For more information on The R&A's Sustainable Agronomy Service please contact [sustainablegolf@randa.org](mailto:sustainablegolf@randa.org)



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Excessive Rainfall

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