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# Greenkeeper International

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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 trust that you enjoyed a positive and successful week at BTME. Exhibition space sales were more than 7 per cent higher than 2023, which was hugely gratifying after what could have simply been a post-Covid "bounce" event last year. Just as importantly, Continue to Learn delegate numbers were at record levels, even higher than our previous highwater mark in 2019.

It does seem that the event scene has had a welcome boost. I believe the period of separation that Covid enforced has made many of us really value the chances we do have to come together, to network, share experiences and to educate.

Prior to BTME we held our Annual General Meeting. Attendance numbers had dwindled over the years for the in-person event so the Board of Management took the decision to move the meeting online. I'm pleased to say that we did experience an increase in numbers and the meeting passed very well.

AGMs are largely procedural exercises. They fulfil obligations under company law and provide you, the member, with the comfort that the Association is being run properly. I was pleased to be able to report on another positive financial

“ Many of us really value the chance to come together, network and share expertise

performance with management accounts ahead of budget and providing a surplus to reserves. It was also a very successful year operationally. Membership numbers are at a long-time high, our initiatives are receiving record levels of engagement and our standing in the industry has never been higher.

The meeting also marks the end of some of our officials' terms and we saw the passing of the Presidential baton from Andy Smith to John Keenaghan. Andy has been a superb President, charming everyone he's met and serving with pride and humility. I know that John, or JK as he is known to most, is unbelievably proud to take the reins and will bring energy and passion to the role.



Jim Croxton  
BIGGA Chief Executive

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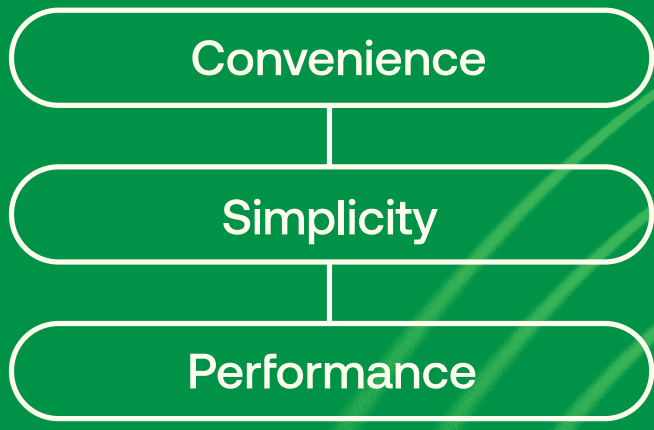
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We are committed to the continual professional development of our members, working with the leading bodies in golf for the good of the game.

BIGGA's activities are underpinned by the generosity of our industry partners and supporters. BIGGA's various activities, initiatives, learning and development opportunities and member benefits are made possible due to the ongoing commitment shown by these companies, organisations and individual donors. From our supporters all the way up to our premium partners, our thanks go to all of them for their dedication to BIGGA and its members.



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# First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- More exhibitors lined up as Scots Turf Show returns for second year
- Roddy Williams on how to make your renovations as sustainable as possible



## Remembering golf irrigation industry pioneer Bill Hawthorn (1934-2023)

Bill Hawthorn, who dedicated 53 years of his life to the golf industry, has died at the age of 89.

Born William Douglas Hawthorn in 1934, he passed away peacefully at home in November last year surrounded by his family.

Bill's 'can do' approach and eternal optimism, together with his desire to help and support those around him, made him an unstoppable character. He was a generous, kind, loving and forgiving man who possessed an unyielding faith.

In his profession, he was a brilliant pump engineer who dedicated most of his professional life to the water industry as it expanded over more than six decades.

In a professional capacity, Bill will be

widely recognised for his contribution and support to the golf industry over more than half a century.

He is considered one of the early pioneers of the golf irrigation industry as, along with his co-founder Robin Sitwell, he launched one of the most successful irrigation contracting and manufacturing companies in Europe, if not the world.

Watermation, registered in 1970, continued for over 30 years and installed irrigation systems across Europe and as far away as Asia, the USA, Barbados and New Zealand. Watermation is famous for manufacturing its own impact rotors and two-wire technology in the form of TW2 and decoders, some of which continue to operate today, 30 years

after they were installed.

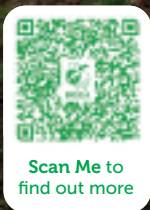
Bill leaves a legacy of innovation and forward thinking, and many in the industry today are indebted to him for setting them on a path to success during the period of the 1970s, 80s and 90s when golf and the development of the game expanded rapidly around the world. He may never have fully appreciated the impact he had on the industry and the individuals who have worked, and continue to work, in it.

Bill leaves behind his wife Eileen, two daughters, a daughter-in-law, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, plus two sons-in-law who still work in the industry he inspired to become the success it is today. **GI**

## The BIGGA Calendar

February: Michael Gibbons,  
course manager, Disley Golf Club

Download the desktop calendar  
by scanning the QR code below



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# Scots Turf Show returns

The Scots Turf Show returns to Hamilton Park Racecourse on March 6 with the promise of an expanded exhibitor list and even more education opportunities.

Following the success of its inaugural year, the second edition is set to be bigger and better, with featured exhibitors including Campey Turf Care, AllGrass, Dennis, SIS Pitches and John Deere. The total number of exhibitors is up from 16 to 50, underlining the huge growth of the event and its ability to attract key players in the turf industry.

Alongside fellow Scots Turf Founding Committee member and SIS Pitches

Sales Manager Alan Thomson, Campey Product Specialist Richard Heywood has worked hard to bring this event to Scotland.

"The Scots Turf Show was designed to bring the trade to the Scottish turf community, and it has done with a lot of success," said Heywood.

"Whilst it is primarily for Scotland, the event is open to everyone, and I think the developments we're making demonstrate the show's progress.

"As we enter our second year, the increased number of exhibitors reflects the growing importance of this event in the industry, and we're already excited

for our advancements in 2025, where we will increase the area for indoor exhibitors."

The event offers excellent networking and collaboration opportunities, bringing together professionals, suppliers, and enthusiasts from various corners of turf management. **GI**



## Baroness appoint Connell to Scotland sales role

Baroness have announced the appointment of Richard Connell as their new area sales manager for Scotland.

Connell comes with vast experience in the turf and golf industry, having spent 15 years as a mobile machine service engineer, with his duties including diagnosing and solving faults with machinery, servicing, customer

relations and support.

"Richard is well equipped to help drive sales to the next level in Scotland," said Adam Butler, director – Baroness UK.

"He will play a pivotal role in our company and will work alongside dealers and customers with training, support, and sales in his purview." **GI**



## What's on this month

### Dates for your diary

7 February

BIGGA L&D Roadshow, Scotland – Auchterarder GC

14 February

BIGGA L&D Roadshow – Waltham Windmill GC

20 February

BIGGA London Section Seminar – Oaklands College

21 February

BIGGA L&D Roadshow – Copt Heath GC

22 February

BIGGA L&D Roadshow, South East – Stoke-by-Nayland GC

28 February

BIGGA L&D Roadshow, Scotland – Bothwell Castle GC

## A greenkeeper's best friend – Dougie



Owner: Andrew Ramsay

Club: Mill Ride GC

Dog's name: Dougie

Breed: Cocker spaniel

Age: One year

Favourite treat: Sausage sandwich at lunch time

Favourite place: His favourite part of the course is running and hiding in the long grass

Naughtiest moment: He's naughty when digging and running through the bunkers when they are just raked

He is happiest: Jumping in the lakes and chasing the geese



# BIGGA

Regional Patrons

Our programme of local and regional events is supported by regional patrons, whose generosity helps create opportunities for BIGGA members.

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### CONNECT PLUS



### CONNECT



Head to the BIGGA website for more information about local activities near you



# Working together on sustainable renovations



**Roddy Williams**  
joined GEO  
Foundation for  
Sustainable Golf in  
2021 after more than  
two decades with the  
European Tour and  
Ryder Cup

Our focus is on helping facilities fully realise the sustainability potential of whatever planned work it is that they are delivering

**Now we know that 2023 was officially the world's hottest year, smashing previous records by some margin, and world ocean temperatures are higher than they have ever been before.**

At the same time, severe flooding has affected much of Northern Europe in recent months.

A rapidly changing climate is one of many external pressures exerting influence on golf facilities worldwide. Growing time constraints on individuals, rising operating costs, pressures and regulations on natural resources and an increasingly competitive market are also collectively driving a fresh surge of investments and innovations in course improvements.

As part of the strategic planning for these investments, there is a need to bolster the facilities' resilience against these new external pressures. Incorporating resilience against elements beyond a facility's control is now at the core of many investment choices. Global pandemics, the increasingly frequent extreme weather

events and the strain of living costs are beyond individual control, but these risks can be mitigated by diversifying businesses, securing greater control over sustainable water and energy supplies, minimising reliance on external supply chains where feasible and enriching the local environments.

**“ At GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf, we believe that every action can deliver greater efficiencies, reduced resource use, improved playability and an even more resilient facility for the future**

Last year, the Sustainable Golf Developments team published a new Sustainable Renovations Guidelines with these opportunities in mind. Renovations have been part of the fabric of the game for centuries, carried out to keep pace with the evolving nature of the sport – adjusting to increasing swing speeds or changes to the ball's performance and its ability to cover ever greater distances.

But how often do we stop and think about the overall impact these changes are having on the course and the sustainability of the course?

At GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf, we believe that every action can deliver greater efficiencies, reduced resource use, improved

playability and an even more resilient facility for the future.

Independent support from the Sustainable Golf Developments team is focused on helping facilities fully realise the sustainability potential of the planned work, while championing the good work project teams are doing to get the best results for the course, players and community.

Given the diverse

nature of renovations, the support on offer varies depending on the scale and complexity of the proposed works. Renovations can be both large and small changes, encompassing projects with substantial budgets or driven solely by in-house staff time and effort. What these projects share is the intention to improve and generate greater value and productivity from the land.

Through transparency and collaboration, there is an ability to proudly and credibly recognise and promote this work – and its long-term benefits. Providing the ownership, golfers, community and wider stakeholders a view of the responsible, measured and professional decisions being taken by teams to deliver more for golfers, nature and society.

Please get in touch with the team at [hello@sustainable.golf](mailto:hello@sustainable.golf) to discuss your improvement plans and find out how we can best help your planned and future renovations to be as sustainable as possible and how we can help you get the recognition you deserve. **GI**

# Spring into action

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# From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- Submit your Proposal to Present for Continue to Learn at BTME 2025
- New BIGGA President John Keenaghan shares his plans for the next year



The 18th at Bruntsfield Links

## **BIGGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP HONOURS:**

- **BIGGA National Championship Challenge Trophy**  
Awarded to the best strokeplay score across two rounds
- **BIGGA National Championship Challenge Cup**  
Awarded to the best combined Stableford score across two rounds
- **BIGGA National Championship Regional Cup**  
Awarded to the four entrants from a single region who return the best combined Stableford score on the opening day

## **BIGGA National Championship 2024 heads to Edinburgh**

The BIGGA National Championship 2024 will take place at Royal Burgess Golfing Society and Bruntsfield Links Golfing Society in Edinburgh on October 7 and 8, with a prize pot in excess of £2,000.

Participants will play at both venues, which are located close to the centre of the city. This year's new format will see the field split, with half playing on each course each day.

Entry costs £110 and includes a gala dinner to be held at Bruntsfield Links

after play on day one.

"The annual BIGGA National Championship gives BIGGA members the opportunity to pit themselves against their peers over two days and we are delighted to be playing at Royal Burgess and Bruntsfield Links in October," said Membership Services Manager Roger Butler. "The event will bring together golfers from across the UK with many of the competitors being put forward to play from winning local section events. There

are no handicap limitations, so any BIGGA member can enter."

Royal Burgess lays claim to being the oldest golf club in the world, having been instituted in 1735, with the current Barnton course opening in 1895.

The origins of Bruntsfield Links date back to 1761, but golf has been played on the site since the 15th century.

The entry price includes two rounds of golf, the gala dinner and refreshments on both days. **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

# L&D Roadshow: Free learning opportunities for BIGGA members





## BIGGA members can take advantage of a series of free learning opportunities as the L&D Roadshow tours the UK.

There are 10 events taking place across February and March, with every region covered.

Roadshows provide an opportunity for BIGGA members to meet a range of industry experts and ask questions about the future of turf maintenance in a local setting.

The sessions are supported by BIGGA's network of regional patrons, a scheme introduced to standardise learning opportunities across the UK, giving BIGGA members everywhere the same access to the association's renowned networking and educational events.

The roadshow includes roundtable discussions, demonstrations and presentations from industry experts focusing on the current status of the turf maintenance industry. [GI](#)

## Roadshow dates and locations:

### 7 February

Region: Scotland & Northern Ireland  
Venue: Auchterarder Golf Club

### 14 February

Region: Central England  
Venue: Waltham Windmill Golf Club

### 21 February

Region: Central England  
Venue: Copt Heath Golf Club

### 22 February

Region: South East  
Venue: Stoke by Nayland Golf Club

### 28 February

Region: Scotland & Northern Ireland  
Venue: Bothwell Castle Golf Club

### 5 March

Region: Northern  
Venue: Castle Eden Golf Club

### 6 March

Region: South West & South Wales  
Venue: Tredegar Park Golf Club

### 7 March

Region: Northern  
Venue: Conwy Golf Club

### 7 March

Region: South East  
Venue: Hampton Court Palace Golf Club

### 13 March

Region: South West & South Wales  
Venue: Thornbury Golf Club



# BIGGA

CPD Continuing Professional Development

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

Craig Boath, Carnoustie

Richard Johnstone MG, Nairn Dunbar

Chris Browett, The Richmond

Scott McTaggart, Sandyhills

Jeremy Ward, Grange Park

Daryn Curtis, Shirley Park

Patrick West, Sweetwoods Park

Steven Hemsley, Penwortham

Stuart Cagle MG, CGCS, Advanced Turf Solutions

Andrew Knott, Haagse Golfvereniging Leeuwenbergh

Steven Mullen, Gullane

Brai Graham, Shirley Park

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

Craig Boath, Carnoustie

Patrick West, Sweetwoods Park

Richard Johnstone MG, Nairn Dunbar

Chris Browett, The Richmond

Daryn Curtis, Shirley Park

Derek Grendowicz, Private Residence



# LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT ROADSHOWS



# Get involved: Your chance to present at BTME 2025

Submit a Proposal to Present for Continue to Learn at BTME 2025 and help shape greenkeeper education

Continue to Learn is recognised as the premier education event outside the USA for those working within the greenkeeping and sports turf industry.

The event has a wide range of agronomic and practical learning on offer, alongside many educational offerings on relevant subjects, including leadership, mental health awareness and career progression.

Once submissions are received, BIGGA members will be asked to vote on the topics they wish to see on the education programme via the Members' Choice survey, which will shape the agenda for 2025.

Anyone who has a topic and wishes to present can make a submission, whether you are a greenkeeper, a turf educator, employed in the industry or even if you have never worked in turf before but have a proposal that could benefit BIGGA members.

You may be an experienced speaker, or this could be your first time addressing a crowd – all submissions are welcome.

Selected core education content will feature in the programme along with fresh ideas and presenters, providing new angles and insights on a huge variety of topics, ensuring Continue to Learn maintains its position as the sports turf industry's most influential annual event.

**Submissions open in February**

## North of Scotland split aims to ensure 'appropriate representation'

The split of the North of Scotland into two sections will ensure BIGGA members have "relevant events and opportunities" and "appropriate representation".

The decision to create a new Highlands & Islands section while renaming the North section to North East Scotland was announced at January's AGM.

John Young, membership services

manager for Scotland and Northern Ireland, said: "BIGGA is all about its members. Splitting the North of Scotland section into two sections covering the Highlands & Islands and North East has been long discussed and now is the right time to make this change. This will mean we are able to meet our aims of ensuring that there are relevant events and opportunities for all members, as well as ensuring

there is appropriate representation throughout the association's structure."

The new section covers the Highlands, Islands and Morayshire, while North East Scotland fully incorporates Angus, which was previously split between North and Central Scotland.

Members are able to choose which section they belong to. **GI**

# CGCS recommends 7% salary increase

Golf club managers and greenkeepers in the UK should receive a 7% wage increase, according to a recommendation from the Committee for Golf Club Salaries (CGCS)



The CGCS put forward the figure based on the prevailing economic conditions, while also proposing a 9% rise for assistant greenkeepers in light of the increase to the national living wage.

From April, it will go up by 9.8% for those aged 21 and over, while the increase for those aged 18 to 20 will be 14.8%.

A statement from the CGCS said: "Following another turbulent year for the economy with high inflation putting pressure on the cost of living, it is gratifying to see the golf industry continue to thrive with golf facilities in general doing well.

"The ongoing success of the sport is in no small part due to the hard work of the highly committed workforce of the golf industry, particularly at club level."

The committee said that while inflation had reduced from the peak levels seen in early 2023, wage inflation remained comparatively high as employers sought to reward staff

amid the growing cost of living.

Meanwhile, the CGCS welcomed the increase in the national living wage "in principle" but acknowledged it will "have a major impact on golf facilities in terms of cost considerations".

Alongside salary recommendations,

the CGCS also urged golf clubs to ensure that appropriate resources are directed towards the mental health and wellbeing of employees. **GI**



## What is the CGCS?

The CGCS is an independent committee, representing the interests of golf clubs throughout the UK. The committee supports a healthy golf industry by acting as a positive reference for all club staff and club officials.

Originally formed in April 1997, the CGCS includes representatives from BIGGA, GCMA and independent golf industry and recruitment experts. The CGCS firmly believes that valued professional staff members are critical for golf clubs to succeed. It meets to review and recommend salaries for greenkeepers and golf club managers.

In 2020 the CGCS launched the online salary calculator system, established after substantial industry consultation, with separate tools for golf club manager, golf course manager, deputy golf course manager and assistant greenkeeper roles, available through the CGCS website.

# Every BIGGA member should feel supported



John Keenaghan  
President

In my role as president, I want people to know the association is here for them

It still feels a little odd for me to say that I'm BIGGA's president – it's an honour and privilege. But more than that, it's also a responsibility and one I am taking very seriously.

I see it as my duty to be visible and available to the members, to tell them that I'm here for them, as is the association. I want to be open and accessible and for people to know they can approach me.

Every BIGGA member should feel supported and recognise they have people to turn to and services they can make use of. Whatever challenges they are facing, they should know that they are not alone.

Last year certainly provided plenty for us to overcome and I know at times the winter season can seem like a long hard slog, with Christmas providing welcome but perhaps only momentary respite from it all.

I'm sure many will be relieved to have entered 2024 with a good excuse to look forward, and I hope you will all share my optimism for what this year has in store.

There will of course be more obstacles and hurdles to clear, more difficult days to get through, but we can also look ahead



with excitement, because it is in dealing with those difficulties and emerging through the other side that we become stronger.

Not only that, but I find you tend to be more grateful for the good things when you've had to muddle through some of the not so good things.

As part of my wish as president to foster a positive relationship with members, I plan to spend a bit of time travelling around to meet new people, and no doubt I'll come across some familiar faces too.

This community of ours is a special one and spending

time together with other greenkeepers, listening to their stories and learning from their experience is truly one of the things I enjoy most.

It's also vital that we share that wisdom and insight with the younger members who are just starting out. Peer-to-peer learning carries so much value and we all have a responsibility to share our knowledge with those around us.

I will also be using my role as president to champion this industry and continue the push for it to be properly recognised and appreciated so that it

may be embraced by more people.

On that note, one thing I'm really excited about this year is the continued growth of the First Green initiative. This is something that has the power to shape the future of greenkeeping and the wider golf industry, bringing young people into our profession and into this sport to pursue careers that we know can be incredibly fulfilling.

I hope that as you look ahead to what 2024 might bring, you too can find cause for optimism. **GI**



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Lamlash
- .....
- Lewis Miller (GK)**  
Gleddoch
- .....
- Aaron Wallace (APP)**  
The Carrick Golf Club on Loch Lomond

**Northern**

- Mark Alexander (AGK)**  
Sandiway
- .....
- Dean Baily (FA)**  
Heswall
- .....
- Shane Birkett (AGK)**  
Brampton (Talkin Tarn)
- .....
- Cole Gallagher (AGK)**  
Regent Park (Bolton) Golf Centre
- .....
- Olly Glindon (AGK)**  
Lymm
- .....
- Stephen Hudson (AGK)**
- Mark Maguire (GK)**
- Archie Whittingham (AGK)**
- Alex Wilson (GK)**  
Lancaster
- .....
- Stuart Mort (GK)**  
Stanley Park Golf Course
- .....
- Richard Peel (AGK)**  
St Melyd
- .....
- Caron Roberts (GK)**

- Nefyn & District
- .....
- Keith Scruton (CM)**  
Darwen

**Central England**

- Paul Bramley (FA)**  
Erewash Valley
- .....
- Robert Cowey (AGK)**  
Hoddington Estate
- .....
- Robbie Eason (HG)**  
University College Oxford
- .....
- Ruth Etches (AGK)**
- Matthew Wright (AGK)**  
Trentham
- .....
- Jamie King (AGK)**  
Charnwood Forest
- .....
- Jack Perkins (GK)**  
Sunningdale
- .....
- Lewis Savuto (AGK)**  
Chesfield Downs
- .....
- Joe Stoner (APP)**  
March

# Welcome to our new members



## South East

**Roland Antill (AGK)**

**George Miles (FA)**

Nizels G&CC

**Ryan Arnold-Tilney (GK)**

Sheringham

**Frankie Evans (AGK)**

The Warren G&CC

**Ryan Hervey (APP)**

Abridge G&CC

**Trystan Hinkins (AGK)**

**Joshua Outram (GK)**

**Gary Sidders (M)**

Royal St George's

**Nathan Knights (APP)**

Seckford

**Charlie Lines (AGK)**

Fulwell

**Sean Loakes (P)**

Syngenta UK

**Patrick Loyer (APP)**

Bishop's Stortford

**John McClelland (AGK)**

**Christos Ross (GK)**

Wilderness

**Matt Middleton (AGK)**

**Richard Price (M)**

Beaverbrook

**Jordan Moxey (AGK)**

Roehampton Club

**Neil Pickett (FA)**

Bury St Edmunds

 South West & South Wales

**Matthew Bennett (GK)**

**Raymond Browne (GK)**

Southerndown

**Andrew Cosh (DHGK)**

St Mellons

**Alun Crichton (HGK)**

Kington

**Thomas Cunningham (FA)**

Corhampton

**Jack Curtis (APP)**

**Lewis Willett (APP)**

Saltford

**Harry Foster (AGK)**

Brickhampton Court

**Keith Taylor (AGK)**

Beaverbrook

## 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



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# Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- Course manager Mark Crossley's achievements and ambitions at Prestbury
- Head greenkeeper Ron Butler on his 58 years and counting at Wilton



Rhys and his youthful team



Preparing the greens at Royal St George's

## Rhys Butler: 'I'm the team veteran at 45, but I wouldn't change it'

Rhys Butler, links manager at Royal St David's Golf Club, has spent a decade in the role and his youthful team are keeping him forever young.

Here, he discusses the challenges of managing a links course and his plans for the coming year.

"At 45 years of age, I'm the oldest on our team of eight at Royal St David's – and what a great team it is.

"I started my role as links manager back in 2013 and the whole time I've been here, the club has always sought to find ways to improve and to progress. We've invested a lot to make that happen and it shows in the machinery, the agronomy and basically every aspect of the club.

"It's also very apparent in the staff we have, and I'm proud of the team

we've built. They're good people who are fun to work with, and they're dedicated to doing the best job they can. It's a team who get on well at work and outside of work too.

"We're a busy team and, though we did most of our big projects before Christmas with a new teeing ground and a couple of long walkways, this month we'll be doing some ecological work before the bird nesting season and bits of maintenance like slitting on the greens to start ramping up the presentation.

"I'm a founder member of The Links Club, along with Richard Whyman, Ian Kinley, Paul Larsen and Craig Boath. We set it up because links management is so unique - with different grasses and regimes - and

it's important for those involved to share ideas and best practices. It's about preserving and promoting those practices to ensure those values that we hold dear can survive and thrive.

"We've got lots to come in 2024 at our links. Our season starts early as we have the St David's Meeting on the first weekend in March, which is a big one for us. We'll also be hosting the Welsh Amateur Championship in the summer.

"Even after a decade in the job, I still get excited about going to work and striving to produce the best playing conditions for our members.

"It's still hugely important to me that we don't let our standards slip – although with this team, I don't have to worry about that." **GI**

Greenkeeper  
Files

A photograph of Mark Crossley, a bald man with a light beard, wearing a dark blue and white tracksuit. He is sitting in a utility vehicle, possibly a lawnmower or similar equipment, with his hands on the controls. The background shows a green building with a doorway and some trees. The overall lighting is somewhat dim, suggesting an overcast day or late afternoon.

Mark  
Crossley



## Prestbury's Mark Crossley has a track record of shaping careers as well as golf courses

Mark Crossley forged his own path to the role of course manager in short order, ascending to the position by the age of 24, but it's his knack of helping others achieve their career goals that really makes him stand out.

Now 42 and the course manager at Prestbury, Crossley's track record of identifying, supporting and developing young talent is impressive, with his proteges occupying top positions at courses across the UK.

It's not hard to see why the Burnley native has proven such an inspirational mentor given the exceptional standards he has delivered at Prestbury, a Harry Colt-designed course that may lack in size but has grown immeasurably in stature and prestige since Crossley's arrival in 2015.

### First flickers of ambition

The father-of-two, who recently married long-time partner Katy before honeymooning in Dubai, sees it as his responsibility to aid the development of others for the good of an industry he loves.

Crossley had a formative experience of his own when an old college friend he bumped into at BTME invited him to help out at Stockport Golf Club, which was hosting an Open qualifying event in 2003.

"He said I should come along and meet the team, get some experience under my belt there, and it would stand me in good stead if anything came up there in the future," he said.

**“ I just got a really good vibe about the place**

"I took him up on that, and I was just blown away by the standards they were producing there under Warren Bevan.

"Within a few months I was there full-time as first assistant, and it was only at that stage I started to think how great it would be to manage a course at that level."

### Stepping up

His first course manager role came at Mickleover before a spell at Chesterfield preceded his appointment at Prestbury – an opportunity that very nearly passed him by.

"I'd been earmarked for another course manager role but, on the last day of the advertisement that I'd spotted in Greenkeeper International, I was heading back from a weekend in Chester, and I thought I'd go and have a look at Prestbury," he said.

"I drove past the multimillion-pound houses with all the Bentleys, Rolls Royces and Aston Martins and thought, 'I wouldn't mind a little bit of this'. I just got a really good vibe

### Prestbury in Crossley's words

The course at Prestbury is a Harry Colt classic – the work of arguably the greatest golf course architect of all time.

It sits on a tiny piece of land and the fact he's produced this golf course in such a space shows the genius of the bloke.

It's not particularly long but it's undulating and it's tight. The greens we produce are generally firm and fast, with many featuring false fronts, and then there's the new bunkering in place now as well.

Overall, it's a really good test of golf for all calibre of player.

about the place.”

Within a few hours of dropping off his CV, Crossley was asked back for an interview – he's had almost 10 years in the job now, and it's been an immensely productive spell for Prestbury. It was all part of his plan.

### Room for improvement

On that first walk around the course back in 2015, Crossley was suitably impressed but could readily identify areas for improvement. It was February and the course appeared to have been put to bed for the winter, lacking the vitality required for optimal playing conditions, with organic matter on the greens and a notable absence of definition. Crossley wasn't picking out problems so much as spotting opportunities – the ways in which he could take an excellent summer course and turn it into a year-round thing of beauty.



“ I demand high standards  
from the team, but that  
starts by delivering on that myself

## Equipment and machinery

Amazone Smartcut  
Ford TYM T265 tractor  
JCB excavator 5 tonne  
John Deere rotary mower  
Kubota 75hp tractor  
New Holland T4.55 tractor  
New Holland Boomer tractor  
SISIS brushes x2  
Toro Greensmaster Flex 21 x4  
Toro Greensmaster 1026 x3  
Toro Greensmaster Toro eTriflex x2  
Toro Greensmaster 3250  
Toro Reelmaster 5010 x2  
Toro Reelmaster 3100 x2  
Toro Groundsmaster 4700  
Toro Reelmaster 5510  
Toro Multi Pro 5800-D sprayer  
Toro ProCore 648  
Toro Workman MDX x3  
Toro Workman with Dakota topdresser  
Toro Greens Pro 1260  
Tornado Blower  
Trailers x5  
Toro Zmaster  
Toro TRX – 16 trencher





"Prestbury already had a very good reputation and I saw lots of potential to make it even better. It's a sandy-based course, there's areas of heathland we can promote, and through general practices, such as aeration, topdressing and low inputs of water and fertiliser, I knew we could actually produce a really good year-round golf course," he said.

"Members say now the conditions during the off-season are as good as they've ever seen during the season."

#### **Teamwork makes the dream work**

Prestbury's high standards in 2024 reflect Crossley's vision from nearly a decade ago, but he would be the first to admit it has not been a solo undertaking. His team, now 10-strong including Crossley, continue to deliver the goods, aided by a shed stocked with over £1million worth of machinery.

He prioritises three things when identifying the staff he wants in his team: integrity, honesty and hunger, and Crossley believes the best way to get the most out of them is to lead by example.

"I demand high standards from the team, but that starts by delivering on that myself. I'm someone who likes to lead from the front, and I'll never ask someone to do a job that I wouldn't do or haven't done myself," he said.

"I'm also very results-oriented, and that's important in this industry because we're asked to produce results every day we come to work. We've got members and visitors who pay a lot of money, and they expect five-star service from the whole experience, which obviously includes the playing conditions."

#### **Chasing perfection**

Such lofty expectations leave no room for complacency and, while Crossley acknowledges the pursuit of perfection is never ending, the ideal is something worth striving towards. Just before the end of 2022, Prestbury concluded an ambitious project to upgrade the irrigation to all greens and approaches, including 104 new sprinklers, pipe and cable, the levelling of the 17th green and a complete refurbishment of all 61 bunkers. It was completed within 21 weeks – 11 ahead of schedule – without exceeding the



## The unique challenges of maintaining Prestbury









Our challenges come down to winter wear as much as anything. We've got quite a few pinch points – the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 17th greens are all within 150 yards of each other, which is quite a unique design aspect.

The undulations mean water gathers in the low spots, and there are issues with divoting because balls run down to those spots too. The difference between our highest point and the lowest is huge, so getting people down to the lowest points on 11 and 12 is tricky.

Our tees are very close to the greens, which means the walk-off areas are under a lot of stress. No members or greenkeepers like to see ropes around the course, but at times it's a necessary evil.

Ultimately, we do our best to produce a golf course that members can be proud of 12 months a year.

## A (Working) Day In The Life

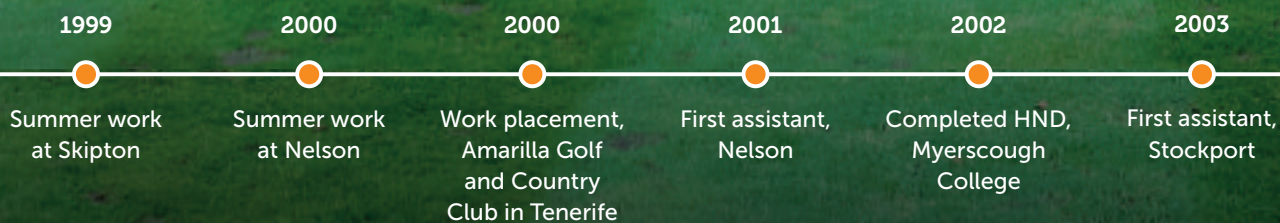
- 
**0530**  
 Arrive at the course, read emails, check forecast and plan accordingly
- 
**0600**  
 Team arrive on site for a team meeting to discuss the previous day and the day ahead
- 
**0630**  
 Head out for course walkaround
- 
**0730**  
 Assist team with tasks as required
- 
**1030**  
 Short break
- 
**1100**  
 Liaise with office staff, the pro, GM and others
- 
**1230**  
 In the office planning, replying to emails, dealing with anything that comes up
- 
**1530**  
 Home time



Left to right: Chris Keeler, Ieuan Berry, Mark Crossley, Tom Silcock, Ollie Tovee



### Career timeline





“ I think you can be ambitious without moving jobs



2005

Course manager,  
Mickleover

2010

Course manager,  
Chesterfield

2015

Course manager,  
Prestbury

£750,000 budget, and the course stayed open to members the whole time. It was another string to the bow for Crossley and his team.

“We take great pride in the job we’ve done, and that goes beyond me and my team. I’ve benefitted from having a very stable Green Committee during my time here, which has helped massively – they push us hard and we push them hard,” he said.

“I think while we’ve unlocked some previously untapped potential, there’s certainly more to achieve. There’s more to come in terms of construction, playing qualities, in terms of sward composition change – so, yes, we’ve come a long way and we’re extremely proud of that, but we keep driving forwards.”

### Future plans

The job Crossley is doing at Prestbury hasn’t gone unnoticed and, as someone who has provided a career boost to so many others, the man himself still has professional aspirations, though he’s keen to stress that ambition doesn’t necessarily lead to itchy feet.

“There are still one or two jobs out there that I’d like to look at, but they’d also have to be the right jobs for my family as well as my career and my wife’s career,” he said.

“But I’m passionate about this golf club, I’m grateful for the support they’ve given me, and I hope in return I’ve rewarded them with my hard work and professionalism.

“As a team, we strive every year to be better than the previous year. I think you can be ambitious without moving jobs, and the ambition is to keep producing better standards year-upon-year at Prestbury Golf Club.” **GI**

### Meet the team

Mark Crossley – Course manager (9 years)  
 Brandon ‘Pickle’ Heyward – Greenkeeper mechanic (6 years)  
 Callum Atkinson – Senior greenkeeper (6 years)  
 Tom Silcock – Senior greenkeeper (3 years)  
 Chris Keeler – Senior greenkeeper (2 years)  
 Ollie Tovee – Assistant greenkeeper (5 years)  
 Sam Yates – Assistant greenkeeper (New starter)  
 Harry Massey – Assistant greenkeeper (New starter)  
 Ieuan Berry – Apprentice greenkeeper (1 year)  
 Sam Jackson – Seasonal greenkeeper

### Crossley’s proteges

Darren Coop – Course manager, Matlock  
 Ben Cumberland – Course manager, Coxmoor  
 Callum Goodhind – Course manager, Wilmslow  
 Christian Johnson – Course Manager, Erewash Valley  
 Chris Learmonth – Course manager, Mickleover  
 Liam Plummer – Head irrigation technician, Tottenham Hotspur  
 Zack Stewart – Head greenkeeper, Adlington  
 Steve Warne – Course manager, Hallowes  
 Phil Worth – Course manager, Macclesfield



# Ron the record-breaker? 58 years and counting for Wilton's head greenkeeper

When Ron Butler turned up to the job centre back in December 1965, he had no idea he was about to stumble upon an opportunity that would shape his life for the next 58 years and counting.

Having just left school, he was looking to get into farming but was pointed towards a vacancy at Wilton Golf Club as “the next best thing”.

He applied and, despite the 16-year-old knowing almost nothing about greenkeeping, he got the gig, with a starting salary of 10 shillings a week.

Ron formed part of a three-person team – the same size as the team is now at the Redcar club, which was founded in 1952, just a few years after Ron was born.

Though much has changed in the industry during Ron's

nearly six-decade stint, the satisfaction he derives from his work has not.

“When I first started everything was done by hand – tining, mowing, watering,” said Ron, now Wilton's head greenkeeper.

“The biggest change has been going from manual to mechanical machinery. Up to 1977, everything was hand watered until we got a sprinkler system for £7,000, and we used to have push mowers as well.

“It's an easier job now with all the machinery, but I still get the same satisfaction from it as I always have.

“The best feeling is leaving work on a Friday, driving away from the course and seeing the results of all my hard work.”

Ron has been committed to maintaining a parkland course that is overlooked by the spectacular Eston Hills and, barring some aesthetic enhancements and a few more hazards, is not so different from his first day.

“When I first started there were two bunkers and now there are 39,” he said. “And there were 12 or 13 trees and now there



are 300 or 400, but otherwise it's still very similar to back then."

At 74, most would have been long retired but it's not something Ron likes to think about, even if his wife has other ideas.

"It only gets mentioned when I go home to my wife – she thinks I should be retired and sat at home with her.

"I don't know what I would do if I retired. I think I could be one of those who would be dead within six months if I'm doing nothing!"

As he enters his 59th year at Wilton Golf Club, Ron admits the idea of hitting a nice round number like 60 holds some appeal, though he isn't sentimental about it and doesn't see any need for fanfare. It is, in his words, "only a job", but one he appreciates and would recommend to any youngsters considering a career in greenkeeping.

"You get to be outdoors in the fresh air and you spend your time in a nice environment rather than cooped up in an office," he said. "After all these years, I still look forward to coming to work in the morning." **GI**

“ After all these years, I still look forward to coming to work in the morning



#### Ron's top tips

- Don't be complacent
- Greenkeeping isn't just cutting grass – learn your craft
- Be prepared to work hard
- Enjoy the work, appreciate the results



### Greens Chairman John Buxton on Ron

I was introduced to Wilton Golf Club at four years of age – my father was heavily involved with the club and its committee while I was growing up. I would often caddy for my father’s friends or more often would sit on their bags and be pulled along. Time and time again I remember we would stop while the adults talked to this man on a tractor or with a spade in his hand or just doing something, and I’d slowly get impatient as we weren’t on the move. That is my first memory of Ron. I’m now 50 years old and he’s still working at Wilton Golf Club and I’m now the one who’s heavily involved with the committee and the club.

Ron is at work every morning several hours before his start time and often has already inspected the course by 6:30am, cut five greens and put the kettle on for the rest of the staff before their arrival. He’s hard working, conscientious, courteous, and a joy to be around.

Nothing demonstrates this more than the number of years’ service Ron’s workforce has also accumulated. Brad with 29 years’ service and young Sam with 12 years. Even those who have retired still visit weekly to have a cup of tea and reminisce about the time they all worked together.

I’ve learnt so much from Ron – he’s always willing to dedicate time to explain in detail why certain things need to be completed when and how they are.

But what I’ve learnt the most is why my father and his friends always paused their round of golf to talk to the man on the tractor, because he is genuinely a nice man.

Ron continues to be wholly committed and dedicated to his role as head greenkeeper and is an asset to Wilton Golf Club. I hope he’s not thinking about retirement any time soon!



“ I still get the same satisfaction from doing the job as I always have



**Let us know**

Do you know someone who can beat Ron's 58-year stint at one club?

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<b>16-4-8</b> + 3.6% MgO + 0.5% Fe												
<b>7-0-21</b> + 2.6% MgO + 0.5% Fe												
<b>7-6-14</b> + 2.8% MgO + 0.5% Fe												
<b>9-3-9</b> + 2.2% MgO + 0.6% Fe												



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<b>16-4-8</b> + 3.6% MgO + 0.5% Fe												
<b>10-0-15</b> + 3.1% MgO + 0.5% Fe												
<b>5-0-27</b> + 4.2% MgO + 0.5% Fe												



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# Careers

Jobs, expert advice and peer-to-peer support

- My New Job: Darren Anderson on life as club manager at North Wales GC
- National Apprenticeship Week 2024



## Goodhind shows career progression is a journey, not a race

When Callum Goodhind was appointed deputy course manager at Cheshire's renowned Prestbury Golf Club at the age of 24, he could have been forgiven for eyeing a fast-track route to the top job.

But Goodhind spent seven years in the role, turning down other course manager opportunities along the way to continue learning his trade under the tutelage of Mark Crossley.

Though he admits the desire to climb the career ladder is a common trait among many in the industry, and he was not immune to it himself, Goodhind knew he was onto a good thing at Prestbury – a top 100 course and Harry Colt classic is no bad place to bide your time.

And bide his time he did – it was

seven years before Goodhind moved to Wilmslow Golf Club as their new course manager, taking up the position in December 2023.

"When I got the deputy role at Prestbury at 24, I probably was thinking, 'Actually, I can kick on and get a course manager role in the next few years'," he said.

"And I suppose I did end up there longer than I planned to, but I appreciated the fact I was at a high-stature club and could still benefit a lot from being there.

"We were working on a lot of projects like the Mackenzie and Ebert plan we went through last year, so it was all valuable learning and exciting stuff to be involved in."

Having taken a more patient

approach to rising through the ranks, Goodhind warned against the urge to "chase a title" without considering the bigger picture.

The 30-year-old's willingness to play the long game has allowed him time to cultivate the necessary skills for his new role, with a flexibility towards managing people and appreciating their strengths rather than dwelling on weaknesses a key facet of his style.

He now plans to make his mark at Wilmslow while continuing his own professional development.

"A big goal is to go through my Master Greenkeeper certificate and I'll see where that takes me," he said. "But for now, my focus is on improving things here at Wilmslow and trying to move this place up the rankings." **GI**



# Darren Anderson

Darren Anderson has had to get his head around a few new responsibilities after leaving behind a course manager role at Bromborough to become club manager at North Wales.

He spent five and a half years in his previous job, continuing to add qualifications and achievements to his impressive CV, before making the move to a course closer to the welcome comforts of home.

### Tell us about your new role

I have a good greenkeeping team here who are keen to learn and part of my role is to pass on my knowledge and experiences to them. With my extensive greenkeeping and sports turf qualifications, and being a BASIS sports turf advisor, I am helping to improve the course, but my role extends beyond that – I manage the club, membership and accounts. The last element has been the main challenge, but it's been made all the easier by modern accounting software. The final piece of the jigsaw will be when I have set my own club and course budget.

### What do you hope to achieve in the role?

I hope to raise the club's profile through improving the course, increasing membership and strengthening the club's financial status. We would then look to invest this into the business to improve the experience of North Wales Golf Club for members and visitors.

### How does it fit into your career path?

I had my mind set on becoming either a technical manager or an agronomist, but several relevant opportunities passed me by as jobs went to other candidates. At that point I saw an advert for the role at North Wales Golf Club and I realised I didn't have to chase the big roles anymore. I decided to be happy with my life and managing my local links golf club was a big tick in the box as well as a huge boost to my mental health.

### What skills have you found vital to your job?

Golf course management is an advantage, but there are a few things that all greenkeepers are good at – rational thinking, problem solving, being resourceful. I also think man-management and people skills are a massive advantage.



“ Don't be scared to move and do something out of your comfort zone



The club manager at North Wales GC is adding new strings to his bow as he settles into a fresh challenge



North Wales

## Darren on applying for a new job

### **Describe the recruitment process for your role**

North Wales Golf Club advertised the position with the GCMA who advertised it on their website and on social media. I follow NWGC and GCMA on social media and this is where I saw the advert for the first time. Although I was happy as course manager at Bromborough and was successful in improving the course in my time there, the job just stood out to me.

### **What were your new employers looking for?**

The board basically wanted someone to carry on where my predecessor left off. The board wanted a manager to oversee the management of the whole club reporting directly to the board, but when I applied they saw I had more to offer than your average club manager.

### **What do you think set you apart from the other candidates?**

On offering me the job, the club chairman said it was my course management experience that made me stand out as I had a track record in that regard and in producing quality surfaces. He recognised there would be areas with the admin side of things I wouldn't have much experience with, but they would help me in any way they could and they didn't expect me to understand those areas straight away.

### **What advice would you give to anyone applying for a role?**

Make sure it's the right role for you at the right time, as this one was for me. I worked hard to achieve everything I could in my greenkeeping career and this was a natural progression in my career path, so give it some thought when you're looking at your next move.



Bromborough



**What is the best thing about your new job?**

Seeing my son Hari every morning and a smaller commute to work. Before, I used to FaceTime Hari to say good morning, whereas now we sit down and have breakfast together each morning. Little things like having breakfast with your son are times you will never get back and I'm so happy to be doing this now.

**What do you wish you'd known at the start of your career?**

I wish I had known how to get the bigger jobs without pushing myself so hard in my qualifications when I was younger. The answer would be to move around with the job and get experience at bigger clubs, even as a seasonal greenkeeper, because that goes a long way. However, I have still been very successful in my career, even becoming the most qualified greenkeeper in Europe. I worked at Abergele Golf Club for 26 years, but if I was to do it again, I would have moved after my apprenticeship to those named

clubs while I was younger. To those younger greenkeepers reading this: Don't be scared to move and do something out of your comfort zone.

**What has been your best career break?**

There are a few things that have boosted my career, including becoming a Master Greenkeeper in 2007, then winning Environmental Greenkeeping project of the year 2018 in the Golf Environment Awards, and winning Greenkeeping Project of the Year 2020 at BTME.

**What would you like to be doing in 10 years' time?**

I want to be a successful club manager, hopefully pushing North Wales Golf Club up the rankings. But who knows, one day I may revisit a chance to get into agronomy. One thing I do know is that I want to be happy in my work; the day you aren't happy or dread going to work is the time to move on.

GI

“ Little things like having breakfast with your son are times you will never get back



# National Apprenticeship Week 2024



With National Apprenticeship Week coming up this month, we take a look at two greenkeepers who have benefitted from schemes and give you some ideas on how to kick-start your career

## Wadsworth takes his career to the next level

Nik Wadsworth braced himself for a challenge when he took on the Level 3 Advanced Golf Greenkeeper programme, but he has never been afraid to work hard. The two-year course is a tough nut to crack, testing the practical and theoretical skills of the candidates.

And Wadsworth, who undertook a career change after a chance offer to try greenkeeping, was breaking new ground in more ways than one as he became the first person in the country to gain the honour in December 2022, the news doubling nicely as an early Christmas present as well as a major career boost.

“I was delighted to be the first to pass the revised Level 3,” said the first assistant at Dunham Forest Golf & Country Club. “The course was extremely hard work and I believe that I passed the exam because I really worked for it. What it did do was to make me think about what I was doing.”

It was not Wadsworth’s first experience of post-school academia, having earned a geography degree before

**“I was delighted to be the first to pass the revised Level 3**



**My job in three words: Engaging, rewarding and variety**





embarking on a career as a business analyst.

His decision to pursue an alternative professional path initially led him to teaching, but the lure of the golf course is what ended up winning the 53-year-old over.

“Six years ago, I decided I’d had enough of my line of work, took a postgraduate teacher training qualification but then grew bored and restless after I completed it, until a friend at Lymm Golf Club asked if I wanted to try a couple of weeks greenkeeping there. I loved it, stayed and never looked back.”

That restlessness proved an asset once in the profession, steering him towards career progression as he gained his Level 2 with distinction before immediately tackling the Level 3 qualification at Myerscough under tutor Chris Garland-Kelly.

Wadsworth’s work at Lymm did not go unnoticed as he was twice nominated for Toro’s Greenkeeper of the Year, in 2021 and 2022. It’s little wonder he loves the job, given his aptitude for it.

“Greenkeepers are wonderful,” said Wadsworth. “They can turn their hands to anything - they are builders, mechanics and engineers - as well as to anything turf-related.”

## Apprentice Bromfield sets sights high

Tom Bromfield had no idea what he wanted to do when he left school, but it wasn’t too long before he had his entire career plan mapped out.

Trentham Golf Club’s first assistant became the second person to pass their Level 3 Advanced Golf Greenkeeper course, representing another step towards his goal of managing a greens team.

Bromfield started his qualification at Myerscough College

in April 2021 to content developed by Lantra, and only Nik Wadsworth beat him to the punch on gaining the honour.

For someone who knew early on that greenkeeping was the vocation for him, the Level 3 is but one stepping stone on his career development path.

“Like many before me, I left school with no clue of a career,” said the 22-year-old. “I played golf with my dad at Barlaston

**“Greenkeepers are wonderful. They can turn their hands to anything”**



**My job in three words:**

**Challenging, fulfilling, inspiring**





Golf Club nearby. He inspired me to take up the game.

"Dad knew the head greenkeeper, who mentioned that Trentham Golf Club were seeking an apprentice greenkeeper.

"I tried it for a week, loved it and began an apprenticeship there in September 2017. Working outside doing a variety of jobs really appealed to me."

By summer 2019, Bromfield was graduating from his Level 2 in Golf Greenkeeping, and while he initially planned for a break before embarking on his Level 3, the imposition of Covid forced a rethink.

Meanwhile, he was shortlisted for the finals of Toro's Young Greenkeeper of the Year and won it, with two weeks' work experience at a course near Nice, in France, coming as part of the prize.

"That made me so proud to have been noticed for the work I had done," he said. "I was dealing with a different climate [in Nice], in temperatures up to 40 degrees. I was out of my comfort zone, but this helped me develop myself and gave me more independence and self-reliance as few people spoke English."

He has already started making strides in the industry, having been helped along the way by Adam Shoosmith, who tutored him for his Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications.

"Adam had been a greenkeeper himself and it felt good to know I was receiving the right information and to continue with his style of delivery," he said.

"I needed Level 3 to allow me to progress up the career ladder, and achieving the qualification helped me get promoted to first assistant greenkeeper in December."



The original material for these two case studies was provided by Lantra.

## What is National Apprenticeship Week?

National Apprenticeship Week is a celebration of the achievements of apprentices and the impact they have on communities, businesses and the wider economy.

Taking place from February 5-11, this year's theme is Skills for Life, shining a light on how apprenticeships can lay the foundations for individuals to flourish in their chosen careers, while employers can cultivate a workforce with future-ready skills.

### In 2023

- 25 live events
- 35,000 registrants
- 17,000 attendees

## A guide to UK Apprenticeships



In the first of a series of articles, Andy Wight of Oaklands College explains how apprenticeships work in the different nations of the UK, starting with England.

Apprenticeships in England are government-funded courses. There is a mandatory requirement for the employer to provide the student with at least six hours of

off-the-job training each week for the agreed duration of the apprenticeship.

The training provider is required to assess what skills, knowledge and behaviours are already held by the apprentice and must not charge for any such skills already held.

The audit must show there is a sufficient training need for the apprenticeship to last the minimum 12-month duration. If a candidate has extensive experience, they may be declined an apprenticeship.

Once all details have been agreed, the learning period starts. During this time, the apprentice will learn all the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to complete the apprenticeship. At the end of this period, the employer, training provider and apprentice will all agree that they are ready for



Gateway – the terminology used by the English government to denote when an apprentice has finished their training and is ready to take their End Point Assessment (EPA.)

The EPA will normally consist of a personal statement that is written by the student and an online exam, as well as practical assessments and a professional discussion carried out at the apprentice's place of work.

The EPA will be carried out by an Independent End Point Assessor, who will grade the apprenticeship components and provide a final grade.

Apprentices are expected to hold the required level of maths and English for the apprenticeship they are undertaking. Level 2 apprentices must hold at least level 1 maths and English and attempt level 2 in maths and English. Level 3 and 5 apprentices must hold Level 2 maths and English.

### Apprenticeship levels:

Level 2 - Greenkeeper apprenticeship

Level 3 - The Advanced Sports Turf Technician

Level 5 - Golf Course Manager apprenticeship

### Who pays?

Apprentices may not contribute. Where employers have fewer than 50 employees, the government will pay 100% of the apprenticeship up to the funding band maximum for apprentices aged:

- 16 to 18
- 19 to 24 with an education, health and care plan provided by their local authority, or has been in the care of their local authority

For students that do not meet the above criteria, the employer will pay 5% of the funding. However, there is one exception and that applies to employers with a wage bill of over £3 million, who must pay 100% of the apprenticeship cost. **GI**

**“ Apprenticeships in England  
are government-funded  
courses**

# Latest job vacancies

## Course Manager

Alwoodley Golf Club, Leeds



We are seeking an ambitious Course Manager to maintain and improve our special heathland course, which is consistently rated among the top 100 courses in GB&I.

Responsibilities will include:

- Leading the team of nine greens staff at our friendly, inclusive and thriving private members' club
- Working collaboratively with the industry-leading expert consultants on course architecture and agronomy who advise the club and support our planning

The opportunity comes with an attractive salary and comprehensive benefits package. The club is willing to assist with relocation costs.

To apply, send your CV, with a brief covering letter, to Richard Weeks, our Club Manager: [richard@alwoodleygolfclub.com](mailto:richard@alwoodleygolfclub.com)  
Closing date for applications: Monday February 12

## First Assistant Greenkeeper Vacancy

Chipstead Golf Club, Surrey



We are seeking an experienced and highly motivated individual to join our team of 5.

The successful candidate will work alongside the Course Manager in maintaining the golf course to a high standard.

You must have an NVQ Level 2 and have a basic knowledge of health and safety regulations. PA1, 2 & 6 certificates are desirable. You will need to work weekends and bank holidays on a rota system and be a team player with a keen eye for detail.

£25000-£27000 per annum.

We offer BIGGA membership, golf privileges, full uniform, education and training opportunities.

Please send a full CV and covering letter to: [Hayley.Petrie@eic.co.uk](mailto:Hayley.Petrie@eic.co.uk)



GKG GOLF CLUB ICELAND

## HEAD GREENKEEPER



GKG Golf Club are looking to recruit a **Head Greenkeeper** for their course in Iceland.

GKG GC is a 27-hole resort located close to Reykjavik centre. The Leirdalur course is an 18-hole championship course played as **6.000 meters** long par 71 and is a great test for all levels of golfers. The 9-hole course, which tests players with lakes and bunkers, is designed for a comfortable walk. The course is around **2.400 m** from the back tees, so offers great fun and is ideal for a quick and fun 9-hole round.

GKG GC is a **family-oriented** club with around 2.700 members of all ages.

### Role responsibilities:

- Work in conjunction with the Course Manager to lead, motivate and inspire the team daily, whilst producing a golf course of the highest of standards.
- Head Greenkeeper is responsible for the management, maintenance, care, and overall appearance of the golf courses.
- To be highly competent in all areas of greenkeeping and to carry out those tasks whilst working in accordance with Health and Safety guidelines.
- The Course Manager, Head Greenkeeper and the Assistant Greenkeepers form a knowledge team that works to plan all operations on the field, such as fertilizer schedules, seeding of grass species and how to deal with unexpected incidents.

### Key Skills:

- Minimum 5 years' experience working on golf courses with 1 year in a supervisory role.
- A positive attitude to work, self-motivated and team player.
- An understanding of routine golf course maintenance including planning and work allocation.
- At least Higher National Certificate (HNC).

### We are offering:

- A competitive salary.
- 30 days holiday.
- Car for personal use.
- Continual skill progression through training courses.
- Use of the golf course and all club facilities.

If you are interested, please apply by sending a cover letter and CV addressed to [agnar@gkg.is](mailto:agnar@gkg.is)



From trainee vacancies to senior management roles, new greenkeeping job opportunities are added daily to BIGGA's online recruitment pages. Our website receives 1.6m page views per year and 55% of those are to our careers pages. Visit [bigga.org.uk/careers](http://bigga.org.uk/careers) to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position. Call 01347 833 800 or email [info@bigga.co.uk](mailto:info@bigga.co.uk)

## Assistant Greenkeeper

Lingdale Golf Club, Leicestershire



Lingdale Golf Club are searching for an Assistant Greenkeeper to join our team and help achieve and maintain the highest standards throughout 2024 and beyond. The successful candidate should be an enthusiastic, motivated individual with a positive attitude and work ethic, and have the ability to work to the highest standard with attention to detail. They must show flexibility and the willingness to work as part of a team or motivation to work effectively unsupervised. Candidates should have previous experience of working at a golf club, NVQ Level 2 Sport Turf Management or equivalent. Spraying certificates and Chainsaw qualifications are desirable but not essential.

A competitive salary is offered, variable depending upon experience.

**Applicants should send a CV and covering letter to [clubmanager@lingdalegolfclub.co.uk](mailto:clubmanager@lingdalegolfclub.co.uk) by 9th February**

## Assistant Greenkeeper

New Zealand Golf Club, Surrey



We are looking to employ enthusiastic and motivated individuals to expand our team.

The successful candidates should have a positive attitude, work well as part of a team, have NVQ level 2 or be willing to work towards obtaining a qualification in greenkeeping. They should have good time management and be able to communicate effectively

The position is full-time, based on a 40-hour week with the addition of weekends on a rota basis and includes provision of uniform & PPE, staff lunch, training if required, BIGGA membership, off-peak playing privileges, inclusion into the staff fund and paid overtime.

Salary will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications, experience & suitability.

**Applicants should send a covering letter and CV to Stuart Bowman, Course Manager: [stuart.bowman@nzgc.org](mailto:stuart.bowman@nzgc.org)**

## Course Manager

Portstewart Golf Club, Northern Ireland



Portstewart Golf Club is situated on Northern Ireland's spectacular north coast and is one of the UK and Ireland's leading golf clubs. It boasts 54 holes within an environment of special environmental designations.

The Strand course is recognised worldwide and hosted the 2017 Irish Open. It has a large membership and a significant number of overseas visitors, and has embarked on an ambitious development programme, with European Golf Design.

Requirements:

- Minimum of NVQ L3 in Sports Turf Management or similar
- Holder of PA1, PA2 & PA6a pesticide application certificate
- Current Course Manager or DCM with a minimum of 5 years' experience in a 'links' environment.

**E-mail CV and cover letter to David MacLaren, General Manager: [david@portstewartgc.co.uk](mailto:david@portstewartgc.co.uk) by 26th February**

## Senior Assistant Greenkeeper

Trump Turnberry, Ayrshire



A rare and exciting opportunity is available for experienced, enthusiastic, self-driven & passionate Senior Assistants to join our talented golf course and estates team.

The Senior Assistant will assist Senior Managers with the presentation and maintenance of the golf courses.

PA1, PA2 and PA6 certificates & SVQ Level 3 in Greenkeeping is desirable.

Benefits include: Subsidised staff accommodation, meal on duty, discounted room rates for you & family across Trump Hotels, discounts at the Food & Beverage outlets and the Golf Professional Shop, use of spa & golf facilities, Bigga Membership paid, Employee Assistance Programme & ongoing training and development.

**Cover letter & CV emailed to [hr@trumpturnberry.com](mailto:hr@trumpturnberry.com) to apply. Closing date 18/02/24.**

## Qualified Assistant Greenkeeper

Widnes Golf Club, Cheshire



Widnes Golf Club is a private members club founded in 1924 and is located in a scenic parkland setting.

The applicant must have excellent work ethic, dedication, passion and be a team player with a keen eye for presentation. You will be working as part of a greenkeeping team, with excellent opportunities for career development.

Role requirements:

- NVQ level 2 Qualification in Sports Turf Maintenance or equivalent - essential
- Spraying Certificates PA1, PA2 and PA6 – desirable but not essential
- Chainsaw Certificates CS 32/33 would be an advantage

**Please apply in writing or email with CV and covering letter to: The Secretary Manager Nicola Ogburn at the above address or e-mail: [secretary@widnesgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@widnesgolfclub.co.uk)**



## Recruitment

[www.bigga.org.uk/careers](http://www.bigga.org.uk/careers)

From trainee vacancies to senior management roles, new greenkeeping job opportunities are added daily to BIGGA's online recruitment pages.

BIGGA's website receives 1.6 million page views per year and 55% of those are to our careers pages. Visit [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk) to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position.

For more information call 01347 833 800 or email [info@bigga.co.uk](mailto:info@bigga.co.uk)



# BIGGA

British and International  
Golf Greenkeepers Association

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We're **BIG** on...

**SUPPORT  
WHEN  
TIMES GET  
TOUGH**

BIGGA Greenkeepers' Benevolent Fund

Lifestyle counselling support line

Xtra Benefits

Personal accident insurance

Human resources advice line

Greenkeeper legal advice line



# Practical Greenkeeping

Refine your skillset and expand your knowledge

- The R&A on the way ahead from one of the wettest winters on record
- How using data can help to make informed decisions on maintenance



## Only fools rush in – why doing nothing is sometimes for the best



**Robert Patterson,**  
Royal Aberdeen  
course manager

**One of the hardest but most important lessons to learn in greenkeeping is when you're better off doing nothing.**

It's an issue that can come to the fore at the back end of winter as we seek to get courses into a condition that's fit for play, even when nature is working against us.

Greenkeepers often want to be seen to be doing something, but in some cases it can be counterproductive.

Faced with a green covered in ice, you might be tempted to have a go at breaking through to see what's going on underneath – and you will probably find yourself doing

tremendous damage in the process as the grass is likely attached to the ice.

Perhaps you have a fairway under an inch or two of water after weeks of rain and the temptation is to get on there and do something, but consider the state you might leave the course in if you're driving or even walking over saturated ground.

This is where patience and a little bit of experience come in handy. You have to know when the time is right to act, and when you need to wait and let nature do its thing.

It could be a good time to concern yourself with other issues that need tending to – there is always something you can be doing. If you have prepared accordingly earlier in the year and undertaken key

maintenance work such as drainage work and aeration, alongside any other measures including temporary greens and winter tees, you should have fewer issues to contend with at the end of the winter season.

The key to good winter maintenance is to be prepared and get ahead of the game early on, to be proactive as opposed to reactive. But in any case, if you do find yourself with some issues to address, now is not the time to make hasty decisions; the focus should be on the long-term view.

You know better weather is coming and it's time to make plans with the next few months in mind, rather than fretting about trying to solve a problem immediately when that's just not possible. **GI**



# Assess strategy success before spring recovery

Recording results and implications of all Integrated Turf Management actions is essential for reliable and repeatable use in disease control strategies

**Wet weather this winter has posed a hugely serious challenge for turf surfaces. Not only have management practices been severely disrupted, but near continuous leaf wetness and periods of warm temperatures have created the double whammy of high-risk conditions for microdochium disease.**

It's not just the recent months that have proven so damaging for disease. Earlier last year fairy ring was highly evident during the warm, dry spell in June, anthracnose again broke out during some early stress periods, while more courses than ever reported damaging dollar spot outbreaks as early as April, and continuing right through to October or beyond.

The evidence of disease scars and surface damage is all too apparent during outbreaks, but will have further

impacted on plant health that can manifest itself for many months.

Now, in February, is a good time to assess the success of disease control strategies through the year - to evaluate what worked and what measures need to be adapted for the season ahead. It's particularly pertinent to do now, before new spring growth and surface recovery masks problem areas.

The success of any strategy should assess results of both fungicide treatments and management practices

#### Read this for:

- Planning disease strategies
- Assessing ITM success
- Creating effective programmes

designed to reduce risk of disease.

Introducing integrated strategies to cut the risk of one disease, could inadvertently have an impact in increasing the incidence of another. For example, reducing nutrition too low to counter microdochium risk, can make the plant more susceptible to an increase in the frequency and severity of dollar spot outbreaks, as well as exacerbating stress related anthracnose attack.

Getting the balance right and creating a program optimised for your site will vary in every specific situation, as well as with seasonal conditions. However, a good understanding of the relationship between the different factors will help formulate an effective plan, or enable other mitigating measures to be put in place. If the decision is made to reduce nutritional

“Data helps to build a picture of disease risks, to realistically assess the true success of any actions



Author: Sean Loakes  
Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

inputs, for example, then extra effort would be required to minimise any other stresses that might trigger an anthracnose outbreak, such as moisture deficit or low cutting heights.

Furthermore, where you are aware that the risk factors for a specific disease may have increased, it will put greater emphasis on the most appropriate fungicide product selection and treatment timing to prevent attacks.

In a new European collaborative evaluation of turf ITM research, scientists identified work showing reducing N inputs could only lower the incidence of microdochium patch by up to 43% at best, particularly when in combination with rolling, bi-weekly application and utilising slow-release fertiliser. While in the same work the fungicide treatments achieved 66-85% control.


Further pan-European research has strengthened the position of moving towards responsible sustainable use of all plant protection products, using combinations of cultural, biological and conventional chemical controls. The levels of disease were reported to be significantly lower in turf treated with the biostimulant Hicure - where plant health was more resilient to infection, along with utilising the pigment Ryder to retain colour intensity in areas of disease attack, for example. Recording the results of all ITM activity, along with the prevailing weather conditions and disease pressures, is essential to make decisions on the reliability and cost effectiveness of any actions.

Now, there is the opportunity to use the Syngenta Turf Advisor app to build up an accurate picture of disease

pressure and weather conditions during any activities that can better assess their success. That can significantly help to assure the repeatability of those measures that worked under similar conditions, as well as avoid any that exacerbated issues.

Creating a bespoke dashboard in the app for specific problem diseases, incorporating all the local weather metrics that will influence infection pressure, will enable a dynamic approach to adopting the ITM practices that have been shown to work effectively under the conditions, as well as when the optimum fungicide application will be required to support turf health and protect surface quality. **GI**



A satellite is shown in the upper right corner, orbiting Earth. The background features a bright sun in the upper left, creating a lens flare effect, and the Earth's horizon with a blue sky and white clouds below. The satellite has a complex structure with various panels and instruments.

**Using data  
to guide  
maintenance  
decisions**



USGA agronomist Zach Nicoludis reveals how golf course managers can harness the power of data to make informed decisions about maintenance

**Data is the key to unlocking a greater understanding of how best to maintain your golf course, according to USGA agronomist Zach Nicoludis.**

Here, Zach explains the types of data golf course managers can collect, how and where it should be recorded, and why it can improve turf health, playability and golfer satisfaction.

#### **Nutrient analysis**

**ZN:** One of the most common types of data collection is conducting a yearly nutrient analysis and sending samples to measure organic matter in the putting greens.

A nutrient analysis would be used to guide fertiliser applications, while measuring organic matter makes it possible to monitor how levels are trending and whether changes should be made to the cultural management programme.

## About Zach

Zach joined the USGA Green Section in 2016 as an agronomist in the Central Region. Based in Columbus, he conducts visits in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Canada, as well as providing educational outreach throughout the Central Region.

Working on a golf course during high school inspired Zach to pursue a degree in turfgrass science at Penn State University.

Zach spent four years as the South Course superintendent at Wilmington Country Club, before taking up his current position.

Such changes may include increased core aeration, more frequent sand topdressing, or in some situations it could be that less aggressive practices are needed.

### Clipping volume

In the past five to 10 years there has been a lot of discussion about using clipping volume to monitor putting green performance.

A lot of golf course superintendents are measuring clipping volume – whether it's from one green or 18 – to see how inputs are impacting their greens.

The key here is not just collecting the data but analysing it in a way that leads to a greater understanding of performance and the factors influencing that.

To that end, the way the data is

stored and presented matters – programmes such as Excel and Google Docs can work really well, or some superintendents have developed their own programmes for this. The USGA has its own Deacon software for the same purpose.

### Setting benchmarks

When you have a foundation of clipping volume data to work with, you can benchmark that against various factors, such as mean temperature, mowing frequency, fertilizer inputs, or topdressing inputs. This allows you to compare how those factors impact putting green performance.

We're mostly talking about putting green speed, as that's really the only metric we can measure right now, although there are some





superintendents who will use what they call a 'bobble test', where they count the number of times the ball jumps when they measure putting green speed. That is a means to measure any deviation in the ball roll as it travels across the green in order to glean information about the trueness of the surface.

### A slow process

As with the many data sets, it takes time for clipping volume collection to build a clear picture. You're not going to collect clipping volumes for two weeks and suddenly have an aha! moment where you start making major changes to an agronomic programme – it's a slow process, based more on month-to-month and year-to-year trends.

For example, there's a golf course in

Tennessee where their clipping volume data has enabled them to get a firm grasp on a problem they were facing whereby they would see a flush of growth every spring as their ultradwarf broke dormancy.

They had been applying plant growth regulators based on the actual growth of the turf, but by analysing the data and identifying where the surge of growth was happening, they changed the timeframe and made their plant growth regulator apps sooner when the turf was visually still dormant. That led to a significantly smaller drop in their putting green speeds because they weren't getting that growth.

### Fairway regrassing ROI calculator

There are numerous instances throughout our work in the USGA

Green Section where the solution for an issue comes down to having a data-driven model to determine the optimal course of action. A case in point would be when it comes to fairway regrassing.

There's a particular example of one course in Frankfurt, Kentucky, where they had a mix of cool-season grasses – perennial rye grasses, Kentucky bluegrass, poa, and bentgrass – and this is an area where disease pressure is very high and they were seeing some amount of turfgrass loss every year.

Working with them using a return-on-investment calculator we developed, we knew that they were spending around \$75,000 a year on plant protectants, mainly fungicides. They looked at an improved variety of low-mow bluegrass and used HGT

### GPS services

ZN: Kits are available from the USGA with 200 GPS loggers and these little devices are about the size of a packet of chewing gum – they fit right in your pocket.

The reason it's 200 is actually that we found you get the same trends from that number as you would from 500 or 1,000.

Whenever these are in use, we want them on the golfer – not in their cart or their bag – because we want to specifically track their movement.

With that insight, you can see where golfers are walking on and off golf tees and greens, and how they're moving around a course generally.

The data can be shown as continuous lines showing the path people have taken around a course, or heatmaps to show the distinction between high-traffic areas and low-traffic areas.

All this data can be sorted by handicap, gender, age, and whether golfers walked or took a cart, and it also allows you to conduct pace of play analysis.

One example of how this data might feed into course maintenance decisions is if you found there was a bunker that virtually nobody was hitting the ball into, and you're spending \$1,000 a year on maintaining that bunker – that's a lot of money for something that's not getting any use.

The data can also lead to turf reduction, making courses more efficient and sustainable. By knowing where play is minimal, turf reduction can be completed to conserve resources. This is a particular concern in areas where water availability is a challenge.

To underline the wide-ranging usefulness of such data-gathering techniques, the USGA's GPS toolkit was used in Toronto to plot ski routes across five of the city's golf courses. City staffers responsible for the courses located close to Toronto's downtown area created eight loops based on data gleaned from GPS units carried by golfers, highlighting low-traffic areas of the course to ensure minimal disruption to the turf during winter months.

Kits cost \$1,400.

“The way the data is stored and presented matters

bluegrass and initially thought they'd need \$24,000 on plant-protectant treatments after regrassing and establishment, which turned out to be a pretty accurate prediction.

They did have the cost of a seeder and a non-selective herbicide to kill off the existing fairways, but the result was a significant improvement in playability and a timescale of 1.2 years for return on investment with this project.

It should be noted that such savings can be reallocated within the budget, as opposed to resulting in a cut to the budget.

### The forward tee calculator

One tool developed by USGA agronomists is the forward tee calculator, which helps facilities determine forward tee distance so the course is more accessible to golfers with a higher handicap or slower swing speed.

Based on data from our distance insights project, we can see how far golfers of different standards might be expected to hit the ball, and then you can compare that to the yardage of a course based on the position of the forward tees.

We worked with one course which came in at about 6,200 yards from the forward tees, and we know from the data that for the average female golfer it should be somewhere between 4,400 and 4,600 yards – so on that basis, this course was at least 1,600 yards too long based on the forward tees.

They used this to make more informed decisions about the forward tee positions and encouraged an increase in the number of golfers playing the course who had a higher handicap or slower swing speed.

### Data collection and communication

The collection of data ultimately makes it possible to communicate more effectively, which is vital for the smooth running of any golf operation.

Whether it is making a change to the agronomic programme, selling a project such as forward tees or eliminating bunkers because they are not in play, having data makes it possible to communicate with decision makers in a clearer and more meaningful way. **GI**



### The future of data-gathering

Last year, the USGA launched a new tool that calculates putting green speed, firmness, smoothness and trueness all in a device the same size and weight as a golf ball.

The GS3 is a rechargeable smart ball that affords an incredible level of insight, giving industry professionals the power to glean vital data that allows for more effective course management than ever before.

This incredible new technology is able to collect over 15,000 data points, handing users the information they need to make truly informed decisions.

"We are excited to provide a tool that enables the industry to objectively quantify putting green metrics, besides just green speed," said Matt Pringle, Ph.D., managing director of the USGA Green Section. "GS3 can clarify the impact of different maintenance practices, provide benchmarks and communicate to stakeholders how the course is performing."

“ The collection of data  
ultimately makes it possible to  
communicate more effectively



# Support your turf after winter with Marathon® ALGAE!

## Rain and cold: a tough cocktail for turf



When the cold season arrives, the grass enters a phase of weak or no growth. During this period, it becomes particularly sensitive to climatic stresses such as excess humidity or frost.

The use of sports pitches during this season exacerbates the situation. The cause: compaction induced by trampling and uprooting. Trampling during wet periods breaks the structure of the top layer profile, causing fine particles to rise up and obstructing the porosity of the soil, resulting in water accumulating on the surface. At the end of winter, compaction of the surface layer also slows down the restarting of the soil's biological activity by asphyxiating the environment, leading to mineralisation and nutrition problems for the turf, problems accentuated by the leaching of nutrients such as nitrates and sulphates during the winter. Another disadvantage of insufficient biological activity in spring is the slowdown in the decomposition of organic matter such as mowing residues. The thatch build-up accentuates asphyxiation and encourages the onset of disease.

In short, a negative cycle sets in, leading inexorably to a deterioration in the quality of the turf!

That's why, after a cold, wet winter, it's essential to approach the new season with a tailored nutrition programme, thanks to the Marathon® ALGAE range.

### A nutrition programme to match the situation

As soon as the grass emerges from winter, it is important to act upon two important areas: the supply of nutrients to support the increasing needs of the turf, and the stimulation of biological activity in the soil to boost the mineralisation of organic matter. That's the aim of the Marathon® ALGAE range of organo-mineral fertilisers.

Thanks to its patented XSER® complexation technology, Marathon®

ALGAE releases nutrients sequentially into the soil solution, gradually meeting the growing needs of the turf, while protecting the nutrients from leaching. This stimulates the turf's growth, regenerates its roots and repairs the plant cover damaged by the winter.


The organic component of Marathon® ALGAE has two special features. The first is that most of it comes from a dehydrated source rather than a composted one. This characteristic preserves all the reactivity of organic matter for a rapid effect on stimulating soil microflora. The second special feature is the addition of SEADRY® dry seaweed extract, which is rich in specific molecules (sulphated polysaccharides) and rare trace elements (such as vanadium) favourable to the development of microbial activity in the soil and root hairs.

The different NPK balances available in the Marathon® ALGAE range can be used to support turf throughout the year, from regeneration at the end of winter, through strengthening resistance to summer climatic stress (high temperatures and water stress), to preparing reserves at the end of the season. The Marathon® ALGAE range is available in two particle sizes: 0.7 - 2 mm for greens, elite and stadium pitches, and 2 - 4 mm for fairways, training pitches, parks and gardens.

With such a range of solutions, sports ground managers have an effective tool at their disposal to create the right conditions for the development of high-quality turf. **GI**



Marathon® ALGAE Sport fertilisers are available exclusively from Collier Turf Care [collier-turf-care.co.uk](http://collier-turf-care.co.uk) or call 01328 700600



# **Greenkeeping washdown areas – tips and advice from the GTC**

Effluent and run-off from vehicle washing and cleaning activities can damage the environment and pollute rivers, streams, burns and ground water



Given regular cleaning of maintenance equipment is essential to ensure the long life of expensive equipment, and the fact chemical sprayers require washing and flushing out after applying pesticides and fungicides, greenkeepers must ensure machinery is cleaned in a way that does not impact the surrounding ecosystem.

Wash-off water may contain a range of serious contaminants, including oil, petrol, diesel, grease and pesticides or fungicides.

Dirty water or run-off from vehicle washing and cleaning, carried out as a business or business activity, is called trade effluent. Whether cleaning just one vehicle or responsible for many vehicles, employers must arrange for collection and disposal of effluent to prevent pollution.

It is illegal to discharge trade effluent to the environment or into drains without the permission of the local water authority.

### Drainage system

The initial step in ascertaining what is needed to do to stop any potential pollution is to find out the type of drainage

systems and get a drainage plan. Understanding the drainage system is the key to preventing pollution.

Most areas have what is known as a separate drainage system where there are two types of drain:

- Surface water or clean water drains. These should only carry uncontaminated rainwater. They can lead directly to ditches, streams, burns, rivers and soak-ways. Roof water, car park, road and some yard drainage is usually connected to the surface water drainage system.
- Foul water drains carry contaminated water (sewage and/or trade effluent) safely to a sewage treatment facility. This is either owned privately or by the local sewage treatment provider.

Techniques called Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) are used as a better way of dealing with surface water run-off rather than using piped outfalls to rivers, streams or burns.

In Scotland, the use of SUDS is a legal requirement for surface water disposal. These systems must be protected from



“ There needs to be a good, up-to-date drainage plan for the whole site

contamination in the same way as piped surface water drainage systems.

To prevent pollution, do not allow washing or cleaning effluent, run-off or cleaning chemicals to enter oil separators, drains or gullies connected to the surface water drainage system.

There needs to be a good, up-to-date drainage plan for the whole site. This should include areas where vehicle washing and cleaning will take place.

If the golf club does not have a plan, there is no guarantee the drainage is connected to the right system. If there is no in-house expertise to do this, use a reputable drainage consultant or consulting engineering company. **GI**



## General requirements for vehicle washing and cleaning activities

Activities that produce run-off from the vehicle on to the ground and use cleaning and valeting products should be carried out in areas that are clearly marked and isolated from surface water drainage systems, unmade ground and porous surfaces. These areas are called designated washing bays.

**A designated washing bay should be designed so that run-off is:**

- Isolated using channels, gullies, gradient and kerbs
- Directed to a silt trap or settlement tank to remove larger particles of silt and sediment
- Either collected in a sealed system for reuse, discharged to the public foul sewer with prior permission of the local sewer provider or collected in a sealed system for authorised disposal

**A golf club should also:**

- Have procedures for everyone, including any potential contractors, that cover where and how vehicle washing and cleaning should be carried out and what to do in a spillage emergency
- Consider whether a fence or barrier is required to prevent spray or wind drift out of the designated area
- Have procedures and equipment that minimise water use and solid waste production

**Typical Examples of purpose-built washdown pads include:**

- A reedbed system
- A water recycling system

Please note that for a washdown pad to be compliant it does not require to be a purpose-built system, but it does need to meet the same requirements as mentioned above for designated washing bays.

### Key requirements

The main requirements of managing a greenkeeping washdown area are:

- Completion of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Providing information, instruction and training to staff to protect staff, members and visitors from exposure to any hazardous materials
- Having a suitable hard-standing washdown area
- Ensuring that waste water is either recycled, treated or disposed of by an approved waste contractor

### Questions to Consider

- Is machinery being washed on a bunded washpad?
- Are all staff trained in the safe usage of hazardous substances being used?
- Are residual current devices (RCD) being used where pressure washers are being used?
- Are you aware of pollutant legal limits of the materials you are using?
- Do you have a permit in place allowing to carry out your discharge practices?
- Have you considered a reedbed system to recycle your wastewater?



# Unlocking the Power of Water

For all forms of turf management, one of the keys to success lies in unlocking the power of water

**Effective water management is required in the pursuit of optimal plant health, turf quality, nutrient uptake, root development and soil health. Water is a powerful commodity, and it needs to be managed properly.**

ICL Growing Solutions are proud to announce that its premium wetting agent H2Pro TriSmart, has achieved the remarkable status of being registered as a “non-microbial biostimulant” under the latest EU Fertilizing Product Regulation (FPR)(1009/2019). This unique classification means that H2Pro TriSmart is now in a class of its own.

Developed through extensive research and tested in multiple independent trials, H2Pro TriSmart has been proven to provide a whole host of wide-ranging turf benefits by enhancing water distribution and use.

The registration of H2Pro TriSmart follows comprehensive trials conducted


by the independent Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI). These trials showcased the product’s unique ability to unlock the power of water, enhancing both soil and plant quality traits.

Dr. Andy Owen, ICL International Technical Manager Turf and Landscape, attests to the exceptional performance of TriSmart, stating, “Years of research and field trials have proven that the product performs exceptionally well.” The extensive data gathered from global field trials and university research highlight TriSmart’s capability to reduce

underscores the product’s unique ability to improve moisture status in drought-affected soils and root zones.

Four independent field trials at the STRI, each with eight treatment replications, provided compelling evidence of H2Pro TriSmart’s capacity to unlock the power of water for improved turf quality traits.

The trials measured enhancements in turf quality, colour, uniformity, density, NDVI responses, and a significantly greater volumetric moisture content percentage (VMC %) in TriSmart treated plots compared to control plots. This

 **TriSmart has been proven to provide a whole host of wide-ranging turf benefits**

dry patch and soil hydrophobicity. While acknowledging the benefits under the new fertiliser legislation, Dr. Owen

robust field data supports the product’s designation under the latest regulations, reinforcing its efficacy in optimising





TriSmart was developed through extensive research and underwent multiple independent trials

water distribution, availability and utilisation - all essential for successful turf maintenance.

TriSmart is part of ICL's high-performance H2Pro water management range, which has been developed specifically for high quality performance turfgrass. The range

offers specialist blends of residual and penetrant surfactants suitable for all conditions, all backed by extensive research and user testimonials. Turf managers using H2Pro TriSmart in their programmes can be assured that the product's quality and high performance remain unchanged, with the new FPR

1009/2019 compliant label a testament to its exceptional capabilities.

H2Pro TriSmart's will continue to transform turf management practices, ensuring golf courses and sports fields maintain optimal conditions for play while prioritising ICL's goal of sustainable water management. **GI**

### Turf managers have a powerful tool at their disposal to maximise the use of water

Utilising H2Pro TriSmart in turf management programmes enhances a number of hugely important turf attributes:

1. **Drought resilience:** TriSmart enhances soil moisture distribution and uptake by the turfgrass, enabling it to better withstand drought stress conditions
2. **Water-use efficiency:** Through a programmed approach with H2Pro wetting agents, turf managers can achieve higher water-use efficiency, ensuring responsible water management practices.
3. **Enhanced water uptake:** TriSmart facilitates increased water (and nutrient) uptake by grass plants in a drying soil, promoting healthier root systems and overall plant vitality.
4. **Improved turf quality traits:** Turf managers can expect enhancements in turf quality, colour, uniformity, and density, resulting in a visually appealing and high-performing playing surface.

# The way ahead from one of the wettest winters ever



Paul Woodham is The R&A's Head of Agronomy Europe

We have all experienced an unprecedented and sustained period of consistently wet weather that most golf courses simply cannot cope with

It is hard to start writing a column without reference to weather conditions and the influence these have on playability and what can be achieved by greenkeeping teams. We can only look forward, maybe in hope rather than confidence, to a fair set of weather patterns in the months ahead after one of the wettest winters on record.

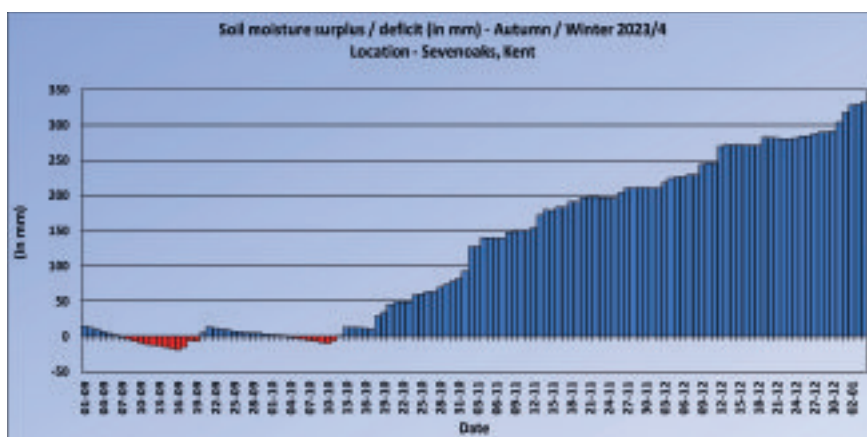
The autumn and winter had seen an unprecedented period of consistently wet weather that began in October and has continued right up to the first week in January when areas of the South and Midlands suffered localised flooding.

Surprisingly, for many locations, by comparison to last year, the weather wasn't the wettest, but monthly and yearly averages perhaps fail to identify the real issue of the latter part of 2023 and how it has presented turf managers with such a challenge.

Information from Mark Hunt, Weather Analytics, suggests that the very high rain rates (measured in mm per hour) have been particularly challenging. This was particularly true towards the end of December with five consecutive days of weather classified as falling at a heavy/violent rain rate (>50mm per hour rain rate). Not exactly what greenkeepers needed over what should have been a busy period for clubs.

Aside from the extreme rainfall events, there has been a chronic lack of dry-down days between the downpours so soils that had become saturated, remained so (there is very little evapotranspiration at this time of the year).

The golfer will inevitably be frustrated with the lack of golf when course



closures or restrictions have been enforced during the past months. With frustration comes the expectation of better days ahead but also the risk of misunderstanding and a lack of tolerance for any further disruption, or perceived excuses for poor conditions or planned interruptions, while pre-season maintenance is scheduled.

This is of course nothing new to greenkeepers and committees who are commonly under pressure from the golfer. Many golf clubs effectively and proactively manage communications well when explaining what actions are planned and why. For those who feel under insurmountable pressure, we must do better to improve golfers' understanding of the impact of weather, limitations of site characteristics and the route into main-season conditions.

I want to labour on the limitations of site conditions and soil types. We have seen relentless wet conditions causing flooding and saturated ground conditions for much of the winter. Clay-based courses have been

particularly vulnerable even where there is drainage. The volume of rain has commonly overwhelmed the natural drainage potential of soils and drainage systems, especially aging designs which have had additional connections tapping into existing drains which were never designed to calculate maximum flow rates.

In addition, surface infiltration and upper profile percolation rates will be massively compromised by the impact of traffic smearing the surface, especially where grass cover has thinned, and with silt/clay capping profiles. A prolonged period of prolific worm casting creates other problems in terms of silt/clay contamination at the surface. **GI**



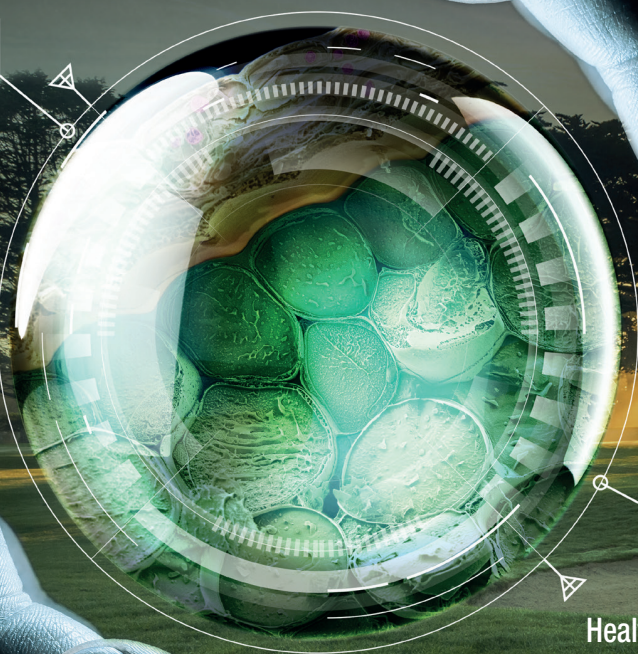
Our monthly column from The R&A's Sustainable Golf team shares news and insights on agronomy and sustainability themes. For more information on The R&A's Sustainable Agronomy Service please contact [sustainablegolf@randa.org](mailto:sustainablegolf@randa.org)

# The **balance** of **power**... ...is in your hands



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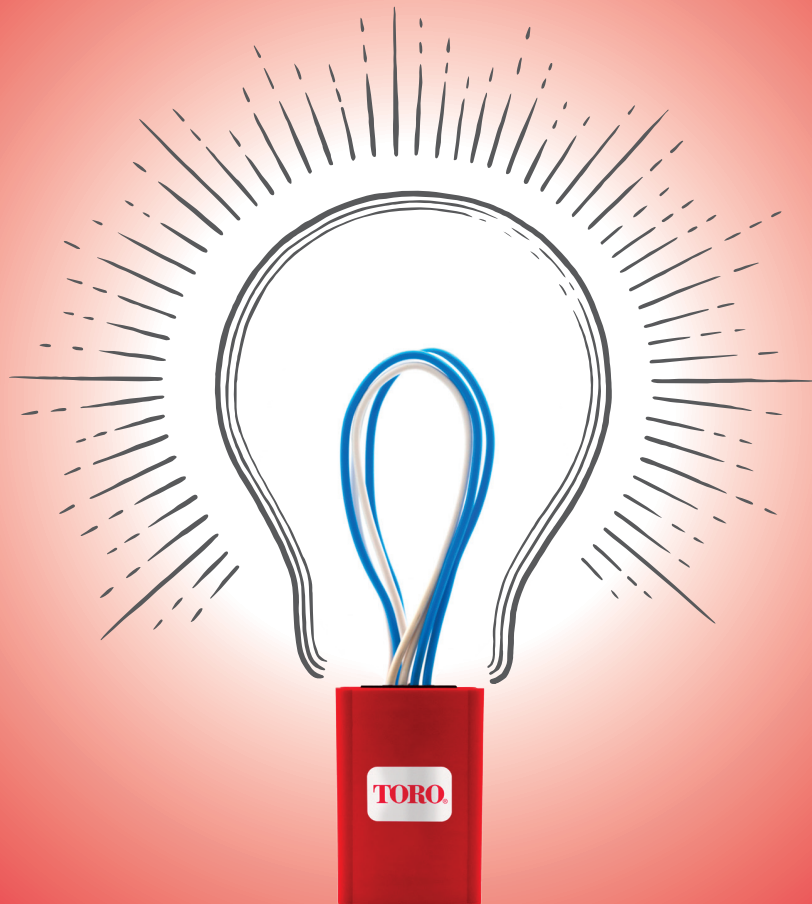
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