



Greenkeeper International



Portstewart's No 1

David Feeney on making the transition to course manager after being a long-serving deputy at Prestwick

■ **From Your Association**

The R&A's Championship Agronomy Programme

■ **Members & Careers**

Liam Geals on returning to work after double amputation

■ **Practical Greenkeeping**

Silloth's conservation work is the subject of a new video

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Contents

August 2025



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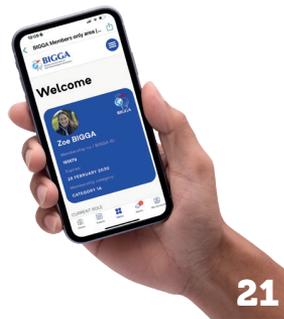
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We are committed to the continual professional development of our members, working with the leading bodies in golf for the good of the game.

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First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- Find out how company car tax changes could impact your pay
- Meet the sunbathing Jack Russell sniffing around the Chartridge Park woods



Meurig Lumley (Third from right)

Aberdovey's Meurig 'overwhelmed' at retirement send-off after 41 years

Meurig Lumley was left feeling "overwhelmed" after a golf day was held in his honour to mark his retirement from Aberdovey Golf Club.

The deputy head greenkeeper stepped down at the end of June, calling time on his 41-year spell at the Welsh venue.

Aberdovey showed their gratitude as Meurig was sent on his way in style, with over 100 people playing in his testimonial event.

The occasion proved to be an emotional one for a man described by the club as an "all-round legend".

"What they did was amazing really," he said.

"I was quite overwhelmed by it. It was nice to see so many people there and I

was grateful to have the chance to say thank you.

"I've been very lucky to be employed at this great club for such a long time. I've enjoyed a career where no two days have ever been the same, and I'm proud of the job I've done over the past four decades."

Meurig, who once starred in the local pantomime, is a former RNLI lifeboat crewman and still serves as the launch driver – a role he intends to maintain in his retirement years.

In tribute to their departing deputy, who also had a stint as head greenkeeper, Aberdovey's club captain praised a man who provided "41 years of hard graft, early mornings come rain or shine, battling the elements and

shaping our beloved course into the gem it is today".

He continued: "His dedication, calm nature and quiet sense of humour have earned him not just the respect of his colleagues, but the affection of everyone who knows him.

"Thank you for your decades of service, for your humour, your kindness and your unshakeable dependability.

"Enjoy your retirement – you've more than earned it."

The father of two is looking forward to spending more time with his family, including being on grandparent duties, and tending to his garden, though he hasn't ruled out the occasional visit to his beloved Aberdovey course. **GI**



The BIGGA Calendar

Kevin Irving, Carlisle

Company car tax changes could impact your pay

Greenkeepers who drive company vehicles could see a change in their monthly tax bills following adjustments to the Benefit-in-Kind (BiK) tax rates on company cars.

From April 2025, new BiK rates have been applied to all company vehicles, particularly those with higher carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, as well as to fuel benefits.

While the tax on electric and low-emission vehicles will remain relatively low, it will gradually rise over the next few years in line with government efforts to encourage greener transport. In some cases this may cost employees hundreds of pounds more per year.

For example, a diesel vehicle emitting over 120g/km of CO₂ could attract a BiK rate of 30% or more, while electric vehicles will see their rate rise from 2% to 3% by 2025.

This could have a real effect on

What is Benefit-in-Kind (BiK)?

BiK is a tax that employees pay for receiving benefits from their employer in addition to their salary. A common example is a company car. If your employer provides you with a vehicle that you can also use for personal journeys, it counts as a 'benefit' and is therefore taxable.

How much you pay depends on:

- The vehicle's list price
- Its CO₂ emissions
- Your income tax band
- The higher the emissions and the more valuable the car, the more tax you pay each month through your PAYE code.

anyone using older or diesel-powered vehicles as part of their job.

Additionally, most double cab pickups are now treated as cars for BiK purposes, because typically these vehicles are equally suited to convey passengers and goods.

Below is some guidance to help mitigate the impact of these changes.

Employees are advised to:

- Review their vehicle's CO₂ rating
- Use HMRC's online BiK calculator to check how much they might be paying
- Talk with their employer about vehicle options before renewal
- Consider moving to a hybrid or electric vehicle, especially if employer support or salary sacrifice schemes are available. **GI**





What's on this month

Dates for your diary

4 August

BIGGA v GCMA – Stover

6 August

East of England Summer Golf Day – Normanby Hall

14 August

South Wales Summer Golf Day – Newport

19 August

South East Golf Day – Prince's

21 August

East of Scotland Willie Woods Golf Tournament – Kingsknowe

27 August

West Scotland Hampden Park visit – Hampden Park



BIGGA Regional Patrons 2025

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



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RURAL TRAINING & CONSULTANCY



A greenkeeper's best friend – Woody



Owner: Tom Grace

Course: Chartridge Park Golf Club

Breed: Jack Russell

Age: 16 years old

Favourite treat: A sausage (if he's lucky!)

Favourite spot on the course: The woods in the middle

Naughtiest moment: He walked underneath the sprayer – twice! We had a Smurf dog for the afternoon

My dog is happiest: When sunbathing in the garden after a long day at work

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



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From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- BIGGA's first online international members meeting
- Participants of the ICL Continue to Learn scholarship revealed



From Source to Course: Water management survey needs your input

Water use on golf courses is coming under more scrutiny than ever.

Following two years of all-time high rainfall, the UK is now experiencing one of the driest periods on record, and this extreme weather is no longer anomalous. It's becoming the norm.

As greenkeepers, you are already adapting, but upcoming legislation changes could make this harder. Government sources indicate that golf courses may soon no longer be permitted to use mains water for irrigation.

In response, BIGGA is working with industry partners and regulators on a sustainable, long-term approach to water supply. But in order to build a case that truly reflects your requirements, we need reliable, on-the-ground data.

'From Source to Course', a new initiative involving key stakeholders across the world of golf, will map water usage within golf in the UK.

Evidence collected will be used to:

- Build a case for the environmental advantages of greenkeeping

- Inform future legislation
- Create a real future for course irrigation and drainage

The survey data will be utilised by the governing bodies of golf across the UK for the benefit of the industry. Please fill it in accurately, but be mindful that it is not a test, nor a method of identifying higher users. We simply need to better understand the current 'state of the nation' in order to accurately represent our challenge and ensure our game is protected for the future. **GI**

The BIGGA National Board is comprised of the following members who volunteer their time to support the association: Kevin Fish, Antony Kirwan, Gordon McKie, Peter Moore, Lucy Sellick, Andy Smith and Jez Ward
BIGGA President Ronnie Myles, BIGGA Chairperson Steven Lloyd



CAFRE hosts Northern Ireland's inaugural event

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) hosted Northern Ireland's maiden First Green event in June.

Held at CAFRE's Greenmount Campus, the event welcomed pupils and teachers from Ballyclare Secondary School in County Antrim.

Throughout the day, students took part in a variety of hands-on activities, ranging from changing holes and measuring green speed to building bug hotels and exploring the biodiversity of golf courses.

Among the highlights was a demonstration of the POGO tool for turf and soil analysis. Students also showed strong enthusiasm for the golf course machinery on display, many climbing aboard greens mowers and utility vehicles.

"It was encouraging to see such interest and eagerness to learn its use, price and – of course – top speed," said Stuart Nixon, CAFRE horticulture instructor. "To me this proves that a career in greenkeeping is so much more than just cutting grass. One must be a gardener, supervisor, nutritionist and mechanic."

Students enjoyed a hands-on

demonstration with a stimpmeter, while another session on insects and habitat management emphasised how greenkeepers contribute to ecological wellbeing.

The youngsters also enthusiastically took on the task of building bug hotels, with one particularly inventive creation featuring a pinecone cannon. The day ended with a friendly putting competition and prizegiving.

Stuart added: "It was a successful event, which hopefully will encourage the next generation of greenkeepers and naturalists alike, for these two careers are becoming closer than ever before. If sustainable and biodiverse golf courses are to flourish, we will need today's schoolchildren to understand and implement new management strategies such as those highlighted here."

As the first event of its kind in the region, it also provided a learning opportunity for organisers, who hope to expand activities and participation in the future.

Also in June, Parkstone enjoyed hosting duties for the first time, while Hoylake and St Andrews each took on the responsibility for the third time. **GI**



“It was encouraging to see such interest and eagerness to learn”



About First Green

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



Scan Me to find out more

**GROUNDS
Fest**



JACOBSEN

Introducing the 2026 FTMI delegates

The delegates for the 2026 Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) have been decided by BIGGA and Jacobsen. The initiative will provide the selected greenkeepers with a fantastic opportunity to develop and hone their skills for future management positions within the industry.

The following candidates have been selected:

- **Callum Atkinson** - The Wilmslow Golf Club - First assistant greenkeeper
- **Tod Bannerman** - Taysmouth Castle Golf Club - Senior greenkeeper
- **Patrick Brown** - Fulwell Golf Club - Senior greenkeeper & spray technician
- **George Edwards** - Walton Heath Golf Club - Deputy head greenkeeper
- **Alistair Hogg** - A&M Fife Golf Club - Senior greenkeeper
- **Alex Hudson** - Sharpley Golf Club - Assistant greenkeeper
- **Chris Keeler** - Prestbury Golf Club - Deputy course manager
- **Ronan Latham** - JCB Golf & Country Club - Senior greenkeeper
- **Toby Long** - Broadstone Golf Club - First assistant
- **Carl Moore** - Kings Norton Golf Club - Deputy head greenkeeper
- **William Moore** - Kilworth Springs Golf Club - Deputy course manager
- **Euan Polson** - Royal Aberdeen Golf Club - First assistant
- **Phillip Shields** - The Blackwood Golf Club - First assistant greenkeeper
- **Greg Smith** - The Berkshire Golf Club - First assistant greenkeeper
- **John Thornton** - Copt Heath Golf Club - Irrigation technician

BIGGA and GroundsFest unite to serve turf industry professionals

BIGGA is pleased to join forces with GroundsFest in a new partnership that unites two of the industry's biggest events, BTME and GroundsFest, to better serve turf professionals.

With this partnership, BIGGA and GroundsFest will closely collaborate throughout the year, cross-promote each other's events, offer combined education programmes and encourage greater crossover between golf, grounds maintenance and landscaping sectors.

BTME is our flagship January event, offering greenkeepers professional development and networking at a turning point in the calendar.

GroundsFest fills the gap with its late summer format, featuring live demonstrations in an open-air venue.

"GroundsFest gives us a fantastic chance to connect with members at a different time of year and in a completely new environment," said BIGGA CEO Jim Croxton.

"We're excited to see greenkeepers at Stoneleigh Park this September."

Beyond events, the partnership also includes the potential for new collaborative training initiatives, combining BIGGA's respected education programme with the practical learning offered through the GroundsFest Academy.

This is an exciting step towards a more cohesive future for our industry, one in which greenkeepers and wider turf professionals can connect, network and learn from one another.

Register for free tickets to GroundsFest by scanning the QR code. **GI**



“GroundsFest gives us a fantastic chance to connect with members”





ICL Continue to Learn Scholars revealed

The five participants of the 10th ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship have been revealed.

Each year, Premium Partner ICL invites five BIGGA members to attend the education programme at BTME, with the latest cohort representing golf clubs across the UK – from the west of England to the east of Scotland.

The two organisations recognise that the valuable career-development opportunities provided by the multi-day event are not available to every greenkeeper, with the cost of education, travel and accommodation proving an obstacle. The scholarship seeks to provide a level playing field for ambitious members who would otherwise miss out.

Ryan Gall, greenkeeper at Loch Lomond, was delighted to be selected and is eager to make the most of the opportunity.

"I'm hoping the ICL Scholarship will help me grow into a confident and knowledgeable course manager," he said. "I want to fill gaps in my understanding of turf management,

learn new techniques, and keep up with the latest industry practices. It's also a great chance to connect with others, share ideas and learn from their experiences.

resources on the association's website, BIGGA members can enjoy thousands of learning opportunities, all aimed at improving their professional abilities. **GI**

“I'm hoping the ICL Scholarship will help me grow into a confident and knowledgeable course manager”

"Overall, I want to use this opportunity to improve both my own skills and the standards at my course, and to contribute more to the wider industry."

The scholarship provides the five candidates with three nights in a hotel and a comprehensive education package worth approximately £500.

To earn an ICL Continue to Learn Scholarship, BIGGA members must demonstrate a commitment to developing their own professional abilities by engaging with BIGGA's Continuing Professional Development scheme.

Whether through in-person learning, reading this magazine, or by accessing



The ICL Scholars for 2026

- Darren Foster, greenkeeper at The Belfry
- Ryan Gall, greenkeeper at Loch Lomond
- Adam Mitchell, course manager at Tehidy Park
- Gary Morrison, deputy course manager at Bruntsfield Links
- Ethan Walker, greenkeeper at Enville

The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme is 'amplifying career opportunities'

The inaugural R&A Championship Agronomy Programme is proving to be a resounding success, with the 10 BIGGA members involved taking full advantage of a career-defining experience.

The programme provides a fantastic opportunity to learn and develop skills from agronomical practices at some of the R&A's foremost events in the summer calendar, including The Open at Royal Portrush and The AIG Women's Open at Royal Porthcawl.

Working alongside the host teams and The R&A's Championship Agronomy Team, each member has been working at one of the championships to gain first-hand insight into elite tournament preparation.

The response from participants has been extremely positive, with the majority commenting on the

confidence and sense of direction in their future career they have gained from being part of the programme.

Scott Reeves, BIGGA's head of membership, spoke of his pride at how the initiative had been received, and looked ahead to the opening of the application process for next year's programme on 1 September.

“We look forward to recruiting the next team for 2026”

“We've been delighted with the success of this amazing opportunity,” he said. “The team members have had hugely valuable experiences that have the potential to amplify their career opportunities, and we look forward to recruiting the next team for 2026.”

Ethan Walker, of Enville Golf Club, was one of the delegates chosen to participate this year.

Ethan was allocated to the AIG Women's Open in Wales, and he said he has found the experience invaluable.

He met his fellow delegates at their first meet-up at Royal Birkdale in April, which provided a day of networking and learning to further highlight the varied benefits of the programme.

“I'm at a nice point in my career where I know a little bit, but I want to know so much more,” he said.

“I've been a greenkeeper for four years and it feels as though this is the biggest moment of my career so far.”

Stay tuned to BIGGA channels for updates on The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme and your chance to apply for the 2026 edition. **GI**

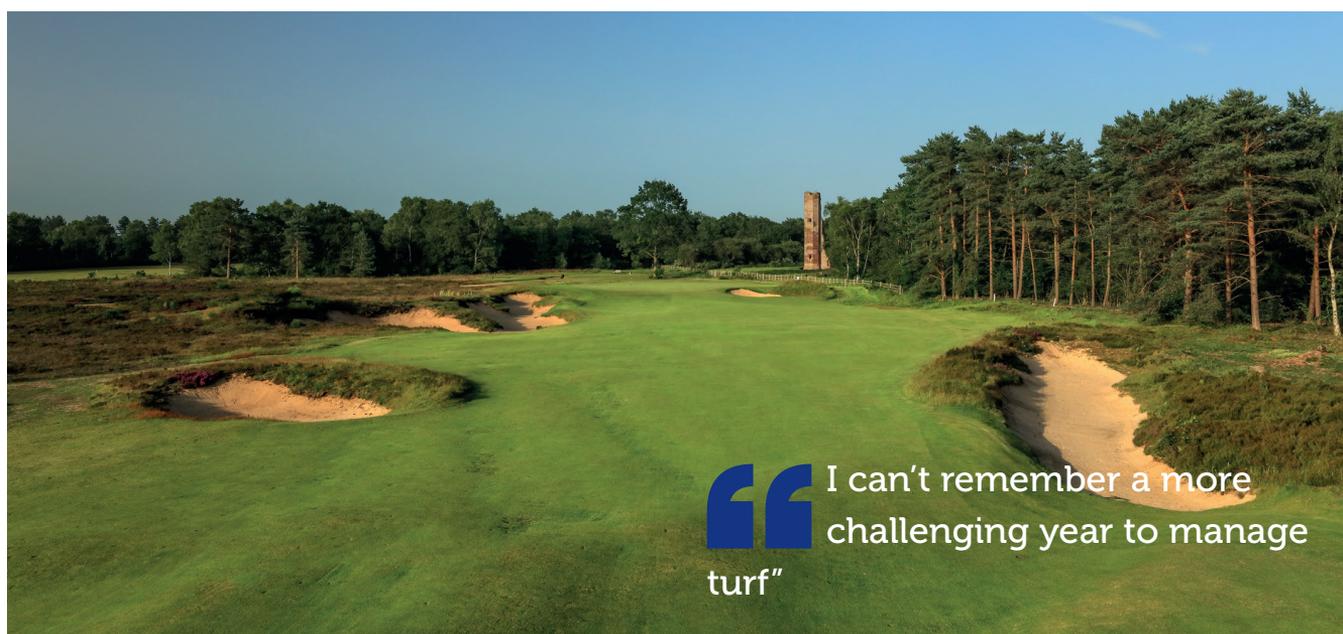


Embracing the challenges of a year like no other



Peter Moore, Director, Central England

This year has brought extreme weather and growing pressures, but greenkeepers continue to adapt, innovate and push through



“I can't remember a more challenging year to manage turf”

We are now in the peak of the golf season with many clubs hosting their most prestigious events, but also with one eye on summer renovations.

Greenkeeping teams have been under extreme pressure from as early as March to produce quality playing surfaces in less-than-ideal conditions. The greenkeepers I have spoken to are feeling that pressure, but as usual there is a sense of embracing the challenges that have been placed in front of us by finding more innovative ways of managing our courses outside of the normal routines.

Once again, where we source and how we apply water to our courses has been highlighted by the series of heatwaves we have experienced. I can't remember a more challenging year to manage turf, and it has put huge strains on not just our water infrastructure but also on the team.

We, like most clubs, have been looking at long-term options for water storage, and I attended the Sustainability conference hosted by England Golf here at Woodhall Spa, where the main topic of conversation was water.

Multiple industry experts

all stated that there will be no water in the future. While that sounds a little sensationalised, it may well be that we as turf managers have further restrictions made upon us regarding water use in years to come.

The challenge now will be ensuring the water we do have is being applied efficiently and maximising its effectiveness. That is why we are urging you to engage with the water survey which is discussed in more depth elsewhere in this magazine.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to BIGGA's

Jenny Bledge and Zoe Wright on their success in graduating from The R&A's Women in Golf Leadership Foundation Programme. It's clear the Association has talented and ambitious people working for it, which can only bode well for the future.

On that note, it's always pleasing to see the names of the ICL scholars and FTMI delegates – in a year that has tested us all, it's inspiring to see greenkeepers not only managing through adversity but also continuing to invest in their personal and professional development.. **GI**

BIGGA's first international members meeting: a global conversation begins



In a landmark moment for BIGGA, we hosted our first online international members meeting – bringing together professionals from across the globe to connect, collaborate and sow the seeds for greenkeeping excellence worldwide.

With attendees tuning in from Canada, Cyprus, the USA and Bermuda, June's meeting highlighted the global reach of our association and the shared commitment to turfcare innovation, no matter the continent.

One of the most spirited topics was how refreshing it was to see fellow professionals in person at BTME. That energy carried into plans for BTME 2026, with everyone agreeing Wednesday worked well and should continue as the preferred meeting day.

Members also supported a dynamic format for future gatherings: 30-minute speaker sessions followed by interactive Q&As, giving attendees more opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences.

We're thrilled to report that some key discussion points raised at BTME are actively being developed. The team at BIGGA HQ is working hard to finalise these points, with updates scheduled to be revealed at our next Teams meeting on 15 September. **GI**

Meet the international attendees

- **Steve Dudley-Brown** – BIGGA's membership services manager for Central England and now internationally. With 28 years of industry experience, Steve leads the charge in global member engagement.
- **Jason Haines** – Superintendent at Cabot Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. A proud steward of North America's only fully fescue golf courses.
- **Chris Furneaux** – Superintendent at the Minthis Golf Resort in Cyprus. Over 25 years in greenkeeping, including 17 years in his current role abroad.
- **Brent Downs** – Director of agronomy for two Indiana courses in the USA. A newly minted Master Greenkeeper who made his BTME debut this year.
- **Kenton Brunson** – Director of golf course operations at The Mid Ocean Club, Bermuda. Tuned in attentively and adds valuable perspective to our expanding network.

Got ideas or insights to share? We're building an international greenkeeping network that thrives on connection. Your voice matters – get in touch and shape the future with us. Together, we're growing more than turf – we're growing a global community. Email: steven.db@bigga.co.uk



With
Jim Croxton, CEO

'Every course manager's contribution matters'

It is vital to demonstrate golf's responsible approach to water management by backing it up with data, says CEO Jim Croxton

Water availability represents an existential threat to golf. It is a matter that demands our immediate and collective attention.

The drastic swings in weather patterns highlight the growing impact of the changing climate, providing a fundamental challenge to the future of golf courses across the UK. While only last year we were battling unprecedented rainfall and drainage issues, we are now staring down severe drought conditions, with hosepipe bans emerging and water scarcity becoming a real and present danger.

This isn't just about striving to maintain optimal playing conditions in the face of increasing pressures, it's about the very survival of our courses.

In response, the game of golf must be strategic and united in its approach.

That is why BIGGA is working alongside key stakeholders, including the Home Nations, the R&A and the GCMA, in an industry-wide collaboration aimed at tackling this issue head-on. We're not just talking, we're taking action. Our goal is to demonstrate to regulators and water suppliers that golf is a responsible and critical part of our communities, bringing huge physical and mental health benefits to millions of people.

“We are urging all golf clubs to participate”

The coordinated survey on water usage is key to this, allowing us to gather the hard data required to create the strongest possible case to advocate on behalf of greenkeepers and the wider golf industry.

We are urging all golf clubs to participate and provide precise information about their water usage. Course managers are clearly essential to this, as they understand the judicious, targeted approach to water management that modern greenkeeping adheres to.

We're not claiming golf's water needs are as critical as drinking water. But we are saying that golf courses provide significant environmental and community value that must be understood and protected. Without comprehensive data, we're vulnerable when drought orders and water restrictions are discussed.

The consequences of inaction could be severe. A prolonged drought and associated irrigation bans could see some golf clubs going out of business. By coming together, collecting data and having informed conversations with regulators, we can develop strategies that protect our courses.

Every club has a role to play. Every course manager's contribution matters. This is our moment to show that golf is not just a sport, but a responsible community committed to sustainable environmental management. **GI**



Seafood Head
© Simon Lambert

BIGGA Awards: Recognising excellence in greenkeeping



BIGGA Awards categories

Greenkeeping Project of the Year

Recognising greenkeeping teams who have completed a specific project in the past year. Projects can be long term in nature and may include construction, renovation or rebuild. Innovation and dedication to the project are key.

Championship Greenkeeping Performance of the Year with Bernhard and Company

Honouring the greenkeeping staff that deliver championships, from county championships through to major professional tournaments. This award is for exemplary playing surfaces and teamwork under pressure.

Outstanding Contribution Award

Awarded to a BIGGA member or members that have gone beyond the call of duty, whether through charitable acts, industry promotion or service to society.

Applications for the BIGGA Awards are now open, with the submission deadline set for the end of October.

The awards, which take place during BTME, recognise that high standards of quality and dedication are vital to the success of any golf course or championship.

They reward the innovation delivered by BIGGA members who are at the cutting edge of their profession.

Any members within the UK can enter, with the awards providing an opportunity to showcase your successes and highlight the quality of your golf course and team.

The awards are split into three categories and the winners will be announced at the BIGGA Celebration, held on the opening day of BTME 2026.

Members can nominate themselves for an award, or an external source can nominate a BIGGA member. There is no restriction on who the nominator can be. In respect of team awards, greenkeeping personnel may be nominated if at least one permanent member is a full BIGGA member.

Award winners from clubs of all shapes and sizes last year demonstrated that greenkeeping excellence can be achieved no matter the circumstances.

As in years gone by, each of the stories presented at the BIGGA Celebration in 2025 highlighted the diversity of challenges and successes of our membership. **GI**



Continue to Learn 2026 programme update

The Continue to Learn at BTME 2026 programme is shaping up, promising five packed days of education from Sunday 18 to Thursday 22 January. Delegates can enjoy the usual mix of conferences, classes and seminars, featuring returning favourites and fresh faces.

For the first time ever, there will be seminar content

running on the Thursday, with the full programme set to be released on 1 October.

Early confirmed speakers include Adrian Mortram and Timmy Sethi on irrigation, Bob Taylor and James Hutchinson on ecology, with course management insight from Matt Pledsted, Craig Boath and Brent Downs CGCS MG. **GI**



Jenny Bledge



Zoe Wright

Celebrating BIGGA's leaders of tomorrow

BIGGA is proud to mark the success of two of our own, Jenny Bledge and Zoe Wright, who have both graduated from The R&A's prestigious Women in Golf Leadership Foundation Programme.

Not only is their success a testament to the commitment to personal and professional growth of each individual, but also to BIGGA's ongoing support of programmes promoting diversity, development and good leadership in golf.

With over 200 graduates worldwide and more than 75% going on to achieve promotion, the programme has also proven an extremely effective catalyst for change throughout the industry.

Jenny, BIGGA workforce project manager, reflected on her experience: "This programme has made me realise more about myself and think differently about what leadership is all about.

"It's not about having all the answers, but showing up with honesty, leading with heart, bringing people with you and backing who I am."

“It's given me deeper insight into how I can support and represent the greenkeeping industry”

Zoe, BIGGA's social media and marketing executive, echoed those sentiments and she plans to use the experience to support the wider industry.

"Attending the Women in Golf Foundation programme has been an incredibly valuable experience, both personally and professionally," she said.

"As the marketing and social media executive of BIGGA, it's given me deeper insight into how I can support and represent the greenkeeping industry.

"The programme has highlighted the importance of having a growth mindset and emotional intelligence."

GI

Save the date: Central England Conference

The BIGGA Central England Conference returns on 25 November, hosted by Steve Dudley-Brown and Scott Reeves of BIGGA.

Taking place at the highly regarded Kings Norton Golf Club, the conference promises to provide an absorbing lineup of guest speakers from all corners of the turf management industry, topped off by a new awards ceremony in recognition of excellence and dedication in the profession.

Delegates will also hear about new membership benefits. A year after launching our Member Survey in 2024, we are happy to share progress that we have made after listening, learning and acting.



Better for you, better for the environment – launching our digital membership card

As part of our ongoing efforts to modernise the association and deliver more value to members, we are proud to launch a new digital membership card – now available within the BIGGA mobile app.

The card, which replaces the traditional plastic version, offers members instant, on-the-go access to their credentials directly from their phone.

Beyond convenience, the move also aligns with our wider commitment to sustainability.

“As we continue the work of modernising our association, moving to a digital membership card also helps us increase our contribution to sustainability in golf,” said Head of Membership Scott Reeves.

“The BIGGA app puts the association in your pocket and the digital membership card removes several thousand extra pieces of plastic from circulation each year.”

The digital card is available exclusively through the BIGGA mobile app, which offers a streamlined, all-in-one platform for members to manage their accounts, access services and stay informed.

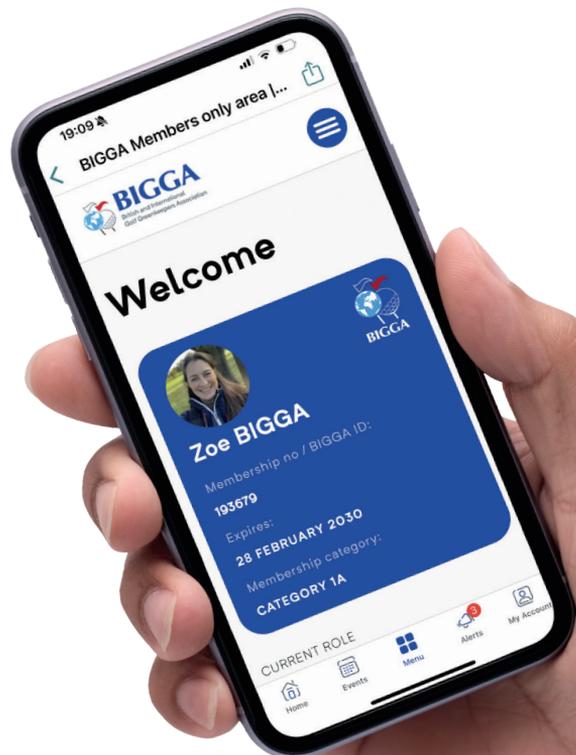
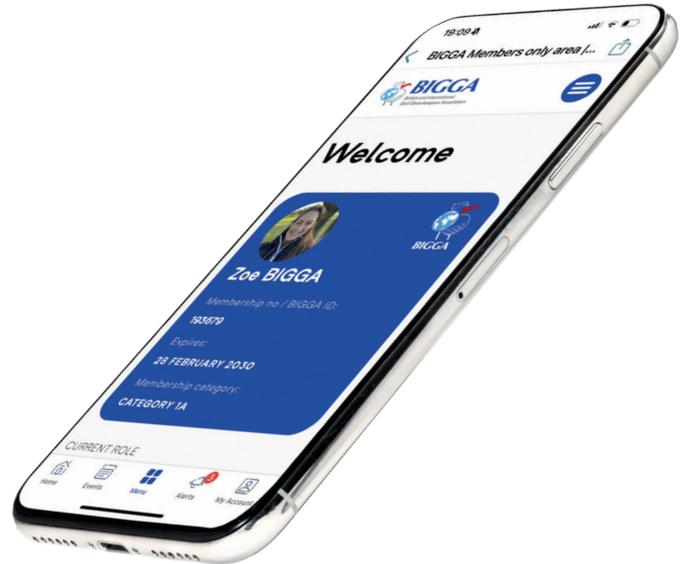
From valuable member benefits like the HR Helpline, confidential counselling and Xtra Benefits, to real-time notifications about events, webinars and competitions, the app ensures BIGGA is always just a tap away.

In addition, the app provides quick access to up-to-date agronomic resources, helping greenkeepers identify and address problems on their courses more effectively. It's also a simple way to keep personal and professional information current, ensuring members get the most out of their BIGGA membership.

The BIGGA app is available for free on the App Store and Google Play. All members are encouraged to download the app, activate their digital membership card and explore the many features that bring the best of BIGGA directly to their fingertips.

This development marks another important step in BIGGA's journey to provide a modern, environmentally conscious and member-first experience for greenkeepers across the UK and beyond. **GI**

Download the BIGGA app by scanning the QR code



“The digital membership card removes several thousand extra pieces of plastic from circulation each year”

Welcome to our new members

Saunton

Northern Ireland

Steven Connolly (AGK)
Adam Shields (AGK)
Brian Tomlinson (CM)
Casey Taylor (DHGK)
Christopher Mornin (FA)
Stuart McFall (GK)
Aaron Burns (GK)
Holywood

Scotland

Gordon Howat (A)
The R&A

Tyler Petrie (AGK)
Moray

Tyler Rogers (AGK)
Dale Murdoch (GK)
Douglas Goodfellow (GK)
Graham Ferguson (GK)
Taymouth Club

Marc Gray (CM)
Ullapool

Gary Rodger (CM)
Kingsknowe

Stephen Cairns (GK)
East Renfrewshire

Brandon Timmins (GK)
Calum Gamble (G)
Alessandro Pieroni (G)
Trump Turnberry

Northern

Andy Bell (A)
Normanton

Thomas Alexander (A)
Rickerby

Angus Routledge (APP)
Slaley Hall

Luke Smith (AGK)
Steve Challand (AGK)
Jonny Smith (DHGK)
Hillsborough

Bethanie Whitham (AGK)
Worsley

Morgan Vesty-Eltringham (AGK)
Poulton Park

Redford Osborne (AGK)
Hornsea

Mike Barker (CM)
Chesterfield

Scott Oliver (CM)
Prestwich

Karl Boardman (DCM)
Martyn Wharton (GK)
Dean Harrison (M)
Hurlston Hall G&CC

Joe Thomas (GK)
Stockport

Josh Bovill (GK)
Worksop

Thomas Swinburn (GK)
Waltham Windmill

Central

Andrew Wolfe (APP)
Huntercombe

George Clarke (APP)
Dyrham Park G&CC

Sam Light (AGK)
The Belfry

Alexander Hose (AGK)
North Hants

Samuel Knowles (AGK)
Nottingham Forest FC

Kevin Brown (DCM)
Lutterworth

Craig Winkless (DHGK)
Birstall

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

Stuart Fitzgerald (GK)
The Leicestershire

Sean Gill (GK)
Stourbridge

Jamie Challinor (GK)
Whetstone

 **South East**

Callum Hooper (APP)
North Foreland

Fen Howard (APP)
Bletchingley

Shace Tebbs (APP)
Aldenham G&CC

Max Perry (APP)
Get Golfing

Christian Thaysen (APP)
North Hants

Luke Hale (APP)

Matthew Rushmer (APP)
Ely City

Stephen Hancock (AGK)

Glenn Harris (AGK)
Singing Hills

Paul Greenough (AGK)
Weybrook Park

George Arnold (AGK)

Adam Turner (AGK)

Sean Duff (GK)

Roehampton Club

Sophie Hollands (AGK)

Matthew Isley (AGK)

Nevill

Mark Woods (AGK)

St Clements

Michael Hockley (GK)

Michael Turner (AGK)

Terrance Young (CM)

The Burstead

Ellis Shaw (AGK)

Hartley Wintney

Henry Smith (AGK)

Mid Sussex

Dylan Lummis (AGK)

Sandy Lodge

Marley Brooks (GK)
Willingdon

Ryan Daniels (GK)
Purley Downs

Toby Robertson (GK)
Walmer & Kingsdown

Ben Clark (GK)

Birch Grove House Estate

Dan Magee (I)

Al Badia

Helen Tung (ST)

Ulster University

 **South West & South Wales**

Luke Shaw (AGK)

Wessex Golf Centre

Anthony Whelan (AGK)

Thomas Yeo (AGK)

Saunton

Luke Surtees (AGK)

Cams Hall Estate

Neil Joyce (AGK)

Came Down

Tom Neave (AGK)

Burley

Liam Carpenter (AGK)

David Smith (CM)

Christian Ross (FA)

Oliver Morton (GK)

Bulbury Woods

Ben Thomson (AGK)

Meyrick Park

Finley Justice (AGK)

Alresford

Jac Davies (AGK)

Cardigan

Oliver Wooten (AGK)

Bristol

Jordon Southall (GK)

Royal North Devon

Michael Rimmer (GK)

Tidworth Garrison



BIGGA
CPD Continuing Professional Development

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

Thomas Arbon, Woodbridge

Charlie Sorrell, Seaford

John Thornton, Copt Heath

David Beatson, Fairmont St Andrews

Harry Glover, Lee Park

Jonathan Fisher, Ruddington Grange



Fairmont St Andrews

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

Jonathan Fisher, Ruddington Grange

Thomas Arbon, Woodbridge



Woodbridge

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Members & Careers

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals
and share their stories

- David Feeney on managing one of Northern Ireland's premier links venues
- Bramhall's course manager reflects on a successful first year at the helm



Meldrum House greenkeeper 'saved' by work after double amputation

Meldrum House greenkeeper Liam Geals reveals how he overcame a major accident to return to work.

On 4 April 2020, I was in a serious motorbike accident resulting in a below-knee amputation of my right leg at the scene. I lost about five pints of blood. My forearm bone was snapped clean in half – I needed a metal plate inserted – and both my knees were reconstructed.

On my left leg, the chain and sprocket tore through the inside of my calf, leaving a gouge two inches deep, four wide and eight long. The tib and fib were snapped, and more than 100mm of bone was shattered.

They took skin grafts from my thigh, and a specialist magnetic device was brought over from America. It had

rods through my leg, and each day it stretched the bone by 1mm – 0.25mm at a time. I had no feeling in my left foot and couldn't control it.

Sepsis hit me twice. In March 2021, after weeks in the intensive care unit and repeated infections spreading further up my leg, I told the consultant to remove it before the option of a below-knee amputation was taken away from me. Three days later, I underwent a second amputation.

I got out of hospital in August 2020 and returned to Meldrum House part-time, on crutches. After the second amputation, I had more rehab, but by May 2021 I was back at work and even starting to play golf again.

Meldrum were amazing. I could come and go as I pleased, with no

pressure. That flexibility really helped me mentally. One of my good mates at work used to pick me up in his van, loading my mobility scooter in the back, just to get me out of the house. I was back full-time by June 2021.

Since then, I've built things back up. I started playing more golf in 2022 and I play when I've got the energy and no pain. My current handicap is two.

Getting back to work – getting back outside – saved me. Being around my mates, being part of something, helped me to feel normal again. **GI**

BIGGA members are covered under the Personal Accident Insurance scheme



David Feeney

The Portstewart course manager discusses his approach to leadership and the challenges of managing one of Northern Ireland's premier links venues



David's Career Timeline

- **2004**
First greenkeeping role for a summer at Palazzo Arzaga in Italy
- **2005**
Returned to the same resort in Italy for another summer
- **2006: Worked at Dalmahoy Golf Club in Edinburgh**
- **2007**
Took on a seasonal role on the Eden Course at St Andrews
- **2007-2010**
An initial seasonal position on the Old Course turned into a three-year stay
- **2010-2017**
Started as assistant at St Annes Old Links in Lancashire before advancing to deputy course manager
- **2018-2024**
Moved back to Scotland to become deputy head greenkeeper at Prestwick
- **2024-Present**
Stepped up to his first course manager role at Portstewart in Northern Ireland

“I’m constantly balancing different grass species, soil profiles, and disease pressures”

David Feeney’s passion for golf and the outdoors began as a junior golfer in Dundee, where weekends spent on the course with his family sparked a lifelong connection.

A formative stint as a seasonal greenkeeper in the sun-soaked surroundings of northern Italy laid the foundations for a career that later took in spells at Dalmahoy, St Andrews and St Annes Old Links.

It was via Prestwick that David made the move to his current role as course manager at Portstewart in 2024.

Having stepped into the shoes of the long-serving Bernard Findlay, David is focussed on blending respect for tradition with fresh ideas as he seeks to drive continuous improvements across Portstewart’s three courses.

We caught up with David to find out more.

Why was greenkeeping the career for you?

I was a junior golfer at Downfield Golf Club in Dundee, playing with my dad and brother. I kept playing through my teens, but when I finished school, I wasn’t really sure what I wanted to do. I loved being outdoors and spending time on the golf course, and that combination naturally led me into the industry. Once I started learning more about golf courses and greenkeeping, I became more and more interested, and I’ve never looked back since.

Where did you get your first start?

After finishing school, I went to Elmwood College in Cupar and completed a one-year full-time National Certificate in greenkeeping. Rather than taking the conventional route of finding a local job, I decided to go abroad to gain both greenkeeping and life experience. I landed a role at a golf resort in northern Italy called Palazzo Arzaga near Lake Garda in the summer of 2004.

My grandfather was Italian, so I’d always been interested in exploring that side of my heritage. It felt like the perfect opportunity to connect with my roots while gaining hands-on experience in the industry. I enjoyed it so much that I went back the following summer in 2005.

It was a stunning 27-hole golf resort designed by Nicklaus and Palmer. The weather was incredible; I was in a t-shirt every day, constantly applying sun cream, and by the time I came back, my hair was sun-bleached yellow. It was an amazing experience, and I really loved my time there.

How did you get your foot in the door back in the UK?

I had been applying for full-time jobs locally near Dundee, but it was quite a struggle to get into a few places. During that period of looking for a greenkeeping job, I worked at the Post Office, delivering mail in the mornings. Then a role came up in Edinburgh at Marriott Dalmahoy Golf Club, and

David's reflection on leadership

It's about leaning on the advice and guidance from your peers and reflecting on what you've learned from the course managers you've worked with. I've had the privilege of working under people like Dave Edmondson, Stuart Hogg, Gordon McKie, Greg Wellings and John Wood – you take that knowledge on board from them and then try to put your own stamp on things. When stepping into this role, you have to be prepared and ready for whatever is thrown at you, but also to take a step back and assess things in order to come to the right decision. You have to be prepared to dedicate a lot of time and effort, do your best each day and remember that things won't always go your way, so it's important not to get too upset – just take it day by day and be ready for anything.

This job requires a lot of patience. You need to rely on your team to do their best and provide them with as much guidance and support as possible. I often think back to what course managers have taught me and the valuable lessons I've learned from them. It's important to remember where you've learned from and reflect on those good influences throughout your career.

I worked there for the 2006 season. Fortunately, it was also my first opportunity to work at a golf event – they hosted the Scottish Seniors Open that year, which Sam Torrance won. It was a great experience, and I really enjoyed it.

It was also a chance to work with a new team and get experience back in Scotland, in a climate I was more used to. Italy was beautiful, but at times it could be too hot, so it felt good to be working in more familiar conditions.

Then in 2007, I got a seasonal role at St Andrews Links Trust, working on the Eden Course through that year. I had a fantastic time and really enjoyed the links environment among the Eden Estuary and sand dunes. Come autumn 2007, an opportunity came up to move onto the Old Course, and I transitioned from a seasonal greenkeeper into a full-time role. I stayed there for three years, right through until 2010. In this time, I gained further tournament experience, including the Dunhill Links Championship and The Open Championship.

Why did you decide to move on from St Andrews?

I wanted to progress and move up the ladder, and I thought the opportunity to work at another venue would be quite appealing. A role came up at St Annes Old Links down in Lancashire in 2010, so I moved there for an assistant greenkeeper's position. I used to go to Blackpool as a kid for family holidays, so there was a part of me that wanted to return and spend some time living there. I stayed for seven years, moving up from assistant to senior and eventually to deputy course manager. It was a wonderful experience. I had the chance to work at Final Open Qualifying in 2012 – it had a great atmosphere, and getting to go along the road to Royal Lytham to see The Open in 2012 was a thrilling experience.

Then, at the end of 2017, an opportunity came up to move back to Scotland. Prestwick Golf Club had advertised for a deputy head greenkeeper, which was the same role I was doing at St Annes, but the chance to return to Scotland was really appealing. I was lucky enough to get the job and moved back in January 2018.

I worked at Prestwick for six years and absolutely loved it. It's a historic venue with so much tradition. The membership were fantastic – so kind and supportive, especially through the tough times during Covid. They looked after the team, invested in the facility and machinery and made it a brilliant place to work.

Towards the end of my time there, I started to feel ready for the next step – becoming a course manager. When the opportunity came up at Portstewart, after Bernard Findlay moved on, I saw the advert and thought, 'this is too good not to go for'. I put in my CV and I feel very fortunate to now be here.

What motivated that desire to move up the ladder?

There's a drive and hunger – a hunger to take on that role and be the person who takes responsibility for what goes on. I want to be someone the team can look up to, someone they turn to when they need guidance and support. I want to help others progress and be the best they can be and help produce a great playing surface.

I've learned a lot from the people I've worked under over the years. I've taken the best parts of what they've passed on to me, and I try to use that to help myself and others grow in their roles and careers. Becoming a course manager is something I've been striving for over a number of years, and I really enjoy it. It's incredibly rewarding to help present a golf course to the highest standard and to be part of a team that's passionate and proud of the site. That's what drives me.

 **It's incredibly rewarding to help present a golf course to the highest standard"**

You were stepping into the shoes of the long-serving Bernard Findlay – how do you make your own mark?

For me, when I go into an interview, like anyone else, I look at particular areas on the golf course that could be changed – a tweak here or there. Bernard has done a fantastic job, and everyone – members and staff alike – have great respect and admiration for him. I feel I can bring in new ideas and help build on the great work that has been done.

I see the opportunity not just to focus on the greens, tees and fairways, but also on the outer areas – pathways, extension zones, runoff areas and irrigation systems. All these combined give me a chance to help take Portstewart further, put my own mark on it and progress as much as possible. The club shares this vision too; they've been keen on improving runoff and pathway areas, and that's something they're actively working towards.

How do you make sure the team are on side when you're following someone who has been there nearly 40 years?

When taking over from a guy who's managed the team for so long, I wanted to take my time in getting to know the guys and to understand the methods and practices

Favourite hole: 2nd on The Strand Course

You're standing on an elevated tee, looking through a narrow channel between the dunes, with only a small area of fairway to aim for. Then, once you're on the fairway, you're hitting up to a plateau – an elevated green tucked right into the corner. It feels like you're in a hole all on its own, completely surrounded by the dunes, with nothing else in sight.



Meet the team

David Feeney – Course manager
Richard Engall – Deputy course manager
Neil Gibson – Senior greenkeeper
Jonathan Doey – Senior greenkeeper
Marc Brown – Senior greenkeeper
Richard McMullan – Head greenkeeper, Old Course
John O'Brien – Greenkeeper
Jonathan Hemphill – Greenkeeper
Nick Menzies – Greenkeeper
Gary McLelland – Greenkeeper

Phil Crocker – Greenkeeper
David Smyth – Trainee greenkeeper
Michael McAfee – Trainee greenkeeper
Gary McFadden – Trainee greenkeeper
Gavin Morrison – Trainee greenkeeper
Kieran McConnell – Mechanic
Raymond McMath – Seasonal
Gordon Stuart – Seasonal
Mark Thompson – Seasonal
Lucas Linton – Seasonal



About Portstewart

Portstewart Golf Club, located in Northern Ireland, is renowned for its stunning links courses set against the backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean. The club boasts three exceptional layouts: the Strand Course, the Old Course and the Riverside Course. The Strand Course is recognised as one of the UK and Ireland's very best links layouts and, in addition to many national and international amateur championships, in 2017 it hosted the Irish Open, won by Jon Rahm.

that had been done over the years, and so I felt a gradual, steady approach to things and giving the team space and time to have their input was the right way. At the end of the day, it's a team environment – we all have our own ideas and opinions. I just try to steer the ship in the direction I believe is best. When I came in, I wanted to have an open-door policy where the guys feel they can come and speak to me whenever they need help. It was more about identifying where we could improve and involving the guys in that process as much as possible. Flexibility is key but so is making sure we're achieving our goals and constantly

improving the course. That's the end game – making sure everything out there looks and performs as well as it possibly can. And if there are things I can do to help the team improve individually, I'll always do my best.

It can be daunting when you step into a new team, especially one that's been used to a certain way of working for a long time. In my opinion, you have to take your time and avoid making changes too quickly. Let people adjust to your ways of working. There's no single right way to do things; as long as the course is presented to the highest standard and the membership and visitors are happy. Everyone has their own style, and the guys have embraced that and adapted well.

Managing a multi-course site must present some difficulties?

Even though I've been here just over a year, I'm still figuring out the best way to cover the whole site and make sure I'm seeing every area of the course once or twice a week. It's tough with such a large site, especially when you have a team around you that you want to be involved with as much as possible.

The Old Course being on the other side of Portstewart and



not on the same site adds its own challenges. That's where trust and communication comes in with the team, giving them the opportunity to get on with their jobs and trusting they'll do their best. It's about making sure they have the support to carry out their work to the highest standard.

And are there varied agronomic challenges between the three courses?

There are. The Strand Course is predominantly built on a sand-based profile with a fescue-dominant sward, which is across all surfaces. Then you move on to the Riverside Course, where it gets more complex. Some areas are sand-based with a fescue-bent mix in the sward, and some are built to USGA spec and contain more annual meadow grass, bent and small amounts of fescue. That variety presents its own challenges from a maintenance perspective – planning and micromanaging different areas based on their specific needs, rather than applying a blanket approach. That's what makes this site so interesting. I'm constantly balancing different grass species, soil profiles and disease pressures. On the Strand, for example, dollar spot can be an issue during the summer months, so managing that is a top priority.

“It's a team environment – we all have our own ideas and opinions”

What has been the impact of The Open coming back to Portrush?

We will be seeing a high number of visitors and societies during Open week, playing not just the Strand Course but also the Riverside Course. The increased footfall continues for several months afterwards and will carry on into next year. It's fantastic for the golf club and the local community – everyone benefits from the boost in tourism.

From a course management perspective, though, it does make things more challenging. We have to try to get the balance of speed and quality to stay ahead of golf during the busy periods. The wear and tear, especially from traffic and wheel marks, becomes very noticeable.

We do our best to alleviate the pressure on the turf but, inevitably, the much higher footfall leads to increased wear and tear, more divots and more areas that require extra attention. **GI**

Latest job vacancies

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 to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position. Call 01347 833 800 or email info@bigga.co.uk

Course Manager

Childwall Golf Club, Liverpool



Childwall Golf Club seeks an exceptional Course Manager to take our course to the next level.

The ideal applicant should have: Proven senior greenkeeping experience; level 5 preferred, minimum level 4.

Good knowledge of agronomy and irrigation systems.

Strong leadership, management and project skills.

Environmental awareness

Attention to detail, effective communication, interpersonal skills and the flexibility to work irregular hours.

We offer: Competitive salary from £65k for the right candidate

John Deere fleet, newly built staff welfare facilities and office

Investment in professional development

For the full job role please visit the BIGGA website.

Apply with covering letter including experience, salary expectation and CV to office@childwallgolfclub.co.uk. Closing date: August 8th

Course Manager

Dainton Park, South Devon



Dainton Park is an 18-hole proprietary owned parkland golf club. We are recruiting a Course Manager to lead a team of six full-time greenkeepers tasked with maintaining the highest standards of playability.

The successful candidate will be an effective team leader with a strong understanding of golf and a passion for greenkeeping. They will have previous golf course management experience, or at least an advanced deputy role, and a minimum SVQ Level 3 qualification in Sports Turf Management, or equivalent. Competitive salary dependent on experience.

Send CV and covering letter, including current remuneration, to daniel@daintonparkgolf.co.uk. Applications close August 31st

Assistant Superintendent

Dubai Creek, Dubai, UAE



We are seeking an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent who is highly self-motivated, well organised and detail oriented.

This Assistant Superintendent role offers a unique opportunity to grow within a high-performing team at a world-class golf facility, located in one of the most dynamic cities in the world.

Ideal candidates will demonstrate a strong work ethic, a passion for turf management, and a clear ambition to advance into a Superintendent role.

Head Greenkeeper

Fortrose & Rosemarkie Links, Scottish Highlands



As the 15th oldest recorded club in the world (1793), Fortrose & Rosemarkie Golf Links is proud of its heritage.

We are seeking a dynamic and experienced Head Greenkeeper for the day-to-day management of the greenkeeping team whilst maintaining and enhancing the course to the highest standard.

We are looking for a hands-on leader with a passion for golf course presentation, team development and both short and long-term planning. The ideal candidate will hold the relevant qualifications and take pride in delivering exceptional playing conditions for our members and the many visitors who play on the Links all year round.

To apply: Please send a covering letter and CV to: secretary@fortrosegolfclub.co.uk by August 9th

Seasonal Greenkeepers

Jack's Point and Glendhu Golf Courses, New Zealand



Join our teams at Jack's Point and Glendhu Golf Courses! Nestled in Queenstown and Lake Wanaka, these renowned courses offer the golfer an unparalleled experience. We seek skilled Seasonal Greenkeepers to join us from September/October to mid/end of April. From manicuring fairways to nurturing greens, your dedication ensures that every golfer enjoys a world-class experience in a spectacular setting. Ideal candidates will hold turf qualifications or similar and have previous greenkeeping experience. Benefits include competitive pay, learning and growth opportunities, thorough training and a supportive team environment.

Apply for Jack's Point or Glendhu Golf via www.jackspoint.com/employment

Golf Greenkeeper and Golf Course Manager Assessor

Land Based Assessment Ltd



Can you help shape the future of the Greenkeeping and Golf Course Management workforce?

Land Based Assessment limited are looking for Apprenticeship End Point Assessors in Golf Greenkeeper Level 2 and Level 3 and Golf Course Management Level 5.

The role requires flexibility to travel across England and is paid at £330 per day, plus travel and expenses.

If you have the relevant work experience (3years +) and hold a recognised assessor qualification, please send your CV to enquiries@landex.org.uk by Friday August 8th and a member of the team will be in touch.

If you don't hold an assessor qualification but have the relevant experience, please share your CV and we can discuss steps required to obtain this through our assessor training program.

Greenkeeper

Littlehampton Golf Club, West Sussex



Littlehampton Golf Club is a vibrant member's club and the only true links course in West Sussex. We're looking for an enthusiastic, hardworking individual to help maintain and elevate our already high standards.

Key Qualifications: NVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf Maintenance or equivalent; PA1, PA2 and PA6 spraying qualifications beneficial; team player; a playing background in golf advantageous.

Responsibilities: Carry out all golf course maintenance tasks; support the team in maintaining exceptional course conditions.

Working hours: 39 hours per week; weekend morning rota;

Benefits: Pension contribution; uniform and PPE provided; staff playing privileges; BIGGA membership; Cycle to Work Scheme.

Salary: Up to £30,000 per annum dependent on experience.
Apply with CV and covering letter to Grant Burger, Head Greenkeeper at greens@littlehamptongolf.co.uk . Please note, we can only respond to those who are successful for interview.

Greenkeeper

Northamptonshire County Golf Club



An exciting opportunity has arisen to join the greenkeeping team at Northamptonshire County Golf Club, ranked No.1 in Northamptonshire and consistently within England's Top 100 courses. We're seeking an enthusiastic, motivated individual to help maintain and enhance our championship-standard course. The role includes all aspects of course maintenance, with flexibility required during busy periods and tournaments.

Applicants should hold an NVQ Level 2 in Sports Turf or equivalent. PA1, PA2, PA6, and chainsaw certificates are beneficial but not essential. This is a full-time role (40 hours/week) with weekend mornings on a rota.

Benefits include a competitive salary, bonus scheme, pension, 28 days holiday, training opportunities, uniform/PPE and staff playing privileges.

Apply via: coursemanager@countygolfclub.co.uk

Golf & Turf Customer Support Specialist

Orient Irrigation Services, UAE



Orient Irrigation Services seeks a Golf & Turf Customer Support Specialist to support expanding machinery sales across the UAE. The role involves providing technical advice and training for brands like John Deere, TruTurf, Campey and Dennis/SISIS..

Candidates should bring at least five years of technical support experience—ideally within golf & turf—and strong IT skills.

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Familiarity with John Deere products, excellent verbal and written communication and flexibility are essential.

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Course Manager Adam Mitchell reveals how a key part of his plans for this month were thrown into doubt



What we do in...
August

Club: Tehidy, Cornwall

August is a busy month at Tehidy, with the highlight being our Festival of Golf week.

It's a popular event and we operate from 7am until late into the evening, welcoming up to 1,200 people and hosting over 200 rounds each day.

Festival week draws in a mix of our members and visiting golfers. We run a different competition each day, featuring various formats, and the event has built a strong local following, as well as those who come from further afield to take part.

Following the festival, we had plans to undertake a major tee renovation project and address a problem area on the course that causes us real difficulties during the winter months.

As a parkland/valley course, there are a few holes that become particularly challenging when the ground is wet, which often affects accessibility and puts pressure on our ability to keep the course fully open.

To tackle this, we scheduled work to begin as soon as the festival concluded. The project included re-levelling a tee, raising the low-lying ground and installing a proper path.



We had a contractor and shaper lined up who had quoted for the job, and everything was ready to proceed.

Unfortunately, the contractor got in touch to say that she and her business partner had decided to move in a different direction. They're now investing in a quarry and exiting shaping work altogether, including selling off their smaller equipment.

That left us in a difficult position and forced us to reconsider how we move forward with the project as it's not easy to get someone else in at short notice. The original contractors said it would take them two weeks, with two

people on the job, so for us to do it in-house when we're a four-man team would be tough.

That aside, August for us is typically about precision and presentation. We've had a little more rain than large parts of the country and have maintained good grass coverage and managed some irrigation system challenges.

After the festival week, we're planning some light maintenance – vertidrainage, micro-coring and dressing. It's a delicate balance of keeping the course in top condition while minimising disruption. **GI**

“August for us is typically about precision and presentation”

Application on target

Syngenta Technical Manager, Sean Loakes, met up with Dan Waring, previous winner of the Amenity Sprayer Operator of the Year Award, at the JCB Golf and Country Club



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Spray operation can make a huge impact on the effectiveness of your spray applications. So it's very important that we fine tune the elements that come together to make a spray.

Things like nozzle selection, speed and water volume are all going to have a big impact.

We visited Dan Waring to understand how he approaches different spray situations and gain his practical insights, along with the science behind why all that works.

Greens and tees

Greens and tees can be the most difficult areas of a golf course to spray, but they're also the most important; highly valuable areas and areas where we can't afford to go wrong.

There's lots of things to think about. We've got unusual, irregular shapes, often with lots of undulations and levels.

The turf surface is a really dense canopy, with really small leaves - so it's hard to land water droplets and get them to stick on the leaf, if that's the target for a fungicide, PGR or foliar feed, for example.



Dan's Top Tips for greens

I'll always start with the basics. Check your nozzles and make sure it's the right nozzle for what you're trying to spray. That's important because you want the water to get where you want it to be in that canopy.

Look out for your boom height, because we've got a lot of rolling

greens here. We want to make sure that the nozzle height is the optimum 50cm from the ground. Be particularly conscious of when you're driving on and off sloping greens, because that's going to affect the nozzle height of the boom at the back of the sprayer.

Then check your pressure. You want to be checking that constantly, to keep it in 'the goldilocks' of pressure range, as I call it, at 2 to 3 bar. That's really going to reduce the drift of off target spray.

And then, speed. Make sure your speed is suitable for the area that you're spraying. Greens and tees are smaller, so you want to be going just that little bit slower and make sure you've got that time to think about

Tight height of cut and a dense surface of greens present a particularly difficult target for application to stay on the leaf for foliar application, or reach surface with a soil treatment.

what you are doing, what you're applying and where it's actually going on the surface. Nozzles, pressure and water volume need to be matched accordingly.

So, when we're thinking about getting the most accurate application on our greens and tees, we can look to some of the research we've done in the science of spraying.

We've got a really short height of cut, so that means a very small leaf.

And when we're trying to land and retain spray on that it's very difficult.

Smaller droplets are going to do a better job, since big droplets are much more likely to overwet the leaf and roll or run off.

When we're talking about water volumes, for a foliar application it's really good to keep those lower.

So, 250 to 300 l/ha is going to be really good at giving you coverage, but not so much that you lose it through the canopy and it doesn't stay on that leaf.

Slow speeds are really important. They're going to allow you to use a small orifice nozzle, such as an 025, which allows you to use a lower water volume and give those small droplets, but without applying too much drift because you're going slower as well.

However, if you are targeting a soil application on greens or any surfaces, for leatherjackets, wetting agents or with a nematode treatment, for example, larger spray droplets and higher water volumes are going to give you more penetration through the canopy. A larger 08 XC soil nozzle will apply 800 – 1000 l/ha water volume at comparable low speeds and pressure, with larger droplets that will better reach though to the soil surface.

Since the intention of soil applications is not to retain product on the leaf, application to wet surfaces or in light drizzly rain are particularly effective, or irrigate straight after application – ideally as you drive off the green. But avoid spraying in heavy rain that might lead to product running and pooling in low spots.

Greens and tees

Foliar application

- 025 purple XC Nozzle
- 2 – 3 bar
- 200 – 400 l/ha
- 3 – 5 km/hr

Soil application

- 08 White XC Nozzle
- 600 – 900 l/ha



Author: Sean Loakes, Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland



Dan Waring (right) and Sean Loakes discuss practical tips for sprayer operators

Fairways and fringes

The larger leaf surface area on turf of fairways and fringes are much easier areas to target. But they're not without their challenges.

You need to stay ahead of golfers to avoid disruption. Spraying at faster speeds increases the potential for drift, and there's potential pitfalls of undulations and ledges as well.



Dan's Top Tips for fairways

Firstly, know your areas. I think it's very important to accurately map the course and know precisely the area you are spraying. You'll soon get to know where your tank fill should get you around the course, and that's an instant watch out if it changes.

Similar to greens, watch your speed. Since it's a bigger, more open area, it's very easy to get carried away, especially trying to keep ahead of that golf.

That's particularly the case if you use an auto-rate controller or GPS controller. That's going to compensate for any increase in speed by increasing your pressure, to maintain consistent application rate – which will create more smaller droplets and could seriously increase the risk of drift. Watch the pressure gauge to stay in the 2 – 3 bar range.

The big advantage we find with GPS technology is that if you get disrupted with golf, you know exactly where you've already sprayed on the computer. So you can stop, let golf pass and start again precisely where you left off. That's really useful for us on a busy golf day.

With longer leaves on a fairway height of cut, medium to coarse droplets from say an 04 XC nozzle are going to do a better job of keeping spray on that slightly larger leaf. You also get the benefit of reduced spray drift at typical speeds of 5 – 7 km/hr.

Using a water volume of 250 to 350 l/ha is going to give you really good coverage, but you don't get so much water on the leaf that it's leading to run off and loss.

Fairways and fringes

Foliar application

- 04 red XC Nozzle
- 2 – 3 bar
- 200 – 400 l/ha
- 5 - 8 km/hr

Soil application

- 08 White XC Nozzle
- 600 – 900 l/ha



New GPS technologies and equipment advances aid more precise applications



Using 250 – 300 l/ha, compared to previous conventional turf applications at 600 - 800 l/ha, means a reduced number of loads and so generally a reduced time to get out and complete the whole course application.

Again, if you need to go with a larger water volume for a soil application, so 600 to 900 l/ha, switching to an 08 XC Soil Nozzle is going to give you those larger droplets that don't stay on the leaf and push down through the canopy and into the thatch layer. So much better for targeting there.

Longer rough

Longer heights of cut in semi-rough and rough present a different set of circumstances, which is going to come with its own set of different challenges.

It's typically a really large wide area to be applying to. You've got a lot more vegetation per meter squared, so it takes different amount of spray volumes to cover that.



Dan's Top Tips for rough

Check your label for advice on water volume and droplet recommendation, that will give you the speed and nozzle combination - which will then work in conjunction with pressure - to keep within the 2 to 3 bar range.

Check ground speed when you're driving, because obviously it's not always going to be smooth and that can affect boom stability. Also different levels of vegetation will influence nozzle height to the intended target.

With more vegetation there is the temptation to increase pressure to force spray down into the leaf. In reality, higher pressure creates more small droplets which are actually less effective in penetrating the sward - and you're going to increase drift.

So again, keep that pressure range within 2 to 3 bar.

Rough and semi-rough

Foliar application

- 04 red XC Nozzle
- 2 – 3 bar
- 200 – 400 l/ha
- 5 - 8 km/hr
- 50 cm nozzle tip to target boom height

Thinking about the mechanics and the science of spray application on rough, with the higher height of cut those longer leaves can handle a larger droplet size and retain more water for complete coverage.

So the coarse and the medium droplets aren't going to run off as freely as on a greens height of cut, for example. An 04 XC nozzle, applying 350 – 400 l/ha at slightly slower speeds than a fairway, to take account of rougher terrain, will give an ideal compromise of water volume and droplet size for leaf coverage and retention.

It is important to understand the relationship between nozzle design, droplet size, water volume, speed and pressure - and how changing any one of them will influence the spray characteristics.

Knowing your target and where you want the spray to end up lets you be in control of the application process and achieve the best results possible.

Weather to spray

With all applications, weather conditions are crucial.

When you're thinking about getting a spray window you can use your Turf Advisor app to find an optimum time. Part of that is when its dry and when there's not too much wind, but Turf Advisor also avoids high temperatures when spray may dry too quickly and scorch leaves - along with leaf wetness, humidity and evaporation risk.

It's a great tool to use in conjunction with disease risk forecasts, since if risks are very high, for example, it may be necessary to spray when any opportunity arises to prevent damage, rather than waiting until after infection has hit.



Spraying fairways and semi-rough provides more leaf to target, but increases risk of drift at faster speeds

Syngenta would like to thank Dan and the team at JCB for filming their application and learning their insights. You can watch the videos to find out more here:



Scan Me to find out more

The top 10 reasons to roll your greens

Dr Thomas Nikolai explains why rolling the putting surfaces should be a key part of any integrated turf management programme.

Greens rolling has undergone a significant evolution in greenkeeping, shifting from a once-controversial practice to a cornerstone of modern turf management.

Historically, rolling was viewed with scepticism and many greenkeepers were wary of its association with soil compaction, turf stress and disease. However, advancements in equipment – particularly the development of lightweight rollers – and a growing body of research have transformed these perceptions.

Pioneers like Dr Thomas Nikolai played a key role in this shift, providing data that has challenged long-held assumptions, turning many on their head. His studies have demonstrated that rolling not only preserves turf health when done correctly, but also offers numerous agronomic and playability benefits.

From improved surface uniformity and seedbed preparation to reduced disease pressure and enhanced green speed without lowering the height of cut, rolling has proven itself to be more than a cosmetic measure.

As a result, rolling is now embraced as a sustainable, cost-effective alternative to frequent mowing, particularly during periods of environmental stress. The practice is seen not only as a performance enhancer but also as a tool for reducing inputs such as water, fertilisers and pesticides.

Here, Dr Nikolai outlines the top 10 reasons to roll your greens.

1. Customer satisfaction

The leading reason for rolling is the positive impact it has on customer satisfaction. In years past, rolling was often reserved for special occasions like the club championship to deliver a premium putting surface. Today, regular rolling produces smoother greens, which can either boost green speed or maintain it while allowing a higher height of cut, improving the turf's resilience to traffic. Both results contribute to a better playing experience. Golfers notice and value the enhanced ball roll and consistency on well-rolled greens.

2. It's the economy

This concept was examined through research conducted at Michigan State University, where the potential to substitute mowing with rolling was investigated. The initial strategy alternated mowing and rolling throughout the week – mowing on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, and rolling without mowing on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Data collected from both cool and warm season grasses showed that this alternating schedule achieved green speeds equivalent to daily mowing. However, for warm season species like Bermuda grass and paspalum, this approach is effective primarily during the cooler seasons.

For cool season grasses, the method performs best when temperatures remain near 80°F (25°C). The cost savings are notable, as rolling generally requires less labour and equipment upkeep than mowing.

Additional trials found that daily rolling combined with mowing every other day produced similar green speeds to daily mowing, offering a more efficient use of resources and reduced stress on the turf.

In short, increasing the frequency of rolling while reducing mowing, when conditions allow, is a practical and cost-effective strategy for maintaining high-quality greens and vigorous turf.

3. Decreased dollar spot

Rolling greens three times per week significantly reduces the incidence of dollar spot. This finding constituted a major breakthrough – the most significant of my research career – as dollar spot remains the most economically impactful turf disease, often requiring repeated fungicide applications whenever conditions are favourable – typically when temperatures exceed 60°F (15°C) with sufficient humidity, regardless of turf type.

Regular rolling – at least three times weekly – consistently led to lower levels of dollar spot. While the effect wasn't immediately conclusive, research beginning in May 1995 showed a clear trend over time. From 1996 to 2000, data revealed a consistent and statistically significant reduction in dollar spot on rolled plots compared to those left unrolled.

At Michigan State University, further research conducted in collaboration with Dr Joe Vargas, Dr Paul Giordano and myself compared various rolling frequencies and timings. Rolling once or twice daily, regardless of morning or afternoon application, showed similar reductions in disease – indicating that dew removal wasn't the main factor. Twice-daily rolling yielded faster results, though rolling more than twice a day is not advised.

The precise mechanism remains unclear, but increased populations of beneficial soil microbes may contribute to suppressing the fungus. This finding underscores rolling as a valuable tool in disease management.



Dr Thomas Nikolai, Senior Turfgrass Academic Specialist

Dr Nikolai is known worldwide as the Doctor of Green Speed due to his research interest focusing upon golf course putting green mechanical and cultural practices that increase turfgrass health and customer satisfaction.



“ Golfers notice and value the enhanced ball roll and consistency on well-rolled greens”

4. Better topdressing incorporation

When applying topdressing to greens or other turf areas, it's essential that the material – typically sand – remains in place to perform its intended function. Research involving vibratory rollers has shown they play a significant role in improving topdressing incorporation. One major benefit observed was an approximate 45% reduction in the amount of sand picked up from cool season grasses when rolling was performed once after topdressing.

The recommended approach involves brushing the topdressing into the turf canopy first, followed by a single pass with a roller. This sequence helps integrate the sand more effectively into the surface. By the following day, maintenance equipment collects noticeably less loose sand, confirming improved incorporation.

Efficient topdressing incorporation is vital for long-term surface quality, as it aids in reducing the accumulation of organic matter – a primary reason for topdressing in the first place. Ensuring that the sand stays within the canopy allows it to contribute to a firmer, smoother surface and healthier root zone. As such, improved topdressing integration stands out as a strong argument for the use of lightweight rolling immediately after brushing

5. Decreased cutworm activity

While I'm not an entomologist and didn't conduct a formal study on cutworm populations, I noticed a clear pattern through bird behaviour on my putting greens. Birds tend to peck at greens to feed on cutworms, leaving small holes behind. By observing these bird pecking holes early in the morning – when dew made them more visible – I consistently saw fewer holes in areas that had been rolled, suggesting reduced cutworm activity.

Typically, greens are mowed in the morning and then rolled. Not all clippings are captured in the mower bucket, and some remain scattered on the surface. Rolling after mowing can help collect these stray clippings, along with any cutworm eggs that may be attached. According to research by Dr Dan Potter at the University of Kentucky, cutworms lay single eggs on the tips of bentgrass plants, and around 70% of these eggs can survive mowing.

By rolling after mowing, it's possible to remove both clippings and viable eggs, disrupting the cutworm life cycle. Fewer cutworms means fewer birds foraging on the greens, which reduces the associated surface damage. So, while indirect, the link between lightweight rolling and decreased cutworm activity – or at least reduced bird pecking – is compelling, making it a valuable reason to roll.

6. Maintain green speeds with raised cutting heights

A key benefit of rolling is its ability to maintain green speed while allowing for a higher mowing height. This concept was first investigated in 1993 to determine whether increased mowing heights could deliver similar speeds to those achieved with lower cuts. In the study, mowing occurred daily, while rolling was done on alternating days. Initially, the shorter height (5/32" or 4mm) produced faster greens, but after about 10 days, the higher height (3/16" or 4.75mm) matched those speeds on rolling days and the following day. This demonstrated that rolling could sustain green speed for up to 48 hours, assuming thatch





accumulation was minimal.

By rolling three times per week while maintaining a higher height of cut, researchers found that green speeds comparable to lower mowing heights were achieved. This approach also resulted in healthier turf and reduced disease incidence – particularly anthracnose – as shown in studies at Rutgers spearheaded by Dr Bruce Clark. Further research at Michigan State University found that daily rolling with elevated mowing heights improved both wear tolerance and green speed, even under heavy traffic. This combination supports strong turf health while maintaining excellent playability.

7. Fewer localised dry spots

This finding originated from a 1995 study comparing plots rolled three times weekly with those left unrolled. After about two months during the summer heat, the rolled areas showed noticeably fewer dry spots than the unrolled ones. Initially dismissed as a coincidence, repeated observations in 1996 and beyond confirmed the consistent pattern.

To investigate the cause, soil tests measured bulk density and infiltration rates, revealing that rolling did not increase compaction or hinder water absorption. Additional pressure plate tests demonstrated that rolled plots retained more moisture. The breakthrough came in 2000, when root samples showed that rolled plots had significantly greater root mass, which likely enhanced the soil's water-holding capacity and reduced dry spots.

Supporting research from Michigan State University, the University of Tennessee, Connecticut and Arkansas aligns with these conclusions, indicating that frequent rolling helps soil retain moisture and prevent localised dry spots. Notably, all test plots were regularly toppedressed every two to three weeks during the growing season to avoid compaction – a standard golf course practice – further emphasising rolling's role in maintaining healthy, hydrated turf.

8. Broadleaf weed, moss and algae reduction

An observation was made in 1996 that rolling reduced the presence of broadleaf weeds such as plantain, mouseear chickweed and small dandelions on putting greens. Data showed a statistically significant decline in these weeds on rolled greens compared to those that were not rolled.

Moss was also found to be less common on rolled areas. A study by Dr Douglas Karcher at the University of Arkansas revealed that rolling decreased algae growth on cool season grasses during summer. The theory is that rolling produces a thicker, denser turf canopy, which limits light penetration and creates a smoother surface, making it harder for weeds, moss and algae to establish.

Ongoing research seeks to clarify the exact mechanisms behind these effects. For example, Nick Binder, a master's student, noted that clover in rolled sports field plots developed disease while clover in unrolled plots did not. Additionally, one superintendent observed that heavy traffic, such as along cart paths, can prevent moss growth in those areas.

While the precise causes are still being explored, it is clear that lightweight rolling at least three times weekly significantly reduces broadleaf weeds, moss and algae on golf greens and other fine turf areas.

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9. Seedbed preparation

This principle is widely recognised in turf management literature: rolling after seeding is essential to achieve good seed-to-soil contact. Research consistently confirms that rolling greens post-seeding greatly enhances turf establishment. There are several critical phases during establishment when rolling plays a vital role.

Firstly, rolling helps refine the contours and smooth the surface, which is especially important for precision surfaces like bowling greens. Secondly, rolling immediately after seeding ensures the seeds make firm contact with the soil, a crucial factor for successful germination and early growth. Lastly, studies from Michigan State University show that rolling plots multiple times a week for about a month before the first mowing encourages tillering and promotes faster turf fill-in, improving playability from the outset.

Together, these three stages – contour refinement, post-seeding rolling for seed contact and frequent rolling during early growth – form a comprehensive seedbed preparation strategy, underscoring the vital role of rolling in achieving strong turf establishment and quality playing surfaces.

10. Alleviate frost heaving

During winter, freeze-thaw cycles cause the ground to heave, making it crucial to roll greens at least once before the first spring mowing to reduce scalping. This method has long been employed in both northern and extreme southern regions to effectively combat frost heaving.

Rolling is also valuable in managing thatch swelling caused by heavy rainfall, warm-season grasses, high humidity or missed mowing. In these conditions, rolling before mowing helps control the swelling and further decreases scalping risk.

In essence, rolling smooths the surface and creates better mowing conditions after frost heaving and during humid, wet periods. This practice supports healthier turf and enhances playability throughout the season. **GI**

“Daily rolling with elevated mowing heights improved both wear tolerance and green speed”



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Andy Wood knew dairy farming wasn't for him, but he has certainly milked the opportunities that a career in the golf industry has provided.

Now in his 28th year at the stunning Kauri Cliffs, Andy has settled into life as a course manager after a storied past in construction. The passion with which he speaks about it suggests a return to construction cannot be discounted, but for now he faces the more pressing challenge of regrassing all the fairways.

How did you get started in greenkeeping?

I played a lot of golf and I worked on a dairy farm. I realised I was never going to be a golf pro, and the morning and afternoon milking got to me with the dairy farming, so I started an apprenticeship at New Plymouth Golf Club in Taranaki, New Zealand, in 1985.

When did construction come onto your radar?

As I was coming to the end of my apprenticeship, I knew I wanted to get into golf course construction. At that stage in Australia, and in Queensland in particular, the Japanese were building golf courses left, right and centre, and I managed to get a job at the very end of the construction of The Pines Golf Course at Sanctuary Cove under a guy called Doug Robinson, who was the President of the Australian

Association. I was over there for 12 to 18 months.

What brought you over to the UK?

I was supposed to get onto another construction project, but it wasn't happening. I have a British passport, so Doug said, 'If I was you, I'd go to England'. This was in 1991 and construction was busy back then, with loads of farms being sold for development, so I wandered over to the UK via Asia and started worked on the Lambourne Golf Club for a little bit.

I had interviewed at Gleneagles and met Joe Paulin, who was involved with the construction of the London Golf Club, and I ended up joining the team down there as the grow-in assistant. Once Steve Marsden left, I became the course manager and stayed on until 1997, when I came back to New Zealand to build Kauri Cliffs for the owner,

About Kauri Cliffs

Spanning 6,000 acres of working sheep and cattle farmland, Kauri Cliffs is a sanctuary of natural beauty. The course unfolds onto the majestic coastline of New Zealand's North Island, revealing panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean.



Andy Wood
Kauri Cliffs, New Zealand



“I’ve been fortunate to build two courses that are in the top 100 in the world”

Julian Robertson. In 2004 I oversaw the construction and grow-in of Cape Kidnappers, and now I just manage the property at Kauri Cliffs.

It’s a top-tier golf course now, but what was the scene when you arrived?

When I first got here, it was a sheep and beef farm, so it was just fences and kikuyu grass everywhere. I met with the architects’ representative on site, who drove us around. I was opening gates because there were still sheep and cattle all over the place, and a bit of earth moving equipment just coming onto site. I was interviewed by the owner and the architect and a couple of directors he had on the company and then I started not long after that. Today we have a high-end five-star lodge with an 18-hole golf course on a 6,000-acre farm.

Do you prefer construction or course management?

Construction is an exciting phase of golf course development. When you’re in the construction game, everything is happening quickly – cash is flowing, owners are excited, and there’s a real sense of momentum.

It’s definitely a young person’s game, though. You’re looking at 12-hour days, seven days a week, with projects that can take 18 months to two years to complete. Right

now, with young children aged 12 and 14, I wouldn’t choose to do a construction project. But earlier in my career, it was incredibly rewarding. I’ve been fortunate to build two courses that are in the top 100 in the world, which is something I’m proud of.

So, no more construction for you?

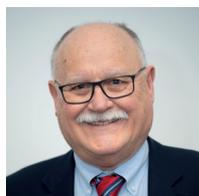
Possibly, but not right now. I’m glad I’ve had the experience, and I’m enjoying applying those skills to ongoing course management.

The challenges are different now. During Covid, when we had no international visitors, we actually used the downtime productively. We resurfaced all our greens and tees, and we’re currently regrassing our fairways with warm-season grasses. We’re shifting from cool-season to Bermuda grass, which will help us manage our sustainability and water usage more effectively.

There’ll be a lot of pressure on myself. We’re not doing it at the optimum time of the year, which would be killing the golf course in December and growing it in January and February, our two warmest months, but that’s our peak time for business. Instead, we’re killing the golf course mid-October, seeding in November, and all pressure on Andy Wood to get the grass grown in before Christmas. I’m really hoping and praying for a warm spring! **GI**

A close-up photograph of a soil profile. The top layer shows green grass blades with some brown, dried-out blades. Below the surface, a thick layer of dark, rich soil is visible, with numerous roots extending downwards. The text is overlaid on the soil portion.

Plant soil microbe interactions under drought stress



Dr Stan Kostka and Dr Mike Fidanza explore the evolving science of rhizosphere dynamics and its critical role in supporting turfgrass health during periods of water scarcity



“Roots are essentially trying to create their ideal neighbourhood”

Roots extract water and nutrients from the soil by the biophysical properties of the rhizosphere, as well as root exudates and mucilage, soil particle connectivity and porosity, and microbial interactions.

Significant scientific advances have been made toward understanding these phenomena in the past five years, with further insight gained into the importance of the rhizosphere in maintaining plant function and performance under abiotic stress such as drought.

Dr Stan Kostka and Dr Mike Fidanza are both considered world-leading scientists in the field of turfgrass

ecosystems and have spent decades conducting research and developing technologies.

Here, they provide a primer on these recent advances and their implications for sustainable turf management practices in a changing environment.

The rhizosphere

In the intricate underground world beneath every golf green and sports field, a complex drama unfolds that determines plant survival and performance.

Recent scientific breakthroughs are revealing how plant roots interact with soil in ways far more sophisticated

than previously understood, offering groundbreaking insights into drought tolerance and ecosystem resilience.

The rhizosphere – a zone surrounding plants roots no more than the thickness of a few grains of sand – emerges as a critical battleground where plants negotiate survival through intricate chemical and biological interactions.

This zone can be seen as a kind of 'communication hub' where roots actively manipulate their environment to enhance water and nutrient uptake. Central to these interactions are root exudates and mucilage, sticky substances secreted by roots that



Dr Stan Kostka

Dr Stan Kostka, a visiting scholar at Penn State, is a leader in the development of compounds and products to modify the rhizosphere and enhance soil-plant-water relations.

Stan has spent over 25 years leading industry discovery and technology development programmes with the goal of understanding how surfactants and other compounds may be used to manage soil water repellency, improve water use, and enhance performance of input chemistries in turfgrass.

He has over 40 publications in the field and holds 15 patents relating to the use of surfactants and polymer technologies to modify soil and rhizosphere properties.

As a globally recognised expert, Stan has been an invited speaker at numerous technical meetings globally in the fields of turfgrass and soil science.

Stan received his PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of Massachusetts, a MS in Plant Science from the University of Connecticut, and a BA in Biology from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA.

serve multiple functions. Think of mucilage as a biological glue – it maintains hydraulic connectivity, attracts beneficial microbes, and helps soil particles stick together.

These substances create what we now call a "rhizosheath" – a thin layer of soil particles adhering closely to root surfaces. The rhizosheath's importance cannot be overstated. Research shows plants with robust rhizosheaths can explore larger soil volumes, sustain greater root growth under drought stress, and maintain better water content around delicate root tips.

In practical terms, this means more resilient turf that can withstand challenging environmental conditions.

Microscopic imaging has

revolutionised our understanding of these processes. Advanced techniques like electron microscopy reveal dramatic changes in root structure during water stress. Root hairs – tiny cellular extensions critical for water and nutrient absorption – can completely collapse when soil moisture drops, effectively shutting down the plant's ability to extract resources.

Microbial interactions play an equally crucial role. Plant growth-promoting bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi form symbiotic relationships with roots, extending their reach into soil and enhancing nutrient uptake. These microorganisms aren't passive passengers but active participants in creating a favourable root

environment.

Roots are essentially trying to create their ideal neighbourhood. They exude specific compounds to attract beneficial microbes and create a conducive habitat. This selective recruitment helps plants maintain function under stress by improving soil aggregation, nutrient cycling, and water retention.

Practical implications for turf management are significant. Traditional approaches focused on surface-level treatments are giving way to more holistic strategies that prioritise root zone health.

Experimental treatments demonstrating improved soil connectivity and water delivery suggest promising management

Dr Mike Fidanza

Dr Mike Fidanza is a professor of plant and soil science at Penn State. His research and teaching focus is plant and soil ecology, the translational evaluation and exploration of plant health products (fungicides, herbicides, plant growth regulators), soil surfactants, seed technology, mushroom compost, biostimulants, turfgrass physiology, cultural practices in turfgrass ecosystems and the biology and ecology of fairy ring disease in turf.

He is the director of Penn State's Center for the Agricultural Sciences and a Sustainable Environment, and is a fellow in the American Society of Agronomy. He teaches undergraduate courses in biology, horticulture, soils, turfgrass science and a graduate course in plant physiology. He was past president of the Northeastern Branch of the American Society of Agronomy (2013-2017). He was Editor-in-chief of the International Turfgrass Society Research Journal (2010-2013), and a member of the USGA Green Section Research Committee (2010 - 2017).



techniques.

Key strategies emerging from this research include:

- Multiple, carefully timed applications of soil amendments
- Using plant growth-promoting bacteria
- Maintaining consistent soil moisture
- Minimising mechanical stress through careful mowing practices

The research also challenges existing paradigms about soil water repellency and drought stress. What was once considered a problem of surface hydrophobicity now appears more complex, involving intricate root-soil interactions at microscopic scales.

Climate change adds urgency to

these investigations. As environmental stresses increase, understanding how plants maintain function becomes critical. Turfgrass ecosystems, often overlooked, play significant ecological roles in carbon sequestration and environmental resilience.

We're not just talking about creating perfect putting surfaces – we're exploring how plants fundamentally survive and thrive under challenging conditions. For turf managers, groundskeepers, and agricultural professionals, these insights offer a new perspective. Successful plant management is no longer about treating symptoms but understanding and supporting the complex underground ecosystem.

The future of sustainable turf

management lies in recognising roots not as passive structures, but as dynamic, intelligent systems constantly negotiating survival. By supporting root health through sophisticated, science-driven approaches, we can create more resilient, adaptive landscapes. As research continues, one thing becomes clear: the most critical plant processes happen out of sight, in the intricate, dynamic world beneath our feet. **GI**

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Parkstone: Where better never stops

The Dorset venue exemplifies ambition and innovation – and Course Manager Grant Peters is central to its success.



How Parkstone kicked into gear

The transformation at Parkstone started before my time when Stevie Richardson took over. At that point, the club moved to a management committee structure, and the chairman at the time was very forward-thinking. He wanted to modernise the entire approach. They brought in a highly capable general manager in Gary Peddie, and between the chairman, Gary, and Stevie, they put a clear and ambitious plan in place. They began with a full bunker renovation, using a course architect to redesign the course's visuals and strategy. That gave Parkstone a real wow factor. Over the next few years, they also introduced a new irrigation system, and these upgrades really helped to put Parkstone back on the map. Since then, we've built on those foundations, carrying out extensive drainage projects, fairway coring and sanding – not always the most popular decisions with members at the time, but they've had a hugely positive long-term impact. We've also gradually improved other areas: tee reconstruction, a range of in-house projects and even creating our own bespoke course furniture. It gives us a unique selling point – something members won't see anywhere else and something you can't just buy off the shelf.



“We're always planning for the future”

Grant Peters is a man with enviable energy and boundless enthusiasm, qualities from which Parkstone is reaping the benefits. Since taking on the role of course manager eight years ago, Grant has overseen a stream of ambitious improvements, from major infrastructure upgrades to precision-engineered course enhancements.

His team of nine full-time greenkeepers, supported by three additional staff in peak season, handles much of the work in-house. From reshaping greens and installing drainage to crafting custom course furniture, they bring a rare depth of expertise and pride to each task.

Communication plays a central role in Grant's approach. Whether presenting plans to the management committee or keeping members updated via video blogs, he believes in transparency, clarity and sharing the 'why' behind decisions.

That mindset – and the quality of work it supports – has earned plentiful recognition. Having won the Championship Greenkeeping Performance award in 2020 after successfully hosting the Ladies' European Amateur Championship, Parkstone won the Greenkeeping Project of the Year award in 2025 following a 1st tee and putting green redesign.

With so much careful planning and impeccable execution in delivering the project, Grant was not shy about seeking recognition for his team and the club via the BIGGA Awards.

"I remember thinking at the time that we might never have another opportunity like this, where we've done so much of the work ourselves," he said. "It felt right to champion it. It wasn't just a renovation – it involved major engineering work, drainage and wetland management.

"It's probably the most nervous I've ever been at an awards ceremony. I didn't just want to be there for the experience, I really, truly wanted to win. Reaching the final was already a huge moment, but to win just proved how good the project really was. It meant a lot to the team, and it helped reinforce



In-house or outsource?

Taking on projects in-house does put extra strain on resources, and you need to be confident you have the necessary skills within the team. We've built real strength in depth within our team and steadily built up the capability to take on larger projects. I'm confident we could handle most of them ourselves now. That said, when the budget allows, it can sometimes make sense to bring in a specialist. When you bring in someone who does something day in, day out, you're getting all their experience and problem-solving instincts, and that provides an opportunity for you to learn.

their standing with the membership too."

It was fitting acknowledgement of the work that goes into delivering such projects, with Grant having committed himself fully to all elements of the task.

"For me, it was a real labour of love," he said. "It involved everything – the planning, the committee meetings, the presentations. I'd be out in the field for 12-hour days, then filming and editing videos at night to keep everyone updated. It was tough, no doubt, but I always had a clear vision in my mind of what we were aiming for."

That clarity of vision has helped Grant attain his current standing at Parkstone, who give him their full backing – something the team have earned through their deeds.

"It all comes down to trust, and that trust is earned through consistently delivering high-quality projects," he explained. "Every job we take on has to meet the highest standards, but before we even reach that point, there's a huge amount of due diligence involved.

"The club's management committee is made up of individuals who've been at the top of their respective

industries. For example, one member led the entire build of the Eden Project, and others have overseen multi-million-pound developments in their own fields.

"It might look from the outside like I get what I want, but the reality is that I have to build a really strong case for every proposal. And that case is stress-tested from every angle before anything gets the green light. Nothing is rushed – they make sure every box is ticked, and if it isn't, they'll send you away to research further before making a decision."

A standout achievement of the award-winning project was reshaping the putting green to align perfectly with Parkstone's distinctive heathland character. Delivered through close collaboration between the in-house team and course shaper Shane Ringwood – who was in attendance in Harrogate for the awards – work also included the installation of new practice nets, upgraded paths and a complete drainage overhaul. Transplanted heather was carefully integrated to ensure the result blended naturally with the surrounding environment.

And that's not the only major undertaking the Parkstone crew had on their hands in 2024, which Grant revealed was "meant to be a quieter one".

"We ended up creating a 5,000-yard, 18-hole course. This involved designing and constructing four new sets of tees, all done in-house," he said. "The result was essentially an entirely new layout, offering a fresh experience to the membership.

"Originally, we had also considered blowing up our whole seventh green due to the severity of the slope, which had become too severe for green speeds. The projected cost was around £100,000. Instead, I approached the club and asked for a chance to try a different approach by trying to level the back portion of the green.

"We stripped the turf, reduced the slope from 4% to 2%, and relaid the original turf. It grew in perfectly, and the entire job only cost about £1,000."

“ I really, truly
wanted to win”

PARKSTONE GOLF CLUB

GREENKEEPING PROJECT OF THE YEAR
WITH PRIZES FOR CARE



This went alongside an ongoing greens expansion programme aimed at increasing the surface area from one hectare to 1.75 hectares, necessitating a tweak to the irrigation system with the fitting of stealth kits that sit flush with the surface and can be mowed and putted over without disruption.

“The team always jokes that my ‘quiet years’ never stay quiet for long,” Grant laughed. “I tend to add more projects as we go, but even with everything we did that year, the total spend was only around £25,000 to £30,000. For that, we levelled and expanded two greens and delivered a brand new 5,000-yard course. I think that’s outstanding value for money.”

For a venue and team clearly so averse to inertia, it is little surprise to hear plans are in place for further developments.

“Looking ahead, aside from the drainage work, our next major focus is tee redevelopment,” added Grant. “We’ve just completed a full audit of every tee complex and developed a matrix to rank them by priority, based on need versus cost.

“For this project, we’re also planning to bring in a golf course architect to help us. We haven’t appointed anyone yet, but we recognise that altering tees can impact nearby bunkers or the back of a green, so we want to take a more holistic view of the whole course layout.

“We’re always planning for the future, and the standard the club sets is high. Over the past eight years, I’ve worked hard to earn the trust of the committee. They know I won’t take shortcuts, and they know I’ll deliver well-planned, on-time and on-budget projects.

“Thanks to the skill and dedication of our in-house greenkeeping team, we’re able to finish jobs to a standard that we’re proud of, and that the club is proud of too.

“I’ve now been here eight years, and honestly, it still feels like my first day every time I walk in.” **GI**



Top tips for taking on projects

Big in-house projects can be incredibly rewarding, but they’re also full of potential, but avoidable, pitfalls. Here are some of the lessons I’ve learned.

- Plan backwards from the worst-case scenario**
 Start by asking yourself: ‘What’s the worst that could happen?’. Think about all the risks, and then build your plan around how you’ll mitigate them.
- Resource for daily operations first**
 A common mistake is using too many staff on the project, leaving the golf course to suffer. For our putting green project, I asked the club to retain a couple of seasonal staff for an extra month to handle daily set-up and maintenance, so members didn’t notice a drop in course presentation.
- Do your homework – then get it checked**
 If you’re designing or planning in-house, either research every detail until you’re confident, or factor a consultant into your budget. Before we began shaping the putting green, I submitted my design, and the club brought in external architects to review it. My plans held up, helping build trust and get us the green light.
- Don’t go it alone**
 Even if you’re leading the project, it’s OK (and wise) to bring in specialists. Our shaper, Shane, has 25-years experience – he spotted issues I wouldn’t have seen and helped steer things when it really mattered.
- Communicate early and often**
 Be open from the start about risks and resource needs. The more you can forearm people with the necessary information, the more support you’ll get.

Silloth on Solway – the golf course that has it all?

James Hutchinson revisits one of his favourite sites – Silloth on Solway – where ecological excellence sits alongside first-class maintenance



If I were to be asked which is my favourite golf course in the whole wide world, I obviously couldn't answer as they're all different in their own ways. If, however, you were to ask me to name my top 10, Silloth on Solway would be nestled comfortably in there, probably near the top end to be honest.

But why, I hear you shriek. Well, I've been to and advised on well over 500 golf courses both here in the UK and places further afield such as Latvia, Portugal and America but it's difficult to find one that has it all in terms of first-class maintenance, scenery and a good balance between flora, fauna and ecology – Silloth may just have all that.

I have my favourite greenkeepers too! Far too many to mention, but one that sticks out a little is a marvellous young chap called Matthew Grainger, who works at Silloth as the first assistant greenkeeper. I've known Matthew for a few years now and his rise up the ranks within not only the greenkeeping world but the eco world too has been impressive to say the least.

I arranged a visit to see Matthew at his place of work to ask a few questions and to take another look around a site I first visited in 2021 to catch up with Course Manager Brian Story.

I have to mention that the course

was in even better condition than it was four years ago. Fabulous work Brian and team!

Tell us about yourself and your greenkeeping history

I've been a greenkeeper for seven years now. Before that, I completed a Level 3 in Countryside Management at Newton Rigg. I've always been a keen golfer, so greenkeeping was the perfect job that brought together my two biggest passions: golf and conservation. I've been involved in golf course conservation since the start of my career and have been honoured to be a finalist for the Golf Environment Awards Conservation Champion two years running.



“ I absolutely think sustainability has a future in golf”

About James Hutchinson

James Hutchinson has spent more than 25 years immersed in the world of golf and ecology. With seven years as BIGGA's resident ecologist, over 480 golf courses visited on behalf of the association and previous roles including environmental officer at St Andrews, James continues to advise clubs across the UK and beyond in a freelance capacity. An R&A Gold Badge Scholar with FdSc and BSc (Hons) credentials, few are better placed to comment on the state of golf course sustainability and the people driving it forward.

Can ecology and greenkeeping work alongside each other? If so, any examples?

Ecology and greenkeeping don't just work alongside each other – they complement each other beautifully.

On our links course, we've reverted to a more traditional native habitat by creating sand scrapes, which improve views and playability while supporting wildlife like the natterjack toad.

Interestingly, close-mown turf areas provide important hunting and travelling corridors for species such as natterjacks, and golf is much more enjoyable when you're surrounded by birdsong.

In addition, we've seen the reintroduction of rare wildflowers,

including common spotted orchids, which adds to the biodiversity of the course and creates a richer experience for both players and the local ecosystem.

Silloth is, in my opinion, one of the most interesting courses you are likely to find in terms of wildlife, what are you likely to see if you play a round of golf there?

Working and playing at Silloth offers a fantastic chance to experience a variety of wildlife. If you're lucky, you might spot natterjack toads or great crested newts, both protected species we actively support. You'll often hear the sounds of birds all around, including skylarks and curlews, which

add to the unique atmosphere of the course.

We're also proud to see butterflies and other pollinators thriving in the wildflower areas we've established, showing the positive ecological impact of our work.

This was my second visit to Silloth, and I am happy to suggest the site is still in extraordinarily good condition, if not better than the first visit. What projects are in the pipeline to take it to the next level?

We have an incredible team with a passion for producing a top-class course, and that collective commitment drives everything we do. Looking ahead, we're focussing on



“ It shows that conservation is valued and that you can build a career around it”

expanding our ecological areas, improving habitat connectivity and continuing our work on invasive species control to protect native flora.

Additionally, we're exploring ways to enhance sustainable maintenance practices, making sure the course remains in excellent condition while reducing our environmental impact.

You had some success in the Golf Environment Awards, has it given you a platform to accelerate your career?

The Golf Environment Awards have been really important for me personally, but also for the industry as a whole. They do a fantastic job of highlighting the incredible work greenkeepers are carrying out across the UK, much of which can go unnoticed. For young greenkeepers, especially, it's really inspiring to see that kind of recognition for environmental work – it shows that conservation is valued and that you can build a career around it.

I feel genuinely honoured to have been part of the awards for the last two years. It's given me the chance to learn from others, share ideas and keep pushing our own standards higher. While the recognition is great, for me it's really about celebrating the good work that's happening right across the industry.

Are you liaising with any outside groups such as Natural England? If so, on which projects?

Yes, we work directly with a number of outside groups to make sure our conservation work is as effective and well-informed as possible. Natural England are a key partner, helping us manage the site and improve the overall condition of the SSSI. Their input is invaluable in ensuring our work meets the right standards and delivers real ecological benefit.

We also work closely with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust, focussing on supporting and monitoring the local natterjack toad population to make sure everything





we do helps maintain and grow this important species. On top of that, we've worked with Bob Taylor Ecology to ensure that all of our ecological work ties in well with the demands of the golf course itself, helping us set realistic, long-term plans and goals that benefit both the game and the environment.

Why were you shadowed by a film crew recently?

The film crew, who are from Five Kingdom Films and have spent their careers making nature documentaries, approached me with the idea of showcasing conservation and wildlife within golf. I was lucky enough to be chosen to feature in this short film, which aims to highlight the positive impact the golf industry has on local wildlife.

I was very nervous and felt a huge responsibility to ensure the industry is shown in the best possible light because we rarely get the chance to receive good publicity in this way. The hope is that the film will help both golfers and non-golfers understand

that golf courses can be vital habitats for wildlife.

I have been carrying out eco reports for golf courses for around 13 years, and I have the feeling golf course ecology and the desire to be flora-and-fauna friendly has taken a backstep recently. Tell me I'm wrong?

I think you're right in that it probably has taken a bit of a step back in some places. Pressures on budgets and staff can mean ecological work slips down the list of priorities. But that's exactly why projects like this film are so important. I'm really hopeful that by showcasing the positive impact golf courses can have on wildlife, we can help propel this topic back into the spotlight where it belongs.

I recently played a course and found orchids growing that nobody even knew were there – that's exactly why we need to bring this conversation front and centre again. There's so much potential on our courses if we take the time to look and manage them properly.

Does sustainability in golf have a future?

I absolutely think sustainability has a future in golf – in fact, I'd say it has to if the game is going to thrive long term.

But it's also a term that's very open to interpretation, and that's actually important to recognise.

There isn't one single way to be "sustainable" that fits every course or situation. Finding your own sustainable practices, tailored to your site and your resources, is really the key.

It can be about reducing inputs, restoring habitats, supporting rare species, managing water use carefully or simply being more efficient and thoughtful in the way the course is maintained.

For me, sustainability isn't just about ecology either – it's about making sure the course is viable for the club, playable and enjoyable for golfers and valuable for the wider environment.

Greenkeepers are in the perfect position to balance all of those needs and drive that future forward. **GI**

A fairway to sustainable aquifer management

How Ashridge Golf Club upgraded its integrated water management system



Ashridge Golf Club, nestled within the picturesque Hertfordshire countryside, has long enjoyed a reputation for its stunning course and commitment to environmental stewardship. However, the club's previous water management system - which was reliant on a 12-year-old borehole and a basic pumping setup - presented significant challenges.

Outdated technology, coupled with the complexities of a 200-metre-deep borehole, led to costly pump failures, and a lack of real time data of water levels within the borehole.

Recognising the need for a more sustainable and reliable solution, Ashridge partnered with Grundfos to implement an integrated water management system.

The challenge: A system under strain

The existing system at Ashridge Golf Club relied on a single pump at the end of a flexible pipe within the deep borehole. The system lacked real-time monitoring capabilities and water depth measurements were taken manually, often at inconvenient times.

Meanwhile, flow rates were measured using manual calibration. This setup presented several critical issues:

- **Pump failures:** Two consecutive seasons saw catastrophic pump failures, resulting in weeks of irrigation downtime during crucial periods, particularly during drought conditions. The complex borehole engineering made repairs lengthy and expensive.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Monitoring of water abstraction was reliant on manual readings at specific intervals – risking human error.
- **Inefficient water use:** Without precise flow rate data or real-time water level monitoring, optimising irrigation schedules and minimising water waste was challenging.
- **Lack of proactive maintenance:** The system offered no way to monitor pump performance, making it impossible to predict potential failures.

The solution: An integrated approach

The club sought a pump that would improve irrigation and ensure a more secure water supply, recognising the need for a comprehensive upgrade to its water management system.

The club's general manager Stephen Proudfoot looked for a solution that

would not only address the immediate problems but also ensure long-term sustainability and means to demonstrate not just regulatory compliance, but also best practise.

He worked closely with Jack Wakeham from borehole engineering specialist Whatley & Co, and key account manager Paul Andrews from Grundfos to implement a state-of-the-art solution. The core of the new system is the Grundfos SPE 18 borehole pump, driven by a CUE variable speed drive. This combination allows for precise control of flow rates, while maximising energy efficiency. Its innovative hydraulic design optimises water flow, contributing to significant energy savings.

Critically, the system incorporates Grundfos Connect, a remote monitoring platform that provides real-time data on groundwater levels within the borehole. This data is essential for ensuring compliance with EA abstraction limits and preventing pump damage due to low water levels.

A Siemens SITRANS FM 5100 flow sensor further enhances the system's accuracy by providing real-time precise flow rate measurements, which are integrated directly into the pump control system.

Improved efficiency is achieved via the variable speed drive and high-efficiency pump, significantly reducing energy consumption and the club's carbon footprint by 833 Kg/year. Additionally, the new SPE 18 pump consumes 1456 kWh/year less than the previous pump.

Meanwhile, the system's proactive monitoring capabilities enable predictive maintenance - minimising costly pump failures and guaranteeing uninterrupted irrigation.

The future of water management

Sustainable water management in the face of increasing regulatory pressures and climate change is vital and the leisure industry will need to adopt more proactive approaches to water resource management.

Grundfos' integrated approach, combining high-performance pumps, intelligent controls and remote monitoring capabilities, offers a model for other golf courses and leisure facilities to follow. By embracing these technologies, businesses not only reduce their environmental impact, but also improve operational efficiency and ensure long-term sustainability.



Implementation and fine-tuning

The project commenced in December 2023, with a thorough assessment of the existing borehole by BA Hydro Solutions, including remedial works to increase its yield. Whatley & Co then worked closely with Grundfos to install the new pumping system.

The integrated nature of the Grundfos solution simplified the installation process and ensured seamless communication between the various components.

"Following the initial installation in April 2024, the system underwent a period of fine-tuning, says Jack Wakeham, contracts manager, Whatley & Co.

"This involved calibrating the sensors, optimising pump settings, and ensuring that the data presented through Grundfos Connect was easily understood and actionable. The close collaboration between Grundfos engineers, the contractors and the Golf Club staff were crucial to this process,"

Key benefits and outcomes

The solution delivers numerous benefits, including enhanced regulatory compliance through Grundfos Connect's real-time monitoring, ensuring adherence to EA abstraction limits and bolstering environmental credentials.

The Grundfos SPE 18-24 borehole pump

This high-efficiency pump is designed for demanding applications and provides reliable performance even in deep boreholes. With a superior hydraulic design, the Grundfos SPE offers outstanding energy efficiency.

The permanent magnet motor is among the best on the market and the canned-rotor design, with pump and motor integrated in a single unit, offers world-class energy efficiency and reliability. With an increased temperature rating of 60°C, and stainless-steel rotor cladding protecting the magnets from corrosion, the motor has potential for use in a wider range of applications and offers a long lifetime.

Additional features:

- CUE variable speed drive: The CUE drive optimises pump performance by adjusting the motor speed to match the exact water demand. This leads to significant energy savings and reduces wear-and-tear on the pump.
- Grundfos Connect: This cloud-based platform provides remote access to real-time data on pump performance, water levels and flow rates. It also enables automated reporting, simplifying compliance with EA regulations.
- SITRANS FM 5100 flow sensor: This highly accurate flow meter from Siemens provides real-time precise measurements of water abstraction, ensuring that the club stays within its licensed limits.

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Better practice for better golf

Recent projects by all-weather surface specialists Huxley Golf

Today's golfers expect more than just a great course — they want professional-quality practice facilities that perform all year round. Maintaining grass tees, nets and short game areas under heavy use and unpredictable weather is a constant challenge.

With decades of experience, Huxley is the trusted name in premium all-weather golf surfaces. Our synthetic solutions

look, feel, and play like natural turf — but require far less upkeep. Golfers benefit from reliable, realistic conditions to hone their skills, while clubs save on maintenance and protect key areas of the course.

Here are three recent installations that show how Huxley Golf is helping clubs elevate their practice offering in 2025 and beyond:

Royal Troon Golf Club, Scotland

Premier Tee Turf practice tee

Huxley Golf's Premier Tee Turf offers the ultimate all-weather practice surface. Designed to replicate the look and feel of a perfectly maintained natural tee, it remains pristine through constant use and any weather conditions.

Golfers enjoy a clean, consistent strike, with the freedom to tee up at any height and hit through the surface just as they would on grass — without creating muddy divots. For Royal Troon Golf Club, this means preserving their natural practice areas and significantly reducing upkeep, while giving players a world-class practice experience.

Customer Testimonial

"We have four grass tees but with the amount of play we get it is a hard push to maintain them to a standard, so the Huxley tee is a very high-quality addition for us."

– Billy McLachlan | Head Greenkeeper

St Enodoc Golf Club, Cornwall

Triple Bay Cage Net

For clubs short on space, the Triple Bay Cage Net is a smart, compact solution. This fully enclosed system allows golfers to hit full shots safely and confidently, without the need for a full driving range.

Built for durability and everyday use, each bay provides a reliable space for players to warm up and practise year-round. At St Enodoc, it adds real value for members and guests — delivering a low-maintenance facility that fits neatly into underused space.

Customer Testimonial

"We are so happy with the clean aesthetic look of the nets, they are compact, functional and blend well with the surrounding landscape."

– William Smith | Head Greenkeeper

Royal Troon, Scotland
Premier Tee Turf Practice Tee



St Enodoc Golf Club, Cornwall
Triple Bay Cage Net



The Oaks Golf Centre, Surrey
Putting and Chipping Green



**The Oaks Golf Centre, Surrey
Putting and Chipping Green**

Short game practice is essential — and with Huxley’s Putting and Chipping Green, it is always available, whatever the weather. Constructed with premium synthetic turf, it delivers a true roll, realistic pace and consistent feedback.

Unlike natural greens that suffer from wear and tear, this surface stays in top condition season after season, while reducing the need for water, chemicals and constant repairs. At The Oaks, players now enjoy a dependable, professional-quality area to sharpen their scoring and lower scores.

Customer Testimonial

“We had installed an inferior green a year ago, but it was so bad the decision was made to replace it. Having been in the industry 36 years I decided to get the best. The process was smooth from the initial consultation to the installation. We couldn’t be happier with the Huxley green.”

– Phil Benn | General Manager

Performance, durability and value — all year round

From tee turfs and nets to putting greens, Huxley Golf’s range of all-weather surfaces helps clubs meet the demands of today’s players while managing time, cost and space more effectively.

Every installation is designed for lasting performance, minimal maintenance and a consistently high-quality experience — delivering better practice, greater confidence and better golf.

Please scan the QR code for more information



Huxley Golf
Premier All-Weather Surfaces for Golf

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Protecting fairways for the future

How to manage and maintain turf in more extreme weather conditions

A changing environment and a tough start to 2025

There is no denying that the UK climate has changed. Turf managers now face increasingly erratic conditions, ranging from soaring summer temperatures and milder winters to unpredictable rainfall patterns. The once-reliable rhythms of the weather have all but vanished. Nothing nourishes turf quite like natural rainfall, but the dependable April showers that used to rejuvenate grass now feel like a thing of the past.

Although summer is still unfolding, dry conditions are impacting turf quality. Grass is particularly vulnerable as it emerges from winter dormancy, so transitioning straight from winter into a dry spell has placed significant stress on turf. The early and widespread appearance of seed heads is a clear sign that grass plants are struggling.

Even with some rain, turf may still be in a weakened state, leaving it vulnerable to prolonged damage if the dry weather continues throughout the summer. While we can't predict what the coming months will bring, it's wise to prepare for all possibilities.

Restoring fairways after drought damage

If fairways require remedial overseeding, careful consideration should be given to seed selection. When chosen wisely, the right seed mix becomes a long-term investment that delivers lasting benefits.

As hot and dry conditions become more common, the performance differences between grass species are becoming increasingly noticeable. While UK summers are warmer, we're still far from needing to consider warm-season grass species. However, native fine fescue varieties are showing strong resilience, tolerating heat and enduring drought conditions more effectively than others.

Guided by what works in nature

We're all familiar with the concept of natural selection - nature's long and gradual process of favouring species best suited to survive in specific environments. Over thousands of years, environmental pressures have shaped which plants thrive. This same principle can guide our choices when selecting grass species that can withstand drought; nature offers clear, tested examples.

By observing undisturbed, 'wild' landscapes, we often find natural stands of sheep's fescue and hard fescue. These two closely related species have adapted to thrive in challenging conditions, coping well with heat, extended dry spells and nutrient-poor soils. Their success in such environments isn't coincidental; it's the result of generations of adaptation, making them ideal candidates for turf areas that need to be resilient and low-maintenance.

Just as wildlife reflects its habitat, these grasses reflect the conditions they've mastered. Choosing them for overseeding or establishing drought-tolerant turf is not just informed, nature's own selections inspire it.

Last to drought out, first to bounce back

Both sheep's and hard fescue have adapted over time to be resilient in the face of heat and drought. But how do they do this?

- Narrow rolled leaves to minimise transpiration.
 - Leaf stomata close fast when under stress to reduce transpiration.
 - Deep and fibrous root system to better access water.
 - Slow growth rate to conserve energy and water.
 - Fast to initiate dormancy in times of stress to preserve vital tissues.
- These characteristics enable Sheep's



Sheep's fescue surviving on an exposed, south facing bunker bank.



Sheep's fescue at a mowing height of 10mm.

and Hard Fescues to outlast other species when the heat is on. When the rains eventually return, they will be the first to bounce back.

What about turf quality?

Both sheep's and hard fescue are well-suited to low fairway mowing heights, typically at or above 10mm. At these heights, they form a tightly knit, resilient surface. When combined with other fine fescue species, they help develop a robust mat layer that enhances turf durability. Areas dominated by sheep's and hard fescue often produce a distinctive 'fescue crunch' underfoot.

While wild sheep's fescue often grows in noticeable tufts, modern turf-quality cultivars have been bred for a more refined growth habit. These improved varieties deliver a smooth, even surface and integrate seamlessly with other fescue species, making them an excellent choice for creating consistent, high-quality fairway turf.

Shade and full sun

One key distinction between the two species is hard fescue's superior

tolerance to shade. This makes it an excellent choice for fairway seed mixtures on tree-lined courses that are also prone to drought.

In contrast, sheep's fescue thrives in open, sun-exposed environments. It naturally flourishes on coastal links courses under full sun and dry conditions. This makes it a perfect fit for links fairway mixtures, where durability and drought resistance are essential.

Which Origin mixtures will I find sheep's and hard fescue in?

Origin R5
 Hard fescue, Dumas 1 50%
 Slender creeping red fescue, Absolom 20%
 Strong creeping red fescue, Hastings 20%
 Chewing's fescue, Greensleeves 10%

Origin Pure Fescue
 Sheep's fescue, Quattro 20%
 Hard fescue, Dumas 1 30%
 Slender creeping red fescue, Absolom 20%
 Strong creeping red fescue, Hastings 20%
 Chewing's fescue, Greensleeves 10%

Origin Low Maintenance (with Ryegrass)

Sheep's fescue, Quattro 15%
 Hard fescue, Dumas 15%
 Perennial ryegrass, Creepstar 15%
 Perennial ryegrass, Angelina 15%
 Strong creeping red fescue, Hastings 40%



Origin Amenity Solutions

(OAS) can provide advice and strategies that can help support your overseeding strategy.

Scan the QR code for more information or speak to an OAS advisor on 0800 138 7222.



Why August can be the prime time for fine turf renovation



Jaey Goodchild is an Agronomist at The R&A

Main-season renovations are effective for a variety of reasons – for the best results, prepare thoroughly and remember to communicate with your stakeholders

As the summer rolls in and golf courses bask in long daylight hours, many clubs across the UK find themselves at a seasonal crossroads.

The holiday season aligns with turf growth potential being at a high for the year. With good preparation and management, August emerges as an opportunity in the greenkeeping calendar – a great time to undertake essential renovation work on our greens and fine turf. There may also be an opportunity at some clubs to exploit a lull in the golfing calendar, although not everyone is that lucky as some clubs fail to plan windows of opportunity for essential renovation work.

August brings with it two powerful allies: high soil temperatures and extended daylight hours. These conditions are ideal for greenkeeping

actively growing when work begins, helping it bounce back faster. Rather than playing catch up with a post-renovation feed, get it moving early.

Equally important is irrigation. Before any machinery hits the greens, irrigation coverage and performance should be checked and calibrated to guarantee even coverage. Managing soil moisture content is vital for successful seed establishment, particularly in summer.

Accurate irrigation will also contribute to healthy root development, ensuring soil stability during disruptive operations. Irrigation also plays an essential role in topdressing integration, both in filling core holes and in sward integration. Use your tools to your best advantage.

When it comes to the implementation of the renovation,

and seed/soil contact. These small steps can make a big difference in the long-term success of the renovation and make the investment in seed worthwhile and cost-effective by ensuring good seed strike efficacy.

Of course, even the best-laid plans are at the mercy of the weather. While August typically offers favourable conditions, unpredictability is always a factor.

Still, by aligning renovation efforts with this seasonal sweet spot and preparing thoroughly, greenkeeping teams can dramatically improve their chances of a smooth and successful renovation.

With the right planning and preparation, along with a bit of cooperation from the weather, greenkeeping teams can capitalise and complete work that is essential to achieving their goals. Members should expect a managed period of disruption and recovery, and temporary relaxation of the daily course set-up and presentation tasks while the greenkeeping teams focus on essential maintenance.

Your club should also have a well-communicated plan of action for strategic improvements and measurable outcomes. **GI**

“The longer days of summer mean more sunlight for photosynthesis, fuelling improved recovery and establishment”

teams. Warm soils accelerate seed germination, making it the most efficient time to bolster the bent or fescue grass content on golf greens. Meanwhile, longer days mean more sunlight for photosynthesis, fuelling improved recovery and establishment.

But even with nature on your side, success hinges on preparation and planning. A pre-renovation fertiliser application is one of the simplest, yet most effective steps. It ensures turf is

attention to detail pays dividends. For those planning to hollow core tine, trialling a few test lines can ensure clean core pulling from the outset. A polished tine, set to the target depth, will provide cleanly pulled cores from the outset of the coring operation.

If overseeding is on the agenda, mock runs with your overseeder are invaluable. They are essential to fine-tune seed placement, ensuring optimal calibration for seeding rate, depth



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

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