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Greenkeeper International



The custodian of Purbeck

How John Hockley is using all his experience at the Dorset heathland

■ Practical Greenkeeping

Assessing the impact of the dry spring – and what comes next

■ Seasonal Advice

We take a look at some of the most common summer diseases

■ From Your Association

Meet our Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists

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July 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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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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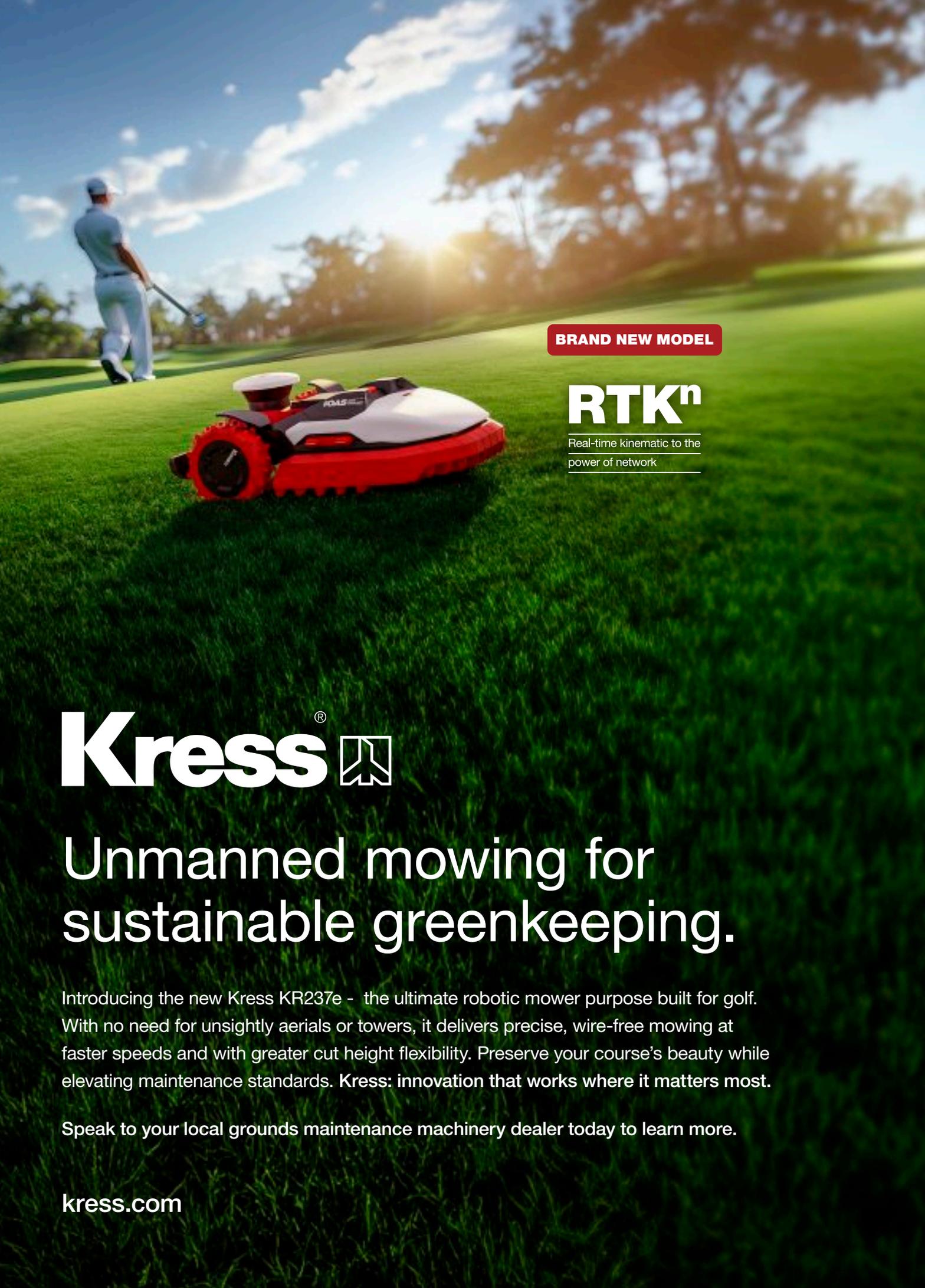
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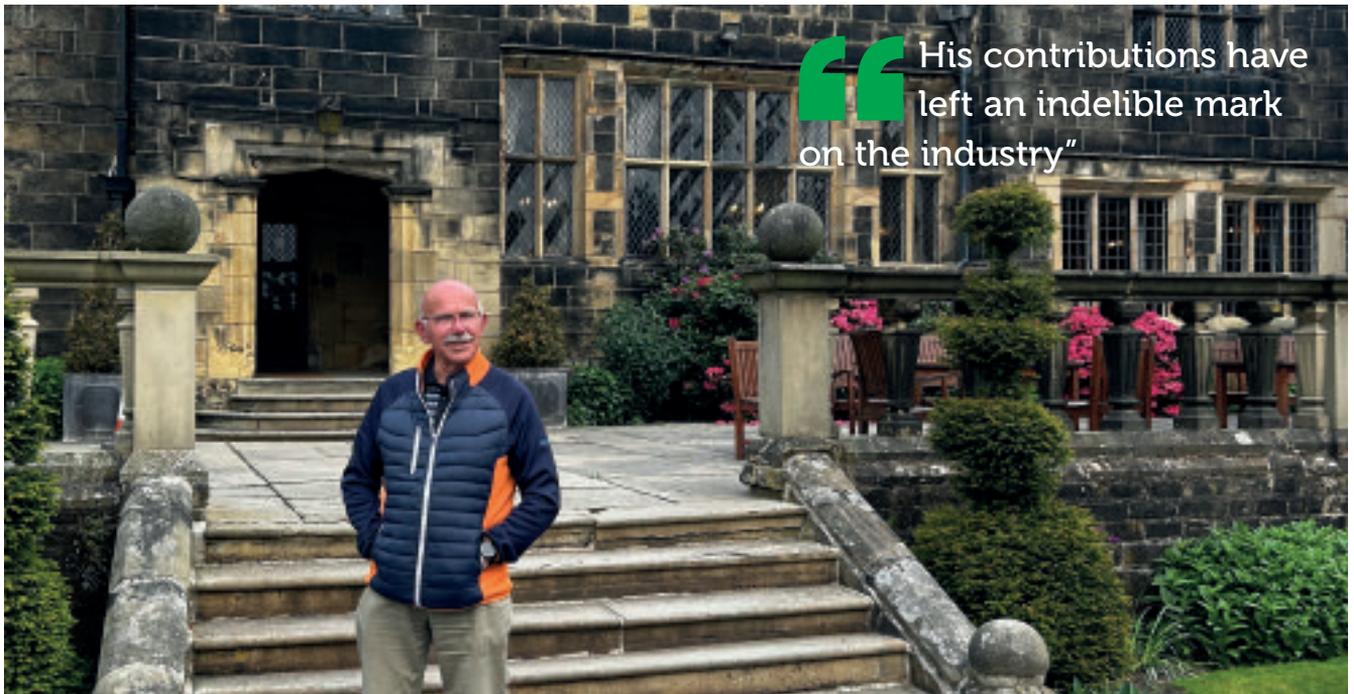
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First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- Former BIGGA President Chris Sheehan retires
- Conwy Golf Club receives funding to attract more female greenkeepers



“His contributions have left an indelible mark on the industry”

Colin Rushbrook retires after over 50 years in turfgrass

Industry veteran Colin Rushbrook has announced his retirement after serving for more than five decades in the turfgrass industry.

It marks the end of an era following a distinguished career in which Colin demonstrated tremendous dedication and enviable expertise, building lasting relationships across the sector along the way.

Colin's journey began at RE Rushbrooks & Sons, the family business based in Ipswich that specialised in supplying products to the sportsturf and landscaping industry. It was here that he honed his skills, built a reputation for excellence and developed the deep-rooted knowledge that would ultimately

define his career.

In 2004, he made the significant decision to sell the company to Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd, where he continued to cultivate his exceptional understanding and passion for the industry.

What started as a plan to work for just a couple of years turned into an incredible 21-year tenure at Aitkens – a testament to his unwavering commitment.

Beyond his technical contributions, Colin's mentorship left a lasting impact on colleagues and clients alike.

His approachable nature and wealth of knowledge made him a trusted advisor to many in the industry.

Richard Aitken, managing director of

Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd, paid tribute to a highly valued member of the team who will be sorely missed as he settles into a well-deserved retirement.

“Colin has been a wonderful member of staff who has been a mentor, a trusted advisor and familiar face to countless customers and colleagues,” he said.

“His contributions have left an indelible mark on the industry, and his presence will undoubtedly be missed.

“As Colin steps into retirement, the entire Aitkens Sportsturf Ltd team, along with colleagues across the turfgrass sector, wish him all the best in this well-earned new chapter.” **GI**





The BIGGA Calendar
July: Joe Hague, Kedlestone Park

Bernhard Academy launches Turf Equipment Technicians Conference

The Bernhard Academy is hosting its first Turf Equipment Technicians Conference in September.

The dedicated one-day event is designed to support and celebrate the vital role of turf equipment technicians, equipment managers and professionals in greenkeeping and grounds maintenance.

Taking place on 23 September at the Bernhard Academy located within Bernhard and Company's manufacturing headquarters in Haverhill, this industry-focused conference is officially endorsed by the Turf Equipment Technicians Organisation (TETO) and aims to deliver specialist education and training tailored to the unique needs of turf equipment professionals.

"We're thrilled to see Bernhard

Academy acknowledge the critical contribution of equipment technicians," said the TETO leadership team. "This event underscores the value that skilled and educated team members bring to turf care. By endorsing this conference and encouraging our network of technicians to attend, we hope to establish this event as a regular fixture in the industry calendar."

Sami Strutt, education director at the Bernhard Academy, said: "This

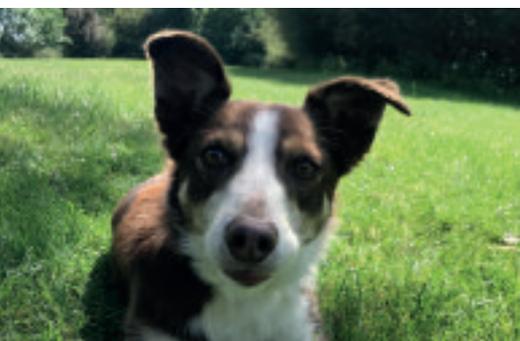
conference not only provides vital training but also presents invaluable networking and shared learning opportunities."

Steven Nixon, managing director at Bernhard and Company, added: "Skilled technicians are essential to delivering the elite-level surfaces expected in today's sports world. It's vital we continue attracting and training new talent to ensure the industry's long-term success." **GI**



Discounted booking

BIGGA members are eligible for a £50 discount. To claim your code, email hello@bernhardacademy.co.uk with your name and membership number.



A greenkeeper's best friend – Moss

Owner: Lee Cox

Course: Mill Hill Golf Club

Breed: Border Collie

Age: 9.5 years

Favourite treat: Running forever and ever

Favourite spot: Leaving the yard for a long walkies

My dog is happiest: When someone is throwing his toy banana



What's on this month

Dates for your diary

2 July

Course walk – Royal Portrush



Royal Portrush

10 July

BIGGA London Section Summer Golf Day – North Middlesex

15 July

Mid Anglia Summer Golf Fun Day – The Bedfordshire

30 July

D&C Summer Golf Day – Tehidy Park



Tehidy Park

31 July

South Coast Summer Golf Day – Remedy Oak

Save the date

25 November

Central Region Conference – Kings Norton



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



Bidding a fond farewell to retiring former BIGGA President Chris Sheehan



Former BIGGA President Chris Sheehan officially retired on 6 June, bringing an end to a long and distinguished career.

He served as President of the Association in 2019, succeeding Chris Kennedy, and is a BIGGA Life Member. Previously he worked as a cook and baker, then as a foreman in a food-canning factory. He also spent time in the Merchant Navy when he left school.

Chris started greenkeeping in 1980 and spent most of his career at West Derby, with 30 years as course manager, before working with Ian Kirwan at Widnes, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, and finally Bramhall in Stockport.

“Chris has been a true BIGGA man from more or less when he stepped off his Merchant Navy ship and walked into his first greenkeeping facility,” said CEO Jim Croxton.

“He’s spent an entire career wanting to help other greenkeepers, especially in times of need. He may not be the biggest, but he has a huge heart!”

“Being appointed President of BIGGA in 2019 was, I know, a hugely proud moment for him and he absolutely threw himself into it, representing the Association with great humility and enthusiasm throughout.

“I’ll never forget the look on his face when dozens of members of his close and extended family turned up at the AGM to see him appointed to the role. We had kept their attendance, at their request, a complete secret, and he was gobsmacked. A lovely moment.”

Chris was previously North West Section secretary, chairperson, and also chairperson of the Northern Region. After Bert Cross, a key figure in the region, died, Chris often stepped up to represent the region.

Head of Membership Scott Reeves added: “When I went to work in the North West, Chris was already a stalwart of the Section and within BIGGA generally. I got to know him as a volunteer culminating in us both serving on the National Board together.

“I have very fond memories of functions we attended together as President and Chairperson, and I found him to be one of the most fundamentally decent, warm and enthusiastic people I have met. I consider Chris to be a friend to both myself and BIGGA and I wish him all the very best in his well-deserved retirement.”

Chris placed huge value on sharing knowledge and providing a good grounding for his staff and was proud that four of his proteges went on to become head greenkeepers.

Now aged 71, he prefers fishing and spending time with his grandchildren Isaac, Megan and Jacob. Wife Shirley will also have a long list of jobs to keep him busy. **GI**



“He’s spent an entire career wanting to help other greenkeepers”

Conwy's funding boost for welfare facilities project



Conwy Golf Club has received a £20,000 cash boost from the Women's Golf Legacy Fund to upgrade its welfare unit, in a move designed to attract female greenkeepers.

The funding comes from a £1 million pot made available by the Welsh government, via Wales Golf, to improve facilities and opportunities for women and girls in particular.

The initiative was launched in readiness for this year's AIG Women's Open, which will be held at Royal Porthcawl and will constitute the largest women's sporting event to be played in Wales.

Conwy is now pressing ahead with a two-fold plan to enhance its offering, with General Manager Matt Parsley looking to add a female member to an eight-strong course maintenance team already producing exceptional playing surfaces.

"We actively want to try to recruit female greenkeepers, but we've not had the facilities where we could cater for them," he explained. "Part of this funding is going towards an upgrade to our greenkeepers' welfare unit to include female showers and female toilets.

"I think when you can see something you can be it, and we want women and girls to see people like them working within our greenkeeping team and know that's a thing they can do too."

The £100,000 project will also see the club build a new halfway house with facilities for men and women, with all work scheduled for completion by September.

Course Manager Marc Wilcock said the new welfare unit will accommodate up to 12 staff and provide a better working environment for the team, while also helping in the club's bid to bring in new recruits.

"The general manager and greens committee have supported improving the facilities within our compound and

it has always been a high priority for them," he said. "This included a new machinery unit to store and access our cutting machines and trucks. The machinery unit was built at the end of last year, which has made space for the welfare facility."

He added: "I would welcome anyone who wants to come and join the team, and having the new male and female facilities in place shows we are creating an inclusive environment, which I hope will improve our chances of employing a female greenkeeper in the future." **GI**



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From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- First Green education outreach programme heads to Newquay
- Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists announced



The BIGGA Membership Handbook is going digital

We are proud to announce that, starting this year, the BIGGA Membership Handbook will transition from a printed publication to a fully digital format.

This move reflects our commitment to greater sustainability and cost efficiency and is supported by feedback from members. By going digital, we significantly reduce our environmental footprint while also making better use of our resources – savings that will be reinvested in supporting BIGGA members.

The shift will also enable greater flexibility. Unlike the printed edition, the digital handbook can be updated instantly, ensuring all information remains current and relevant throughout the year. As a resource it will be more responsive and impactful.

As ever, the handbook will provide you with the opportunity to make the most of your membership; meet the BIGGA team working on your behalf, learn more about our wide range of initiatives and how to get involved, and read up on exclusive benefits.

Members can continue to access the handbook through the BIGGA website, ensuring easy and convenient availability. For those who may have questions or require assistance with the new format, please reach out to the membership team for support.

This transition aligns with BIGGA's broader strategy to embrace digital innovation and sustainability, providing valuable resources and support to our members in the most effective and environmentally responsible way possible. **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



A family affair for Newquay's Dan Kendle

Among the 60 primary school children attending Newquay Golf Club's First Green event was one face very familiar to Head Greenkeeper Dan Kendle.

His son was part of the year-six group that descended on his course for a hands-on learning experience and, much to Dan's relief, he described the day as "better than I thought it was going to be", which constitutes high praise.

It was a busy day all round at the Cornish club, with an education evening for the members also taking place, and that meant some extra helping hands at the various stations.

BIGGA's Scott Reeves, Marie Athorn from the RSPB, Stuart Barber from John Deere, and Liam Rowlands from ICL were among those in attendance,

helping the in-house team.

"We had all our John Deere fleet out and they loved the machinery," said Dan. "We had a station on tools like the hole moving kit and the stimpmeter, another on soils and fertilisers, and we had one where you could measure out areas on the practice fairway."

Although his team had been nervous beforehand, Dan was proud of how well they engaged with the children to deliver an action-packed and memorable day.

"Despite the nerves, none of them said, 'I'm not doing that'," he said. "They read through the lesson plans and made sure they were prepared. In the end they all stepped up to the plate and really enjoyed it."

As well as being wowed by the

machinery and enjoying a putting competition, the pupils were fascinated by Marie's talk about the wide variety of wildlife found on golf courses.

Each of the pupils wrote thank you letters, which made an impression on Dan and his team.

"It was quite touching," he said. "Many of them said they never realised how much work goes into a golf course and said how much they enjoyed the day."

"To see them all getting involved, having in some cases had no previous experience of golf or maybe even sport, was brilliant."

"If one child comes out of it thinking that a career in greenkeeping could be for them, then that's a win." **GI**



We know not everyone loves scrolling through lots of words (especially after a long day on the course!), so we've turned the First Green (STEM) Field Trip Toolkit into a series of easy-to-listen-to audio episodes!



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**





Support team selected for BMW PGA Championship

The 2025 BMW PGA Volunteer Support Team

Ian Briggs, Woodhall Spa
 Miles Burnett, Trump International
 Danny Carter, Golf at Goodwood
 James Thomas Edward Cornforth, Easingwold GC
 Brent Merrill Downs, Otter Creek GC
 Sam Ewing, Crane Valley GC
 Luke Fitzpatrick, The Buckinghamshire GC
 Darren Foster, The Belfry Hotel & Resort
 Matthew Kent, Surbiton GC
 Cameron Keith Lea, QPR FC
 Craig Littlejohn, Douglas Park GC
 Chris Low, Coventry Hearsall GC
 Cameron Levi Macken, JCB Golf & Country Club
 Shay McQueen, Romford GC
 Joe Robertson, The Renaissance
 Lucy Elizabeth Rogers, Kings Lynn GC
 Andrew Ritchie, St Andrews
 Stephen van Rhyn, Beaverbrook GC
 Craig Surgeon, Fairmont St Andrews
 Adam Stone, The Grove
 Liam Watson, Walton Heath GC

The BMW PGA Championship Volunteer Support Team has been named, with 21 BIGGA members set to join the Wentworth Club greenkeeping team in September.

Apprentices and course managers alike will enjoy a behind-the-scenes experience at one of the DP World Tour's flagship events in Surrey.

The volunteers will supplement the in-house greenkeeping team as they prepare the course for play each day.

The volunteers represent a range of golf courses across the UK and beyond, with Master Greenkeeper Brent Downs seizing the opportunity to come over from Otter Creek in America, where he serves as director of agronomy.

Also included among this year's team is Sam Ewing, whose first engagement with the initiative came seven years ago.

Sam, who is first assistant at Crane Valley, was also part of the delegation at TPC Sawgrass for The Players Championship in March and is relishing the prospect of another outstanding volunteering opportunity.

"I'm so grateful to get another amazing opportunity courtesy of BIGGA," he said. "I can't wait to be part of the team in September after doing it back in 2018 when it was held in May. I'm sure it'll be incredible."

"I'm looking forward to meeting new people and networking with them, possibly even bumping into faces I haven't seen in a while. Most of all, I hope to have fun."

"Once again, I'd like to say a huge thank you to BIGGA." **GI**



Sam Ewing

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Don't be your own harshest critic



Lucy Sellick, Director, South West and South Wales

As greenkeepers, we have a tendency to be overly critical of ourselves, but it's important to recognise the positives

“ We often focus on the imperfections ”



I'm 10 months into my role at Raglan, and what a journey it's been so far. When I first arrived, significant portions of the course had been untouched for six years and there was a huge amount of work to be done just to get the back half playable.

Now, we're approaching 450 members and have transformed a once dormant site into a thriving golf community. I keep saying that at some point we'll get a chance to stop and breathe as it's been pretty full-on, but even taking stock now, I'm proud of how far we've come.

I'll be the first to admit that greenkeepers are our own harshest critics. We often

focus on the imperfections – those thin fairway areas or patches that don't quite meet our exacting standards – instead of recognising the remarkable progress we've achieved.

This year, with extreme dry weather challenging courses nationwide, it's particularly important we acknowledge the incredible work happening on golf courses everywhere in difficult conditions.

Engaging with The R&A Leadership Programme was a pivotal moment for me, highlighting that modern greenkeeping extends far beyond agronomic skills.

Managing expectations, emotions and teams is now as critical as managing turf – a topic Sam Evans

explores further in this issue.

Learning to view feedback constructively, to take the time to measure your responses, and to understand emotional intelligence has been transformative for me. I wish I had acquired these skills earlier in my career.

I had the privilege of participating in regional interviews for Student Greenkeeper of the Year Awards, the finalists for which are revealed in this magazine. Watching these young professionals filled me with genuine optimism for our industry. Their enthusiasm, commitment, and desire to improve are truly inspiring.

These candidates aren't just demonstrating a high

level of technical skill; they're showing a passion for our industry that shines through, particularly in the number of volunteering opportunities they are all so keen to undertake. Volunteering is the lifeblood of our Association and the wider industry, and it's great to see the younger generation of greenkeepers are so eager to embrace it.

It is something of which former BIGGA President Chris Sheehan would be proud. We only briefly overlapped in our service on the board, but I know people like Chris embody everything that is good about our Association, and I can see others just starting their journey in this industry who share his values. **GI**



With
Jim Croxton, CEO

The Open: Advocating for greenkeepers on GB&I golf's biggest stage

The Open provides a platform for BIGGA to advocate for our members while showcasing their expertise, says CEO Jim Croxton

The Open represents a highlight in the golfing calendar and is one of a handful of events that transcends the sport itself. For over three decades, BIGGA members have been actively involved on the ground at the world's oldest major – and this year we're taking that to a new level.

The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme sees ten of you join the host greenkeeping teams across five top-tier tournaments this summer, including two who will be assisting at Royal Portrush. They will be fully embedded with course manager Graeme Beatt's team for nearly two weeks, contributing to course preparation, performance measurement and gaining unparalleled

insights into major championship management. Additionally, the other eight delegates will be able to attend

“We're showcasing the professionalism and expertise of our membership”

The Open and get an 'inside the ropes' view of the Agronomy team in action, gaining unrivalled educational and professional benefits.

By positioning our members at the heart of The Open, we are

demonstrating the critical role greenkeepers play in delivering world-class golf experiences.

For BIGGA as a whole, The Open provides a platform to advance our advocacy efforts and ensure we are at the centre of all the key conversations happening around the game of golf and the wider industry.

It is the premier gathering point for golf's governance and professional community across Great Britain and Ireland, offering us the opportunity to engage with the sport's key stakeholders.

We will be meeting with organisations including The R&A, the home nations' governing bodies, the PGA, the GCMA and many more as we continue to collaborate on industry initiatives.

Royal Portrush offers a special opportunity this year, with the tournament returning to Northern Ireland and providing a unique chance to connect with local members and the broader golf community.

For BIGGA, The Open is more than a tournament – it's a chance to put the profession of greenkeeping in the spotlight and champion the outstanding work our members do.

I'd like to wish the best of luck to all the host greenkeeping teams across our championship season. **GI**



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Meet the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year 2025 finalists

The final takes place from 9-11 September at Rudding Park in Harrogate.

The latest crop of Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists are all thrilled to have emerged from a fiercely competitive field to earn their shot at claiming a prestigious honour.

The process affords ambitious BIGGA members the opportunity to meet and compete with the best greenkeeping students in the UK for one of two sought-after titles.

The annual awards are committed to offering greenkeepers of all ages, backgrounds and experience levels a chance to excel.

Once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to further their careers and network with influential industry leaders await the winners of both the Student Greenkeeper of the Year and Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year honours.

The finalists will convene at Harrogate's Rudding Park from 9-11 September to compete in a series of challenges designed to test their technical knowledge and passion for the greenkeeping profession.

Winners will then be crowned across both categories, but all in attendance will gain invaluable rewards from the experience. **GI**

Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists:

Jamie Beattie, assistant greenkeeper, Royal Liverpool



"Greenkeeping is in my blood. My biggest inspiration is my grandad who retired at Royal County Down – he taught me many things before I even really understood what it was he was teaching. One thing I definitely knew was his hate for craneflies! My mum and dad are also in the greenkeeping industry, having first met at Myerscough College, where I am now studying for my Level 3 qualification."

Ruth Etches, assistant greenkeeper, Trentham



"It's a privilege and honour to be named one of the finalists. I like pushing myself out of my comfort zone, and love learning and meeting new people. I have a law degree and want to utilise my education to its fullest potential by driving the industry towards positive and sustainable growth. I love research so maybe that's a future avenue. For the time being I'm focusing on my greenkeeping and aiming to be the best I can be at it."

Oliver Pate, deputy head greenkeeper, Workson



"Being acknowledged for awards such as these makes all the hard work worth it and the feeling is one of enormous pride and satisfaction, especially after the disappointment of missing out last year. I like a bit of healthy competition, from who can cut the straightest lines at work to loser buys the after-round drinks, so challenging myself against the other outstanding candidates is what I'm looking forward to the most about the final."

Chris Szoradi, first assistant greenkeeper, Manchester



"I'm excited to have the opportunity to learn from other students and industry professionals, expanding my network and knowledge. I love greenkeeping because it's a career that allows you to work alongside nature and utilise new technologies. I also enjoy the satisfaction of seeing the results from your work, maintaining beautiful, playable sporting surfaces. My ambition in the industry is to become a top course manager at a prestigious golf course, working at the highest level and experiencing the pinnacle of greenkeeping."

Bradley Taylor, first assistant greenkeeper, Beau Desert



"The best piece of advice I've ever been given is, 'Do a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life'. No day is the same out on the course, I love the variety that comes with the job and working in nature. This industry is fantastic and the opportunities available are endless. I've been lucky to work on some of the best courses on the DP World Tour circuit and travel the world while doing it. I wish I'd have started younger, but I wouldn't change a thing."

Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year finalists:

Oliver Badger, apprentice greenkeeper, Parkstone



"I'm looking forward to meeting other likeminded people throughout both categories. I believe that networking is a very important thing in the industry so I will be looking to gain new connections and most definitely new knowledge. I aspire to create a name for myself and to work at many courses around the world through things like tournament support. Places like Augusta National, TPC Sawgrass and any Ryder Cup or Open venues are on my bucket list."

Andrew Semple, apprentice greenkeeper, Machrihanish Dunes



"Back in lockdown I had done some work on my Dad's farm which made me realise that I really enjoyed working outdoors. I also really love all things sports-related, so towards the end of my last year in school I put two and two together and applied for a greenkeeping apprenticeship and ended up loving the job. When I got the call to tell me I was a finalist for Young Student Greenkeeper of the Year, I couldn't believe it – I feel very privileged to be in this position."

Matthew Strutt Donnelly, apprentice greenkeeper, Stoneham



"I initially took up greenkeeping to get out of a rut. Having just left university, I was stuck for work and was undecided as to what I wanted to do. From there I was given the opportunity to join Stoneham Golf Club and I've been loving it ever since! I'd like to take advantage of the amazing number of opportunities to work and volunteer abroad that this great industry has to offer."

About the awards

The Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award was introduced in 1989, with the 'Young' category added in 2016.

Previous winners and finalists have gone on to become some of the most influential characters in the greenkeeping industry, helping shape the sport of golf in the UK and further afield.

The awards offer greenkeepers of all ages, backgrounds and experience levels a chance to excel, with winners afforded once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to further their career and network with influential industry leaders.

Welcome to our new members

Wentworth

Northern Ireland

Thomas Winter (APP)

Royal Belfast

Robert Stewart (APP)

Cushendall

Allan McBurney (APP)

Ulster University

Rody Kilbride (DHGK)

Foyle Int Golf Centre

Scotland

Lee Edwards (AGK)

Daniel Herdsman (GK)

Moffat

Alex Falconer (DHGK)

Westhill

Lindsay Skea (GK)

Royal Aberdeen

Greg Ritchie (GK)

Belleisle

Douglas Keith (GK)

Milngavie

David Mcclurg (GK)

Sandyhills

Alan Grant (GK)

Nairn Dunbar Golf Links

Josh Lindsay (GK)

The Duke's Course

John Docherty (GK)

Fairmont St Andrews

Neale Lees (G)

World Rugby

Northern

Leon Heppell (APP)

Cookridge Hall

Rob Britton (AGK)

Pryors Hayes

Steve Green (AGK)

Burgham Park

Matthew Horton (DHGK)

Crewe

James Baxter (GK)

Ribby Hall Village

Jordan Wilcock (GK)

Baxenden & District

Nicholas Tomlinson (GK)

Great Harwood

Luis Sollitt (GK)

York

Paul Wilkin (G)

Tyneside

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

Ryan Dixon (RP)
RPD Rural Training & Consultancy

 **Central**

Bobby Brittan (APP)
Emyr Court (AGK)
Jamie Fletcher (GK)
The Belfry

Stuart Hill (AGK)
Tony Parton (AGK)
Wrekin

Darren Fretwell (AGK)
Horsley Lodge

Lyall Burkin (AGK)
Goring & Streatley

Jonjo Ashbrook (AGK)
Callum Jackson (AGK)
Hill Valley

Scott Bowyer (AGK)
Mike Czepak (AGK)
Kyle Rochford (AGK)
Wentworth Club

Jacob Rodgers (AGK)
JCB G&CC

Josh Beck (AGK)
Abbey View

Cameron Mackay (GK)
Mowsbury

Kyle Paige (HGK)
Blaby

Ian Benison (Tutor)
Train Together

 **South East**

Ashley Hatch (APP)
St Ives

Joel Weller (APP)
Get Golfing

Reece Burgess (APP)
Jacobsen

Samuel Dover (APP)
Highgate

Roan Keane (APP)
Mid Kent

Peter Stratford (AGK)
Royal Ashdown Forest

Ryan Wake (AGK)
Wisley

Phoebe Baker (AGK)
Thomas Owen (GK)
Wentworth Club

Tim Shaikly (AGK)
Lexden Wood

Barry Easton (GK)
Chipstead

Stephen Hayes (HGK)
Ifield

Peter Dawson (Tutor)
BCA (Windsor Forest)
Colleges Group

 **South West & South Wales**

Jonathan Mitchell (AGK)
Clyne

David Latham (AGK)
Meyrick Park

Alistair Shields (AGK)
Parkstone

Leon Clark (AGK)
Alun Howells (AGK)
Greenmeadow

Sam Wheatley (AGK)
Neil Williams (GK)
Minchinhampton

Toby Clark (AGK)
Royal Jersey

Archie Woodland (AGK)
Kendleshire

Gethin Smith (AGK)
Tenby

Connor Picken (CM)
Sam Day (HGK)
Highcliffe Castle

Mark Cox (GK)
Richard Webb (GK)
Whitchurch

Jowan Waller (GK)
Falmouth



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

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Simon Ashford, Rhyl

Andrew Sellars, The Grove

Roger Barrett, Aldwark Manor

James Lindsay, Stirling

Marcus Davies, Royal

Jamie Searby, Askham Bryan

Toby Long, Broadstone

Ryan Yuill, North Berwick

Jake Beech, Newcastle under Lyme

Jack Hall, Kilworth Springs



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Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- Hockley discusses managing a course in a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Carlisle's Kevin Irving steps up to the role of course manager after 20 years



Members' agronomy facility tour showcases Ganton's greenkeeping expertise

Ganton's members were treated to an eye-opening tour of the club's agronomy facilities in a move Course Manager Simon Olver believes will foster a greater understanding of the level of expertise involved in greenkeeping.

After a fire destroyed the old sheds in 2018, new facilities, including a workshop and welfare provision, were developed and completed in 2022.

The recent tour was the first time members had been formally invited to view the complex.

"It was an opportunity for us to bolster people's understanding of what we do," said Simon.

"They could see the level we're working at and what the money had allowed us to build, which is

an immaculately maintained facility. Doing this helps us to get buy-in and show members that their greenkeeping team are experts in what they do."

Simon and team member, Sam Hughes, delivered presentations and answered questions, to around 30 members, who were "amazed" at the extent of data collection and detail involved in maintaining a golf course.

"The feedback we had is that people hadn't expected the level of professionalism that we were working to, and I would say that's the case at a lot of clubs," added Simon.

"It's about building awareness of what members are getting for their money and the standards to which their greenkeeping teams are working,

which they can then see on the golf course."

Simon is now organising a visit for the board and intends to host more tours for members in the summer.

It is an approach he encourages other clubs to take, even if they are not blessed with the same standard of facilities.

"You could host a tour to show why your facilities need development," he said. "People need to see what conditions you're working in to be able to understand why there is a need for improvement.

"Whatever size of team you have and whatever facilities you have, there is no excuse for not looking after them and taking pride in your working environment." **GI**

A delicate balancing act



Career Timeline

2007-2009

The Wisley (trainee – assistant)

2009-2012

Foxhills (first assistant greenkeeper)

2012-2014

Laleham (deputy course manager)

2017-2018

Royal Ascot (assistant greenkeeper)

2018-2020 Wentworth

(assistant greenkeeper – deputy head greenkeeper)

2020-2021

Royal Cinque Ports (assistant greenkeeper – senior greenkeeper)

2021-2021

Poult Wood (head greenkeeper)

2021-2023

Gatton Manor (head greenkeeper)

2023-present

Isle of Purbeck (head greenkeeper)

Having fallen in love with the spectacular Dorset venue after one visit, Isle of Purbeck's head greenkeeper John Hockley is now harnessing that passion to unlock its full potential

John Hockley manages a landscape at Isle of Purbeck where every grain of sand requires approval and ecological preservation is paramount, but it's a challenge he welcomes.

Balancing the needs of golfers with the complex demands of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the head greenkeeper is overseeing a transformation of this rugged heathland 27-hole layout while showcasing a blueprint for sustainable management.

The SSSI covers seven holes and the Dorset club works closely with the National Trust, Natural England and the RSPB on a site that affords breathtaking views, particularly from an elevated 5th tee that provides an unrivalled panorama.

Having enjoyed a glowing reputation for many years, a prolonged spell of underinvestment saw the club's grandeur fade before new owners arrived in 2015 in the shape of Californian duo David Suruki and Kathy Tatar.

That fresh impetus provided the catalyst for re-establishing Isle of Purbeck as a top-100 mainstay, an effort that has ramped up since John – who quickly recognised the venue's potential – took the helm in 2023.

"It's a site that I had played the year before during a golf day hosted by golf architect Tim Lobb, who was doing some work with the club," he explained. "The job became available within about six months of that visit, and it was a site that I fell in love with when I played it. It's quite a natural, rugged site with ridiculous amounts of potential, so the role appealed to me."

There were only two full-time members of staff when John arrived in March of that year, supported by four part-timers. That number has since grown to six full-time members, lending the team a renewed sense of purpose as they develop a five-year plan that promises to propel the course to new heights while cementing an ecological legacy of which John is understandably proud.

"The natural ruggedness of the site lends itself to an aesthetic you wouldn't want to take away, with seven holes in the SSSI and the surrounding land owned by the National Trust, the landscape being predominantly heathland," he said.

"The long-term objectives are to remove invasive species of gorse and trees, and to establish heather in the areas that have been exposed again. Over the last three winters, the club has utilised access to a countryside stewardship scheme to remove 14 hectares of gorse and reduce the volume of trees across the site."

Those objectives, allied to John's desire to present playing conditions that can meet growing expectations, are being delivered against the backdrop of significant restrictions, given the protected status of a large swathe of the course

Transitioning grass species

"We sow a rye-fescue mix on fairways, tees, and approaches. I believe fescues are right for the site, even though agronomically they struggle because – though people may assume otherwise – we're not actually a sand-based course. On the greens, we're taking a traditional heathland approach by overseeding heavily with brown top bents. Historically, they've overseeded with fescue, but after about 20 years of inconsistent overseeding – likely due to budget restrictions or limited feeding – fescue isn't the dominant species. Now is the right time to transition to stronger bent grass cultivars. We'll gradually introduce bent grass over the next 3-4 years, using practices like verti-cutting, light top-dressing, and careful seeding to help these new grass types establish."



Sward Isle of Purbeck Golf Club

and the impressive biodiversity of the land on which it is situated.

"I have to work within certain limitations because standard cultural practices could have a detrimental impact on the surrounding ecology," said John. "We can only feed greens, tees and approaches – and 'approaches' is a loose term, really. We can only feed up to about 50 yards from the greens. Our irrigation system only functions on tees and greens.

"Over the last two years, we've been reducing nitrogen input, which can be challenging because we have a high poa content. Poa requires quite a high nitrogen input compared to fescues and bents. We're now down to about 100 units of nitrogen across green surfaces for the entire season.

"I can't have any chemical input on fairways or roughs at all. We're not allowed to apply nitrogen to these areas, and we have to be very specific about the sources of nitrogen we use. We can't just have a blanket approach like, 'The fairways are struggling, so we'll throw some fertiliser down'. Even the smallest trace element input isn't permitted."

Balancing environmental considerations with the goal of delivering exceptional playing surfaces is the crux of the challenge at Isle of Purbeck, and it's one that informs practically all of John's decisions.

"We're trying to be sustainable in our management, but we're also having to heavily invest in overseeding," he said. "We're trying to get strong cultivars of grass back into the playing surfaces so they can withstand long periods of drought like we've experienced this year, or be able to survive extended periods of flooding or of soil saturation.

"Everything we do requires approval – every grain of sand, every stone for drainage, every path topping. We're currently developing a comprehensive five-year course management plan, which is about 55 pages detailing our long-term strategies.

"I see these restrictions not as problems, but as challenges. I enjoy finding solutions, even though it can be frustrating

“It was a site that I fell in love with when I played it. It's quite a natural, rugged site with ridiculous amounts of potential, so the role appealed to me”

and things don't move quickly. The goal is to work within these constraints while continually improving the course."

An investment in much-needed new equipment is helping to achieve that aim, enabling John to fine-tune his approach as he continues to oversee incremental improvements.

"It has allowed us to dyno-core two or three times a year, which helps us dilute the thatch in top 25mm and then we drop seed at the same time," John explained. "With the new verticutters we verticut and light topdress every two weeks, and we do that at 1mm below the surface to avoid disturbing the seed bed.

"The major issue remains moisture retention, especially during periods like we're experiencing now. It's a constant challenge to maintain surface quality while managing these delicate transitions."

When it comes to the day-to-day reality of delivering consistent course quality on a sensitive and ecologically significant site, John is clear about the biggest challenge facing any modern greenkeeper – and it goes well beyond agronomy.

"Managing expectations in greenkeeping is always the most difficult challenge," he said. "The real question is: whose expectations are hardest to manage – the owners, members, visiting golfers or your own?"

"As a greenkeeper, I see myself as a custodian of the land I'm lucky enough to manage. Success here isn't about immediate perfection but about making marginal gains year on year while minimising the impact on the surrounding environment.



5th Isle of Purbeck Golf Club



Meet the team

- Joe Lamb – Deputy Head Greenkeeper (2 years)
- Andy Gale – Assistant Greenkeeper (16 years)
- Sam Hill – Assistant Greenkeeper (10 years)
- Sam Wells – Apprentice Greenkeeper (1 year)
- Jamie Costello – Apprentice Greenkeeper (1 year)

“The key is striking a balance between the long-term objectives of the golf course and the objectives of the various trusts and bodies we work with. It’s an interesting dialogue.”

As he reflects on the progress made and the work still to be done, John harbors a tremendous sense of satisfaction at the way he and his team are managing to strike that balance.

“I take great pride in what my team of six produce across 27 holes within the restrictions we have,” he concluded. “There isn’t an endless amount of money for us to go and resolve all the long-term issues that have been here for a lack of investment prior to this ownership, but I take great pride in what we produce and the manner in which we do it, and we’re making the golf course better year on year, while ensuring the ecology that lives around us is able to thrive.” **GI**

Mental health

“Being a head greenkeeper can feel like quite a lonely place. You’re constantly having to manage upwards, manage your team and manage membership expectations. It can be an isolating role, and I would like to raise awareness of mental health. To any greenkeepers at any level who are struggling – personally or professionally – I encourage you to utilise the support that BIGGA can provide. Don’t let yourself feel burdened or think that you would be a burden by speaking out about how you’re feeling. I have friends, both in the industry and in other sectors that have struggled in recent years and I wanted to take this opportunity to promote the resources that are available”





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

Kings Hill Golf Club, Kent



Main Duties:

Day-to-day management of the greenkeeping department. Maintain, improve and enhance the course conditions to the highest standard.

Motivate and lead the team. Manages costs within budgets.

Essential qualifications/experience:

Minimum 5 years greenkeeping management PA1, PA2, PA6, NVQ Level 3 or equivalent
Chainsaw licence

Desirable qualifications/experience:

Project, irrigation, woodland management
Digger licence. Basic mechanics
Currently a Course Manager or senior greenkeeping position

Applications in writing, stating current salary, including CV and covering letter to: manager@kingshillgolf.co.uk

Please note, unsuccessful applicants will not be contacted.

Deputy Head Greenkeeper

Oakmere Golf Club, Nottinghamshire



Oakmere Golf Club are seeking a Deputy Head Greenkeeper to help elevate the club's exceptional standards.

Key responsibilities: Support and deputise for the Head Greenkeeper in all course management operations; maintain the golf courses to a high standard; help drive new projects

Candidate requirements: NVQ Level 2 or higher in Greenkeeping; minimum 3 years' experience; PA1, PA2, PA6a spraying certificates and Chainsaw licence preferred.

You'll Need To Be: A motivated team player; dependable; flexible with working hours; eager to grow professionally

We Offer: Training & development; full uniform; 28 days annual leave; company pension scheme; BIGGA membership.

Salary: Circa £35,000, full-time, 40hrs/week + weekend rota
To Apply: please email your CV and covering letter to Jamie Jarvis, Director of Golf: enquiries@oakmerepark.co.uk

Experienced Greenkeeper

Pannal Golf Club, North Yorkshire



An exceptional opportunity has arisen at Pannal Golf Club, a Championship parkland course near Harrogate

The candidate will: Have a high standard of greenkeeping skills and extensive knowledge of course maintenance; be able to work unsupervised and within a team; be self-motivated and enthusiastic; communicate effectively; have a flexible approach.

Ideal candidate will possess: NVQ Level 2 or equivalent; 3 years greenkeeping experience; ideally PA1,2,6 spraying certificates; knowledge of irrigation systems; understanding of golf.

An advantage, but not essential: NVQ Level 3 Greenkeeping; Chainsaw certificates; mechanical skills.

Salary circa £28-30k. **Benefits include:** Full training and development support; pension contribution; 5 weeks holiday; BIGGA Membership; uniform; discounted staff meals.

To apply, please send your CV to Neil Horton, Golf Course Manager: neil@pannalgc.co.uk by Friday 11th July 2025.

Greenkeeper

Sleaford Golf Club, Lincolnshire



Sleaford Golf Club are seeking a dedicated greenkeeping professional to help us achieve our goal of becoming an outstanding course for golfers of all levels.

Our ideal candidate will possess: NVQ Level 2 or equivalent in greenkeeping and sports turf management or at least 2 years' practical experience; PA1, PA2 and PA6 spraying certification and qualified CS30 & CS31. chainsaw operator (or willing to gain the qualifications); consistently high standards; knowledge of modern greenkeeping practices; practical experience of turf maintenance machinery; knowledge of health & safety; flexibility and willingness to work outside regular working hours.

Benefits: Competitive salary; company pension; career development; BIGGA membership; membership of the club; a relaxed, dynamic, supportive working environment

Please apply via email to manager@sleafordgolfclub.co.uk with a covering letter stating your suitability for the role.

Assistant Greenkeeper

Waterton Park Golf Club, West Yorkshire



Waterton Park Golf Club near Wakefield. is an 18-hole championship course with extensive practice facilities.

The ideal candidate will have: A strong work ethic; flexibility for early starts/weekends; an understanding of greenkeeping practices; experience in fertiliser and chemical applications; competency in operating and maintaining turf machinery.

Essential requirements: Proven experience; NVQ Level 2 (or equivalent) in Sports Turf Maintenance; full UK driving licence.

Desirable (but not essential) qualifications: Chainsaw certificates; knowledge of irrigation systems; Spraying certificates: PA1, PA2 and PA6.

Benefits: Competitive salary (DOE); company pension; ongoing training opportunities. This is a full-time, permanent role.

To apply: Please send CV and cover letter to: info@watertonparkgc.co.uk

Head Greenkeeper

Wirral Golf Club, Merseyside



Wirral Golf Club, a historic members' club with a characterful heathland course on the Wirral Peninsula, is seeking a dynamic and experienced Head Greenkeeper.

We're looking for a hands-on leader with a passion for course presentation, team development, and long-term planning. The ideal candidate will hold relevant turf management qualifications, have strong agronomic knowledge, and take pride in delivering exceptional playing conditions year-round.

This is a fantastic opportunity to shape the future of a much-loved course with full support from the Club and Greens Committee.

Apply now with CV and cover letter to office@wirralgolfclub.com

My New Job



Kevin Irving

Kevin Irving is set to become only the fifth course manager in the history of Carlisle Golf Club



“The team are all supportive and happy that I got the job”

After two decades at Carlisle Golf Club, Kevin Irving is now relishing the prospect of stepping up to the role of course manager.

The Cumbrian venue will formally wave goodbye to the retiring Anthony Naisbitt in October, with the current incumbent overseeing a transition period in the meantime.

Kevin is eager to tap into Anthony's wisdom as he prepares to take sole charge later this year.

Tell us about your career journey and your new role

I previously worked at Brampton from 1998 to 2005 and was deputy there before coming to Carlisle as an assistant. It was a step down in position but a step forward for my career as it's the bigger club in the area and I also wanted to learn from Anthony. I've been here 20 years now and am delighted to be stepping up to become course manager.

What was the process like?

There were 18 applications for the role, including from overseas. It was whittled down to six, and then I went through a two-hour interview with the greens committee, followed by a course walk.

They used a matrix scoring system for the candidates and I came out on top. It was quite a long process, but I was pretty confident.

What are some of the new skills you'll need to demonstrate?

Anthony is showing me about budgets and some of the office-based tasks I'm less familiar with. He'll be guiding me through board meetings and greens meetings. He's said he'll always be available if I need advice, which is really helpful.

What are your main goals?

I want to push the golf course into the top 100. I'm planning to create a woodland management plan to address our tree maintenance. The team here will be crucial to achieving our goals. We have experienced staff and with their support, we can build on the great work that's already been done here.

How will the team find it with you being the boss?

It'll be strange to start with, but the team are all supportive and happy that I got the job. We might have disagreements, but we're mature enough to work through them.

Any tips for someone going for a job interview?

Relax. Trust yourself. Don't try to be someone you're not. Be open about what you're good at and what you're not. In my interview, I was honest about my limitations in office work, but showed I was eager to learn. Do plenty of research. Most importantly, be honest and confident in your abilities. **GI**



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With tournaments and high visitor numbers, Course Manager Jason Brooks and his team are fine-tuning in July



What we do in...
July

Club: Stover, Devon

As this month is the prime time for tournaments and visitors, our focus is on maintaining the playing surfaces at their peak and keeping on top of our cutting regime to present the course at its best.

We will steer clear of doing anything too disruptive and just seek to keep things ticking along, having managed to get the course into excellent condition despite the challenges of this year's dry weather.

Ensuring optimum turf health throughout this month will set us up for our maintenance work at the start of August, allowing our greens to recover quickly after aeration and renovation.

As ever, the most unpredictable element is the weather. We're constantly adapting to whatever Mother Nature throws our way, whether it's potential drought conditions or unexpected rainfall.

We've been fortunate to have some welcome rain after an incredibly dry period, which has helped us manage the course more effectively. We're looking to undertake some drainage work if conditions permit, always



mindful of not inconveniencing our members or visitors.

We've been proactive in managing drought stress by using techniques like spiking to improve water infiltration, applying wetting agents and adjusting our mowing practices.

When possible, we've increased rolling to maintain green speeds without stressing the grass. This approach allows us to keep the course in good condition while protecting the turf.

Throwing the traditional diary out the window, we did our spring aeration work in January and February; it

positioned us well, unlike some courses who did that work a little later and consequently struggled with recovery due to the cold, dry spring.

Towards the end of the month we'll be gearing up to host the County Finals day in early August and, while course set-up and presentation will be up to the same high standards our members expect, we may look to add a little more speed to the greens.

Although there is an extent to which July is about routine and repetition, it is nice to have that opportunity just to fine-tune things and enjoy seeing the course in prime condition. **GI**

“We've been proactive in managing drought stress”



Manage moisture to hit rising leatherjackets



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Managing soil moisture during leatherjacket control programmes can help achieve optimum control of damaging larvae populations.

Leatherjacket larvae are most active in moist soils, where they can be effectively targeted for control. If soil conditions are too dry, they will move down and only return to the surface to feed. That could limit the amount of time they come into contact with an Acelepryn insecticide treatment or applied NemaTrident F

beneficial nematodes.

Research compiling years of data recorded by Syngenta Pest Tracker monitoring of adult crane fly activity - signifying egg laying that will result in leatherjacket larvae - consistently indicates the optimum timing for Acelepryn application on or around the 20th October each year, followed

by the NemaTrident F application within the next seven days.

Where practical for course management, ideally, soil moisture should be around 20% for Acelepryn application, increasing to 30% at the time of a nematode application - then held at 25%+ for a week to 10 days if possible to maximise activity. Wetting agent

combination enhances the consistency and reliability of leatherjacket control. The inclusion of NemaSpreader with the NemaTrident F application is beneficial to prolong nematode survival and activity as they move in search of leatherjackets to infect.

Best use guidelines

Best use practice guidelines for treatments advocate mowing prior to application, to limit product spray retention on the leaf. Spray water volume should ideally be at 1000 l/ha, applied through 08 XC Soil Nozzles, with coarse water droplets helping to move as much product as possible to the soil surface. When applying nematodes the larger orifice 08 nozzles are essential to minimise risk of damage during application.

Application with a forecast of light rain or heavy dew to wet the leaf surface is also preferable, or to irrigate as soon as possible after treatment.

Syngenta research by the STRI has shown that aeration practices can also affect the efficacy of controls. Punching hollow-tine holes through the surface provides channels for leatherjackets to move up to the surface to feed at night, and return deeper in the profile

by day without coming into contact with the treatments. Results showed leatherjacket numbers were controlled two to three times better where no aeration took place, compared to hollow-tine; with a less aggressive slit tine having a lesser negative effect.

The implication is that, where practicable with maintenance schedules, major aeration works should be undertaken outside of the leatherjacket control window – especially on areas where larvae control is a priority.

Leatherjackets tend to target the same areas of turf repeatedly. That's because the conditions in some areas particularly favour their life cycle, and the pests are relatively mobile – so

they will often recolonise areas that may have previously been successfully treated. Larvae will readily migrate from areas of longer grass in surroundings or out of play areas where eggs may have been laid, onto irrigated greens and attracted by moist soils.

The importance of soil moisture will, in part, dictate the leatherjacket strategy and timing for different areas of the golf course or sports facility. It will largely depend on irrigation availability – both the infrastructure and water resources later in the season – and how that fits with playability schedules for maintaining elevated soil moisture.

Changing weather patterns have made managing treatment programmes more difficult to coincide with wetter periods on areas without irrigation, particularly in extended dry periods of later summer and early autumn. In most seasons, nematodes are not a viable option on unirrigated surfaces.

However, waiting for seasonal rains later in the autumn could compromise nematode activity with falling soil temperatures, which should be consistently above 8°C for nematodes to work efficiently.

On courses with a very low threshold for damage, or where heavy infestations have previously caused severe losses, it can be a sensible approach to bolster the Acelepryn treatment with a sequence of nematodes, to enhance overall control rates and consistency.

Alongside physical controls of leatherjacket larvae Syngenta turf health programmes, including novel targeted biostimulants, PGRs, wetting agents and pigments designed to enhance rooting and vigour, will help to make plants more resilient to pest damage, as well as to recover faster.

Proven pack

Syngenta leatherjacket research in a high-pressure situation, with 100 larvae per m² in the untreated turf areas, showed 89% control from Acelepryn alone, compared to a 65% reduction in larvae population where

NemaTrident F plus NemaSpreader was used. However, where the two components were used in sequence the trial resulted in complete larvae control.

Optimise your leatherjacket strategy

- Identify priority areas for control programmes
- Decide treatment options for different areas
- Plan ahead ready for 20th October target date
- Calculate irrigation schedules around rainfall events
- Prepare with an ITM turf health programme



Author: Sean Loakes, Syngenta Technical Manager UK & Ireland

programmes could provide a valuable aid in maintaining moisture in the target root zone.

The aim is to have the maximum number of leatherjackets active in the upper soil zone when the concentration of Acelepryn is at its greatest and nematode numbers at their highest.

Based on the trials research, the

“An integrated strategy can increase the reliability of leatherjacket control”



Follow the conversation

'Wildlife has always been a passion of mine'

Daniel Evans and his team are doing work that his idol David Attenborough would be proud of.



At the start of 2025, Llandudno Golf Club Maesdu became the first club in North Wales to gain GEO Certification, following that achievement with the Sustainability Project of the Year at the Wales Golf Awards.

The double success is fitting recognition of the tremendous work being done by Head Greenkeeper Daniel Evans, who has been at the club 16 years and heads a six-strong team at

the picturesque coastal course, which provides a scenic blend of parkland and links-style golf.

The club's bid for recognition from the GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf was spearheaded by Daniel's team alongside club member Ian Peters and a dedicated group of volunteers.

Working alongside the North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT), there has been a concerted effort to bolster biodiversity across the 46 hectares the course

covers. Of those, 7.5 hectares remains naturalised, consisting of woodland, bracken and gorse, while six ponds occupy 0.5 hectares.

The NWWT produced a Habitat Management Advice report for the club and its recommendations have been acted upon, including mapping out the various vegetation types found on the site. A walkaround survey conducted last year recorded 131 different flora and fauna.

GEO Certified Report highlights

- Long grass areas are maintained as small perennial meadows by adding a diverse mix of seeds to enhance plant diversity.
- A strong tree management programme involves planting various tree species, creating unmown woodland copses, and thinning wooded areas to support wildlife and boost biodiversity.
- Bracken areas are enhanced by increasing habitat diversity through scattered tree planting and grassland integration, strengthening the ecosystem and supporting wildlife.
- Ponds are managed to ensure a range of microhabitats, from open water to established emergent plants.
- Considerations in the planting of hedgerows in some areas.
- The installation of several bird boxes.





“It’s part of my job to educate the members by letting them know what we’re doing and why we’re doing it”

The club also participated in a woodland trust scheme in 2023, nurturing several native tree saplings in its nursery to be planted in suitable areas.

Eco-rough is being encouraged by transitioning some areas away from being managed turfgrass, while the

GEO Foundation report praised the fact that some bunker edges are left as natural and some are being converted to grass to support wildlife further.

They are all measures that appeal to Daniel’s sense of responsibility as a steward of the land.

“Wildlife has always been a passion of mine – I’m a big fan

of David Attenborough,” he said. “I like the way golf courses can be used for the greater good of the environment, beyond just being somewhere to play golf.

“That approach has become more common over the past 5-10 years, and it’s informed a lot of the work we’ve been doing, which started with looking at how we could enhance rough and out-of-play areas around the course.

“We thinned them out and planted wildflowers and enjoyed huge success with that, with lots of positive feedback from members, and we’ve gone on from there.”

The installation of bird boxes, bat boxes, bug houses and nesting areas on ponds has given rise to a substantial increase in winged visitors and other creatures of all shapes and sizes, while the help of one club member has yielded some tangible – and delectable – results.

“We have a member who is a beekeeper, so we have beehives on the course,” Daniel explained. “That’s been a great success and we sell the honey in the clubhouse.”

When it comes to managing the playing surfaces, the team uses

A 2024 site survey found...

- 78 plant species
- 32 bird species
- 10 invertebrates
- 7 mammals
- 2 amphibians
- 2 types of fungi



organic fertilisers and biostimulants to sustain optimal nutrient levels in the soil, with daily inspections taking place to identify any pest, disease or weed issues.

"It's about managing the surfaces more organically," said Daniel. "A lot of chemicals are being taken off the shelf and that's something I agree with, given my passion for wildlife.

"It does change the way you have to manage the course but it's about using your knowledge and implementing your cultivar methods to keep the plant healthy and maintain quality surfaces."

The greens, tees, fairways and maintained rough areas benefit from a variety of cool-season turfgrass species, with a mix of fescues, browntop bent, annual meadow grass and ryegrass ensuring excellent playing surfaces while also being best suited to the climate and soil conditions.

A transition from annual meadow grass to finer grass species on the greens is part of the plan to better withstand the changing climate, with top-seeding taking place throughout the growing season, alongside regular testing and monitoring.

Daniel underlined the need to maintain open lines of communication with members to ensure they understand his team's approach to managing the course.

**“I like the way
golf courses
can be used for the
greater good of the
environment”**

"It's part of my job to educate the members by letting them know what we're doing and why we're doing it," he said.

"We can't just cut greens down to 3mm and put loads of water on because that would go against our eco-friendly approach."

In fact, responsible water management is another area in which the club has excelled. In 2023, Maesdu secured a £24,000 grant from Sport Wales to fund a project aimed at reducing its mains water consumption, installing a

2,000-litre bowser filled via the ponds, and drilling a borehole that provides 20,000 litres a day.

The cost savings and drastically improved efficiency in water usage are results of which Daniel is hugely proud, even if the early omens did not bode well.

"It was a case of third time lucky with the borehole," he explained. "Dragon Drilling drilled their first hole 120 meters down and just didn't find anything. They were surprised, and we were surprised ourselves.

"Second time, probably about 20 meters away, we tried again a good 100 metres down, and still nothing.

"I was very passionate about this and we had a meeting where I pushed for us to try another drill, and third time lucky – having moved the location about 100 metres away and drilled to around 140 metres – we struck gold.

"We're saving a huge amount on our water bill compared to five years ago, when we were fully reliant on mains water."

As well as continuing to identify rough areas for targeted management, an ongoing review of the bunkers is high on the agenda for Daniel and his team.

"We filled in quite a few, but we're reviewing the rest as there are some that just aren't getting used," he said. "It's labour intensive to maintain them and the cost and availability of sand is also a factor.

"We'll go round every bunker and identify the ones we don't need and either convert them to grass or include some other feature without changing the playing characteristics of the course too much."

It is another step in an ongoing journey that Daniel hopes will create an enduring legacy at Maesdu, with the awards and accolades that have recently come the club's way a reminder that there is recognition for a job well done.

"It is nice to get awards and recognition, and to get positive feedback from members," he said. "It means the world when you work hard, produce results and people recognise you for it.

"As a team we're proud of the work we're doing, and I know it makes the members proud to be part of Maesdu." **GI**



"Llandudno Golf Club Maesdu is passionately advancing its sustainability efforts by protecting habitats for biodiversity, progressing sustainable turfgrass management, and reducing resource and material demands. With a commitment to responsible sourcing and fostering mental health and well-being in the community, their inspiring initiatives include beehives, a portable water bowser for irrigation, bird boxes, bug hotels, wildflower areas, tree nursery and solar panels. Furthermore, LGC has generously donated land for a community cycle track and provides vital support to charities like Blind Veterans UK and Ty Gobiath, which delivers hospice care for children with cancer. LGC's initiatives reflect a strong and commendable commitment to sustainability and community support, promoting a healthier environment for all."

- Dino Minoli (GEO accredited independent verifier)



10 tips for dealing with modern stresses in golf course management



North Hants' Sam Evans provides tips, tricks and strategies for course managers in a role that continues to evolve in both its scope and complexity

Modern golf course management is far more complex than simply maintaining playing surfaces. With 80% of a turf manager's role now focused on people management rather than technical agronomy, professionals face unprecedented psychological pressures.

Course managers are simultaneously

expected to be technical experts, team leaders, community representatives and problem-solvers. They juggle multiple responsibilities: managing staff, responding to member expectations, communicating with club boards, handling equipment challenges and maintaining course quality – often

before most people have started their working day.

These multifaceted demands create significant mental health challenges. Many turf professionals become overwhelmed, prioritising work over personal well-being, potentially damaging relationships and personal satisfaction.

The industry's passionate nature means managers frequently blur lines between career and calling, leading to burnout. Social media and industry reputation add extra layers of stress. Professionals feel constant pressure to present a perfect image, manage external perceptions and prove their competence. This can lead to imposter syndrome, anxiety and a reluctance to show vulnerability.

I have first-hand experience of this and, though I cannot claim to have always handled things the right way, I have developed strategies that have helped me grow both personally and professionally.

Here, I hope to help others do the same by sharing some of those tips – because I believe they can work for you too.

1. Awareness

The most important thing is simply being aware. Recognise the challenges before they overwhelm you. Throughout my journey, I have found awareness to be critical in managing both professional and personal pressures.

2. Support network

Remember the network around you. I've been guilty of pushing people away, thinking I knew best. Our industry is full of incredible people who genuinely want to help. Don't be afraid to reach out. Whether it's a colleague, a mentor or a friend, there's always someone willing to listen.

3. Perspective and communication

Life is about perspective. Communication is key – upwards, downwards, sideways. Be honest and approach conversations with humility. When dealing with staff, members, or management, remember that everyone has their own story, their own challenges.

4. Self-reflection

We don't do this enough. Give yourself time to reflect. After a conversation, a challenging day or a difficult interaction, take a moment to consider:

- How did I handle that?
- What could I have done differently?
- What can I learn from this?

Then draw a line and move on. Learn from it, but don't dwell on it.

5. Boundaries and expectations

Set clear boundaries. Whether it's with your general manager, board members or staff, be clear about:

- What you can realistically achieve
- Your working hours
- Your personal limits

Don't be afraid to say no. Protect your mental space.

6. Tackle issues head-on

We're all guilty of avoidance and procrastination. That difficult conversation? The challenging staff member? The member complaint? Address the 'elephant in the room' quickly and professionally.

7. Mental health support

Don't be afraid to seek help. I underwent therapy and it's one of the best things I did. It's not a sign of weakness – it's a sign of strength and self-awareness.

8. Treat yourself like your turf

We nurture our greens with precise care – give yourself the same attention. Recognise when you need:

- Rest
- Nutrition
- Professional support
- Time out

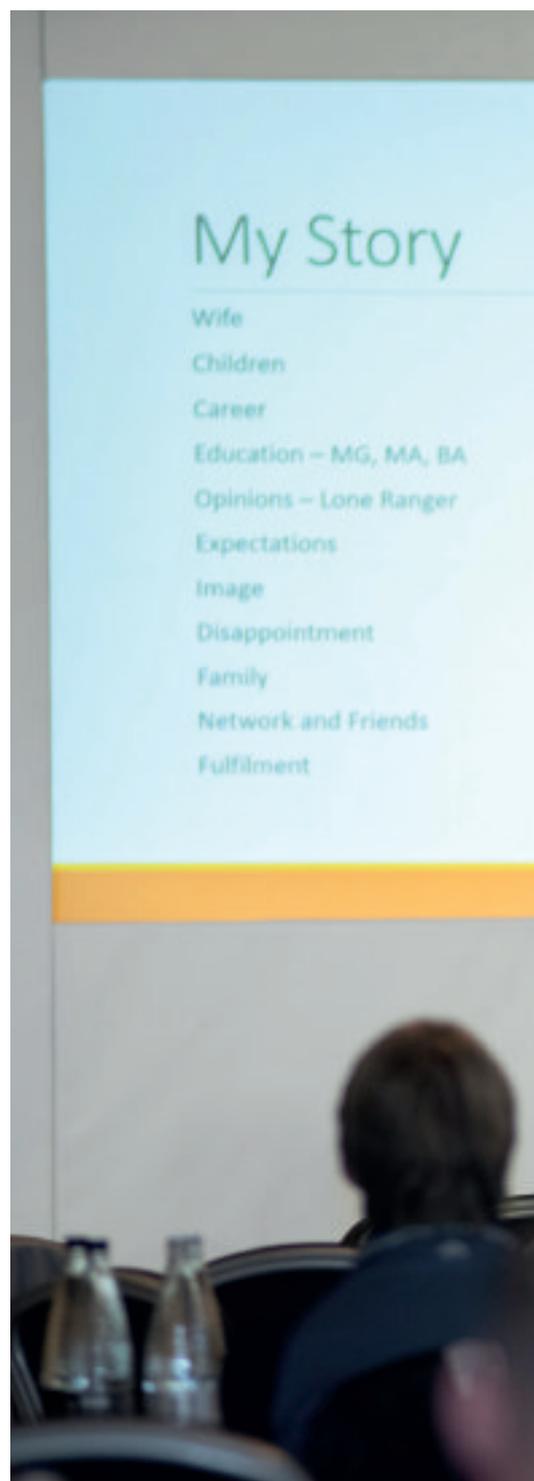
9. Community and personal brand

Engage with your local community. Show that golf clubs are more than just exclusive spaces. Simple acts like buying a coffee for the car behind you or participating in local volunteering can change perceptions.

10. Continuous learning

Never think you know everything. Our industry is constantly evolving. Be curious, be open to learning new things and remember – there's always someone who knows something you don't. **GI**

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Final thought (inspired by Ted Lasso!)

Be curious, not judgmental. About yourself, your team, your members; everyone is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Approach each day with empathy, openness and a commitment to personal and professional growth. Remember, you get one life – savour every moment.



Sam's Career

2008-13	2013-14	2014-16	2016-18	2018-20	2020-Present
Heythrop Park (assistant greenkeeper)	Oakland Park (deputy head greenkeeper)	Oakland Park (head greenkeeper)	Fulwell (head greenkeeper)	Fulwell (course manager)	North Hants (course manager)



Take the heat out of summer diseases



We caught up with expert Sean Loakes of Syngenta to find out all about the diseases lurking on golf courses this summer

Summer turf diseases can pose a threat to any golf course, but there are measures – both preventative and reactive – that can mitigate the impact. As climate patterns become increasingly unpredictable, greenkeepers face mounting pressure to understand, identify and manage these complex biological challenges.

In this Q&A with Syngenta's turf disease expert Sean Loakes, he breaks down the most common summer diseases, offering insights into early detection, strategic management and emerging technologies that can help preserve playing quality.

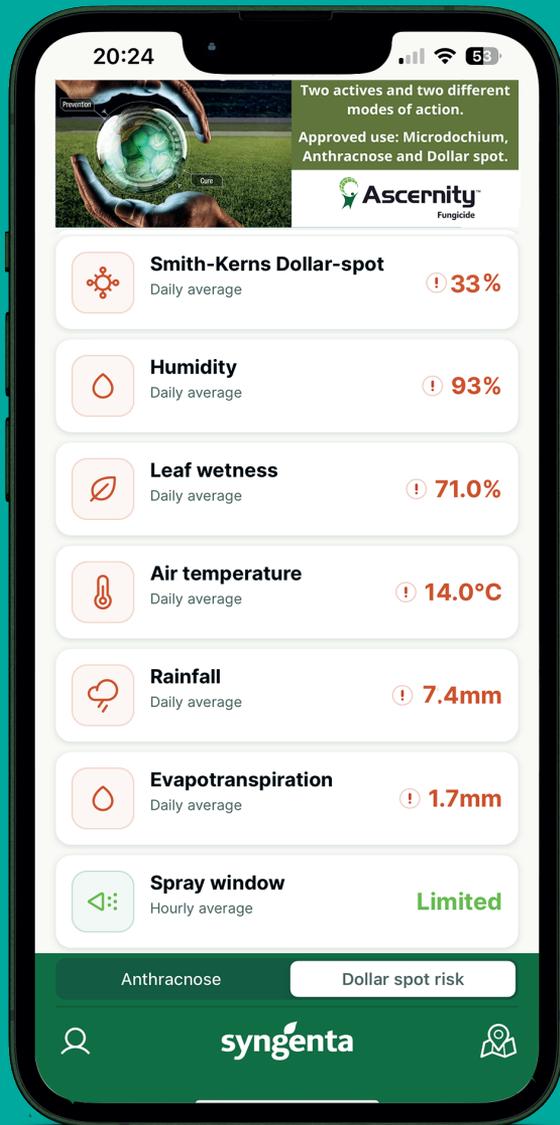
From dollar spot to anthracnose,

here's your essential summer survival guide.

What are the most common summer diseases greenkeepers are seeing at the moment?

Dollar spot would be first on my mind to talk about at this time of year.

There's a real north-south divide with it. Most people in the north wouldn't really be too worried about dollar spot, but down in Cornwall, along the coast and pushing beyond London, it's becoming a major concern. Five years ago, it was just something that happened in America – now it's here and prompting a real mindset shift for UK greenkeepers.



The 'game-changing' role of predictive models

Digital models are game-changing for disease management. Syngenta has an app called Turf Advisor with predictive tools, and there are others from different providers offering powerful insights.

For dollar spot specifically, we use the Smith-Kerns model, developed by US turf grass scientists. It links temperature and humidity, presenting disease pressure as a percentage. If you get above 20%, it suggests you'll likely need a fungicide intervention. I've been using this model in trials for two years, and it's generally very accurate.

There are occasional limitations – for instance, if you do a lot of irrigation or have a nearby lake, the weather station might not account for that additional humidity. But most of the time, it's an excellent model for predicting dollar spot pressure.

These digital tools allow you to see disease pressure rising so you can get ahead of it. You can implement cultural practices like rolling, adjust nutrition and consider a preventative fungicide if pressure looks high.

It's game-changing because we've always said preventative sprays are important, but it was difficult for greenkeepers to know exactly when to apply them.

The next on the list would probably be anthracnose. This is also a fungal pathogen, but it shows up when the surfaces are placed under the kind of stress induced when you're trying to get greens ready for tournaments, shaving them down to improve speed, for example. If we do that for too long, especially after a tough season with high stress factors, such as the recent drought conditions or extreme heat, it can be a bad year for anthracnose, and it's a hard one to get rid of.

There's also brown patch, but this is not generally such a big problem, particularly for established turf. It can be difficult for newly established areas, but for most established areas it isn't normally a big worry.

“It's about finding that balance point that works for your specific site”

Why are these diseases particularly prominent in summer?

We call them summer diseases, but it's really about temperature and humidity. Dollar spot, for example, isn't strictly a summer disease. I know a golf course in Cornwall that can see it in January some years. Most clubs will see these diseases in the traditional summer window when temperatures are consistently warmer, but dollar spot can emerge at any time the right climatic conditions align.

It's slightly different for anthracnose, as that disease requires a building up of stress over a longer period, combined with specific climatic conditions. So, while dollar spot can jump out quickly with the right weather, anthracnose develops more gradually. The critical thing is understanding that these aren't fixed seasonal diseases, but responsive biological processes triggered by specific environmental conditions.

What are the early warning signs?

Dollar spot shows nicely in early dewy mornings – you can see the light mycelium on the surface, especially on still days with high humidity and warm temperatures. With anthracnose, look for early senescence of leaves – if you have five leaves in a grass plant, the last two might start turning yellow or orange.

Why is it so important to deal with these diseases?

Summer diseases can be worse than winter ones in their ability to affect play. Dollar spot can create really uneven greens and that can be the difference between a golfer holing his



Dollar spot infection symptoms

Sean's top 5 tips for dealing with summer diseases

1. Upskill your team so they can identify diseases and know how to deal with them
2. Leverage digital predictive models like Smith-Kerns
3. Review your course's disease history and plan accordingly
4. Maintain balanced nutrition
5. Be adaptable to changing climate conditions



Dollar spot

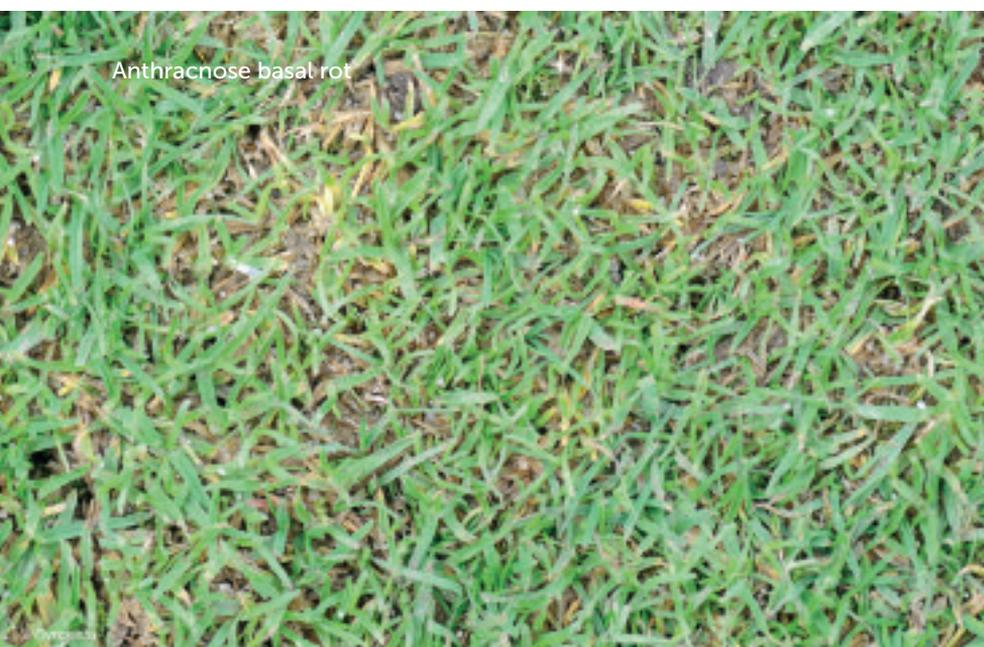
putt or ruining his round. This is the time of year when clubs are hosting their championships and seeing increased footfall, so it's important to present the best conditions, and summer diseases can have a significant impact on that.

Are there any new trends in disease prevalence?

Dollar spot would be the main one moving up the ranking of people's worries. Anthracnose is also worse than five years ago, and this is partly because we're under more pressure to deliver better surfaces. As mower technology gets better, we can maintain consistently lower cutting heights and therefore faster, truer surfaces, but that puts more stress on the turf and can give rise to anthracnose.

Does the type of course make a difference?

Historically, links courses have been less susceptible because they tend to have fewer coarse grasses, but dollar spot will hit them quite hard because it's quite happy to attack fescues and bent grasses. Links course managers have always had lots of other things to worry about – weather, wind, getting spray days – but now dollar spot is a real concern. Links courses seem to be hit worse, which could be partly a nutrition thing. They tend to want to keep their nutrition lower, and that can make you slightly more at risk of dollar spot. In contrast, an inland parkland site isn't necessarily under



Anthracnose basal rot

About the expert:

Sean Loakes, technical manager, UK & Ireland at Syngenta

A qualified biologist, Sean has had a career in environmental science and research through practical field trials and laboratory studies, primarily focused on best practice and optimising results from every application. His role involves using his experience and innovation to develop new turf agronomy strategies to meet the evolving challenges for customers, including the increasing importance of biopesticides within integrated turf management programmes.

Creeping bentgrass inoculated with dollar spot



Inoculated but untreated



Treated with Ascernity @3l/ha

Source: Jealott's Hill Research Centre microscopy unit



syngenta.

pressure to maintain a specific colour – they're happy to have lush, darker green growth.

How important is nutrition balance in preventing the onset of disease?

It's critical. If you underfeed, the plant becomes stressed and more susceptible to disease. But if you have too thick, lush growth, you can also push disease. It's about finding that balance point that works for your specific site – and that will be different for a links course versus a parkland course.

How are fungicide products evolving to combat disease?

Fungicide strategies with today's products have definitely shifted to more preventative treatments to stop damage occurring, rather than curative fire-brigade actions. Historically we used some fungicides at up to 30 litres per hectare, compared to the next one we will get registered which is applied at 0.6 litres per hectare, so these are much more precision technologies.

Legislation is making it harder to get new fungicide products registered and into the hands of greenkeepers, who are limited in how often they can apply them. You've got to target them exactly where and when they're needed, so there's a strategic

consideration around usage, as well as building into integrated approaches alongside cultural controls and new biostimulant plant health programmes.

GI

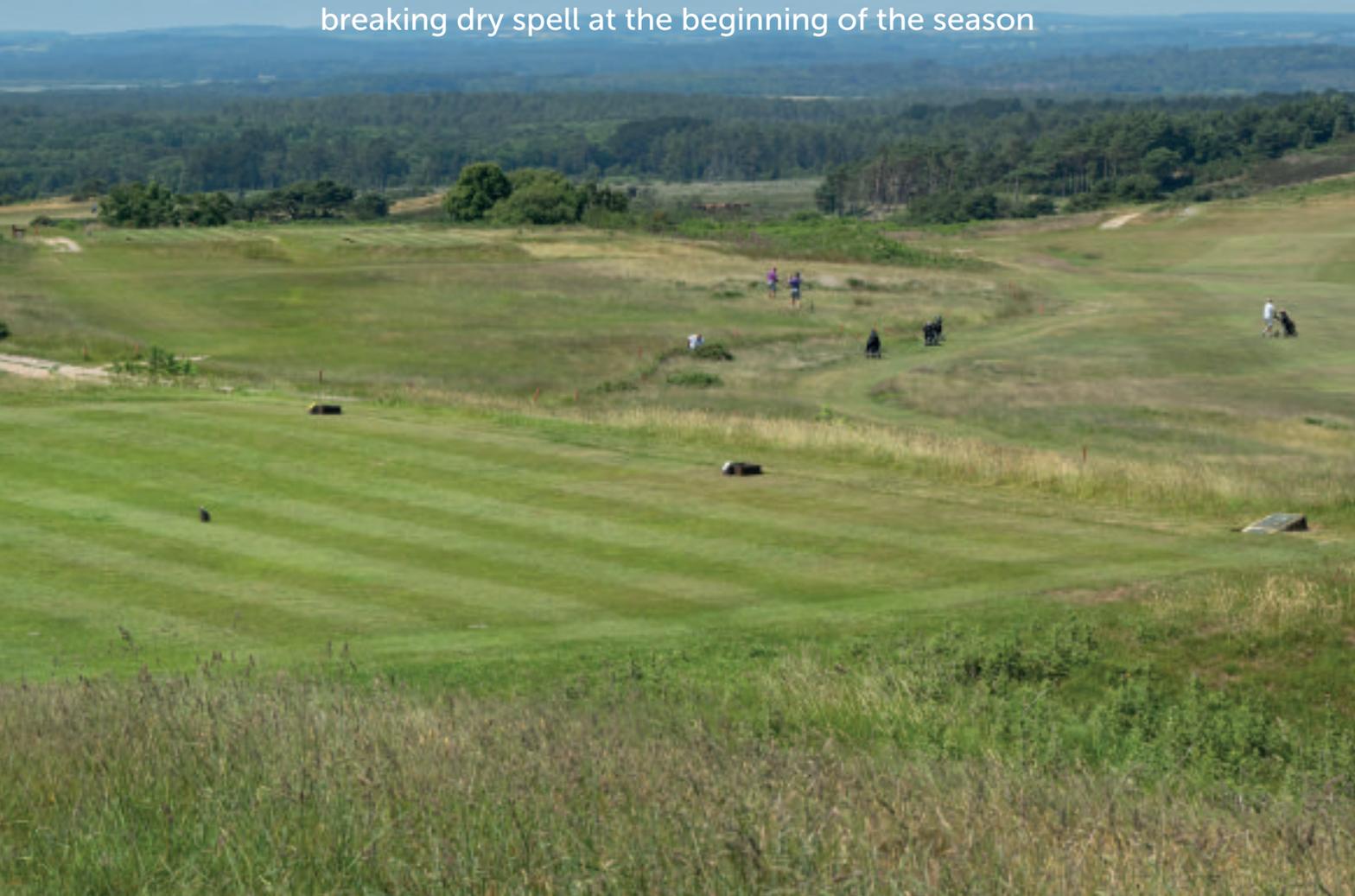
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Helping you through the spring

How BIGGA advocated for greenkeepers during the record-breaking dry spell at the beginning of the season



This spring presented greenkeepers across the UK with yet another tough start to the year, following on from the persistent rainfall seen in early 2024.

It was record-breaking low rainfall and persistent dry conditions this time, with many courses experiencing exceptional turf stress, irrigation strain and growing pressure from golfers unaware of the challenges behind the scenes.

These conditions have placed immense stress not only on the land, but on the hardworking greenkeeping teams striving to maintain it.

At BIGGA, we recognised the concerns being raised by members from across the country. In response, we published an article to highlight the unprecedented challenges facing our members and highlighted the exceptional work you were doing in incredibly testing circumstances. Just as importantly, we made sure that the piece got seen by as many golfers as possible.

This piece provided a platform for greenkeepers to share their experiences and voice the very real impacts of the prolonged dry spell on course conditions and staff wellbeing.

The response to the article was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. Greenkeepers told us they appreciated seeing their voices amplified and their challenges made visible not just to fellow professionals, but to club managers, golfers and the wider industry.

In giving our members a public voice during a difficult time, we were reminded of the strength and necessity of standing together through shared challenges.

This is a core part of BIGGA's mission to represent and champion the work of greenkeepers across the UK.



HOMEPAGE > NEWS AND FEATURES > UK GREENKEEPERS ON THE PROLONGED LACK OF RAINFALL THIS SPRING: "IT'S VERY, VERY DRY."

UK Greenkeepers on the prolonged lack of rainfall this spring: "It's very, very dry."



14 MAY 2025 FEATURE ARTICLE

The UK is experiencing its driest spring since the Second World War — and the impact is unsurprisingly being felt at every single golf course.



"I heard on the radio they're already talking about hosepipe bans in the south-east because of the drought," said David Byron, Head Greenkeeper at Essex's Thorndon Park. "If this continues, it's going to be a tough summer."

Look out of your window and what do you see? Most likely, bright sunshine and blue skies. It's manna from heaven for sunseekers. But it's a problem for anyone who manages turf. To say we've experienced some weather extremes over the past couple of years is an understatement.

April 2024 was one of the wettest in nearly two centuries. Fast forward 12 months and, according to the Met Office, the UK recorded just over half the average rainfall it would expect to see in a normal month. That has been a trend in 2025. "Wales saw its fourth driest March on record, its driest since 1944," said the meteorological body's regular four-weekly summary. "Suffolk and Norfolk experienced their second driest Marches on record, with only March 1929 drier."

May is also shaping up to be parched — with warm temperatures, lots of sun, and barely a raincloud in sight. It's a huge concern for greenkeepers up and down Great Britain and Ireland.



"It's very, very dry," explained David. "It's the driest start to spring in nearly 70 years. We've had almost no rain, and what we have had has come in just one hit, so it's not consistent. I was out measuring moisture in our fairways and we're down to about 3-4% moisture content. Normally, you'd want 10 to 15% moisture content for the grass species we have."

Like so many turf managers, Richard Johnstone, Course Manager at Royal Aberdeen, meticulously takes down rainfall figures. There were just nine millimetres there in April. So far in May, there has only been two. In the five months from October last year to February 2025, there was 300mm less rainfall than in the equivalent period between 2023 and 2024. "We're experiencing extreme weather patterns now," he said. "There's no longer a balance. Instead, we're seeing one extreme or the other — either constant pouring rain or complete drought. "There doesn't seem to be much consistency anymore, and that presents some big challenges."



Advocating on your behalf is about being there in moments like this – when conditions are tough, resources are stretched and morale can waver.

We want every member to know that BIGGA is here to listen, to act and to make your concerns heard when it matters most.

We understand that the pressures you face are not always visible to others. Whether it's extreme weather, unrealistic expectations or broader environmental and staffing issues, your daily realities often go unrecognised.

That's why communications support

and member advocacy are central to BIGGA's work. When members speak, we act – and we will continue to do so.

But we also need your help. We encourage you to reach out and tell us about the issues affecting you and your team. Whether it's an ongoing concern, an emerging challenge or simply something you feel needs greater public or industry awareness, BIGGA is committed to being your voice.

Let us know what matters most to you – because when we advocate together, we are stronger.

If you're facing a challenge that you believe deserves wider attention, contact us via info@bigga.co.uk or speak to your local Membership Services Manager. Your insights help shape our communications, our campaigns and our collective impact. Together, we can continue to ensure that greenkeepers across the UK are seen, supported and celebrated – especially when times are tough.

The data from the Met Office

Spring 2025 broke historical climate records, marking an unprecedented season of warmth and sunshine across the UK, according to provisional Met Office statistics





The UK overall recorded its warmest spring for mean temperature since the series began in 1884, surpassing the previous record from 2024.

The season also outshone the rest, claiming the title of sunniest spring on record for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with England recording its second sunniest spring since sunshine records began in 1910.

To put this into context, spring 2025 is now the fourth sunniest season overall for the UK, with only three summers sunnier since 1910.

The remarkable season unfolded month by month, beginning with a record-breaking sunny March that set the tone, with above-average temperatures and significantly reduced rainfall. The following month continued the trend as the UK's sunniest April on record, maintaining the warm and dry pattern. The season was rounded off with the second sunniest May on record for the UK, with temperatures again exceeding the average and low rainfall persisting.

“Our responsibility at BIGGA is to ensure that these challenges are understood and that the skills and expertise of our members are appreciated by golfers and employers”



The story of Spring 2025

9.5°C
Mean temperature – the warmest since records began

128.2mm
Amount of rainfall 40% below long-term average

653.3
Hours of sunshine – 43% above average



Jim Croxton: I'm proud to see greenkeepers rise to the challenge once again

Mother Nature provided yet another difficult situation for BIGGA members to cope with, and, as usual, I'm hugely proud of the dedication and innovation they brought to bear.

Recent reports suggest that rounds played across the UK were at record levels, a complete contrast to the many days of course closures in Spring 2024.

This flexibility is what skilled greenkeepers possess; the ability to adapt to a changing climate and vastly varying business needs.

Our responsibility at BIGGA is to ensure that these challenges are understood and that the skills and expertise of our members are appreciated by golfers and employers. I'm grateful to the many members that contributed to the article we created; I know that it made a big difference for many across the country.

No doubt further challenges lie ahead; a hot summer is predicted, and we will be on our toes to provide support as necessary. In the meantime, we will continue to advocate on your behalf with golfers, officials, managers and the governing bodies of the game.

How to cope with the challenges ahead



With a warm, dry summer upon us, BIGGA's Scott Reeves offers practical advice to help you navigate the way ahead through solid planning, team support and clear communication

From short-term actions you can take today to long-term preparation strategies, this guidance is focussed on helping you make smart, sustainable decisions under stress. Here is how to stay ahead of the game, protect your course and look after yourself and your team during demanding times.

1 Make sure you have a plan

Identify your priorities and address those first. Focus on the most critical areas of the course and allocate time and resources where they will have the greatest impact.

2 Work out what extra resources you may need

Whether machinery or materials. Anticipate shortfalls – from wetting agents to additional labour – and secure what you can now.

3 Speak to your network

Who has had a similar experience and what successful steps did they take? Connect with other greenkeepers, find out how they're approaching the situation, and learn from each other.

4 Do a little research

There is lots of information on the BIGGA website. Tap into the wealth of expert advice and case studies available online – many of your questions may already be answered there.

5 Open, honest communication

Tell your line manager what you are doing and then tell your members. Be honest and clear, keep it simple. Open, honest communication helps manage expectations and demonstrates professionalism – people are more understanding when kept informed.

6 Keep a close eye on your staff

Keep them informed. Look out for their welfare. They may be pretty fatigued from extra hours on hand watering etc so make sure they don't get burned out. Regular check-ins and balanced workloads help protect morale and prevent exhaustion during long dry spells.

7 Log all extra hours worked

Keep records of what you did differently as this may help you in future difficult times. A detailed record can support staffing reviews, justify budget changes and guide planning in future weather-related challenges.

8 Look after yourself!

If that period of drought was stressful mentally and physically, you have to take time to recover and make sure it doesn't harm your health. Don't ignore your own limits – get rest, recharge and make sure you're not on a fast-track to burnout.

9 Do the simple things well
 Make sure your basics are all in line, do the simple things well and don't lose sight of what is happening today. Stick to best practices in turf care, staying grounded in daily tasks that support long-term resilience.

10 Sharpen your blades
 A good quality of cut will help your turf become more resilient to disease, drought and heat stresses. A clean cut reduces plant stress, helping turf conserve energy and better endure harsh conditions.

11 Check your equipment
 A breakdown at a key time is another level of complication you can do without. Preventative maintenance now can save time and frustration during critical moments later.

12 Look at your agronomy
 Would it be beneficial to introduce some stress relievers such as seaweeds? Products like seaweeds and biostimulants can improve plant health and boost tolerance to heat and drought stress. Think about whether you need to take steps now if your turf is prone to attacks from anthracnose or other pathogens widely seen during these types of conditions. Often when we see these diseases it is too late to take action – prevention can be the most effective action.

Communication is key

Keeping people informed during challenging times helps to foster understanding and garner support. By providing the facts, you can eliminate that element of uncertainty where rumours and gripes might otherwise thrive. *James Bledge, links manager at Royal Liverpool*, offers three simple but highly effective tips on how to fine-tune your communications.

Write a blog

A well-written blog is a great way to keep people up to date. Write in terms the average golfer will understand and post regularly while being careful to avoid repetition. Use pictures to illustrate what you're talking about. Keep your posts positive and encourage member questions. If you're tech savvy, try videos – vlogs build connection by putting faces and voices to your greenkeeping team.

Course walks

Course walks let members see your work first-hand, building understanding and support. Plan your route, know your facts and speak clearly. Use handouts if helpful. Keep the group together and show your facilities – even a basic shed adds insight. Most members have no idea how much data and expertise is involved in greenkeeping.

Clubhouse presentations

Clubhouse talks offer a way to connect with members in an environment where they will feel most comfortable. Time them to coincide with busy periods when more members are around, offer food, and use clear, engaging presentations. Share facts, visuals, and be honest if unsure of answers. Not every member will be easy, but open communication builds respect, trust and shows pride in your team and profession. **GI**

• Taken from a feature that first appeared in Greenkeeper International in 2023

Kress 



The Kress KR237e

A revolution in golf course maintenance



In a landmark move that redefines golf course maintenance, Kress has unveiled the KR237e - a purpose-built robotic mower designed specifically for the unique needs of golf courses.

This new addition to Kress's growing portfolio of professional landscaping equipment signals not just another product launch, but a clear assertion of the company's role at the cutting edge of outdoor technology.

For decades, Kress has led the charge in redefining landscape maintenance with smarter, cleaner and more efficient solutions — and the KR237e is perhaps their most targeted innovation yet.

Designed for golf, engineered for precision

Unlike traditional mowers or even general-purpose robotic units, the KR237e is built from the ground up with golf in mind. Fairways require a level of precision and uniformity that few machines can reliably deliver, particularly across large areas. The KR237e achieves this with remarkable finesse.

At the core of the mower's intelligence is Kress's proprietary RTKn (Real-Time Kinematic network) technology, which offers centimetre-level precision without the need for boundary wires, permanent reference stations or unsightly relay towers. This is a game-changing feature for golf courses. While traditional robotic solutions often compromise the landscape's aesthetics with fixed antennas or tall masts, the KR237e operates freely — and almost invisibly. The absence of aerials or relay towers ensures the integrity of a golf course's pristine visual appeal, preserving the uninterrupted views that define a player's experience.

Speed and flexibility meet professional standards

In addition to its clean and elegant operation, the KR237e brings serious performance to the table. With a significantly greater variation in cutting height — from 10mm up to 60mm — it offers the flexibility needed for everything from tightly groomed fairways to semi-rough transition zones. Whether you're hosting a championship event or maintaining everyday playing conditions, the KR237e adapts with remarkable agility.

Speed is another critical area where the KR237e excels. This unit covers ground at an accelerated pace, aided by an innovative gliding disc and high-efficiency drive system. These enhancements allow each mower to manage up to 42,000 m² (over 10 acres), making them ideal for expansive golf courses where time and labour efficiency are paramount. Each single mower is now able to fully manage the fairways and semi-rough areas of an entire hole without needing manual intervention.

Smarter tech, cleaner cuts

The KR237e's advanced mapping and cutting logic deliver not just speed but quality. Using MAP™ (Mowing Action Plan) technology, the mower maintains a systematic, stripe-like pattern across the turf — much like a human-operated reel mower would. Combined with dual-layer blades, wheel brushes as standard and an auto-levelling cutting disc, the result is a beautifully consistent cut, even on uneven or undulating terrain.

Built-in 4G connectivity enables continuous software updates and remote diagnostics, ensuring the mower stays at the technological forefront throughout its life cycle. An onboard Obstacle Avoidance

System (OAS) adds an extra layer of intelligence, allowing it to gracefully maneuver around trees, signage and even golfers and their carts, without interruption or incident.

A true reflection of Kress's vision

The KR237e isn't just a machine — it's a bold statement from Kress about where the landscaping industry is headed. In a time when automation is often synonymous with compromise, the KR237e proves that precision, performance, and aesthetics can coexist. It blends seamlessly into the golf environment, protects the course's natural beauty and significantly reduces the labor burden on maintenance crews.

Kress's history of innovation in the professional landscaping sector is well established, but the KR237e raises the bar. It reflects not just technological progress, but a deeper understanding of what professionals — and their clients — truly value: reliability, discretion and quality.

Conclusion

The Kress KR237e robotic mower is more than a tool - it's a vision realised. For golf course managers and greenkeepers, it offers the promise of cleaner cuts, greater efficiency and zero disruption to the beauty of the grounds. And for the industry at large, it's a powerful reminder that Kress remains at the forefront of landscaping innovation — pioneering a future where technology and tradition walk side by side.

• Scan the QR code for more information or visit [kress.com/en-gb/robotic-lawn-mowers/](https://www.kress.com/en-gb/robotic-lawn-mowers/)





Summer diseases

What can we do to keep them in check?

Introduction

British and Irish summers seem to be shifting. As conditions swing between extremes, we see the impact on our greens. Diseases like dollar spot, brown patch and brown ring patch are no longer rare sightings, they're turning up earlier, sticking around longer and becoming more of a concern. So, what can we do to keep them in check?

What's changing in the summer disease landscape?

We're generally dealing with more heat and humidity, the perfect recipe for turf diseases to thrive. Mild nights and increasing periods of leaf wetness coupled with environmental and management stress all add to the mix. Tighter mowing heights, traffic, drought stress and sub-optimal nutritional approaches can all add extra pressure, opening the door for these diseases to get in.

Disease-by-disease breakdown

- **Dollar spot** has been around for years, but the conditions we're seeing now mean it's creeping in earlier, from early spring onwards. It shows up as small, bleached spots about the size of a coin but can spread quickly and cause widespread damage in the blink of any eye. Staying on top of mowing, rolling, dew removal and balanced nutrition can really help. If you see disease pressure above 20% (in the Smith-Kerns dollar spot model in the Syngenta Turf Advisor app) for any length of time, it's worth thinking about preventative fungicides like Instrata Elite and Ascernity.
- **Anthracnose** tends to pop up at this time when the turf is stressed - low nitrogen, drought or those short cutting heights that we can't seem to avoid. You'll notice yellowing, thinning and tiny black fungal bits at the base



Scan the QR code to find out more.



Scan Me to
find out more



of the plant. Maintaining adequate levels of nutrition and keeping turf stress levels low can reduce the risk of attack. If the pressure is unavoidable then preventative fungicides like Heritage, Instrata Elite or Ascernity might be needed.

- **Brown patch** is another disease that loves those warm, humid, damp spells. It starts out looking wet and greasy, then turns into tan or dark brown patches, sometimes with a smoke-ring around the edge. Maintaining air movement and watching how much nitrogen goes out can really help, and products like Heritage and Instrata Elite are useful when the pressure is building.
- **Brown ring patch** tends to show up on closely mown turf in warm, wet conditions. You'll see yellow to brown rings, sometimes causing little dips on the surface. The key here is reducing surface wetness, maintaining air

movement, and adjusting fertility to maintain plant health.

- **Red thread** might be more familiar in cooler, damp weather, and it's made worse by low nitrogen levels. The first sign is those red threads on the leaf tips, and in serious cases you'll see pink, fluffy patches. Topping up nitrogen can make a big difference, and in potentially bad cases, fungicides like Instrata Elite can help.
- **Yellow tuft** is less common but can be a real pain in cool, wet conditions where drainage is poor. You'll see small yellow patches with stunted roots – a sign that drainage and shade need addressing. Fungicides generally don't help much here, so it's all about the basics: drainage, shade and water management.
- **Yellow patch** likes cooler, wet conditions and can linger into a mild summer. It shows up as yellow to light brown patches that blend into the turf without any obvious fungal growth. Improving drainage and airflow, along with balancing fertility, can really help the turf recover.

Why are these diseases sticking around?

It's not just that the weather's contributing, with higher average temperatures, mild nights and periods of leaf wetness meaning conducive periods last longer. Our greens are under more pressure too, especially with tournament prep and tighter cuts at this time. And if we look at our available fungicides, we've got fewer curative options in the toolkit. That's why it pays to spot problems early and take a preventative attitude.

Putting together a solid summer management plan

An integrated management plan is always best. Think about cultural practices like removing dew in the mornings, fine-tuning irrigation and optimising nitrogen inputs. If you need to bring out the fungicides, do it when the pressure crosses that line – and pick the right one for the conditions. Tools like the Smith-Kerns dollar spot model in the Syngenta Turf Advisor app are really handy to predict what's coming and help you act early.

Adapting to a new summer normal

Summer diseases aren't rare one-offs anymore – they're part of the landscape. The good news is that if you know what's driving them, can spot them early and have a flexible, preventative plan, you're in a strong position. Keeping a watchful eye, making small tweaks as needed, and understanding these patterns are what's going to keep your greens playing well through summer.

Go to icl-growingsolutions.uk for more detailed information on these diseases and their control.

The merits of hard fescue

A fresh appraisal of the hardest fine fescue



Introduction

Over the last 15 years, the species hard fescue has been used increasingly in golf turf management in the UK & Ireland, particularly in medium-fine turf areas such as fairways on links and heathland sites. This is due to improvements in turfgrass breeding and an increased focus on sustainable greenkeeping, especially after the severe summer heat and drought stress of 2018.

As new varieties of hard fescue hit the market, it seems appropriate to take a fresh appraisal of the species to fully appreciate its potential for improving golf courses.

Hard fescue can be categorised as a *fine* fescue, which in terms of turfgrasses can be narrowed down to a group of five species and sub-species - the well-known red fescues

(slender creeping, Chewings and strong creeping) and sheep fescue. "Fine fescues" shouldn't be confused with the (dramatically different) species tall fescue – a much broader-leaved grass used extensively for sports and landscape turf (as well as golf) in the USA and other parts of Europe (sporadically in the UK).

In terms of further classification, its nomenclature has been a strongly debated subject; it was once called *Festuca duriuscula*, then assigned *Festuca ovina* var. *duriuscula* L. Koch, then *F. longifolia* Thuill., before *F. brevipila* Tracey and *F. trachyphylla* Krajina. Both *F. brevipila* and *F. trachyphylla* are in widespread use today.

Regardless of its binomial name, the important question to answer is why should it be considered for use on a golf course?

Drought tolerance

Drought tolerance is likely the single biggest stress factor that has resulted in increased hard fescue use on golf courses in the last few years. The 2018 heat and drought caused widespread plant death on fairways, and perhaps surprisingly was the fragility of red fescues. By contrast, hard fescue (and in many cases indigenous sheep fescue) survived well (see Figure 1). Variation in stomatal density between fine fescue species (lower in hard/sheep than red fescue) may be one reason for this difference in stress tolerance.



Figure 1: Hard or sheep fescue exhibiting far less drought stress than surrounding grasses.

This phenomenon mirrored Barenbrug trials, which had been ongoing in parts of Europe for several years, and resulted in the launch of Sustainable Grass Technology (SGT) mixtures in 2020. Drought (and heat) tolerance is one of the four pillars of the SGT concept.

Data from Landlab in Italy during the 2018 summer exhibits the very different response to heat and drought of hard fescue, compared to red fescues - see Figures 2 & 3.

Overseeding programmes, utilising the better survival rates of hard fescue in SGT Rye Fairway (parkland/heathland) and SGT Fine Fescue (heathland/links) should help future-proof fairways for a similarly destructive drought moving forward.

One further advantage relating to water-use; whilst hard fescue is often thought of as having slightly slower establishment times than red fescue – in the field this doesn't always ring true. The seed size of hard fescue is ~30% smaller than red fescue, and in a sandy fairway environment this often results in quicker germination due to less water imbibition being required.

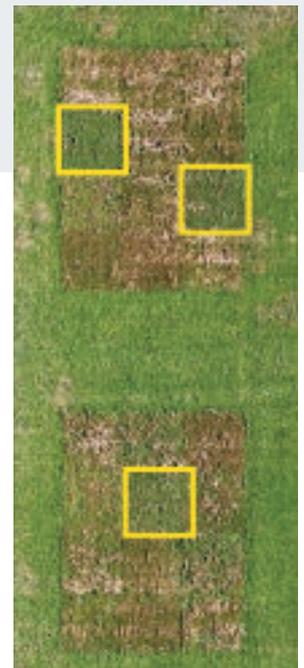


Figure 2: Drone image from Landlab. Highlighted plots are the hard fescue. The quality and endurance of hard fescue stood alone during the most intense heat.

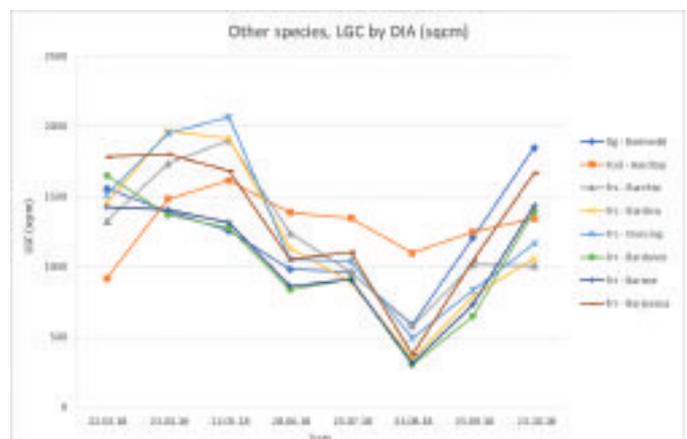


Fig 3 - Graph to show fluctuations in fescue performance (Live Ground Cover assessments) over 9-month period during 2018 in Landlab, Italy. Note the superior performance of Hardtop hard fescue and Barjeux strong creeping red fescue.

Low maintenance

Another significant difference between hard and sheep fescues in comparison to red fescues is their ability to thrive in (free-draining) areas of low fertility and poor soil. This well-documented trait dictated their widespread usage as a landscape turfgrass or in golf roughs before advancements in turf quality shifted their use to regularly mown areas.

In a 1997 study, Bourgoin reported hard fescue as having higher nutrient-use efficiency (NUE) than the red fescue sub-species and noted all fine fescues exhibit little response to increasing N inputs above their standard requirements. Not surprisingly therefore, hard and sheep fescue grow slowly and likely produce thatch less aggressively than the red fescues, which has implications for use in fairways and roughs – areas of the golf course that receive less nutrition and infrequent mechanical disturbance. These points link to two of the other four pillars of SGT – low biomass production and nutrient use efficiency.

An extensive trial in conjunction with the STRI that looked at grass mixture performance under “standard” green maintenance (4mm mowing height, higher nutrition, verticutting) and “low input” maintenance (6-7mm mowing height lower nutrition, brushing) highlighted these findings. Under “low input” parameters a seed blend of 30% hard fescue, 70% red fescue outperformed a more traditional option of 100% red fescue (see Figure 4). The mix with hard fescue maintained higher proportions of total fescue (i.e. less *Poa annua* invasion) during the long-term trial.

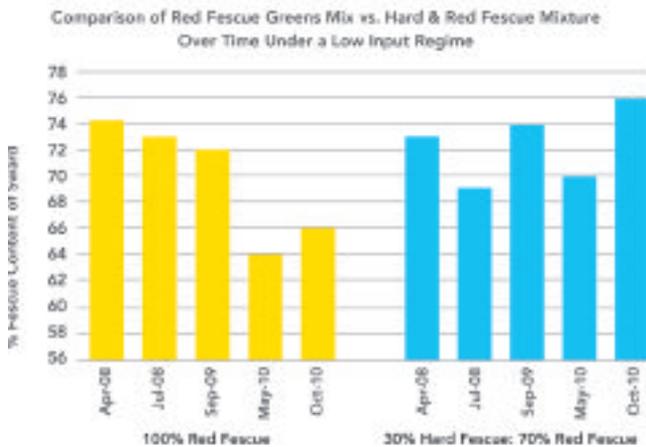


Figure 4: STRI Golf Greens Differential Input Trial. A mixture of hard and red fescue performed better (less *Poa annua* invasion) than red fescue alone (Chewings and slender creeping) when maintained under a low input regime.

Disease and pest tolerance

Hard fescue has strong disease tolerance in general as a species, with expected variation between cultivars.

Of particular interest is its dollar spot tolerance, rated “good to excellent” in a recent extensive scientific review in the USA (Patton *et al.*, 2022) published by Purdue University and encompassing NTEP trials of the last 20 years amongst other sources. By contrast the other fine fescue species are rated either “poor to fair” (strong and slender creeping) or “fair”

(Chewings and sheep), which highlights hard fescue as a critical component for fairway overseeding in the UK and Ireland with raised dollar spot concerns (particularly with *C. homocarpa* pathogen prevalent in this region). It also highlights a significant difference between hard and sheep fescue. Data from the latest NTEP completed trial is presented in Figure 5.

Dollar Spot Tolerance - All data, all locations 2015 - 2019 NTEP				
Cultivars	FRR (Strong)	FRC (Chewings)	FO (Hard/Sheep's)	FRL (Slender)
	6.9	8.2	8	7.4
	6.7	7.9	7.8	6.6
	6.7	7.8	7.7	5.9
	6.6	7.7	7.7	5.6
	6.2	7.6	7.6	
	6.1	7.6	7.5	
	5.8	7.5	7.5	
	5.6	7.4	7.4	
	5.4	7.2	7.4	
	5.2	7.1	7.2	
	5.2	7	7.2	
	5.1	7		
	4.9			
	4.9			
	4.7			
Mean	5.73	7.50	7.55	6.38

Figure 5 - 2015-2019 NTEP Fine fescue trials; all data, all locations.

In the same review article, hard fescue is rated “good to excellent” for red thread (along with sheep, and better than the red fescues) and “good” for snow mould (best rating among the species). Additionally, the latest completed NTEP trials also highlight hard fescue as being the best fine fescue for leaf spot pathogens.

The overall disease tolerance of hard fescue marks the fourth and final pillar of SGT, and is a major factor in the species inclusion in this Sport Range concept.

Widespread anecdotal evidence is now forming (with increased hard fescue use) that some protection against insect pests and also worm-casting is a further benefit of this turfgrass species. It is hypothesised that either the abrasive texture of the leaves or possibly a higher lignin content below the surface reduces insect (egg-laying of crane fly and resulting leatherjackets) and worm activity.

Other differences between hard and sheep fescue

It is fair to say that hard and sheep fescue are often very similar grasses in many ways, not least in their physical appearance in turf. They can often be misidentified and confused for one another, even when it comes to the grass seed market. For example, an older variety *Bornito* is regularly sold as sheep fescue, when it is, in fact, a hard fescue.

Although morphological differences can be difficult to

spot, genetics can easily identify the two species – which interestingly have different ploidy (numbers of chromosomes). Sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina*) is a tetraploid, with 28 chromosomes, whereas hard (*Festuca brevipila*) is a hexaploid with 42.

Hard fescue is preferred by grass breeders for many reasons, and far more commercial varieties are available of this species. There have been very few sheep fescues bred and trialled in the last 25 years, whereas new and improved hard fescue cultivars are coming to the market regularly. One reason for the preference is seed yield and production, but hard fescue has several other advantageous traits to consider.

As already mentioned, disease tolerance can differ, with dollar spot being a notable point for hard fescue. Sheep fescue has lower wear tolerance than hard, particularly in comparison with newer varieties, and hard fescue is generally given the edge with regard to shade tolerance (Braun et al., 2020). These facts all point to hard fescue being more applicable for golf course use than sheep fescue, especially in areas with traffic or light deficit, or dollar spot concern.

New cultivars in Barenbrug Sport Range

Breeding advancements in hard fescue are moving the species forward quickly in terms of turf quality, disease tolerance and other important traits. In 2025, *Barlegant* joined the Sport Range in SGT Fine Fescue and a recent cultivar from USA, *Beacon*, was reintroduced to the same mixture.

Barlegant offers a new standard of turf quality for the species and is listed as the new #1 cultivar in Table L6 of Turfgrass Seed 2025; *Beacon* is not far behind in the #2 position.

In the GEVES Turfgrass List (Figure 6; independent trials in several European countries), *Beacon* is #1-ranked for hard and sheep fescue for a range of traits, including lawn index, global aesthetics, shoot density, wear tolerance and red thread tolerance.

The introduction of these two new cultivars cements SGT Fine Fescue in its market-leading position for overseeding links and heathland fairways.

Variety	Lawn Index	Shoot Density	Global Aesthetic Qualities
Beacon	7.34	8.85	7.61
Aloa	7.28	8.58	7.47
Barlegant	7.03	8.53	7.33
Hardtop	6.74	8.08	6.78
Quatro	6.6	7.91	6.45
Reliant II	6.45	7.89	6.42
Dumas 1	6.31	7.43	6.35
Mentor	6.23	7.87	6.28
Blues	5.71	7.04	5.63

Figure 6 – GEVES Turfgrass List hard & sheep's fescue 2024 summarised data.



Author: David Greenshields

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be seen that hard fescue fairway overseeding has increased dramatically in the UK and Ireland in recent years, particularly in response to the 2018 drought. With advancements in plant breeding, this species promises further benefits moving forward, with respect to the other pillars of Barenbrug's Sustainable Grass Technology (SGT) concept.

Disease tolerance (particularly dollar spot) sets hard fescue apart from other fine fescue species (including sheep fescue), and makes this species a truly *hardy* and sustainable survivor with climate and environmental issues in the present and future.

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Maintain healthy soil

The essential “matrix” for the quality of sports turf

The continual use of sports fields leads to progressive soil compaction that requires regular mechanical interventions. Without such maintenance, turf becomes weakened and increasingly vulnerable to climatic stress, disease and tearing. To maintain both soil and turf in optimal condition, Matrix offers a solution.

The trampling of players and the repeated use of maintenance equipment cause compaction, typically localised in the top five to ten centimetres of soil depth, and sometimes deeper. However, it is within these layers that 80% of the roots are concentrated. This compaction impairs the effective circulation of air and water, restricts root development and reduces soil microbial activity.

To minimise the need for frequent and costly aeration operations, Olmix offers the Matrix solution, an organo-mineral soil improver featuring SEADRY® technology.

Marine algae extract to support soil microflora

Through its influence on organic matter, soil microbial activity releases compounds that help bind soil aggregates, maintaining porosity essential for air and water movement. To enhance this natural process, Matrix incorporates SEADRY® technology, which leverages the richness of marine algae in specific sugars with prebiotic properties that stimulate soil microflora activity. This effect is reinforced by additional organic extracts of plant origin, rich in proteins and cellulose. Matrix’s organic component is supported by a mineral complex, consisting of clinoptilolite (zeolite powder), diatomaceous earth and calcium—elements known for their capacity to retain water, minerals, clays and humus. As sports turf soils are largely sand-based and thus highly filtrating, Matrix is critical to keeping water and nutrients available to the root zone.

Matrix enhances turf growth conditions

During trials at the Golfclub Zwolle in the Netherlands, it was found that incorporating 10% of Matrix into topdressing substrate improved soil moisture retention while limiting hydromorphic conditions (excess water).

Over a two-year period, measurements revealed an average increase of 4.5% in soil moisture for the Matrix-treated plots.

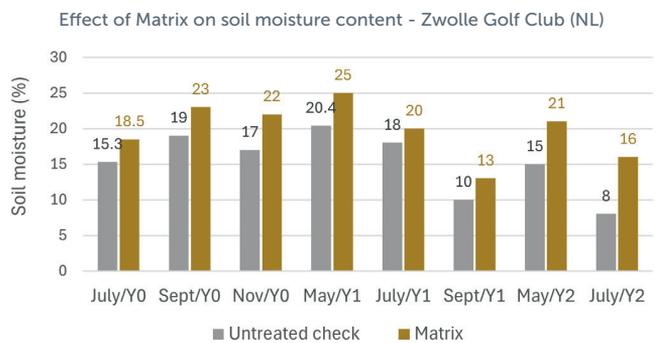
This corresponds to a difference of 13 litres of water per square meter - enough to extend water availability to turf and promote sustained growth, particularly during summer months.

Higher soil moisture levels also help maintain ions in solution, enhancing nutrient bioavailability for turfgrass. Conductivity measurements from a rugby field managed by a local authority in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region of France showed a 33% increase in conductivity following Matrix applications.

By stimulating soil microbial activity, maintaining porosity, reducing waterlogging and improving retention of water and minerals, Matrix creates optimal conditions for the development of healthy, vigorous turf with deep root systems, which is more resilient to pests and weed invasion.



Matrix is formulated as mini granules (0.7-2mm) and is applied at a rate of 20 to 30 g/m² every four to six weeks or mixed with sand during top dressing.



COLLIER® TURF CARE

For more information on Matrix and other Olmix products, contact Collier Turf Care on **01328 700600** or email sales@collier-turf-care.co.uk

“Not your Dad’s Old Wetter”

How ProWet Evolve breaks the “penetrant” vs “water holder” paradigm

ProWet Evolve is the next generation soil surfactant, developed by RhizoSolutions and marketed by TurfCare in Ireland and the UK.

Several things make ProWet Evolve stand out from conventional soil surfactants, most notably its’ pedigree, novel formulation and outstanding year-round performance.

ProWet Evolve was developed by the team at RhizoSolutions, led by Dr. Stan Kostka. Dr Stan, sometimes jokingly referred to as the ‘Godfather’ of modern soil surfactants, developed many of the leading brands of soil surfactants used worldwide for over the last 30 years. Dr. Stan would never say it, but his broad knowledge of the science is a joy to listen to – go and see and listen to one of his talks when you can!

The unique formulation of ProWet Evolve includes a new molecule, dubbed RST (RhizoSolutions Surfactant Technology), which provides previously unseen levels of performance at reduced rates compared with conventional products. “The RST molecule was a definite step forward in product performance” stated Dr. Stan, “It was challenging

to formulate into a commercial product, but it’s outstanding performance, safety and low application rates proved our research to be correct.”

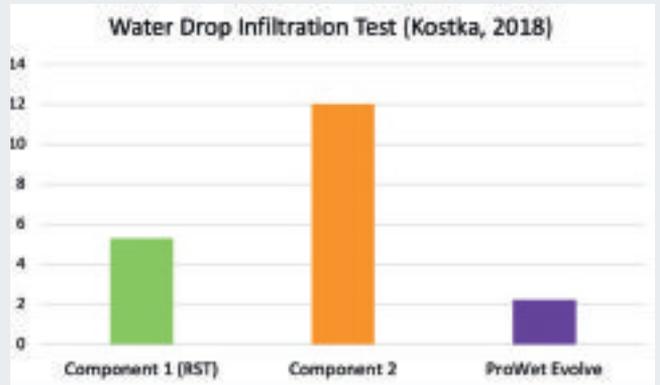


Fig. 1. The unique formulation of ProWet Evolve demonstrates how two different active ingredients can work together to potentiate performance.

Many words are commonly used to describe how a soil surfactant works. Unfortunately, many of these terms can confuse, oversimplify or even mis-represent the performance of these valuable tools. These words include wetter, penetrant, holder, stripper, and the list goes on. This article is too short to address all these issues in detail, but it may be more productive to explain how the technology in

ProWet Evolve does not conform neatly to some of these ideas or misperceptions.

RhizoSolutions’ Dr. Mike Fidanza and Dr. John Dempsey of Independent Turfgrass Research will be presenting research at the 15th International Turfgrass Research Conference in Japan this summer which covers some of these unique findings.

ProWet Evolve effect on soil volumetric water content relative to precipitation. Dempsey, Ireland, 2022.

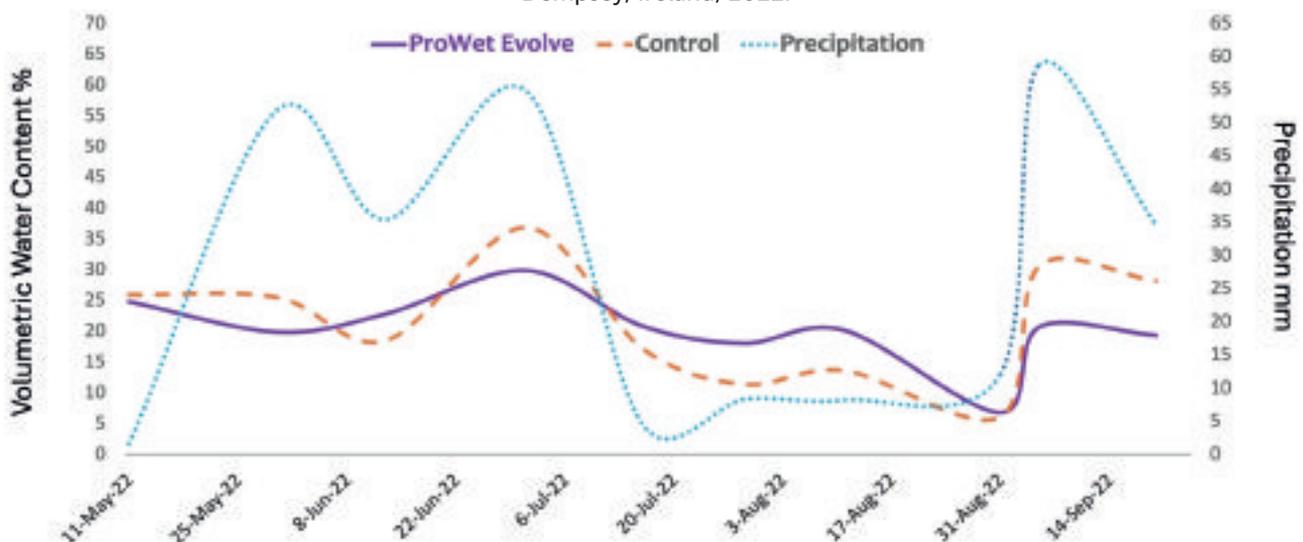


Fig. 2. ProWet Evolve modifies soil hydrologic properties in “wet” and “dry” conditions.

In choosing a surfactant program for your turf, consider its pedigree, the scientific data supporting the product claims and above all the performance you need.

Essentially in "wet" conditions, ProWet Evolve treated soil retains less water than the control. However, in "dry" conditions, ProWet Evolve treated soil contains more water than untreated soils. ProWet Evolve is not a "water holder" or a "penetrant" but modifies the hydrologic properties of the soil to enhance infiltration, imbibition, percolation consistency and drainage of soil water. Put simply, ProWet Evolve facilitates a healthy and functioning air/water balance within soils, which will provide better turfgrass quality and consistency in wet or dry conditions.

This can be seen visually in the following soil profiles, where a blue dye is used to demonstrate the effectiveness of ProWet Evolve at contributing to and balancing soil water status.



Fig. 3. Soil profiles after infiltrometer testing with water containing a blue dye. Control on left, ProWet Evolve on right (images provided by iGin Research; Maryland, USA, 2024).

This same effect has been demonstrated in the field multiple times.

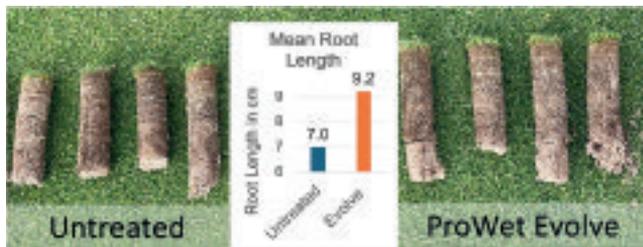
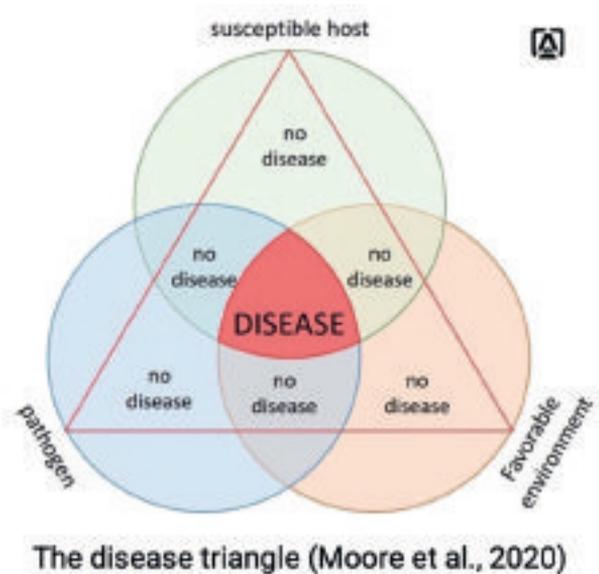


Fig. 6. Creeping bentgrass putting green (image provided by iGin Research; Maryland, USA, 2024).

In addition to producing healthier, more vigorous higher quality turf, ProWet Evolve also helps reduce the impact of diseases, notable Microdochium, dollar spot and fairy ring, as documented in university studies at Oregon State University and Pennsylvania State University.



The performance of ProWet Evolve has been extensively researched and documented. Specifically, it has been proven to enhance turfgrass quality, consistency, resilience, improved root development, overall plant health and resistance to disease in a wide variety of situations. For these reasons, ProWet Evolve is a key component in programmes for a huge range of golf courses worldwide, from tournament venues to local municipal courses.

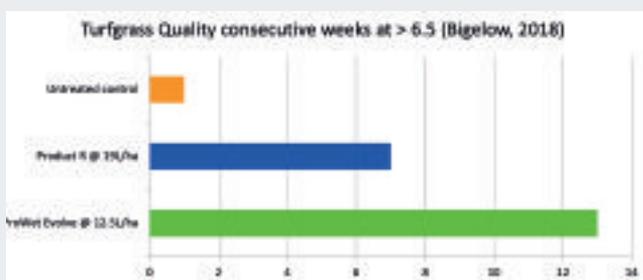


Fig 4. ProWet Evolve produces more consistent, high-quality turf at lower rates than a leading competitor under high stress conditions; turf quality measured on a 1 to 9 scale, where 9 = best, and 6.5 = minimum acceptable quality.

While quality is clearly visible above ground, plant health and resilience are often found underground in the root zone. ProWet Evolve has been shown to consistently produce up to 30% more roots and healthier roots under stress conditions, both in the field and in growth chamber studies.

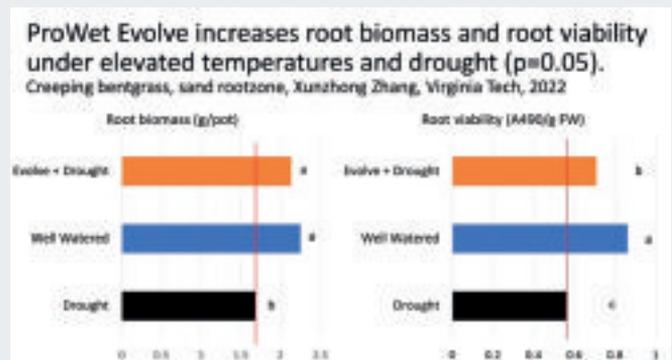


Fig. 5. Growth chamber research demonstrating increased root mass and root viability under stress conditions.

If you would like any additional information on the data covered in this article, please contact snightingale@turfcare.eu.

The value of deep aeration



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

While this practice cannot and should not be seen as an alternative to updating or improving drainage systems, it can be hugely effective in offsetting the long-term impact of wet weather

The ground conditions this year have been in complete contrast to the first six months of 2024, with the Met Office reporting on the driest spring since records began. Just 12 months ago, I wrote that many courses had been subjected to flooding and saturated soil conditions, with rainfall at its highest for any 18-month period in England since comparable data began in 1836. It was commonplace then to see courses implementing contingency measures, with shortened holes, partial closure and extended periods of full closure.

Even a few millimetres of rain was enough to add to the weight of water in the soil and prevent much-needed drying. A few millimetres of rain is now all that some regions had by the end of May, with clubs again becoming concerned by the risk of restrictions

the question: "Are we aerating as well as we should be?"

The impact of rainfall on already saturated soils caused damage to the soil structure and porosity. I warned that a warm wet winter – which we had leading into November – had the potential to stimulate weak and shallow rooting, especially in compacted soils, with the danger being that the topsoil could dry out quickly if there is a swift transition into summer.

This is exactly what we have been seeing. In such circumstances, compacted soils can become very tight and offer little penetration of water to depth.

The onset of drought can then be problematic. My message was a call to action asking clubs to be proactive with deep solid tine aeration work aimed at improving the soil structure.

aeration holes and we see improved turf health under pressure of moisture deficit.

Parkland sandy clay loam topsoils have been subjected to years of soil compaction leading to poor drainage. For these clubs, the deep aeration work should be repeated later this year, whatever the forthcoming summer has in store.

Deep aeration is not the silver bullet resolving all issues. It should be seen as a basic and affordable operation, which has either dropped off the agenda completely or been undertaken with reduced effectiveness in periods where the ground conditions have not been conducive to its benefits.

In summary, we are seeing the benefit of good cultural maintenance of the soil profiles through the application of well-timed and effective deep aeration practices. Benefit will come from the alleviation of compaction to improve the natural drainage potential of the upper profile conditions and encourage deeper rooting, which can lead to the plants increased tolerance during periods of dry conditions.

While deep aeration is not a replacement for adding or renewing drainage where needed, it is a starting point for traditional greenkeeping practices to be part of a sustainable approach towards improvement. **GI**

“ Deep solid tine aeration has been hugely beneficial across a range of courses and soil types. It has penetrated compacted soils typically aerating through the top 250mm fissuring the soil structure to encourage improved drainage and deeper rooting”

being placed on the abstraction of water used for irrigating the course.

While the current predicament is dealing with 'not enough water', I want to again reflect on the prevailing wet conditions of 2023-2024 as there are interesting learnings from courses who followed advice and applied deep solid tine aeration in response to the impact of wet weather.

In my September column, I posed

Where applied, deep solid tine aeration has been hugely beneficial across a range of courses and soil types. The deep aeration has penetrated compacted soils, typically aerating through the top 250mm, fissuring the soil structure to encourage improved drainage and deeper rooting.

The change to drier conditions has also created additional fissuring in the



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