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# Greenkeeper International

## Leading by example

Lyall Burkin, Steve Chandler and Melissa Winkworth on Goring & Streatley's award-winning environmentally responsible golf course



**Practical Greenkeeping**  
Coping with variable growth in spring

**Member Interest**  
We meet Wales Golf's Greenkeeper of the Year

**From Your Association**  
The BIGGA members who visited TPC Sawgrass

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May 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.**

BIGGA's activities on a national and regional level are underpinned by the generosity of our industry partners and supporters. BIGGA's various member benefits, learning and development opportunities and other activities are made possible due to the ongoing commitment shown by these companies, organisations and individual donors. From our supporters through to our national patrons and partners, our thanks go to them all for their dedication to BIGGA and its members.



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# First Cut

All you need to know from around our industry

- London GC's Max Sutton is first greenkeeper in UK to gain new qualification
- Parkstone greenkeeper runs London Marathon for dog rescue centre



## Eddie's pride as Shirley wins Club of the Year at England Golf Awards

Shirley Golf Club Course Manager Eddie Mills expressed his "immense pride" at the role the greenkeeping team played in the club's triumph at the England Golf Awards.

The Warwickshire venue emerged victorious in the prestigious Club of the Year category, receiving the honour before 400 guests at an event at the Hilton Manchester Deansgate.

Hosted by BBC Sport presenter Mark Chapman, the awards recognised those who have gone above and beyond in their contributions to golf.

And Shirley was one of the night's big winners, with recognition given to its outstanding commitment to inclusivity, sustainability and community engagement.

"As course manager it has given me immense pride for our team to be part of this award," said Eddie. "We strive to give our members a course they can be proud of and also for them to showcase it to the many visitors who play at Shirley.

"We as a greens team expect and aspire to maintain a culture of excellence within ourselves to achieve this. It's been a real team effort throughout the club to win this award and it means so much to me to be a part of this wonderful golf club."

Accepting the award, General Manager Aneil Chauhan said: "This is great recognition for the work they've done for many years. We have a fantastic team, with some amazing

volunteers, so this is amazing."

There was also success for Stover Golf Club, who won Tournament Venue of the Year with Course Manager Jason Brooks and his team playing an integral role.

General Manager Simon Bawden heaped praise on the greenkeeping staff after they provided a fitting stage for the English Women's County Finals last September.

"Two months out Jason started putting a programme together to ensure the course was presented in the best possible fashion," he said. "Jason and his team worked tirelessly in the run-up to the event and this continued during the tournament week itself. **GI**

## The BIGGA Calendar

May: Charlie Lacey, Camberley Heath



## Double ALBAS success for Prestwick's Max

Apprentice greenkeeper Max Campbell was named the Horticulture Learner of the Year at Lantra Scotland's Awards for Land-based and Aquaculture Skills (ALBAS).

The young Prestwick Golf Club apprentice was honoured at a glittering ceremony held at the Crieff Hydro Hotel in Perthshire in March.

It proved to be a double celebration as he was also the Overall Runner-up, narrowly missing out on the night's most coveted prize.

Max, who is doing an SVQ in greenkeeping at SRUC Elmwood while working as an apprentice at the South Ayrshire venue, was delighted to pick up both prizes.

"It is an incredible honour and a huge milestone in my greenkeeping journey," he said.

"It's a real testament to the hard work I've put in and the support I've had from my mentors and colleagues.

"I'm eager to keep learning and

growing within the industry, with the goal of becoming a head greenkeeper in the future.

"Greenkeeping is an incredibly rewarding career, from tackling daily challenges to knowing my work can directly improve playability and enhance the experience for every golfer."

Max was among more than 200 finalists, event supporters, employers, training providers and industry leaders in attendance, with recipients honoured across multiple categories covering agriculture, aquaculture, equine, game and wildlife, horticulture, land-based engineering, trees and timber and veterinary nursing.

The winners and runners-up were chosen by an independent judging panel consisting of influential figures from across the land-based and aquaculture sector.

The ALBAS are organised by Lantra, the sector skills council for the land-based, aquaculture and environmental



conservation industries.

"It is a privilege to be part of the ALBAS and to help put the spotlight on some of the incredible people in Scotland's land-based and aquaculture sector, while also encouraging employers to look ahead at their future workforce," said Dr Liz Barron-Majerik, Lantra's Scotland director.

"Everyone who was nominated for our awards should be proud of that achievement, but with the standard of entries continuing to get better each year, it means that our winners are quite simply the best of the best from our sector." **GI**

## A greenkeeper's best friend – Billy

Owner: Chris O'Connor

Course: Outlane Golf Club

Breed: Mix greyhound/lurcher



Age: 8 years old

Favourite treat: Anything

Favourite spot: Wet in the ditches

Naughtiest moment: Nose in

people's pockets looking for treats

My dog is happiest: When covered up in bed



## What's on this month

### Dates for your diary

**1 May**

The Cleveland Shield 2025 Knockout draw

**7 May**

BIGGA North Wales Section Education Day - Royal St. David's

**9 May**

BIGGA Northern Ireland Golf Championship – Ardglass

**13 May**

BIGGA South West Scotland Golf Championship – Kilmarnock Barassie

**15 May**

Spring Competition East Midlands – Glen Gorse

**19 May**

BIGGA Northern Legacy Golf Day - Bramhall

**20 May**

BIGGA West Scotland Section Hampden Park visit – Hampden Park

First Green STEM Field Trip – Newquay

BIGGA North East of Scotland Golf Championship – Portlethen

BIGGA South East Region Golf Day - Romford

**21 May**

BIGGA London Section Spring Golf Day – Sudbury

BIGGA Sheffield Section Spring Golf Day – Abbeydale

BIGGA Yorkshire Section Spring Golf Day - Bracken Ghill

East Of England Spring Golf & Networking - Waltham Windmill

**22 May**

Raglan Course Walk – Raglan

**29 May**

BIGGA Cleveland Section Spring Golf Day – Middlesbrough

Royal St. David's



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# Max blazes a trail for apprentice greenkeepers

London Golf Club's Max Sutton has become the first greenkeeper to achieve the revised Golf Greenkeeper Apprenticeship Standard (Version 1.1) after passing the rigorous End Point Assessment with flying colours.

The Hadlow College apprentice's assessment, awarded by Lantra, tested all facets of his greenkeeping expertise, from a comprehensive knowledge exam to an in-depth professional discussion and practical assessments.

Max had to demonstrate not just technical ability, but also precision, diligence and a sharp eye for detail. His skills were put to the test across a range of core greenkeeping tasks, including tractor operations, mowing, hole changing, bunker and tee ground maintenance and even grass identification, all while maintaining the highest health and safety standards. Beyond the practical work, Max also compiled an extensive portfolio of evidence, showcasing his knowledge, skills and professional behaviours.

His hard work and dedication culminated in a landmark achievement, officially recognised by Lantra as the first completion of this new standard in the UK.

"I was thrilled to achieve the qualification," said Max, who has since been promoted from trainee greenkeeper to a qualified member of staff. "The exam really challenged my knowledge and skills, and I hope to use this as a stepping stone to further my career."

Anthony Stockwell, senior skills trainer at Hadlow College, lauded Max's achievement.

"I'm delighted for Max," he said. "He has shown drive, determination, and a real passion for the industry. To be the first in the UK to achieve this qualification is a fantastic accomplishment."

Anthony continued: "At just 20 years old, I couldn't be

**“He has paved the way for the next generation of greenkeepers striving for excellence in the industry”**

prouder to have had him as a student and he has a great future ahead of him.

"Max's success not only marks a personal milestone but also sets the bar for future apprentices."

"As the first to complete this new standard, he has paved the way for the next generation of greenkeepers striving for excellence in the industry."

Hadlow College is based in Tonbridge and is part of North Kent College, one of the country's leading apprenticeship providers. **GI**



# Parkstone's marathon man ready for the challenge (and a day off)



Parkstone greenkeeper Greg Compton is running the London Marathon on 27 April, but don't expect to see him back at work the next day.

Greg, who took up running last year, is raising money for Waggy Tails Rescue, a Dorset charity that rehomes dogs.

He has set his sights on an ambitious time, though he had the good sense to plan ahead for what will be a much-needed day of respite.

"The first thing I did was book the next day off work," he laughed. "I'll definitely need that!"

Greg has been a spectator at the event for the past four years and is now excited, if not also a little daunted, to be taking part himself as he laces up his shoes to tackle the 26.2-mile route that includes some of the capital's most

famous sights and finishes on The Mall.

"It's a great experience just watching it," he said. "The crowd is amazing and I've loved being part of that. Running it will be a bit different but I'm looking forward to it."

While some like to get their training runs in before work, that is not particularly practical for a greenkeeper, so Greg has done much of his mileage in the afternoons after his shift is done.

"Training has been going okay," he said. "I started around Christmas, which was great because I could eat whatever I wanted."

"I've got up to around 50 kilometres a week and I'm looking forward to tapering off a bit."

Pressed on what time he is aiming for, he added: "I tell everyone I've got three targets – the first is just to finish, the second is to go under four hours, and then if everything is feeling good I want something around 3 hours 45 minutes."

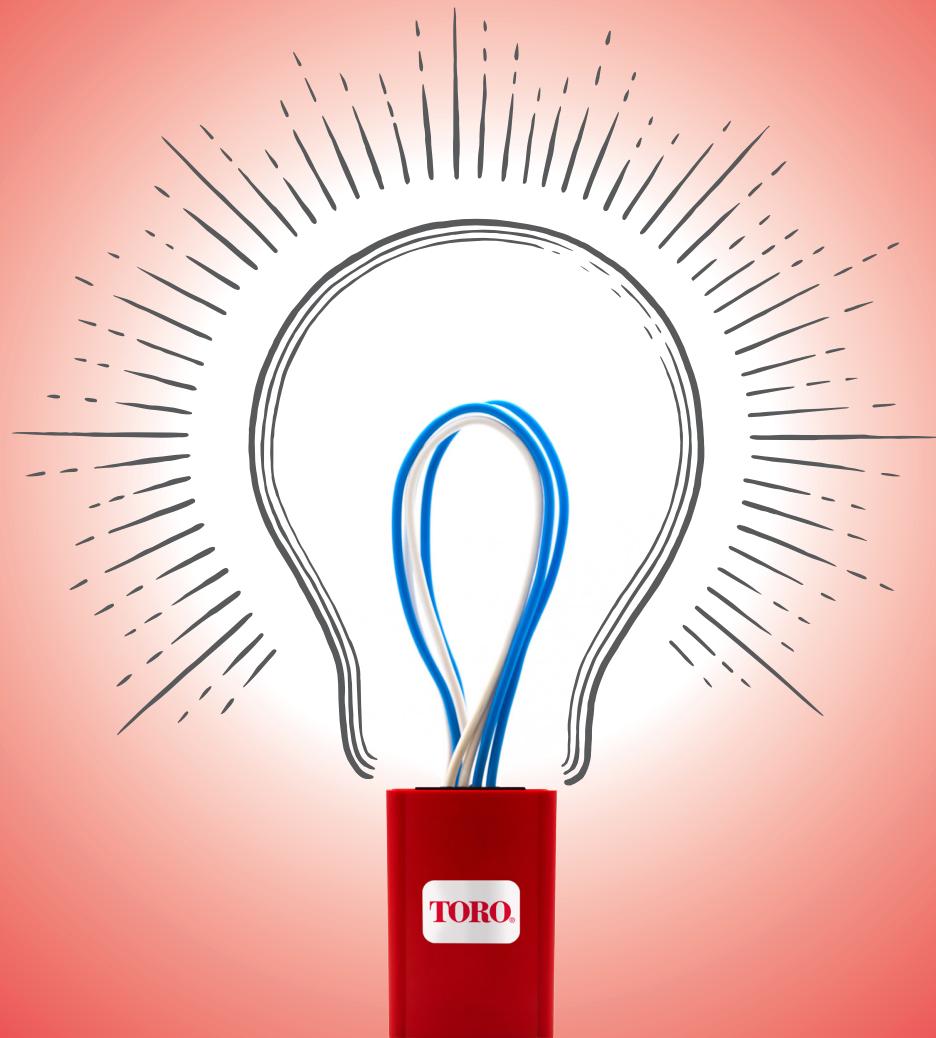
Greg chose his charity as he wanted to support a local cause and, while he and his partner are not currently in a position to take on a rescue dog, he saw raising money for Waggy Tails Rescue as the next best thing.

"Waggy Tails is a dog rescue centre that is local to me," he explained. "Having just a small team, they hugely depend on their great volunteers and from people who kindly donate to allow them to continue to look after these furry friends and ultimately find these dogs the forever homes that they deserve." **GI**  
Scan the QR code to find out how Greg got on and make a donation



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# From your Association

Representing the greenkeeping community

- BIGGA announces Clere Golf as the association's latest official Partner
- Two BIGGA members partake in the opportunity of a lifetime at Sawgrass



## Take your career to the next level with the Future Turf Managers Initiative

Applications for the Future Turf Managers Initiative (FTMI) open on 1 May, providing ambitious greenkeepers with an opportunity to pursue their career aspirations.

BIGGA and our Premium Partner Jacobsen recognise the importance of preparing greenkeepers to take on managerial roles and FTMI provides professional trainers and mentors to give candidates the skills, knowledge and confidence to take the next step.

FTMI begins at Ransomes Jacobsen's headquarters in Ipswich before a series

of online education sessions and two days of education at BTME in January.

This initiative is aimed at greenkeepers who want to move into management, with a focus on personal and professional development rather than agronomy-based subjects.

The ideal candidate will show initiative, dedication to greenkeeping, a genuine interest in the industry and be actively involved in education at both a regional and national level. They will have worked as a greenkeeper for a minimum of three years and

will hold their Level 2 qualification. A nominator will be required to validate each application. International BIGGA members will be expected to meet their own travel expenses.

Dan Martin, irrigation manager at the London Golf Club, who was among the latest cohort, said: "It was a really great experience, with a good mix of online and in-person learning. The lessons that we gained out of it and the new skills and experiences we had are going to massively help boost my career as a prospective turf manager." **GI**

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

# BIGGA and The R&A select 10 greenkeepers for first championship agronomy experience



## Where the volunteers will be

- The 153rd Open at Royal Portrush
- The Senior Open at Sunningdale
- The AIG Women's Open at Royal Porthcawl
- The Amateur Championship at Royal St George's and Royal Cinque Ports
- The Women's Amateur Championship at Nairn

BIGGA and The R&A have selected 10 ambitious and talented greenkeepers to provide tournament support during five of this year's biggest championship events.

The group will join the home greenkeeping teams for the hosting of this summer's R&A championships, including The Open at Royal Portrush and the AIG Women's Open at Sunningdale. The greenkeepers will gain experience in elite tournament preparation, working alongside the host teams and The R&A's Championship Agronomy Team.

Each member is selected to participate at one of the championships, where they will be fully embedded into the home greenkeeping team. The entire group will also assemble at an Open venue in April for an education session and will be invited to attend The Open at Royal Portrush, where they will learn about course preparation and the staging of a major championship.

The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme is the latest exclusive offering for members of BIGGA, building on the existing programme of exciting member initiatives, each intended to further the ability and skill of greenkeeping professionals.

Jim Croxton, BIGGA CEO, said: "BIGGA members have access to an incredible range of exclusive career-development opportunities and I'm convinced that The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme will soon be held among the upper echelons of those. The opportunity to be involved at the very heart of these world-class championships

will be instrumental in the careers of our members.

"My congratulations go to the 10 members selected to participate in this first cohort. I'm really looking forward to meeting them all when they gather together soon. The emphasis is now on them to make the most of the opportunity and represent our profession and association to the highest standard. Who knows, maybe one or more of them will go on in the future to a career in championship agronomy.

"My thanks go to The R&A Agronomy team and the greenkeepers at each of the host venues for the enthusiasm that has brought this programme to fruition." **GI**

## BIGGA members selected for 2025

- Dean Baily, Heswall Golf Club
- Steven Connolly, Ansty Golf Centre
- Kyle Gauld, Whitecraigs Golf Club
- Jack Hall, Kilworth Springs Golf Club
- Adam Matthews, Minchinhampton Golf Club
- Geoffrey Seath, Broadstone Golf Club
- Duncan Sieling, The Richmond Golf Club
- Christopher Szoradi, The Manchester Golf Club
- Bradley Taylor, Beau Desert Golf Club
- Ethan Walker, Enville Golf Club



## Teamwork makes First Green work



Tony Dineen declared the First Green event at Thorndon Park an unqualified success after 45 schoolchildren were introduced to the wonderful world of greenkeeping

The Essex club hosted students from Hogarth Primary School in Brentwood, with the kids making the 35-minute journey on foot to enjoy a fun-filled day of STEM learning on the golf course.

Deputy Head Greenkeeper Tony was full of praise for the staff, who all chipped in to help despite some initial nerves.

"It went better than I could ever have imagined," he said.

"Getting the whole team involved was great fun, and they all did brilliantly even if at first their faces dropped when they realised they'd be dealing with a load of kids for four hours!"

"I paired everyone up and they each worked across the five stations. Once they got into it, they really enjoyed it and the kids loved it."

Tony made sure there was a running theme from one station to the next, making the whole experience immersive and engaging for the youngsters, who got hands-on with some machinery, learned about soils and seeds, and tested out their putting skills.

It proved to be an incredibly effective approach, with Tony

receiving glowing feedback from the school staff.

"The head teacher pulled me to one side and said there were a couple of kids who struggle to engage in schoolwork in the classroom, but they were responding really well to being in this environment," he explained. "It was amazing to know that this was appealing to them and getting their attention."

Tony is hopeful the experience of visiting their local golf course will put greenkeeping on the radar as a career option for the children, and he expressed his gratitude to the people who helped make it happen.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to the club and Head Greenkeeper David Byron for their support," he said. "David gave me the freedom and flexibility to do the background work of organising it, and it was a brilliant day."

"It's a fantastic initiative and I'd say to anyone thinking about getting involved, just take the plunge – reach out to anyone who has done it before, myself included, and you'll find people are more than happy to help." **GI**



### About First Green

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

In doing so, First Green hopes to inspire the next generation of greenkeepers.

**Get involved by scanning the QR code**



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find out more

# Greenkeeping – it's a kind of magic



Kevin Fish  
Advisor

I'm honoured to be the only non-greenkeeper on the BIGGA Board and excited to serve as your support act

When I decided to move from insurance into the exciting world of the golf club industry, it felt like a slightly safer version of running away to the circus. Not as much time on the road perhaps, but still plenty of dangerous animals to deal with and lots of spoilt children who never quite seem happy with their candy floss.

My own golf club's general manager had come from a greenkeeping background, and I assumed that was the common route into club management. Off I went to BTME back in 1999 to form a golf club manager's appreciation of the role of the course manager. I was blown away by the professionalism, the insight, the structured training opportunities and the willingness of the old hands to help the youngsters on their way.

I assumed the same range of support would be available to help me on my way in club management – how wrong could I be?

This disappointment inspired me to set up the first meaningful structured education for club managers. In 2011, we launched the Management



Development Programme (MDP), and I made no secret of the fact that the professional organisation that CMAE was set up to emulate was BIGGA.

You can see then why the invitation to join the Board of BIGGA was so significant for me. I understand that very few non-greenkeepers get to serve on the Board, and I am under no illusion as to what my role is, and what it is not.

In my 25 years in the industry, I have had the privilege of working with some incredibly smart greenkeepers from whom I have learned a huge amount. The skills and knowledge that

greenkeepers have put them on a par with rules officials, celebrity chefs and even magicians doing card tricks – the correct way is obvious, but only when someone shows you how.

I have always been keen to learn that knowledge from those that know, and support them to make the magic happen.

I have also seen some fantastic greenkeepers attend the MDP programme, which I ran for several years. I know from their feedback that it has helped them significantly in their current roles, as well as developing their knowledge base to allow them to consider

extending their remit to the more office-based side of the industry.

Anybody who has spent some time in a classroom with me (or a bar for that matter) will know that I pride myself on always having the data behind any recommendation I make. They will also say that I help people be the best versions of themselves they can be.

In my early days of supporting BIGGA, I have been incredibly impressed with the people elected to represent you, the members, and I hope that I can continue to bring my own brand of support to the table. **GI**

A photograph of a golf course at sunset. In the foreground, a Kress RTK^n robotic mower is shown from a low angle, cutting the grass. In the background, a golfer is silhouetted against the setting sun, putting a ball into a hole marked by a flagstick.

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With  
Jim Croxton, CEO

# Your Course: Helping golfers appreciate the skill and passion of greenkeepers

CEO Jim Croxton discusses how Your Course magazine is helping to educate golfers on the brilliant work of greenkeepers

I hope by now you have all read the latest issue of Your Course. Although it is not our members who are the primary target audience, it's a great way to see how we, as an association, are championing the work you do directly to golfers.

Ultimately, golfers have a significant impact on the professional lives of our members as they occupy positions of influence across the industry. They are customers, they sit on committees, they are general managers, greens chairpeople, even club owners, and in each of those guises they shape the working environment of greenkeepers.

Our overriding goal with Your Course is to help golfers understand the complexity of greenkeeping and showcase the professionalism and passion of our members.

We want them to appreciate that there is a skilled and dedicated workforce out there whose priority is to present golf courses to the highest standard they can with the resources they have at their disposal.

I'm confident we have a receptive audience for this message.

I have often found that when people find out my role, they are genuinely interested in some facet of the industry and will ask precisely the kind of questions that Your Course answers.

**“There is a curiosity among golfers that we are seeking to satisfy”**

We are not trying to lecture people or force something on them they have no interest in; there is a curiosity among golfers that we are seeking to satisfy by presenting a variety of issues that greenkeepers across the spectrum have to face.

Ensuring a consistent level of communication and engagement with golfers and the wider industry is a key part of our strategy, and the ongoing

need to provide this kind of insight and education is evident.

I'm coming up on 14 years in this job and have decades of experience in the golf industry – I am no stranger to greenkeepers or the work they do. In fact, having grown up on a golf course, I came into this role thinking I knew a fair chunk of what there was to know about greenkeeping – how wrong I was!

A good greenkeeper can demonstrate an incredible depth of knowledge and technical know-how, allowing them to rightfully lay claim to being an expert in their field, and that is a message we are keen to amplify.

Yet we need to strike a balance, as we are not trying to convert golfers into turfgrass professionals or make them experts on soil biology. Instead our aim is to create an understanding that the greenkeepers at their course are skilled and passionate professionals who are committed to delivering great quality playing surfaces. We believe Your Course is a key part in achieving that goal. **GI**

## About Your Course

First launched in 2018, Your Course returned in 2024 as a twice-yearly print offering. With copies landing in golf clubs in spring and late summer each year, the magazine explores the most relevant topics relating to golf course management, informing golfers about what it takes to maintain a modern golf course and the challenges faced by the greenkeepers at their own facility.

Alongside the print magazine, we are building a database of articles and other resources that are intended to be read by golfers and shared by those interested in the industry, as a means of raising awareness for the activities of greenkeepers.



Scan Me to find out more



### MEET THE PANEL

Andrew Laing  
Position: Head  
Greenkeeper  
Club: Gaudet Luce  
About his course: "We have push up greens, which were constructed originally with a black ash material, which was the waste product from a coal-fired power station. Thirty years on, with three decades of tea dressing, and we're at a point where we're about 95% sand with 5% silt and 2% clay. That's pretty good from where we were."

Caroline Munro  
Position: Head  
Greenkeeper  
Club: Bonar Bridge  
and Ardgy Golf Club  
About her course: "I have 10 greens altogether – including a putting green – and five of them are a putting green – and five of them are USGA specification greens. I am pushing up, I treat them the same, apart from when it comes to aeration. When I'm working on aeration, when I'm in solid tining, I go down only four to five inches on the push ups, compared to up to eight inches on the USGA."

Rob Sandlands  
Position: Course  
Manager  
Club: Fornity Ladies  
About his course: "We have native sand greens, but the sand is quite dark so while they drain really well they do hold onto a reasonable amount of nutrient. We think about Collado some time ago in the late 1920s, but they are a very old profile."

We spoke to three course managers about how they maintain their greens, the factors that go into speeds and the ongoing impact of climate change

bigga.org.uk

# ALL ABOUT GREENS

## GREENS MAINTENANCE

Given decent surfaces to putt on, golfers are invariably happy. We asked the experts to share their advice on how to create and maintain them

recovery and growth, when they are a combination of bare, soft and frozen, they are subjected to the usual onslaught of pitchmarks and footprints. Not many of us take very kindly to temporary greens when we have managed to get out on the course for the first and only time in a couple of weeks. We also increasingly demand fast greens, as in we determine that the quality of a course is in direct proportion to the speed of its greens. Which is a strange concept because there is compelling evidence to suggest fast greens make for slow play, and it is also true that the faster the greens are, the less slope can be utilized, which makes the game less interesting.

In the section of Your Course, we have gathered opinion and insight from expert greenkeepers who work at a variety of courses up and down the land. We trust we have asked the right questions that come at your club – and that their answers will help you to work with your own course manager and team to produce best possible greens both this summer and in the

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# Clere Golf reinforces its commitment to greenkeeping with BIGGA partnership

We are proud to announce that Clere Golf has become the association's latest official Partner

For almost 20 years, Clere Golf has supported golf clubs throughout the UK and Europe by surveying, mapping and measuring golf courses to produce products underpinned by the data it captures.

Operating across commercial and professional golf, Clere Golf supports clubs, tours, governing bodies, professional players and caddies worldwide, with its products proven and trusted.

Yardage books, scorecards, course measurement and certification, green reading material, pin location systems and course signage have been at the core of the business since it began.

"For many years we've surveyed golf courses and captured a wealth of data that underpins our products," said Clere Golf's Managing Director Steve Richardson.

"It quickly became apparent that this data would be incredibly useful to the teams that manage the golf course; for this reason we developed golfHUB, allowing greenkeeping teams to not only access data that will support their everyday roles but will enable them to document important projects and showcase all of the great work being carried out.

"Uptake of golfHUB has been great to see with teams using it for so many different reasons, whether that's to document winter programmes, plan course changes, compare aerial surveys, support ongoing ecology programmes or plan irrigation projects - to name just a few use cases."

Steve is excited about the link-up with BIGGA as Clere Golf continues to demonstrate its commitment to greenkeeping and the broader golf industry.

"Working as a business affiliate with BIGGA will enable us to share the stories of how greenkeeping teams are successfully using golfHUB and demonstrate how it can support their own personal and professional development," he added.

"We understand the importance of team growth, so developing a product which can help others with their own professional development is something we're really proud of."



The company's golfHUB software brings together all course-related data into one central location for fast recall and analysis, including topographic surveys, as-built plans, elevation profiles and aerial imagery.

Greenkeeping teams use golfHUB to build and monitor programmes of work backed by photographic evidence and critical documentation for club-wide collaboration.

Course managers can build a digital portfolio that showcases their work and supports their personal development. [GI](#)

## Your chance to join the volunteer team at the BMW PGA Championship

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# Welcome to our new members

## Northern

**Thomas Beauchamp (AGK)**  
Blackwell Grange

**Max Cornes (A)**  
Golf Tournament Support

**Adam Curtis (AGK)**  
Spofforth

**Jack Davies (GK)**  
**Mark McConnell (AGK)**  
Heswall

**Michael Haines (G)**  
**Leo Riley (GK)**  
Wirral

**Paul McFerran (G)**  
Warrington

**Alan Moorby (GK)**  
Great Harwood

**James Richardson (GK)**  
Seaton Carew

**Peter Taylor (HGK)**  
Ashton-in-Makerfield

## Ben Winstanley (GK) Woolton

## Northern Ireland

**Brian Manson (HGK)**  
Whitehead

## International

**Segio Campos Serna (I)**  
Alicante Golf, Spain

**Holmar Freyr Christiansson (I)**  
Reykjavik, Iceland

**Kyle Hegland (SUP)**  
Sand Hills, USA

**Ian McGuinness (I)**  
Roganstown, Ireland

**Luca Nardari (I)**  
Kristianstads Golfklubb, Sweden

**Björn Ólason (I)**  
Brautarholt Golf Course, Iceland

## Alex Portaankorva (I) Golf Talma, Finland

## Scotland

**Jamie Barker (APP)**  
The Hon Company of Edinburgh Golfers

**Ryan Fox (AGK)**  
**Keith Reid (AGK)**  
North Berwick

**Moray Winning (AGK)**  
Fort William

## Central

**Dan Greenham (S)**  
**Gareth Grewcock (S)**  
Clere Golf

**Archy Hopkins (AGK)**  
Ladbrook Park

**Darren Howes (AGK)**  
Sudbury

**Mark Kudarenko (AGK)**  
Llanymynech

## Mark Mason (A) Lawn in Glory

## Joseph Naylor (GK) Glen Gorse

**Eathan Paul (AGK)**  
Temple

**Andrew Richardson (FA)**  
Thonock Park

**Toby Rogers (AGK)**  
Oakmere Park

**David Saunders (GK)**  
Robin Hood

**Joshua Tolaini (AGK)**  
The Belfry

## South West & South Wales

**Peter Beadle (AGK)**  
Gloucester

**Gregg Cobley (AGK)**  
**Louis Cobley (GK)**  
Llanishen

**Key**

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<b>APP</b>	Apprentice
<b>ATP</b>	Approved Training Provider
<b>CA</b>	College Assessor
<b>CM</b>	Course Manager
<b>DCM</b>	Deputy Course Manager
<b>DHGK</b>	Deputy Head Greenkeeper
<b>FA</b>	First Assistant
<b>GK</b>	Greenkeeper
<b>G</b>	Groundsperson
<b>HGK</b>	Head Greenkeeper
<b>HG</b>	Head Groundsperson
<b>I</b>	International Member
<b>L</b>	Life Member
<b>M</b>	Mechanic
<b>P</b>	Partner
<b>R</b>	Retired Member
<b>RP</b>	Regional Patron
<b>S</b>	Supporter
<b>ST</b>	Student Member
<b>SUP</b>	Superintendent

**Andy Collman (AGK)****Benjamin Williams-Thomas (AGK)**

Taunton &amp; Pickeridge

**Daniel Davies (AGK)**

Brynhill (Barry)

**Richard Gould (AGK)**

Corhampton

**Joshua Sloman (AGK)**

Burnham &amp; Berrow

**South East****Alexander Bagshaw (APP)**

Nizels G&amp;CC

**Charles Bell (GK)****David Storrar (GK)**

Sundridge Park

**Connor Dacombe (APP)**

Sheerness

**Zachary Davidson (S)****Steve Richardson (S)**

Clere Golf

**Dean Gooch (DHGK)****Marcus Strak (GK)**

Bungay &amp; Waveney Valley

**Joshua Knight (APP)**

Felixstowe Ferry

**Mark Lake-Styles (APP)**

High Elms

**Max Lintott (AGK)****Andrew Thomas (AGK)**

Puttenham

**Darcy May (GK)****Ciaran McAuley (GK)**

Northwood

**Rocco Monteith (AGK)**

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**Luke Taylor (APP)**

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**Thomas White (AGK)**

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Robert Sandilands, Formby Ladies

Stefan Carter, Wentworth

Graham Burnett, Nairn Dunbar

Ronan Latham, JCB

Jack Wellings, JCB

Bradley Birch, Redditch

Richard Johnstone MG, Royal Aberdeen

Steven Mullen, Gullane

Jack Heslehurst, Driffield

Paul Legg, Cardigan

Samuel Fennell, Edgaston

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

Robert Sandilands, Formby Ladies

James Wheatley, Stanton on the Wolds

Martin Turna, Royal Worlington &amp; Newmarket

Paul Connolly, Sandyhills

David Edmondson, Prestwick

Bradley Taylor, Beau Desert

Charlie Ham, Roehampton

# 'The best thing I've done in my career'

The John Deere TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Programme provided two persistent BIGGA members with the opportunity of a lifetime



The road to achieving career ambitions does not always run smoothly and there are bound to be diversions along the way, but Wayne Aris and Damien Coleman are proof that perseverance will get you to your destination eventually.

Both had their sights set on being part of the John Deere TPC Sawgrass Volunteer Programme, joining the in-house team to prepare one of the world's finest courses for The Players Championship.

Neither was successful at the first attempt, despite making it to the final stage. Rather than seeing that as a setback, they took it as encouragement that the opportunity of a lifetime was within their reach and made the cut the next time.

"Going through the process the first time was a worthwhile experience, even though I didn't get in," said Damien, golf course superintendent at Galway Bay Golf Resort. "I knew what to expect second time around and I spoke to two guys who had been awarded the chance before, asking them advice.

"It's something I've wanted to do for quite a while. I've done quite a few tournaments but never a PGA Tour event, so it was exciting to get in second time around."

The 2025 cohort met at BTME for initial introductions before joining up again at their Heathrow hotel prior to the flight out to Florida. Wayne, course manager at Langley Park, felt an instant connection with the group.

"It might sound like a bit of a cliché, but as soon as we met you could tell we were all going to get along," he said. "I didn't quite expect us to have such a good laugh, but we really did."

The group arrived just as a storm was rolling in over Ponte Vedra Beach, with a torrential downpour delaying their opportunity to familiarise themselves with their allocated duties.

When the weather broke, and after the early morning work had been carried out by the light of headtorches, the pair were blown away at the sight of the course.

"It was amazing to stand in a place that I had only seen on television or played on a computer game and to know the best players in the world had stood there too," said Damien.

## The 2025 John Deere TPC Sawgrass volunteers

- **Wayne Aris**, course manager at Langley Park
- **Jake Boardman**, deputy course manager at Frilford Heath
- **Damien Coleman**, golf course superintendent at Galway Bay
- **Sam Ewing**, first assistant at Crane Valley
- **James Hampson**, deputy head greenkeeper at Llanymynech
- **Tim Leat**, assistant superintendent at Rich River
- **Alistair Morrison**, head greenkeeper at Durness

"It was a surreal experience to be on this iconic course, with its famous 17th hole, immersed in this world during the week of The Players Championship."

Wayne was equally impressed and, despite insisting he would have been happy no matter what task he was assigned, he was particularly pleased to be given responsibility for cutting greens – even if it meant shouldering the burden of a little added pressure.

"When I say to you there wasn't a blade of grass out of place, I'm not even joking; it was quite incredible," he said. "I really wanted to be on the greens, and I was lucky enough to

get that job. I was cutting the putting green, first green, fourth green and seventh green pretty much every morning and the surfaces were absolutely mint, like everything else there."

"You do feel a bit like an apprentice for the first day or two because you want to get it right. You can overthink it but there are plenty of supervisors around and they're happy to support and answer any questions."

Indeed, the scale of the operation was one of the most striking elements of the whole experience.

"They've got around 100 full-timers and another 100 volunteers in for tournament week," explained Wayne. "They've got the numbers, they've got the machinery and the supervisors make sure everyone knows their job."

"In some cases, you've got five or six people doing a job you would usually do on your own, but it just means everything's getting done down to the finest little detail."

"If something else comes up it gets covered, and if anything needs sorting it gets done because they have the people to do it."

Damien was entrusted with mowing approaches and green surrounds – a task well within his usual comfort zone, but in the context of such a prestigious event on such a renowned course, still one that required his utmost attention.

"That's one of the reasons I like to do these tournaments – to feel that pressure," he said. "Sure, you know how to do the job, but it's a bit different when you've got [Director of

Golf Course Maintenance Operations] Jeff Plotts or [Assistant Director of Golf Course Operations] Lucas Andrews standing over you."

"These are guys at the top of our industry so you're going to feel pressure, but that's amazing because when you pull it off and someone says, 'good job', you feel great and you realise you can do it under pressure."

Being charged with taking care of such a specific set of tasks, while in stark contrast to their responsibilities back at their own courses, afforded Damien and Wayne a tremendous sense of ownership over their specific remit.

"Because I was mowing the same six approaches and green surrounds for the whole time, there was a great sense of pride in the work," said Damien. "When that approach appeared on television and when Rory McIlroy is chipping off the stripes that you've cut, and only you cut them, there was an immense sense of pride in that for me."

McIlroy was a popular winner among the volunteers, although the Monday finish and rearranged flights meant they were on a plane when his play-off triumph was sealed. It still seemed like just another cherry on a lavishly decorated cake – more than either had dared to dream of.

Wayne enthused: "From a social perspective, it was class. From a working perspective, it was class. And from a learning perspective, I think it was probably the best thing I've done in my career." **GI**



Damien Coleman



Wayne Aris

## Wayne and Damien's top five tips for Sawgrass selection

- Do your research – there's no such thing as being over-prepared
- Speak with people who have been before
- Step out of your comfort zone
- Build up your CV with other tournament experience
- Be confident in your ability and knowledge

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# Member Interest

Where we meet your fellow turf professionals and share their stories

- Wales Golf Greenkeeper of the Year Stuart Adams discusses his approach to sustainability and management at Cardigan Golf Club



**It was the right time to throw my hat in the ring"**

## It's never too late for a change – how David Wyborn is rolling back the years



David Wyborn spent 36 years at Foxhills before deciding it was time for a change and he now has a new lease of life as head greenkeeper at Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort.

Despite such lengthy service with one club, David's career path reflects a man who knows when the time is right to try something different.

Having left school thinking that "golf courses just magically appeared", David cut his teeth at Surrey's New Zealand Golf Club before moving into landscaping. When he rejoined the industry a few years later, it was the legendary Jack McMillan who offered him a position at Sunningdale. "That was a fantastic experience,"

said David. "We had European Opens and all sorts, which was great to be a part of."

When a position came up at Foxhills, David phoned Neville Shade, the head greenkeeper, and was offered the job that he kept for the next 36 years.

David went on to manage the Longcross course before jointly taking charge with David Langheim following Neville's departure. He became course manager outright in 2008, with the club twice hosting the PGA Cup during his time at the helm.

But despite loving the role and being proud of his input into improvements and projects, David needed a new challenge and felt Foxhills would benefit from "a fresh pair of eyes".

He decided to relocate to Wiltshire

and, through his contacts, received an offer to work at Bowood three days a week under Jaey Goodchild. And when Jaey joined The R&A, David found himself drawn back to the idea of taking on the top job.

"I'd got my hunger back," he explained. "I just thought Bowood is such a fantastic piece of land and such a great place to be, with so much further potential, I felt it was the right time to throw my hat in the ring."

Having landed the job, David outlined his plans for Bowood.

"The aim is to improve presentation and enhance the overall experience," he said. "We want to put Bowood in the best possible position to entice people to play golf here and continue to grow our membership." **Gl**



# Cardigan the perfect fit for award-winning Stuart Adams

The Wales Golf Greenkeeper of the Year is perfectly at home at the clifftop links, with the full support of the club and a dedicated team under his care

Stuart Adams exudes the kind of infectious enthusiasm that can't help but put a smile on your face. Asked how he got his start in greenkeeping, he barely pauses for breath as he recounts his entire career - deviating occasionally from the main thread to weave in some other salient detail as he paints the vivid picture of a man who loves his job.

It is clear that Stuart's energy and expertise have been fundamental to the ongoing rise of Cardigan, which in 2023 was named Wales Golf Club of the Year.

The man himself was honoured with the Wales Golf Greenkeeper of the Year Award in March in recognition of his outstanding work at the clifftop links that enjoys stunning views over Cardigan Bay.

Stuart's commitment to sustainability has seen Cardigan become a shining example of how to work with nature while producing exceptional playing surfaces conducive to the environment.

He joined the club in 2017 and it was in March the following year that the last fungicide application went down, while inputs of nitrogen, pesticide and water have been vastly reduced.

## Fescue to the rescue

The course boasts pristine fescue surfaces after a carefully managed sward transition that has elevated the playing experience and aligned the turf conditions with the natural environment. That was a key objective of Stuart's from day one.

"In the first greens meeting I said you can chase speed through low cuts or go back to the indigenous plant that should be on the course, and we run with fescue," he explained.

"I told them the first thing that we'll need to do is lift the cutting heights, which was received with a bit of a gasp from the committee, because they obviously wanted faster greens. I explained that the way to get these greens faster is if we change cultivars, we species select and start pushing back to the fescue."

"There's no magic to it – it's just persistence and understanding the needs of fescue."

Despite the inevitable initial drawbacks, the short-term pain proved to be worth it in the end, with evident results after little more than a year.

## Career Timeline

1994-98	2001-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-present
Bells (assistant)	Tenby (assistant)	Haverfordwest (deputy)	Trefloyne Manor (senior greenkeeper)	Cardigan (head greenkeeper/course manager)



Cardigan Bay

"The first 12 months were rough, with greens slowing down, but we pushed through with faith from the committee and membership," said Stuart. "We were aiming for a kind of sustainable greenkeeping before it really became fashionable."

"Within 12 months, the greens were transformed back to a pure fescue surface at 6mm through winter and 4mm through summer. Some of our biggest critics in year one became our biggest fans in year two."

The club's blossoming reputation as a fine venue and welcoming host has seen a number of Wales Golf events staged there, including the Welsh Team Championships, Junior Championships, Women's Seniors Championships and the Wales v Ireland juniors on a biannual basis.

### Sustainability first

Sustainability is at the forefront of the greenkeeping team's work at Cardigan, and it goes far beyond maintaining the playing surfaces. Stuart embraces a holistic approach that supports the idea of greenkeepers as guardians of the land, entrusted as stewards of the environment.

While that is unquestionably a significant responsibility, it doesn't necessarily mean taking on more work.

"With low resources and limited staffing, you start to prioritise the most important jobs," he said. "When [former

**“We’re not controlling nature, we’re guiding it”**

### Stuart's approach: Sustainability

- Promoting the surfaces that will thrive in the environment
- Low inputs in nitrogen, pesticide, water
- Locally sourced, STRI-recommended
- Using natural resources responsibly and effectively
- Working within financial boundaries to ensure long-term security

BIGGA ecologist] James Hutchinson came in 2019, his consultancy walk reinforced everything I believed about austere greenkeeping – using nature to take the forefront. He showed us areas that we were managing that didn't need to be managed.

"The hardest thing for greenkeepers is to do nothing, but



nature will thrive if left alone. We've implemented cut and collect systems, reduced nitrogen inputs and slowed cutting regimes. By doing less, we've encouraged wildflowers, orchids and natural ecosystems.

"It's about understanding where management is needed and where it isn't. We're not controlling nature, we're guiding it. Every decision is about working with the environment, not against it."

The club depends on local ground-sourced water fed through a network of five rain catchment ponds, gravity-fed to a pump house, while an on-site turf nursery is used for winter project work to include 33 revetted bunkers, the sand for which is locally sourced.

#### Valued staff

Skilled as he may be in agronomy, Stuart puts a high value on how he manages people – regarding them, not the turf, as the most important part of his role.

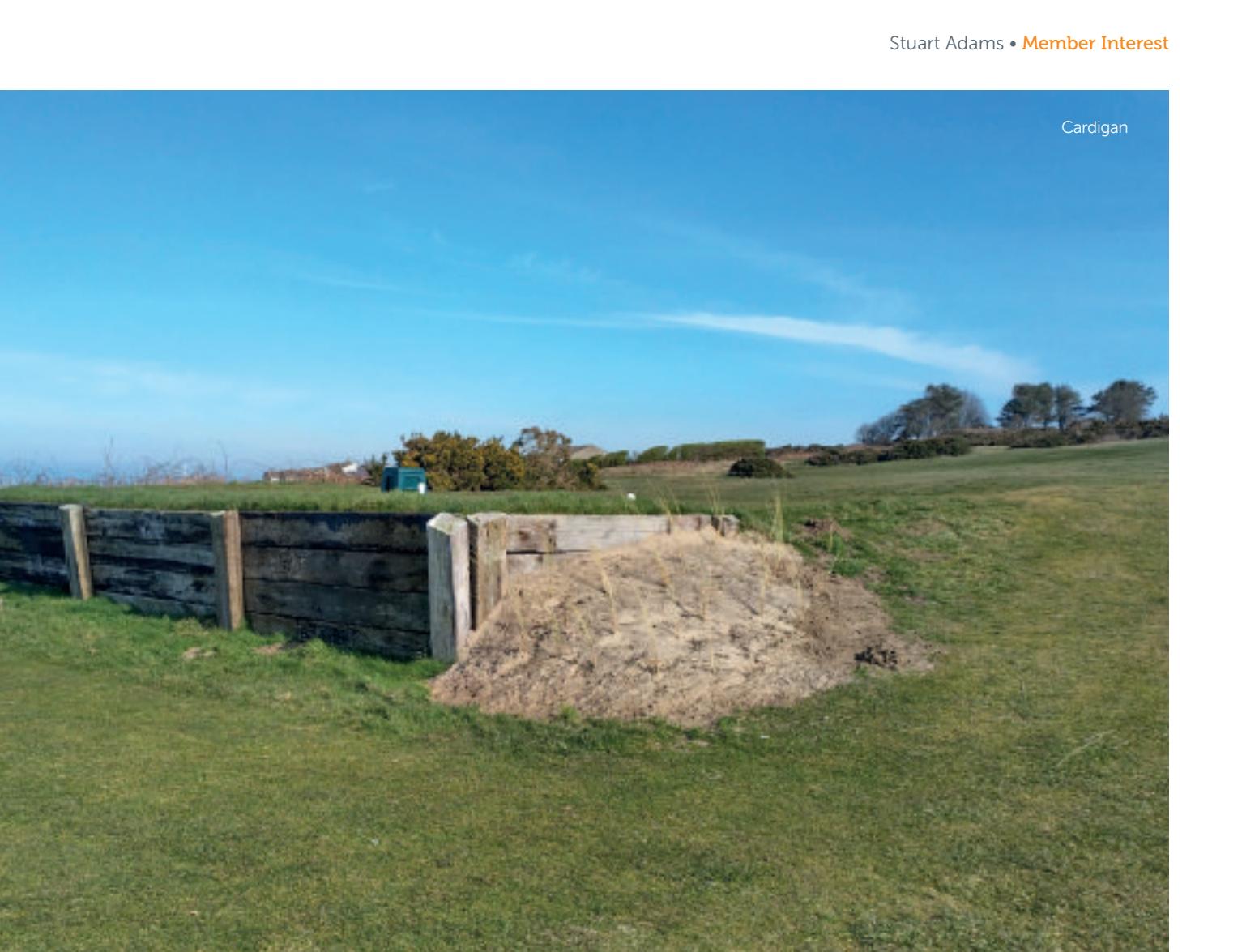
Having realised early in his career that a passion for greenkeeping can lead to the job encroaching on personal commitments, Stuart is a firm believer in affording staff – himself included – a favourable work-life balance.

"I know many passionate greenkeepers who will comfortably do 70-80 hours a week to try to get the course to a certain level," he said. "But if you don't get that work-life balance correct, you're going to miss out on the things away from work – and they're the very reason why we work in the first place."

#### Manage fescue, do not be surprised when fescue grows

Within the sward I now alternate seed companies to allow eight separate fescue cultivars to grow, furthering the hardiness of the green sward. Predominantly six slender creeping red and two chewing fescues overseeded with Vredo twice yearly. I would like to run more but need to be budget and time aware. A six-monthly check of profiles matched on the laptop allows me to monitor thatch levels and if thatch stays under control, hollow tining will be put on hold. The natural bents within the green now are adequate to allow a good mixture of species for harder-wearing greens through the winter. The greens still need a small amount of brushing/grooming early in the season to allow the fescue to continue to thrive and Poa seeds to be removed. I am fully aware of the disturbance theory of fescue but at times, good greens are about balancing the right operations with the managed species.

Cardigan





### Stuart's approach: Managing upwards

- Course walks with both green staff and management
- Future-proofing the golf course with long-term planning reports
- Involving committees with seminars and meetings within the industry

Left to right: Councillor Clive Davies, club Chairman Barrie Davies, Stuart Adams, Club Captain Matthew Morgan, Club President Keith Lewis, Vice Captain Aled Evans, Zoe Adams (Stuart's wife)

### Stuart's approach: Managing staff

- Inclusive workplace where staff can be proud of the difference they make
- Ongoing opportunities to learn and progress
- Rewards and recognition along the way
- A real understanding of work-life balance
- Focus on retaining and developing staff

Providing staff with opportunities to learn and progress is also something close to Stuart's heart as he wants to reinforce the idea that greenkeeping is a career, and not a stop-gap job. On that front, as with all others, he has the full backing of the club.

"I'm fortunate I have a team full of career greenkeepers and I'd say they're probably some of the best I've ever worked with, because they believe in what they're doing," he said.

"Any CPD that they've asked for, my committee has been absolutely key and said yes right along the way. I don't think I've ever gone into a greens meeting and asked for a spring course refresher, or a chainsaw refresher, or a level two for the starters, and been told, 'No'.

"Pushing education from the top down to my level and then down to the team's level has been utterly key to make all this work."

Stuart himself went back to college at the age of 39 to gain his HNC and HND through distant learning at Elmwood as an R&A Scholar, setting an example to his own children about the importance of education.

**“This award was for the whole team and all of Cardigan Golf Club”**

#### Delegation's what you need

A lesson Stuart has learned since moving to Cardigan is knowing when to take a step back and let others assume responsibility for tasks. It empowers them to learn, gives them a sense of ownership and provides a course manager more time to focus on the aspects of the role that only they can execute.

He believes that the whole team dynamic is what led to him being named Wales Golf Greenkeeper of the Year.

"I think delegation is absolute key," he said. "It's the hardest lesson that I've had to learn since I've been at Cardigan Golf Club. I sat in on a seminar at BTME where a gentleman was talking about how micromanaging is not good. It's about actually handing over ownership and getting the boys passionate about what they do. You show them how and then allow them to take responsibility for their work."

"The reason we've got this award is because I've got a fantastic team around me. They do go the extra mile and I don't need to be leaning over their shoulders – they're almost self-governed."

"The moment a head greenkeeper takes all the credit when things are going right, and can't learn about taking the blame when things go wrong, you've lost balance. It's about making sure the boys get the credit, and the compliments are fed back to the team."

"In that spirit, this award was for the whole team, and all of Cardigan Golf Club – I couldn't do what I do without them."

**GI**

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# 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](http://bigga.org.uk/careers) to see our latest opportunities and find out more about advertising your position. Call 01347 833 800 or email [info@bigga.co.uk](mailto:info@bigga.co.uk)

## Assistant Greenkeeper

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**Please submit your CV and covering letter to the General Manager via [sec@blackburngolfclub.com](mailto:sec@blackburngolfclub.com)**

## Assistant Greenkeeper

**The Caversham, Berkshire**



The successful candidate will undertake tasks to ensure the course is always presented to the highest standards.

**Requirements:** Reporting to the course manager; previous golf course experience; ideally NVQ level 2; be able to work in a team as well as on their own; driven with a passion for greenkeeping and the environment; able to work 5 days a week, including weekends on a rota basis; a valid driving licence; a positive, hardworking attitude with attention to detail.

**Benefits:** 28 days holiday (per annum); company pension scheme; full uniform provided; complimentary golf and gym membership; career development and progression opportunities

**Salary:** £24,000-30,000, depending on experience

**Hours:** 44 hours/week, depending on the needs of the business

**To apply candidates should send a CV and covering letter to Course Manager, Jon Scoones: [greens@thecaversham.co.uk](mailto:greens@thecaversham.co.uk)**

## Join the BIGGA team as a Communications & Content Executive

**BIGGA, Yorkshire**



# BIGGA

British and International  
Golf Greenkeepers Association

Are you looking to use your passion for storytelling and your knack for digital content to make a genuine positive difference in the golf and turf care industry? We're looking for a Communications & Content Executive to help shape the voice of BIGGA, the British & International Golf Greenkeepers Association.

In this exciting and varied role, you'll write and edit content for our publications, website, press releases and social media. You'll work closely with our members and industry media to showcase the achievements of greenkeepers and promote BIGGA's activities and events.

### What we're looking for:

A newly qualified journalist or communications professional looking to make an immediate impact

Strong writing and communication skills with excellent attention to detail

Confident creating content across multiple platforms, including social media and web

Organised, flexible and able to manage multiple deadlines

An interest in golf or greenkeeping is a bonus, but not essential

### The role includes:

Writing articles and press releases

Managing and updating web and digital content

Attending events and media briefings

Collaborating across teams and with external media

### Additional requirements:

Ability to travel and attend events

UK driving licence

Job Type: Full-time

Schedule: Monday to Friday

Work Location: In person

Competitive basic salary £26,000 - £29,000 per year based on qualifications & experience

Benefits: Company events; company pension; BIGGA Membership; on-site parking; 25 days holiday, plus bank holidays

If you are a proactive communicator ready to help us promote one of golf's most vital professions, we'd love to hear from you.

**To Apply:** Please email a covering letter and CV to [laura@bigga.co.uk](mailto:laura@bigga.co.uk) - Laura Lincoln, People Manager or call Laura on 07842 449 600 for an informal discussion about the role.

**Apply now and be part of the team championing the people who make golf happen.**

## My New Job



# Megan Varley

BIGGA's new Events & Initiatives Coordinator is looking forward to providing members with the best opportunities



With her passion for learning, Megan Varley will soon be fluent in the lingo of greenkeeping.

Our newest recruit is excited to help members engage with the wide range of opportunities on offer while discovering the wonderful world of agronomy for herself.

Here, Megan discusses her career journey, what drew her to BIGGA and the exciting projects she is looking forward to.

### Congratulations! What does your new role involve?

Thank you! I'm working on the events and initiatives BIGGA runs for its members, so I'll be working closely with the whole team to make sure what we offer is the best there is. It's a relatively new position, so I'm looking forward to growing and developing within the role. I'll be making sure the right people are in the right place at the right time!

### Can you give us a quick round-up of your career so far?

I have mainly worked in not-for-profits and membership organisations, managing and delivering events across the country, from conferences to karaoke. I graduated last year with a degree in English Language and Linguistics and most recently have been pulling pints in my local pub.

### Do you have experience on the golf course?

Yes, but exclusively of the crazy and mini varieties.

### Why did this role appeal to you?

I'm passionate about education, learning, and development, which BIGGA offers to its members in spades. Playing even a small role in helping the members gain opportunities and experiences they may not otherwise have access to is a great motivator. It's not always an easy task furthering your career, so I have huge respect for those who have the passion to continue to learn (hint, hint).

### BIGGA has a busy calendar of events and initiatives – which ones are you most looking forward to playing a part in?

So many! The R&A Championship Agronomy Programme because this is its first year running. Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year and the BIGGA Delegation with Bernhard and Company because they're such once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for our members. And BTME, because obviously.

### Are you already learning lots about the wonderful world of greenkeeping?

From zero knowledge, the only way is up! I've evolved from Googling "what is greenkeeping" to using "agronomy" in a sentence, so that feels like progress? Luckily, I'm in great company so have plenty of people to ask my daft questions to. **GI**

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[BIGGA.ORG.UK](http://BIGGA.ORG.UK)



# Practical Greenkeeping

Refine your skillset and expand your knowledge



**Course Manager Iain Marshall hopes to get back on track in May after dealing with the impact of a fire for the past six months**

May is a big catch-up month for us as we try to get back up to speed after dealing with the impact of the fire that destroyed our sheds and equipment last November.

We recently got the keys to our two new sheds and it feels like we can finally start to turn the corner, having been chasing our tails for half a year.

The fire was a huge shock and had a significant impact on our course maintenance, with a lot of tasks we'd usually have done over winter left undone.

The fire claimed the pump house, leaving us without water, and we had no sprayer, leaving us vulnerable to disease at a time when pressure was already high.

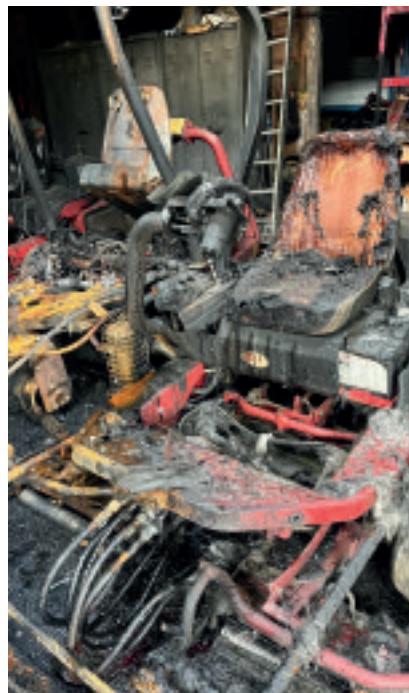
We even had to lift and relay our putting green as it was so badly affected.

We weren't able to topdress or do the planned micro-coring, so we will be catching up on a backlog of jobs once we can get our machinery – which has been living in seven storage containers – to all the areas where we need it.

Work around the sheds and pump

house has taken up a lot of our time: diverting pipes, sorting out the irrigation and creating banks around the new buildings.

With growth kicking in during the first couple of weeks of this month, we are looking forward to getting



**What we do in...  
May**

Club: West Lothian,  
Linlithgow

out there and giving the surfaces the attention they need because it's a busy season.

Competitions started over the last weekend in March and there are more than three times a week – every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday – throughout the season.

The team will certainly enjoy being in the new facilities, having been relocated to the ladies' locker room.

There's a proper office, drying rooms, a small kitchen and the smoke alarms are connected directly to the fire brigade.

It's like moving into a new house and, while our busy schedule means we won't have much time for a celebration, we'll try to do something to mark the occasion.

Soon after the fire happened, someone told me it would be about a year before we can feel settled back in again.

It's been six months now – it might be another two or three before we can say we're back to normal, but we're getting there. **GI**



**The fire had a significant impact on our course maintenance"**



# Evolving dollar spot pressures

Dollar spot is now one of the major disease threats for many courses - seriously affecting smoothness and playability at a busy time of the year in the golfing calendar



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

**The development of the Smith Kerns Model was hugely influential in recognising the climatic conditions that favoured dollar spot, and providing a benchmark for preventative action.**

Identifying temperature and humidity – or more importantly leaf wetness – as the key drivers of disease has given a focus in managing factors that can reduce risks.

However, researchers who designed the original forecasting model now report the evolving pathogen appears to be developing with shorter periods of suitable leaf wetness and temperature. The effect would be a double whammy of more frequent condi-

tions for the disease occurring, and the capability for the disease to go through its lifecycle faster.

The Smith Kerns disease model in the Turf Advisor app is still incredibly useful but, since it's only ever a decision support for the greenkeeper or agronomists' own skills and understanding, it does need to be interpreted accordingly.

While the threshold for a preventative Ascernity fungicide application has typically been applied at 20% disease pressure, if courses in high pressure situations now find they have been consistently hit earlier, it may be necessary to target treatments at a lower pressure threshold, for example.

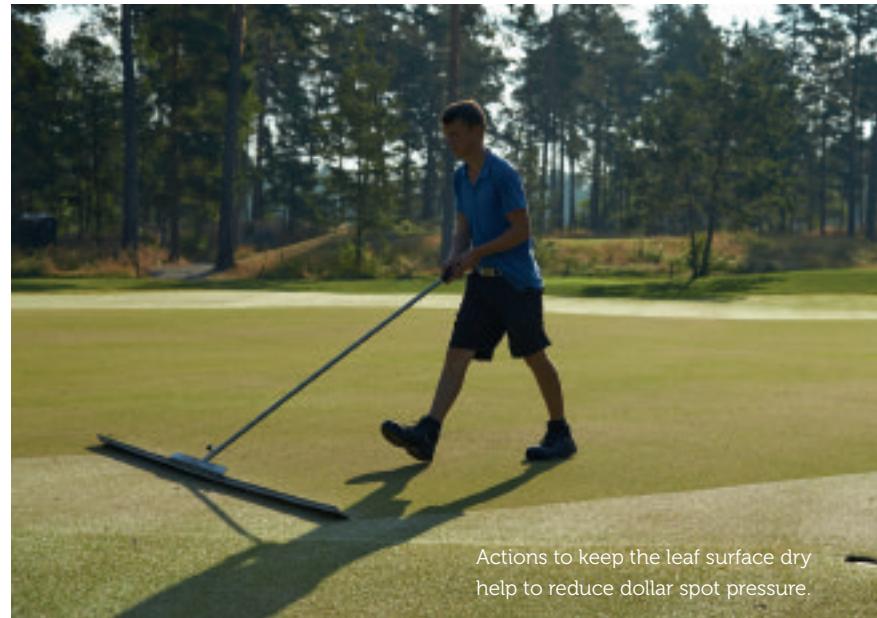
As conditions become more challenging, it also reinforces the importance of Integrated Turf Management (ITM) practices that can help to mitigate against the effect of disease and reduce infection risks, even when the climate pressures indicate

high pressure.

One of the key findings of the original Syngenta Dollar Spot State of the Nation Survey was that while the Smith Kerns Model was a good indicator of pressure, a course's management practices on the turf had a greater influence on which suffered damaging attacks, and which could better resist damage.

The number one factor was reducing the duration of leaf wetness, particularly during hotter periods that are also conducive to dollar spot development. All means of drying the surface appear to be beneficial in lowering disease pressure. That includes physical brushing or switching in the morning, whilst being aware that dew can reform after surfaces have been cleared first thing, especially going into the autumn.

Allied to that, clearing vegetation and trees around greens can hugely help airflow to naturally dry surfaces and keep them dry, especially where



Actions to keep the leaf surface dry help to reduce dollar spot pressure.

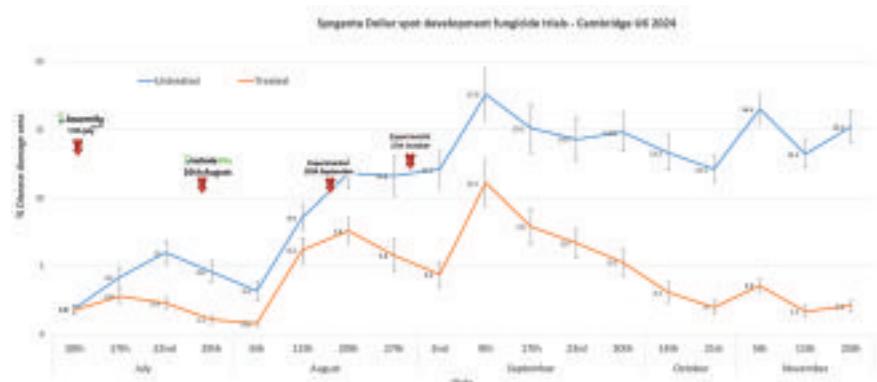


Fig 1 Trials have shown the effectiveness of continuing season long control strategies.

shaded areas that might lie wet for longer can be alleviated.

During the summer the timing of irrigation will have an impact in how long leaves remain wet and implications for disease, particularly when overnight temperatures remain high and the leaf sits wet from an evening application. Delaying irrigation until early morning, when the leaves can dry faster, will minimise the risk – while allowing time for the water to soak into the surface before evaporation.

One of the questions we repeatedly receive from the survey findings is why the practice of rolling appears to reduce the frequency and impact of dollar spot infections? It's most likely that the action actually fits multiple objectives of the ITM strategy.

Firstly, it is a very effective technique for dew removal and drying the leaf. Secondly, many turf managers find alternating rolling and mowing maintains consistent green speed

and smoothness at a slightly longer height of cut – which reduces stress on the plant and does allow more air flow in the sward. Furthermore, compressing the sward surface could help conserve moisture in the soil and root zone to reduce pressure.

Finally, the action of rolling could disrupt and damage the disease pathogen mycelial web on the surface, which may compromise its ability to get into the plant.

All round, the combination of a Primo Maxx II PGR programme and increased use of rolling would appear to have a significant effect in reducing dollar spot pressure.

Furthermore, if conditions favourable to disease continue longer into the autumn – as we are frequently seeing – then the attacks can get more severe with no time for recovery before the winter.

What is also clearly evident, and we saw visibly in trials last autumn, was other diseases coming in on the back

of the dead and decaying material as a result of dollar spot, most noticeably microdochium. Although only relatively small on the dead patches, it creates a point-source foci for future microdochium infection to flare up in the autumn.

Even now we have to be thinking of the season long strategy for disease control, which looks at all the implications of any action over the spring and summer on future risks and pressures.

Repeated trials in the UK and Ireland have consistently shown that ITM strategies combined with the AIM fungicide programme – with a sequence of Ascernity, Instrata Elite and Medallion – give the optimum control of the late summer outbreaks that gives the cleanest greens right through the high-pressure periods.



# The bee's knees – how Goring & Streatley became an award-winning ecological haven

The West Berkshire club has demonstrated a firm commitment to  
environmentally friendly golf course management





### About Goring & Streatley

Established in 1895, designed by Harry Colt and JH Taylor, Goring & Streatley is an 18-hole, par-71 course, measuring 6,355 yards from the white tees and 6,008 yards from the yellow tees. Set in an area of outstanding natural beauty in West Berkshire, with panoramic views of the Thames Valley, it boasts greens renowned for being fast and true.

The greenkeeping team at Goring & Streatley have instigated a quiet revolution over the past five years, combining course improvements with outstanding ecological habitat creation and management.

Progress on both fronts has been remarkable and resulted in a prestigious Syngenta Operation Pollinator Award at January's Golf Environment Awards, a richly deserved prize for a club that has instituted a bold vision and backed it up with diligent planning and relentless hard work.

With a strong commitment to community engagement, Goring & Streatley is showcasing how courses provide so much more than merely a place to play golf.

Driven by the goal of restoring the course to its original state, along with a desire to create a sanctuary for wildlife, the experienced team at the West Berkshire venue are certainly delivering.

Course Manager Matt Aplin and Ecology Manager Melissa Winkworth are spearheading the club's efforts, delivering improved playing surfaces while enhancing Goring & Streatley's environmental credentials.

Matt has been at the club for 27 years, having joined as an apprentice when he was just 17. He has been in the top job for nine years, spending much of that time striving to return the course to its original characteristics.

"When I took over as course manager, our golf course was managed very differently to how it is now," he explained. "We had a lot of invasive scrub that had grown for 50-odd years, as the philosophy was essentially to leave everything alone.

"We ended up with lots of invasive hawthorn, bramble and stinging nettles, even around tees. There were no vistas at all – we've got some stunning views up here now, but that wasn't the case then. We've stripped it all back and taken out masses of what was basically rubbish."

"A lot of the work we're doing is based on the 1940s and 50s RAF photographs. They show how the golf

**“We've got some stunning views up here now”**

L-R: Lyall Burkin, Steve Chandler and Melissa Winkworth



#### Award win a triumph of persistence and consistency

Goring & Streatley were twice runners-up before finally laying their hands on the Operation Pollinator Award.

The team took the opportunity to learn from previous winners, attending an education day at Huntercombe Golf Club, where Course Manager Grant Stewart shared insights on the work that saw them claim the prize in 2024.

Syngenta Turf Business Manager Sarah Hughes, who sits on the Golf Environment Awards judging panel, said: "The vision of Melissa and the team

## Matt and Melissa's top tips for improving golf course ecology

### 1. Light management

Look at allowing more light into areas. Remove over-planted trees – they create shade, cause issues with water and reduce biodiversity. We've seen dramatic differences by thinning tree-dense areas.

### 2. Hedgerow maintenance

Properly manage hedgerows. Don't let them become overgrown with ivy and collapse. Targeted maintenance can create fantastic wildlife corridors.

### 3. Rough area management

Don't cut every inch of grass. Leave some areas uncut, especially zones not directly in play. A 50-yard carry in front of a par 3 can become a wildlife habitat with beautiful seed heads.

### 4. Create habitat structures

When clearing areas, leave log piles and create habitat walls. We've made log walls in areas where we've removed trees – it provides shelter and supports wildlife.

### 5. Collaborate with experts

Reach out to local enthusiasts – butterfly experts, bird watchers, beekeepers. Most are passionate about helping and will gladly donate their time and knowledge to improve environmental management.

**“Our meadows are left completely alone to be natural”**

course used to be and it was clearly designed with hardly any trees.

"It's a downland golf course, but over time it lost those characteristics and we're working hard to bring them back."

The removal of scrub and those trees that were struggling has improved air flow, with some greens that were often damp and frequently rendered unplayable now in fine condition. The remaining trees are now thriving.

The team have focussed on planting native hedgerows, enhancing habitat diversity and offering shelter, all while maintaining the course's playability and avoiding any negative impact on turf management from unsuitable tree planting.

Melissa, who started out working in the clubhouse before pursuing a greenkeeping career a decade ago, is proud of the work being done at her club.

"We have many different types of habitats for pollinators," said Melissa, whose interest in ecology was instilled in her by her parents, who are keen twitchers. "We have our natural meadows which stretch over 19 acres and we have recorded many different wildflower species.

"To maintain this area, we cut down at the end of the year after all the wildflowers have seeded and cut again in the spring to help reduce the thicker grasses and stop them taking over.

"We also have a lot of log piles around the golf course, with the biggest one being in our yard. Every area that is cleared has a log pile built there to help provide a habitat for the solitary bees and other pollinators.

"We have three bits of woodlands on our course, one of which we have completely opened up and exposed the woodland floor. This has allowed bluebells to flourish and every year we are getting more. We have also added snowdrop bulbs to this area to help create an early food source.

"Our bunkers have become a great habitat for mining bees and we have



at Goring & Streatley to protect and enhance the biodiversity around the course has paid off with the great results that continue to improve."

Sarah continued: "It is great that their hard work and initiative is widely appreciated by the club and the members in creating an incredibly valuable ecological resource that is increasingly rare in the area, along with producing a consistently outstanding golf course that achieves excellent reviews."

## Honey is money

Goring & Streatley's beehives are now very much part of the furniture, thanks to Melissa's passion for the idea and a little help from one of Matt's friends.

There are 20 hives on site, soon to expand to 28, strategically placed across the course's wildflower-rich terrain.

The approach is a collaborative one, with a beekeeper – someone Matt happened to know – managing the hives, handling everything from maintenance to honey production, while also mentoring Melissa.

Members can purchase locally produced honey, with the club's share of the profits directly reinvested into ecological initiatives, creating a self-sustaining environmental cycle.

"Last winter, we invested £900 from those proceeds in hedgerow plants for a new hedge along the side of our 11th hole and behind our 1st tee area," said Melissa.

"These are great for providing a food source for birds and pollinators. We also spent a further £700 on wildflower seeds and sowed these in the areas we cleared last year and a few small pockets where we cut turf to use in other places."



## Engagement is key

Engaging with members, visitors and the wider community is a key component of Goring & Streatley's strategy.

The club recognises the need to bring others along on the journey, which begins with explaining why ecology is so important and how golf clubs can do their bit.

"We've really made a point to educate our members about what we're doing," said Melissa.

"At first, when we started clearing areas, some people were critical and thought it looked like a mess, but we've been persistent in explaining why we're making these changes and what benefits they bring.

"We've held kids' activity days for local preschools, inviting children aged three to eight to explore our meadows. They collect wildflowers, do crafts, catch insects and even play a bit of golf.

"We use information boards, newsletters and emails to keep members informed.

"We've also invited experts like butterfly specialists and RSPB representatives to help us document and explain our work.

"The more people understand what we're doing, generally the more supportive they are."





## “The golfers have offered brilliant feedback on course conditions”

educated our members on these so they are very supportive of letting them thrive.”

The club have engaged numerous experts to help assist in their efforts, with some thrilling results, including the reappearance of the rare chalk hill blue butterfly on the site.

Indeed, the variety of different animal and insect species identified on the site is extensive, with kestrels, red kites, buzzards, voles and various reptiles to name just a few.

Melissa described the wide range of management practices that are helping to make Goring & Streatley a home for such an abundance of wildlife beyond just pollinators.

“Our meadows are left completely alone to be natural,” she said. “We have a few pathways cut through to allow us to move around the course, but the two main meadows are out of play so get very little human traffic.

“We leave a lot of wild rough all over the course, which again only have a few pathways cut through and the rest is left. It has no machinery on it until it’s cut down at the end of the year.

“We handpick some wildflowers in

these areas that can cause harm to golfers like stinging nettles, thistles and ragwort. This is a time-consuming job as we have a lot of long grass areas, but it is well worth it to enhance our habitats.

“This is to help with the playability of the golf course and to help with slow play, while it also helps to keep the negative comments from golfers to a minimum. No herbicides are sprayed in any of the long grass areas.”

Throughout this ongoing project, Goring & Streatley has remained committed to delivering excellent conditions for golfers, dispelling any notion that prioritising ecology means compromising playing surfaces.

“We’ve seen massive improvements in our playing surfaces,” said Matt. “One green that was previously out of play for 30-40 days a year due to saturation is now one of our driest.

“By clearing invasive trees and vegetation, we’ve dramatically improved light and air circulation. We’ve always been a low-input club, not throwing fertilisers around and only spot-spraying weeds. Our approach is ‘less is more’ – if you

start pumping water and fertilisers everywhere, you create your own problems.

“We’re lucky that the previous course manager took good care of the course, and we’ve just elevated it to the next level.”

With that increase in standards has come a rise in the number of people wanting to play at Goring & Streatley, placing extra pressure on a course located on mixed terrain, which presents its own challenges.

“Our site is unique – we’ve got seven holes on clay and half the course on chalk,” added Matt. “By managing the landscape more intelligently, we’ve been able to balance these challenging soil conditions. The volume of winter play has increased probably 10 times since I started, which is a real testament to our improved surfaces.”

He continued: “The golfers have offered brilliant feedback on course conditions, and that’s given us the freedom to continue our ecological work. The board and management trust us because the results are there to see.” **GI**

# The world of greenkeeping

From Italy to India and America to Australia, there are BIGGA members working all over the world.



Rob Romard - Cabot Cape Breton



**Jason Haines**  
**Cabot Links, Canada**

As the superintendent at a world-renowned golf course, Jason Haines doesn't have much cause to fret about budgetary constraints, but he is no stranger to the experience.

Before moving to Cabot Links, Canada's top-ranked course and regarded as one of the best on the planet, Jason managed two less well-known facilities and the lessons he learned shaped his minimalist approach to greenkeeping.

Here, Jason shares the story of a career he embarked upon as a

teenager and has since seen him travel the world to impart his hard-earned wisdom.

#### **How did you get started in greenkeeping?**

I started when I was 15 years old at Pender Harbour, a small nine-hole golf course on the west coast of Canada. I didn't really know it was a job at the time and was probably going to become an engineer. Five years in, my superintendent quit and I was handed the reins just before the 2008 recession. We went from having a low budget to having no budget and, while that was difficult, it was a good

**“We’re trying to be the best in the world and we have the resources to back that up”**

time for me to learn about what really matters in greenkeeping, and that's where I learned about minimalism as a concept.

#### **Minimalism was a necessity then, but you've stuck with it since – why?**

I was inspired by the idea that there were people out there who try to spend as little as possible and who look at ways to reduce the reliance on resources.

On a fescue golf course, more damage is done by over-managing it than under-managing. You really need to have a lot of patience and confidence that it will be okay. It's not about throwing solutions at every little problem – sometimes the right thing is to do nothing and just wait it out.

#### **How did you go from a no-budget club to managing Cabot Links?**

During my time at Pender Harbour, I started writing a blog about what I was doing there and it led to opportunities



### About Cabot Links

Located in Inverness, Nova Scotia, this Rod Whitman design offers stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean and a challenging links layout highlighted by exceptional playing surfaces.

Jacob Sjoman - Cabot Cape Breton



Evan Schiller - Cabot Cape Breton

to travel the world to talk about my turfgrass management philosophies and ways to save money. In 2019 I moved to the 18-hole Sunshine Coast Golf Club just before Covid hit, so that was another struggle but we were allowed to stay open. Soon an opportunity arose to join one of the only wall-to-wall fescue courses in North America. Lee Strutt was our director of agronomy and it was awesome to get the opportunity to come to Cape Breton.

### What's the remit for an incoming superintendent when the course is already so highly regarded?

This is the first place I've been where we can honestly say we're trying to be the best in the world and we have the resources to back that up. I was brought here for my agronomic strengths and there is always room for improvement on that front. The last two years have been a period of immense growth for Cabot as a brand,

and part of the challenge for us is to keep up with how busy we are. The turf is already in pretty good shape, so it's minor adjustments, nothing too drastic.

### How big is your team?

I have a team of 25 people, and seven of those are landscapers. The reason we need to have such a big staff is that our golf course properties are quite large – we have 18 hectares of fairways and two hectares of putting greens. But we're also busy, so as soon as the sun comes up, we are foursome after foursome until the sun goes down and actually even into the dark. Across our six-month season, we have 25,000 rounds. If we need to get anything done, we have to throw a lot of people at it and do it ahead of play.

### It must be tricky to mitigate the impact of all that traffic on your surfaces?

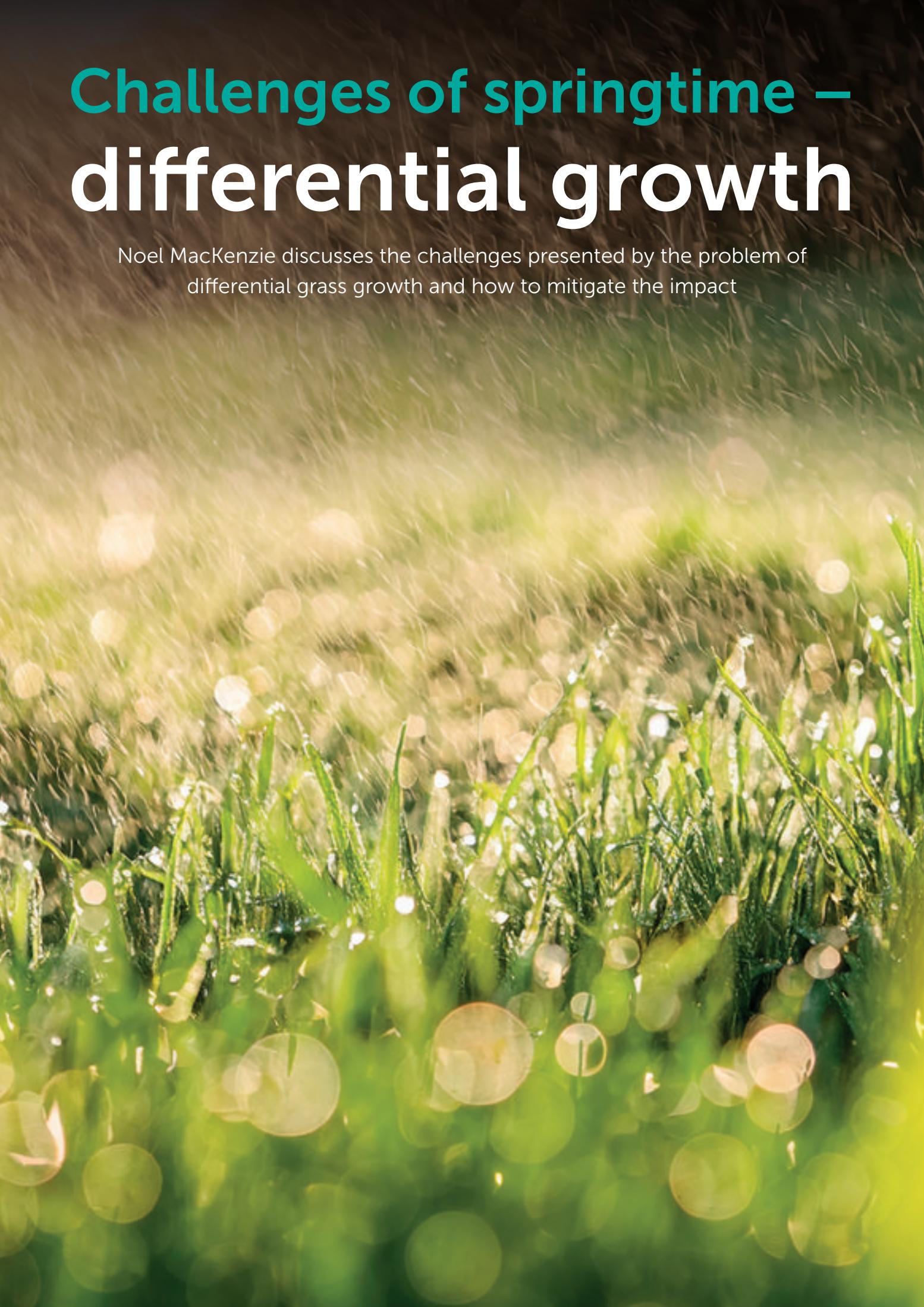
We have large surfaces, so that allows

us to spread that traffic. Fescue does like a depleted root zone, it likes it dry, it's more tolerant to disease, so the less chemicals we use, the better it is to let the Poas and bentgrasses die naturally. The focus for us is on where we apply the additional fertility, whether it's nitrogen or even just wetting agents. I think there's a misconception in the industry, possibly stemming from fungicide applications, that you want to apply at a precise rate evenly over an entire area. When it comes to fertiliser, to get consistent conditions you need to apply it inconsistently. If you apply the same amount of fertiliser in low-traffic areas as in the high-traffic areas, they're going to be soft and thatchy, and they require more sand and more aerification.

We apply most of our fertility through a sprayer, but we do it almost like an artist with a paint brush – we drive around, we look for grass that seems a little bit stressed, and we target those areas. **GI**

# Challenges of springtime – differential growth

Noel MacKenzie discusses the challenges presented by the problem of differential grass growth and how to mitigate the impact





*This image was generated by AI*

Every year the same challenge faces countless players as they negotiate putting on surfaces that are inconsistent due to differential growth between species in the same sward. Here, sports turf expert Noel MacKenzie explores the causes and solutions of an age-old problem.

Depending on where you are in the country, differential growth is an issue that can start to rear its ugly head from January through to May, and it's something that greenkeepers and golfers alike are irked by.

Both groups essentially want the same four things from their greens – true roll, both vertically and laterally; firm surfaces; good speeds and consistency. That means uniformity across each individual green and from green to green.

The problem is golf greens are outside and as such they are subject to the weather and an increasingly unpredictable climate. Moreover, in most cases they contain different grass species or cultivars, and they each have different growth responses to their environment.

Differential growth between different grasses presents a significant obstacle to achieving those four desirable putting surface qualities.

#### All grasses are not created equal

A true natural monoculture is rare. The vast majority of UK courses have greens with different species that grow at different temperatures. It is possible to create and manage a monoculture and, while this is a topic for another day, it is worth recognising this itself comes with benefits and detriments.

Differential growth is not something

unique to the UK, and they face the same issue in the USA, particularly in the transition zone where the climate creates hostile conditions at the peak of each season. Indeed, many countries with seasonal climatic swings experience the same challenge, it's just the cast of grasses that change.

Each species follows its own curve characterised by periods of growth, reproduction, metabolic exhaustion and regeneration.

For example, colonial bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) grass exhibits signs of growth in winter, sooner than *Poa annua*, and retains a higher growth rate later into the year. The key difference is that the bentgrass has a more substantial root system with a greater store of carbohydrates in it.

The deeper roots mean they are warmer than the root system of the *Poa annua*, which is closer to the surface.

Herein lies the problem, as the variable growth rate of the different species present in the sward leads to uneven greens with the kind of lumps and bumps that will have golfers tearing their hair out.

#### What to do about it

While the problem itself may be familiar to many, the solutions – or at least measures to mitigate the impact – are less so. There are some approaches that may seem like they could help but will likely leave you in a worse position.

Should we apply fertiliser in an attempt to get everything growing? Chuck a load of nitrogen on there to liven it all up? The bent will probably enjoy that, but will it make the *Poa*



**Noel MacKenzie**  
Director and principal consultant  
at Sports Turf Consulting

Noel has worked in the sports turf and amenity industry since 1983, holding both head groundsman/greenkeeper roles and working for the leading consultancies in sports turf management. Noel is a

member of RIPTA (Register of Professional Independent Turfgrass Agronomists) and has undertaken in excess of 4,000 advisory visits and presented at numerous seminars for BIGGA at both national and regional events, as well as the IOG/GMA, AELT&CC, HPA and industry liaison events for suppliers and manufacturers. Noel has also taught to Masters degree level in this topic and other management-related sciences. He has experience overseeing complicated projects and their management up to £6 million value, including numerous drainage system installations and site developments.

### Performance tools for testing your greens

- **Stimpmeter** – measure how far the ball travels to determine a speed
- **Parry Meter/Trumeter** – measure smoothness and trueness
- **Visual observation** – use your expert judgement to assess conditions

**Green pitch mark:** This does not show differential grass growth, but unrepaired player damage in the form of a pitch mark. It's remarkable how players can get so bent out of shape about differential growth but walk past a pitch mark which has far bigger implications for playing surface performance and health.



annua suddenly leap out of ground? No, it won't.

What will happen is the Poa annua will go greener but it will still be too cold, so it will hunker down and the result will be an even greater disparity in growth rates. If you're chasing condition, then a sensible dose of potassium nitrate in cold conditions would work great, but don't expect it to help with growth unless conditions are suitable. Overdo forcing growth and you might have a horrendous Microdochium disease hit... not a good result!

One of the things we tend to think about is winter height of cut. On typical colonial bentgrass and Poa annua parkland courses, we might typically be looking at cutting between 5-6mm with a view to trimming back that excess cold-weather bentgrass growth. The bent might respond with a bit of growth, but the Poa will sit there at around 3mm and it's not going to move! The most that's going to happen is that you leaftip cut the Poa very slightly. A lot depends on the type of Poa annua you have in your greens too - coarse, lumpy, wild types or manicured Poa annua var. reptans - it makes a bit of a difference!

To tackle the excess leaf growth means bringing the height of cut down to levels close to the Poa annua 'static height' you have on the spring greens. To this end, getting out a

prism gauge and measuring the height of the sward is a first key step. Then it is necessary to bench set mowers a little above this height to ensure that the cut isn't lower than the measured prism gauge reading or you'll end up scalping the turf. Remember, your pedestrian mower and recently serviced mower will be cutting differently to your daily used triple in mid-summer so look carefully at the first cut runs to see if you are really achieving what you want to achieve.

You can also bring out the verticutting and grooming units. You will need to be mindful of weather as, when you're doing this in February to April, the grass is still going to be cold susceptible. You're going to give it a 'bit of a belting', even if you go in at +1mm, you're still going to hurt it so be conservative; it is always easier to go back to an excess of leaf for another verticut than try to grow new leaves if you've overcooked it, especially if night temperatures are still in low single figures or below zero.

Moving along from mechanical operations, one thing many greenkeepers love to do, which exacerbates bumpy greens in early spring, is hollow tining. If you already have an issue with a bobbly surface, why would you introduce further disruption to it? If you're in a position where you have to hollow tine, really consider the operation you are

undertaking and how to minimise its impacts as much as possible – this is something to discuss with your agronomist in greater detail.

### Beyond spring

You also need to bear in mind that you have got to manage the course for the whole summer season, not just for the four-to-six weeks of differential growth.

A little more nutrient might have to go on because you're going to take the bent leaf off and that might need a bit of a boost, but it's not going to be that significant. More likely is the fact you will inevitably have a stress impact on the greens, not just from mowing but also grooming and verticutting, and as such may need to introduce nutrient to compensate for the stresses applied to the turf. For this the type of fertiliser and nutrient sources need very careful consideration in order to be effective.

The issue also needs consideration with a longer-term perspective. There are other things you can do if you want better species blending, such as

**As greenkeepers, you're the ones who can actually provide the answers"**



**Differential growth presents a significant obstacle to early season greens performance – especially smoothness and consistency”**

**Yorkshire fog:** A patch of Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) in a golf green, with a pin put right in the middle of it! How not to win over members in a popularity contest. Worse still, the Yorkshire fog will be transplanted to another area of the green, worsening differential growth.

overseeding. You've got annual meadow grass that can reproduce six times a year, but the bentgrass doesn't self-seed so needs a seed input in there to contribute to a more evenly blended sward. The same is true of any of the commonly used greens species of grass – inputs are necessary if you want to maintain their presence in the sward.

It could be bent, creeping or colonial, it could be fescue - slender creeping red or Chewing's, and if you have a little nine-hole course that's full of Poa, you might want to consider ultrafine leafed ryegrass. None will reproduce naturally in close-mown turf other than Poa annua, so put some in there in the form of seed and make sure the right application method is used for success.

What you must do is give proper consideration to the material you overseed with. Get good quality seed from a reputable seedhouse with excellent purity scores, make sure it's fresh and hasn't been in storage for years. Cheap seed is usually cheap for a reason!

There is no point in seeding fescue into something that's full of clay, full of water and gets about 90,000 rounds of golf a year. It isn't going to work, especially if you cut at 2-3mm; it's going to just shrivel up and die. You have to work out what suits you and your situation. It's complicated;

there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, so use a proper independent agronomist (See RIPTA – Register of Independent Agronomists) who can talk through what is right in your situation.

#### Managing expectations

It's a cruel twist of fate that differential growth appears around the same time as the Masters, when Augusta Syndrome is at its peak and golfers are expecting the same immaculate playing surfaces they've seen on TV.

It falls upon greenkeepers to deal with those expectations, but there are ways to manage them and it starts by engaging with people.

When players are coming off the course and moaning, it can be easy to bury your head in the sand and ignore it, but as greenkeepers you're the ones who can actually provide the answers.

There is an element here of needing to become proficient in what the American military call PSYOP, or psychological operations. Your goal is to persuade, change, influence, and your targets are club officials and members, particularly those who are inclined to share their opinions with anyone who will listen – the key influencers!

You need to forewarn people about the issue of differential growth and why it happens but also reassure that you're on the case and will be

implementing measures to mitigate the impact.

Differential growth is a relatively short-lived thing, so you can tell them whatever disruption there is won't last long and normal service will soon be resumed. It's key to educate them on the fact that stressing the greens too much during this period will have ramifications for later in the year – it's a tiny bit of short-term pain for long-term gain.

For those golfers who are pining for the conditions they've seen on TV at Augusta, you can remind them you have four staff and a fraction of the budget; hit them with comparison statistics – your budget and staffing versus Augusta – and watch them go pale when you set out the change to membership fees required to resource that!

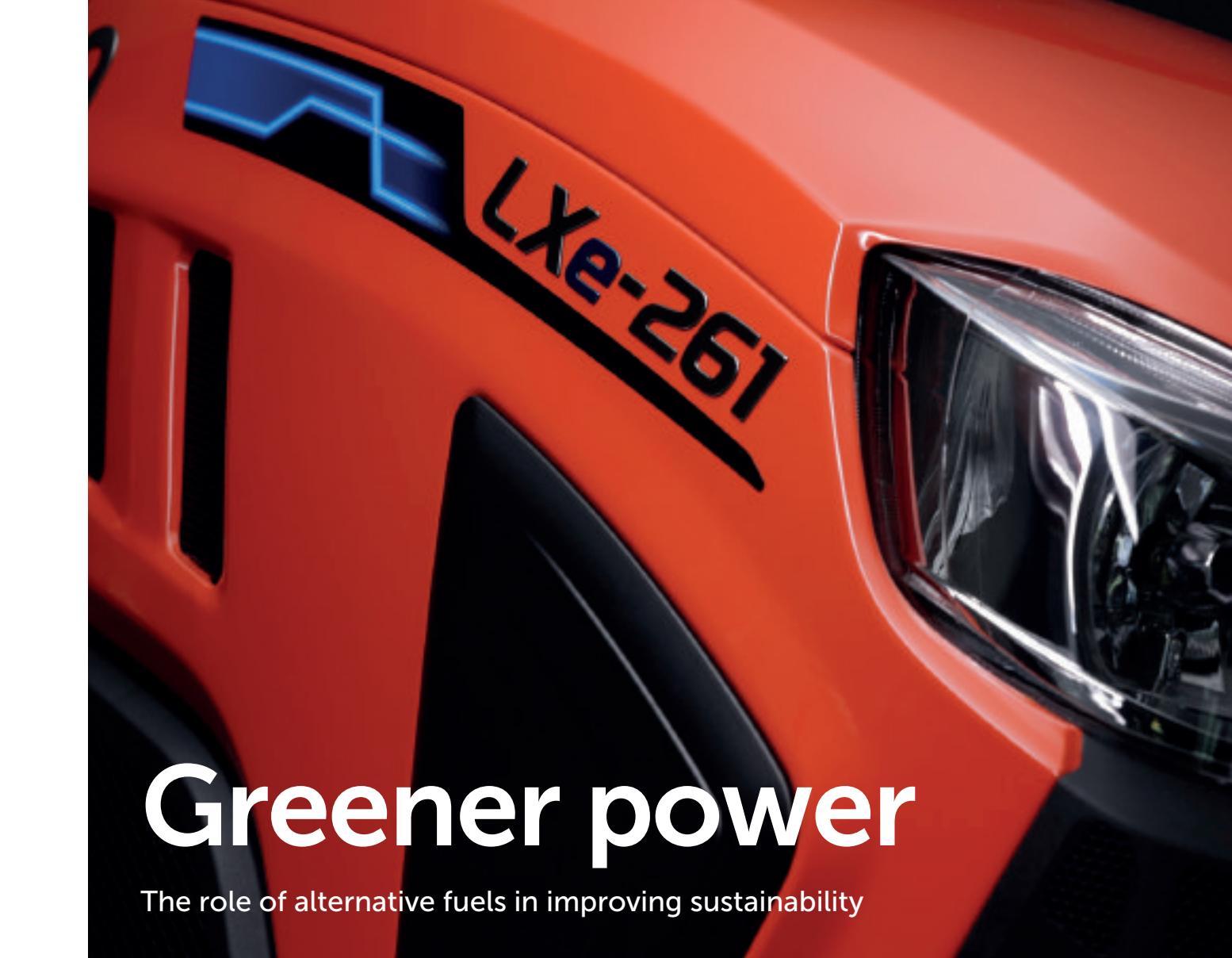
These days there are so many ways to get the message out there: a seminar, via the golf club noticeboard, through social media accounts and, of course, via face-to-face interactions.

The important thing is to show them that you're aware, that you care and that you're doing your best to manage the situation.

Which is a lot better than leaving them to assume you aren't aware, don't care and aren't doing anything about it! **GI**



**Scan Me to find out more**



# Greener power

The role of alternative fuels in improving sustainability



If sustainability and green initiatives aren't already a major topic of conversation at your golf course, there's a strong likelihood that they're not far away. When considering equipment and maintenance machinery, it is common for thoughts to quickly turn to battery powered alternatives. However, many councils and other customers where environmental-consciousness is key are lowering their carbon footprint through the use of alternative fuels such as HVO. Matt Wilson, groundcare product manager for Kubota UK, explains the benefits of HVO and how this is just one of the sustainable options available to course managers from the Kubota portfolio.

Hydrotreated vegetable oil, or HVO, is a renewable, paraffinic diesel fuel made from used or residual animal

fats, cooking oils and other waste materials. The oils are hydrogenated and refined to produce a fuel with properties akin to diesel from the pump. From renewable and sustainable sources, HVO offers a cleaner-burning alternative, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from diesel-powered equipment by up to 90% compared to pump fuel.

HVO should not be confused with biodiesel – another biofuel, but often made from crops. HVO is a second-generation biofuel meaning it is mainly comprised from waste and residue materials.

The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is beneficial for more than just the environment – greenkeepers and machine operators will also be better protected from the harmful effects and health implications of being exposed to engine emissions, particularly if they're working an open station or ROPS unit in a confined area.

Furthermore, in the field HVO has

also demonstrated better combustion, filterability and cold temperature performance compared to fossil diesel.

All sounds good, right? Where's the catch I hear you ask!

Well, of course, there is a financial implication. Using HVO in the place of diesel from the forecourt typically equates to a 10-15% increase in cost. While not trivial, it is significantly less than the cost associated with retiring perfectly serviceable diesel-powered equipment to the shed or scrapyard to make way for brand-new power sources.

Other than that, there are very few downsides to considering HVO in your golf operation. A major plus is the fact that HVO is approved for use in all Kubota internal combustion engines without the need for any modification. There are no changes to existing maintenance intervals or warranty conditions when using HVO fuel. There is also no requirement to flush fuel tanks or change filters as HVO is



**“From renewable and sustainable sources, HVO offers a cleaner burning alternative, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from diesel-powered equipment by up to 90% compared to pump fuel”**

**Left:** the Kubota LXe-261 **Below:** the Kubota L2-622



compatible with diesel and is therefore safe to mix. Note that, if mixed, the particulate emissions will be higher and the fuel may 'go off' if stored for a prolonged period due to the biofuels found in regular diesel.

Peace of mind is also provided by the fact that HVO fuel is covered by European Standard EN 15940 for paraffinic diesel fuels, meeting all the necessary tests and requirements for approved sale and consumption.

HVO provides owners and operators with another fuel choice, to suit their operating environment and help facilities meet targets and conditions where CO<sub>2</sub> is monitored and measured. Suitable for use in the diesel-powered Kubota range, including compact tractors, RTV's and ride-on mowers, operators should familiarise themselves with any and all appropriate local regulations on fuel use in the areas being used.

If clubs do wish to make the switch to electrically-powered equipment,

then Kubota have you covered here too. These machines essentially use a battery source, typically lithium-ion, to provide the 'fuel' for the machine. Instead of refuelling with liquid fuels, they are re-charged by a 230-volt power supply and/or – depending on the supply available – 'superchargers', which can be used to significantly reduce re-charge time.

Kubota have adopted this approach to power the ZE Electric Zero-Turn mower range, joining an RT220-2e compact wheel loader and LXe-261 compact tractor in Kubota's electric portfolio.

Developing an effective electric solution demands more than simply offering a low or zero emission machine – it still must meet the customer's needs for productivity, durability and efficiency. Looking at the LXe-261 tractor in particular, one of the major challenges was delivering ample range and operational run-time.

For that reason, the LXe-261 is equipped with a large-capacity battery

that can provide rapid, one-hour charging and three to four hours of continuous run-time. This means that operators will be able to quickly charge the batteries during their lunch break and continue working in the afternoon. The electric motor produces an equivalent 25.8hp which drives the 3-range HST transmission, hydraulic pump and steering pump making it suitable for mowing, hauling and other maintenance tasks around the course.

We expect to see a blend of fuel sources in use in the professional groundcare sector for a good few years to come. Considerations on consumption, maintenance demands, logistics and of course the economic impact will all influence what the right fuel choice may be for your course.

For more information about Kubota, visit  
[www.kubota-eu.com](http://www.kubota-eu.com) or  
[www.kubota-global.net](http://www.kubota-global.net)



# THE SMALLEST THINGS CAN MAKE THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE

How Toro sprinklers can help to optimise golf course irrigation

Adopting sustainable irrigation maintenance practices is crucial to preserving water resource and using smart technology is one of the easiest and most effective ways to do that.

We often talk about how being able to use a central control system for precise, efficient and effective irrigation can bring about huge savings in water, but what about sprinklers? Surely the method of water application can also play a huge part in this.

Here, Reesink Hydro-Scapes, sole Toro distributor in the UK for golf and sports fields irrigation products, and Andy Strother, Engineering and Product Management at The Toro Company talk about the Toro sprinkler design process and which elements make the most difference (hint: they're small but mighty).

## How are ideas for a new sprinkler generated?

This primarily revolves around customer feedback and market needs. Direct customer interactions and interviews provide immediate ideas, while indirect feedback comes from social media, sales channels and installation contractors who relay customer requests and issues encountered.

These insights are crucial for understanding known customer requirements, solving specific problems or introducing new features that enhance customer satisfaction.

## How heavily do you rely on research and development?

It's fundamental throughout the

Andy Strother,  
Engineering and Product  
Management at The  
Toro Company



**“ Two key features have significantly enhanced golf course irrigation; the integration of a valve within the sprinkler head and a control system that allows for individual programming of each sprinkler”**

product development lifecycle. Research phases focus on conceptualising products and integrating new technologies, while development continues through design, evaluation and manufacturing trials.

The process typically involves a lead product manager, design engineer and various support teams to ensure the product meets or exceeds expectations.

#### **How long does the process take?**

The timeline for developing a new sprinkler design averages around two years, varying based on complexity.

The most challenging aspect often lies in nozzle development, requiring a balance of scientific understanding and practical application to optimise water distribution efficiently. This stage involves extensive modelling, simulation, lab testing and field trials to refine nozzle performance.

Qualification testing constitutes the most time-consuming phase, especially when design issues necessitate repetitive prototyping and testing.

Despite its duration, this process ensures the final product meets stringent performance and reliability standards before production.

#### **What kind of adjustments might be made during research and development (R&D) or infield testing?**

Adjustments during R&D and infield testing often involve refining design elements to meet performance specifications. For example,

adjustments may be made to nozzle designs to optimise water distribution or to seals to prevent leaks discovered during field testing. These adjustments ensure that products meet the exacting standards set during development.

#### **What feature has brought the most change?**

Two key features have significantly enhanced golf course irrigation; the integration of a valve within the sprinkler head and a control system that allows for individual programming and control of each sprinkler.

Working together, these innovations enable greenkeepers to apply water with greater accuracy and precision, leading to huge water and energy savings as well as improved playing conditions.

#### **In your opinion, which Toro sprinklers are simply unmatched?**

Toro golf sprinklers are among the most versatile products in the golf irrigation industry.

Their factory settings are optimised for typical use, ensuring excellent performance in most golf course situations.

Versatility is crucial because golf courses present challenging and diverse environments. The ability to adapt water distribution to specific, demanding areas is a significant advantage for greenkeepers. Examples of this versatility include adjustable main nozzle trajectories and customisable nozzle sets. These are standard features of Toro golf sprinklers.

**With the repeated reference to the impact that nozzles make to sprinkler design, Reesink tells us about the latest examples of this.**

The latest example of nozzle design that brings the next evolution in precise water delivery to the industry are the new Toro Performance Series Nozzles for Infinity and Flex series rotors.

They bring added technology and precision features to Toro's most popular sprinklers, meaning customers don't have to buy new or choose different sprinklers. There's a choice of nozzles that are loaded into the rotors to outperform industry standard nozzles for the ultimate in golf course irrigation efficiency.

It's an easy and quick way to take irrigation distribution uniformity and precision to an elite level, aptly demonstrating why Toro is known to be a guardian of the resource through optimising water delivery and providing efficient and effective water coverage. They even provide profile performance data for operatives.

Reesink Hydro-Scapes brings customers a full range of industry-leading Toro irrigation controllers, sprinklers and soil sensors range of products that utilise the world's latest technology to ensure the greenest use of one our most valuable resources.

- **For further information on the range, as well as training and demonstrations, please contact Reesink Hydro-Scapes on 01480 226800 or visit [reesink-hydroscapes.co.uk](http://reesink-hydroscapes.co.uk)**

# Combatting spring disease pressure



Modern disease control requires an integrated, layered approach using several different tools to maximise your chances of transitioning smoothly out of winter and re-establishing good turf conditions, says Alistair Beggs, senior agronomist at The R&A

The autumn and winter of 2024-25 will be remembered as one of the most damaging for turf disease in the UK in the last decade. Weather patterns in the October to December period were often perfect for the development of fungal pathogens, particularly fusarium (Microdochium patch) and this left greens in many parts of the country much weaker at the start of 2025 than greenkeepers and golfers would like.

The task of controlling disease has become far more challenging in recent times, with weather patterns

becoming more volatile and more difficult to predict, and the range of chemical fungicides now far less effective, especially for curative control.

Turf disease is unpredictable, although advancements are being made with the use of environmental monitoring and disease modelling. We think we understand which areas of turf are the most vulnerable and why, but it doesn't always work out this way. Often, areas that appear relatively robust succumb to decline unexpectedly and no site is immune

to attack, even if it is blessed with free-draining soils and plenty of air and light.

Good planning is essential now if attacks during this vulnerable period of the year are to be minimised. We will not see 100 per cent disease-free surfaces and even robust planning is not completely bullet-proof because we are dealing with nature and unpredictability is a function of nature.

Having said that, I do think that we can get better at planning for disease at this time of the year and, while we might not be able to eliminate the



likelihood of disease and damage to the turf completely, we can certainly reduce the potential for problematic declines and ongoing problems associated with the initial outbreak.

I continue to favour an integrated approach to disease control. The strategy for autumn suppression needs to be thought about in the summer and a clear action plan should be put in place. In my experience this process often starts too late and leads to firefighting, often with chemicals that are not designed to be curative in the way they act.

**Above:** Parkland Poa annua dominated greens came under more pressure during the past winter conditions leading to some examples showing aggressive and rapid development of microdochium patch. The impact of this severity of microdochium patch disease can be alarming and disruptive.

**“** Continuous moisture films are the main cause of bad outbreaks of disease. Review the technology and, if necessary, review work rosters so that morning removal can be supported in the middle of the day on the worst days”

Most fungicides now are systemic or acropetal in their action, so application when tissue damage can be seen by the naked eye is not very effective.

If chemicals are to be used, a decision needs to be taken to do so well before disease appears and successful timings have to be linked with disease-forecasting sites to get the most from the product.

However, even when all the homework has been done and the plan is in place, how often is that plan thwarted by heavy rainfall and wind, both sent to complicate application timings further. This was a real challenge in the autumn of 2024.

There will be those of you out there who haven't used a fungicide or don't want to because it is your belief that application of broad-spectrum fungicides is counterproductive to

disease. Review the technology and, if necessary, review work rosters so that morning removal can be supported in the middle of the day on the worst days.

Fundamentally though, we must work to improve airflow and reduce the impact of shade, which may be keeping the turf damp. This is not always possible but many courses are guilty of not addressing the situation.

Dew removal using surfactants can be considered too. However, many of these products need to be applied to a dry leaf for best results and sometimes this is not possible. Furthermore, some of them, because they have to stick to the leaf, can cause phytotoxic effects in combination with frost or saturated soil conditions. Care is needed with application timings.

Mini robots are providing some

**“ The task of controlling disease has become far more challenging in recent times with weather patterns becoming more volatile and more difficult to predict, and the range of chemical fungicides now far less effective especially for curative control”**

long-term soil and plant health. I respect this point of view and continue to marvel at the results that some greenkeepers achieve without recourse to fungicides.

If this is your approach, then the cultural plan (which also needs to be thought about well in advance and implemented early) needs to be multi-layered and not reliant on one kind of approach. Like the fungicide option it must start early. Again, too many start too late.

The main reason the autumn and winter of 2024-25 has been so damaging to turf is because surface moisture has been persistent with plentiful dew-ridden mornings made worse by drizzle-ridden humid days when dew removal proves almost impossible.

Brushing technologies are improving and allowing more effective removal of surface moisture. We must get better at surface moisture removal if disease activity is to be reduced.

Continuous moisture films are the main cause of bad outbreaks of

potential for relief in this area. Fitting these units with dew brushes is now an option and their regular and repeat deployment during periods of high humidity has the potential to make a real difference to disease management in the years ahead. I've even seen units fitted with UV-C capability which adds further disease protection. Perhaps something for the future as innovation develops.

Turf-hardening mixes are becoming more effective. The careful selection of combination mixes alongside early deployment should be a standard approach now on all courses.

I have two caveats. Firstly, make sure the programme used does not contain too much insidious nitrogen. Know how much you are applying. Some nitrogen as part of a hardening mix programme is fine but amounts can get quickly out of control. Select a programme with low nitrogen content and add more in the form of ammonium sulphate if needed.

Secondly, avoid prophylactic treatments. The old approach of

applying these materials by the calendar month doesn't work. Disease does not have a calendar. Applications need to begin early, probably in late August or early September, and they need to be repeated prior to forecast increases in humidity. There are plenty of good disease forecasting sites available to help with this.

Some autumn and winter periods



**Even fine-grass species environments such as links greens can experience greater than usual pressures although the surrounding and underlying environment is less susceptible than parkland. Recovery in this situation is easier to achieve – and the impact of disease is typically minimal.**



may necessitate relatively low use of such programmes, others, such as the most recent one may require regular and repeated use of such programmes. Be flexible and agile.

Modern disease control requires an integrated, layered approach using several different tools to gain best results.

Biological solutions will contribute in

time but, for now, the pragmatic approach is to use tried-and-tested methodologies adding new technologies, such as robots, to aid delivery.

Finally, if your club exited winter with weakened greens, help them to recover this spring by reviewing your nitrogen delivery. Giving them a little more than normal will accelerate

recovery and facilitate the integration of top dressing to smooth the surfaces and repair scars, in addition to localised overseeding where required.

This will give you the best opportunity to provide good greens as early as possible, even when transitioning into a period of differential growth. **GI**



# Fighting dollar spot

The science and strategy behind effective turf management

**Authors:** Kelly-Marie Clack and Geoff Fenn,  
Origin Amenity Solutions

**Dollar spot is a relatively new disease to the UK and in 2024 we saw the largest outbreak we have seen on our shores.**

Previous outbreaks had been confined to the Channel Islands and Southern UK, however due to the high humidity experienced in the UK in 2024 we observed outbreaks as far north as Aberdeen. In the USA this is considered the most detrimental disease to golf courses, as it is a summer disease that can severely affect surface aesthetics as well as surface performance. At the time of year that golfers expect perfection - firm, true and smooth surfaces, we observe tanned pitted spots all over the green.



## Recognising dollar spot: Key symptoms and signs

Tanned spots about the size of a dollar coin (dollar spot!) around 2-5cm in diameter usually appear on highly managed turf such as tees, fairways, approaches and greens. On close inspection, hourglass shaped lesions can be seen on the leaf blade. Spots can typically coalesce which can wipe out large areas of turf.

This is a fungal disease which is spread through small bits of mycelium moving to a new plant host. They move in water and can also be spread on shoes, golf equipment and turf management equipment. Transfer from fairway clippings onto putting greens is a prime route for infection of lower cut surfaces.

This disease does not produce spores but scientific experts in the US believe that this disease could be entering the seedling of the plant and spreading as the seed drops.

Previously known as *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*, the dollar spot pathogen is now called *Clarireedia* ssp. and has been recently identified as several different species infecting different grasses and climates:

- *Clarireedia homoeocarpa* – only

found in the UK and primarily infects red fescues.

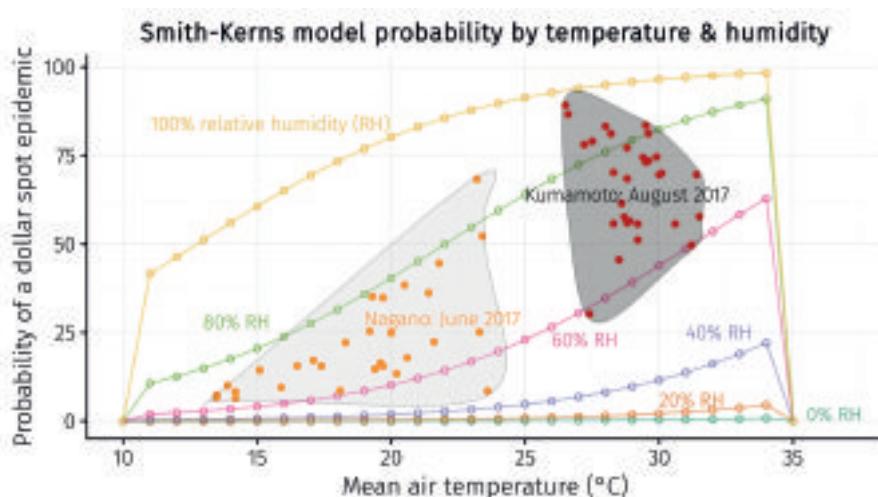
- *Clarireedia bennettii* – mainly infects *Poa annua* in the UK and USA.
- *Clarireedia jacksonii* – the most common and virulent strain worldwide, mainly infecting creeping bent, red fescues and smooth stalked meadow grass.
- Other species are known to infect some warm season grasses too.

## The environmental triggers of dollar spot

Conducive environmental conditions are key to disease outbreaks. Whenever relative humidity is high and temperatures are warm, there is a danger of disease. Collecting weather data is important for preventative monitoring of dollar spot. The Smith-Kerns Dollar Spot Prediction Model is the best method we have of predicting disease likelihood on individual sites.

## Predicting outbreaks: The Smith-Kerns Dollar Spot Model

The widely used Dollar Spot Model uses a 5-day rolling average of relative humidity and average air temperature



to give the probability of a disease outbreak. If the risk reaches 20% probability, a preventative IPM programme is recommended. It is important to use forecasted weather data to plan, if probability is above 20% and increasing for the 7 days ahead, implement your IPM strategy. Relative humidity is heavily weighted in this model as we can see in the diagram above. Temperature can be as low as 12-15 °C but if relative humidity is 100% the probability of dollar spot is 40%.

As with any IPM strategy, we should be over seeding with grass species and cultivars that are less susceptible to dollar spot. Generally slender and strong creeping red fescues are most resistant, whilst creeping bent and annual meadow grass are most susceptible. Many modern creeping bent cultivars have much improved resistance, but the species is still generally susceptible to dollar spot.

#### Best cultural practices to reduce dollar spot

Studies in the US on creeping bent grasses shows a decrease in dollar spot from rolling greens. A 61% decrease when rolling twice per week and 95% decrease from four times per week. Rolling is only recommended when conditions are conducive.

Dollar spot is a foliar disease so maintaining sharp blades on all maintenance equipment will reduce damage to the leaf tissue and minimise sites for the fungus to enter the leaf tissue.

Dollar spot is often associated with low fertility. Collecting clip volume data can be an extremely useful data set when planning your nutritional

inputs and collecting this alongside growth potential (20°C) will give you growth ratio data.

As with most diseases, moisture management is key to reducing the possibility of an outbreak.

- If no dew is forecast, irrigation cycles should run in the early hours of the morning rather than the evening to avoid prolonged leaf wetness.
- If a dew is forecast, then a short 'syringe' of the greens with a single turn of the heads can be effective in knocking dew off the leaf and crucially, reducing the leaf wetness duration, which is a key factor in disease development.
- Remove dew as early as possible and rotate your cutting regime, so you don't remove dew from the last green every time you cut.
- Use wetting agents to reduce surface tension and allow water to penetrate into the soil profile more efficiently. Water will spread through the profile to produce a constant moisture level.

#### Latest research and innovations in dollar spot control

New research shows significant dollar spot reduction by maintaining a high leaf pH (opposite to Microdochium patch). The pathogen seems to prefer a lower surface pH to spread on the leaf and has to produce oxalic acid to allow it to infect new material when

the leaf surface pH is high. The more oxalic acid the pathogen must produce, the less energy it has to spread.

Using 20/20/30 with Elevate Fe instead of Seamac Proturf, and TeMag Elite instead of Mantle, can be used to support your dollar spot IPM plan.

When pressure is very high, Exteris™ Stressgard® is an excellent fungicide for dollar spot prevention. In addition, Stressgard is a proven technology that mitigates stress and maintains plant health to improve consistency in turf quality, therefore delivering great playing surfaces. Exteris™ Stressgard® delivers the immediate aesthetic improvements and long-term plant health benefits proven with Stressgard technology.

Research has shown that high fungicide use can result in a less dollar spot-suppressive microbiome and soils inoculated with microbes from a high-fungicide use area have much higher dollar spot incidence. Several microbial species have been identified as key species in dollar spot suppressive soil and SDHI fungicides (Exteris Stressgard) were pinpointed as having the lowest impact on this group of microbes.

Dollar spot is highly likely to be a major issue for many years to come – watching weather conditions like a hawk and knowing exactly how to respond on your site will be key to disease management and prevention.

Origin Amenity Solutions (OAS) can provide advice and strategies that can help support dollar spot management. For more information visit [www.originamenity.com](http://www.originamenity.com) or to speak to an OAS advisor call 0800 138 7222.



# Eliminating weeds

## A guide to selective herbicide modes of action

There are few turf surfaces that have the fortune of remaining weed free throughout their useful life. Whether it is grasses or broadleaved weeds, annuals or perennials, at some point there is likely to be a requirement for some degree of weed control to ensure that the surface remains attractive, functioning and safe.

The best weed management is to avoid their presence in the first place by understanding what factors will provide opportunities for weed establishment. For example, the Park Grass experiment (Silvertown et al. 2006) demonstrated a reduction in plant species from 45 species down to just two by consistently fertilising grassland, resulting in a reduction in broadleaved weeds and an increase in grass biomass. Even when followed to its fullest extent, however, opportunities for weeds to establish will still occur which may need further intervention through the use of systemic herbicides.

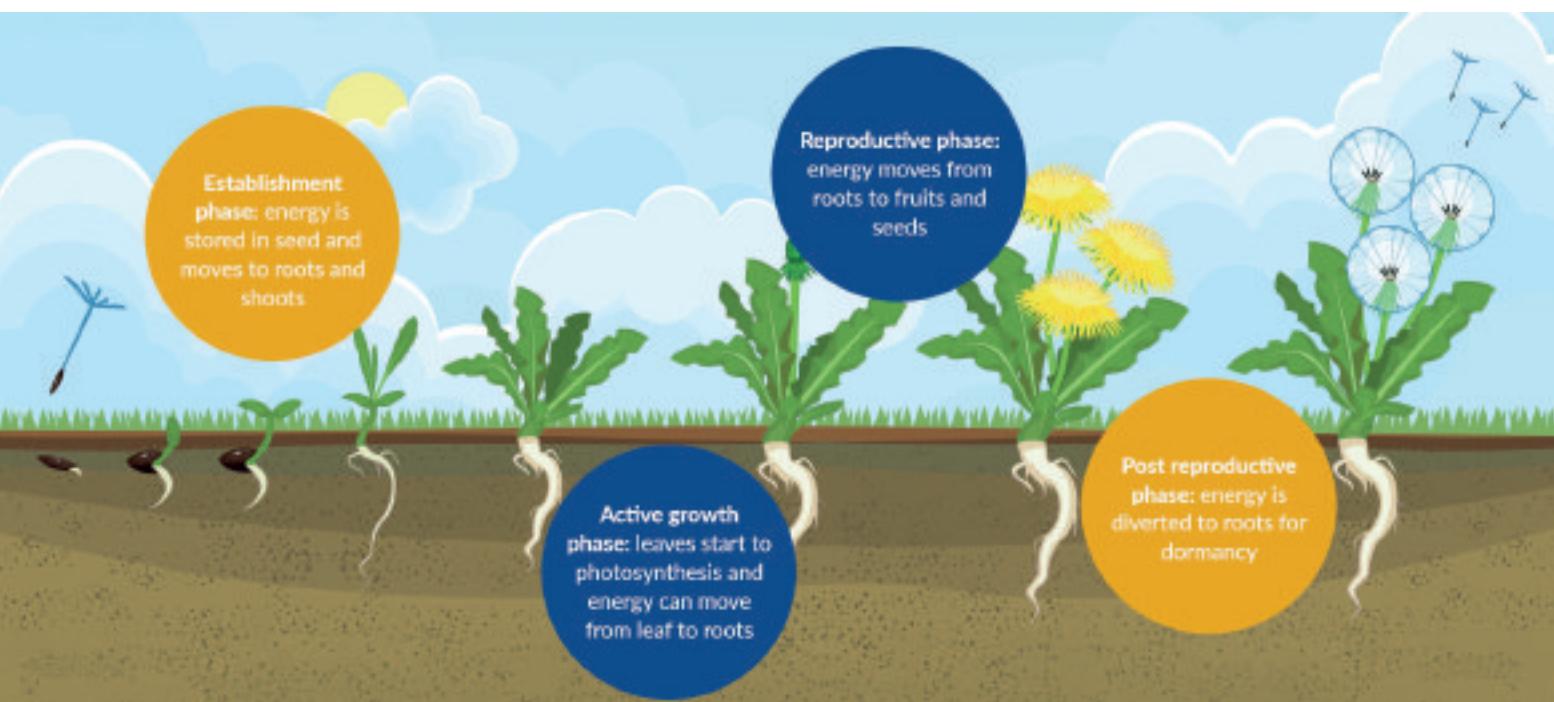
The systemic herbicides that are used on turfgrass surfaces must be selective so that the weed species are controlled without injuring the turfgrasses. For grass weeds there are few options. Since the withdrawal of pinoxaden; Cycloxydim, the active substance in Laser is the only herbicide that will

control certain grasses within a sward. Cultural controls such as manipulating soil pH, available nutrition and water are therefore key to grass weed free turf.

When turf surfaces are affected by broadleaved weeds there are a greater number of options for herbicidal control. To get the most out of herbicides, applications should coincide with the downwards movement of sugars (energy) so that all parts of the plant, including the roots are controlled. This downwards movement occurs when the plant is in the active growth phase and, if it is a perennial plant, in the post reproductive phase. Because annuals only survive for one growing season, there is no point in applying herbicide once they have moved into the reproductive phase.

Alongside timing herbicide application correctly, selecting the right active substances for the species that are present will ensure effective weed control. Whilst there are several active substances that are authorised under the two turfgrass definitions, managed amenity turf and amenity grassland, they all belong to just two mode of action groups. The mode of action describes the specific processes that are affected in the target plant and should be alternated to ensure that

Figure 1 Systemic herbicides should be applied when plants will be moving energy towards the roots, either in the active growth phase or in the post reproductive phase.



Author: Dr Abigail Graceson, Technical Manager, Agrovista Amenity

For more information, speak to your local Agrovista Amenity specialist.

herbicides continue to be effective against target weeds. If it is not possible to alternate the mode of action, the next best option would be to alternate chemical families and finally to alternate active substances.

Auxin mimic herbicides all work by oversupplying the target plant with a synthetic version of the growth hormone auxin. The plant becomes unable to control growth leading to the characteristic twisting following application. High levels of free radicals are produced causing cell damage that the plant cannot defend itself against because energy generation through photosynthesis has also stopped. Ultimately the plant starves to death.

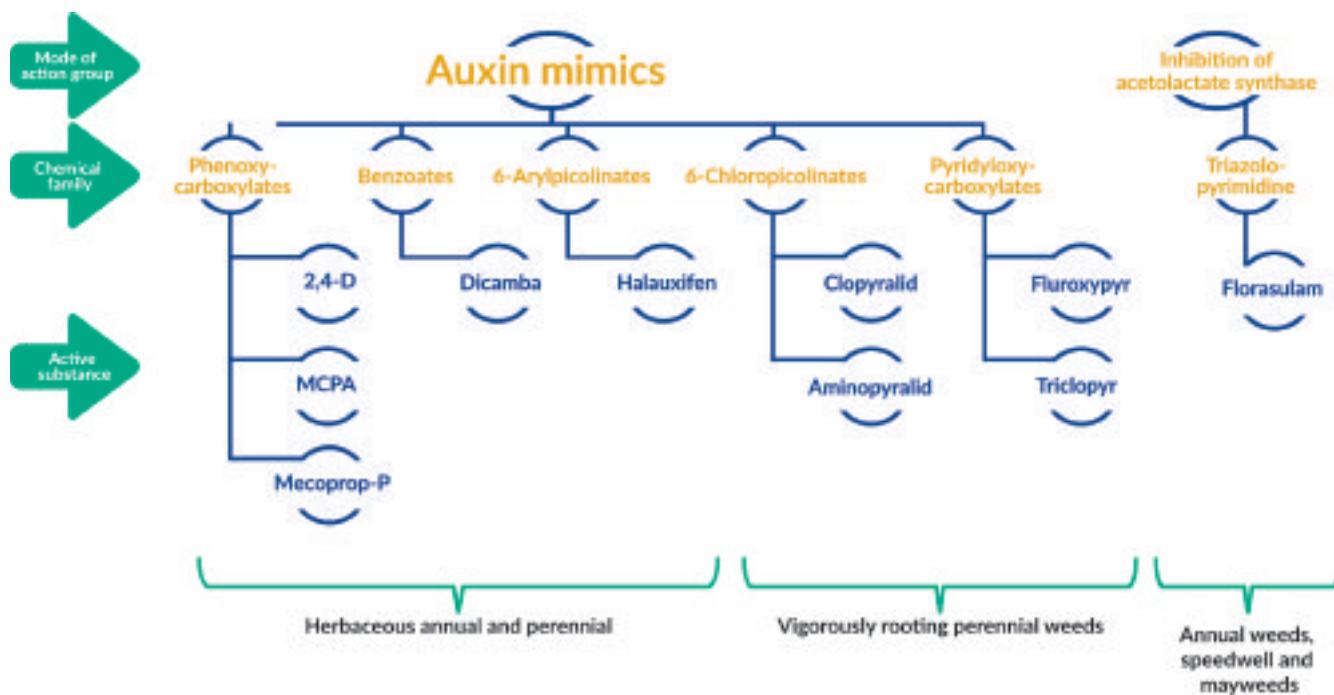
Auxin mimic herbicides in the phenoxy-carboxylate and benzoate chemical families are effective against a range of broadleaved weeds. As a rough rule 2,4-D will provide better control of weeds with a tap root, whilst dicamba is effective against weeds with a spreading habit. The 6-Chloropicolinates and pyridiloxyl-carboxylates provide better control of vigorously growing perennial weeds and of woody weeds. Clopyralid and aminopyralid are particularly useful for weeds with a tap root because they are well translocated. Fluroxypyr

is less well translocated but is useful for controlling problem weeds like speedwell and chickweed. Triclopyr can be used against woody weeds.

Florasulam is the only active substance in the acetolactate synthase inhibitors (ALS inhibitors) group authorised for turfgrass. ALS inhibitors work by preventing the production of specific amino acids. The resulting symptoms are slow to develop and more pronounced on leaves that emerge after treatment. Symptoms include chlorosis, vein discolouration, necrosis, reduction in growth and gradual death. Florasulam is effective at low concentrations and provides good control of annual weeds, speedwell and mayweed. It is the only rotation option for breaking the cycle of using auxin mimics to control weeds in turf.

Identification of the weed species that are present will help with both timing of application and with product selection to ensure that herbicide use is effective. Where multiple species are present, they may need to be targeted with herbicides containing more than one active substance or by tank mixing multiple products with different active substances to increase the spectrum of weeds that are controlled.

Figure 2 The main selective herbicides for control of broadleaved weeds in amenity grassland and managed amenity turf. To maintain efficacy of herbicides and reduce the risk of resistance the mode of action group should be alternated.



# The future is now

Elevating course management with golfHUB from Clere Golf

Reliable products are built on quality data and robust systems. For years, Clere Golf's survey teams have gathered critical data to create products trusted by both amateur golfers and tour professionals worldwide. More recently, they have developed golfHUB, a next-generation software solution designed to help course managers store, analyse and interact with the data they collect.

#### A powerful, integrated platform

golfHUB seamlessly integrates GPS, drone and spatial mapping technologies to support a wide range of tasks, while also highlighting the exceptional work carried out by greenkeeping teams. Its intuitive features allow for quick access to precise area calculations—whether for bunkers, tees, greens or fairways—with sub-10cm accuracy.

One standout feature is the ability to overlay aerial imagery from different years, enabling users to 'swipe' between them to track even the most subtle course changes. The system also houses video flythroughs, offering invaluable insights for remote planning and decision-making.

#### A centralised repository for essential data

golfHUB acts as a comprehensive digital archive, securely storing critical course information, including irrigation plans, topographic surveys and green slope data. This information also powers a sophisticated pin location system, ensuring that vital records remain accessible as teams evolve over time.

#### Simplified project management

golfHUB is particularly well-suited for project management, allowing users to document and categorise work with photographic evidence, relevant notes, quotes and documentation. The system makes it easy to retrieve past records and create structured projects, whether for bunker renovations, ecology programs, winter maintenance, woodland management, heather regeneration or safety signage initiatives.

#### Real-world applications

Many clubs have already embraced golfHUB to enhance their course management strategies:

- Northamptonshire County Golf Club has incorporated golfHUB into the development of its ecology program.
- Berkhamsted Golf Club uses golfHUB to document winter projects, providing valuable photographic evidence for member communications.
- Hadley Wood Golf Club leverages golfHUB's topographic data and elevation profiles for drainage planning.

 **We have customers using the mobile GPS function to locate sprinkler heads in rough areas that can often be difficult to find"**

**“**It’s been fantastic to see the many ways in which golfHUB is supporting greenkeeping teams — every club finds new ways it can help them!”

#### Mobile accessibility & on-course surveying

With built-in GPS capabilities, golfHUB extends its functionality to mobile devices, enabling on-course mapping via iPhones and Androids. This ensures that clubs always have the most up-to-date records, whether mapping new teeing grounds, planning bunker installations or updating irrigation systems.

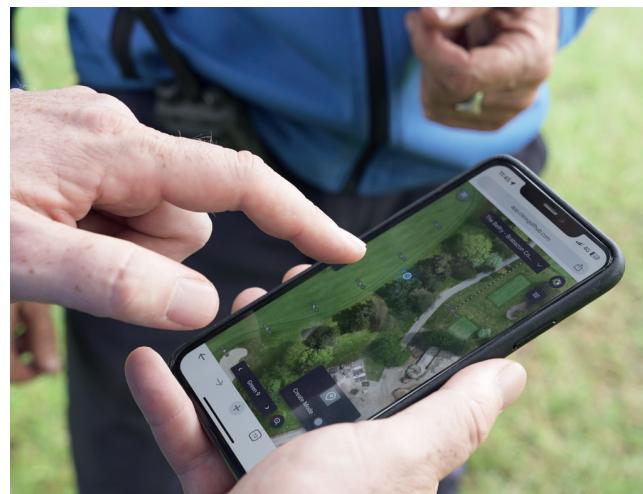
Teams at Moortown and Hankley Common utilise golfHUB’s mobile GPS capabilities to map pin positions directly on-course. These updates are instantly reflected in the PinZone app, providing real-time pin locations for members and guests.

Additionally, golfHUB’s green slope data ensures that pins can be placed with confidence, avoiding severe slopes while allowing course managers to create exclusion zones to protect worn areas.

#### A digital portfolio for course management

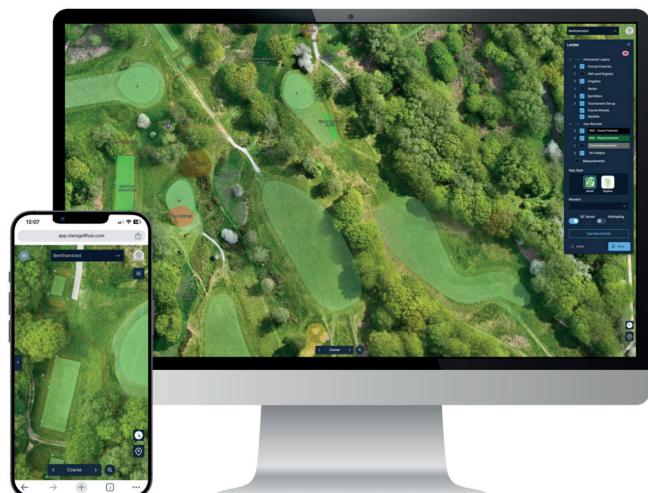
One of golfHUB’s most powerful applications is its ability to build a digital portfolio of a course’s evolution. This tool allows greenkeeping teams to showcase their achievements in a structured, professional manner, backed by photographic evidence and key notes. It serves as a valuable asset for annual performance reviews, demonstrating how objectives have been met and challenges overcome.

By integrating golfHUB, course managers and greenkeeping teams can drive smarter decision-making,



enhance planning efficiency and secure long-term success for their clubs.

*With golfHUB, the future of golf course management is more connected, informed and efficient than ever before.*



To find out more about golfHUB, schedule a demo or become a golfHUB ambassador, call 01635 43026 or visit [cleregolf.com](http://cleregolf.com).

# The season of change is here

It's been a long winter but now spring is well and truly here. Seize the opportunities that this time of the year offers us and take full advantage to set your course up for the year

Now that the spring equinox has been and gone, we are in that fantastic time of year where the day length is long, evenings are drawing out and everything has come alive in the early season.

While overnight temperatures may still be lagging at times, our long days are bringing real opportunity and change to turfgrass systems, with daily progress away from the issues that we discussed this time last month.

Besides the agronomic benefits of these long, bright spring days, they bring an air of enthusiasm and optimism to golf clubs on the cusp of the golf season ahead.

Players are heading back out onto the course after the winter break and, although we must still manage their expectations and encourage patience, the turf is tightening up, play is underway and the feeling is good

**“A well-fed bent grass will be taking advantage when competition is low at this time of year, over time easing the impact that differential growth brings”**

out there.

Back to the agronomics, though, which is, after all, the focus of our roles within the golf community.

The season brings opportunity to initiate change although caution must still be taken by turf managers and players alike.

On greens, particularly, it is the prime season to seize this opportunity and make productive use of conditions that can benefit one species over another.

The fine bentgrass species that we strive to promote on our putting

surfaces come alive earlier in the season than those that we usually manage to reduce populations of.

Tailoring the timing of spring operations to benefit these grasses will bring tangible benefits to our surfaces.

Keeping an eye on the growth rates of mixed swards through monitoring clipping yield and measuring soil temperatures will give us an indication of when things are coming alive and when to take action.

A great example of this comes with timing applications of fertiliser to coincide with the initiation of spring growth of bentgrass.

This will provide the perfect opportunity for bent to assert itself in a mixed-species sward while Poa annua is still lingering in its early-season slumber.

A well-fed bent will be taking

advantage when competition is low at this time of year, over time easing the impact that differential growth brings.

Seasonal root growth accelerates and peaks over the coming weeks.

Seize the opportunity with frequent, low-impact aeration practices, which will provide an ideal conduit to encourage both deep and fibrous root development, giving us resilience.

Warming soils also bring the advantage of speeding up seed germination, whether drilling to reinforce populations as part of extensive spring renovation operations



Jaey Goodchild is an Agronomist at The R&A

or working on recovering areas that have suffered from the impact of winter traffic.

Of course, giving these areas a helping hand through overseeding will help them bounce back to their season's best, but we also need offer some protection and assistance.

Keeping traffic management measures in place for as long as possible will benefit establishment, and continuing to review the ropes and stakes' positions will spread the impact.

Keep in mind that a little patience is still needed but that it will bring rewards.

As growth speeds up, definition can be refined through mowing, presentation will be dialled in and the course will take shape – changes can be made to perimeter cuts as recovery is swift.

Of all the seasons and times of the year, spring will have the greatest influence on what is to come later in the year.

It will set us up for success and help us make progress in our long-term goals as well as give us recovery from the challenges that winter sets upon us.

It is a season of change, so take advantage if it! **GI**



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

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