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Chairman's Column

DOESN'T TIME FLY...

As you read this we will only be a few weeks away from Christmas and I cannot believe this year has passed so quickly, although previous Chairmen told me it would, you never quite imagine it going as fast as it does.

I have firmly enjoyed the last 11 months and would not have swapped the role for anything. Although it has been hectic at times I felt I was in a privileged position to take on the role because of the resources I have at my disposal here at The Belfry.

Talking about that subject I have seen a poor take up in the new nominations procedure to elect a new BIGGA Vice Chairman after some of the criticism we received last year on the process. I see a lot of local people at the forums talking about issues but it would be even better to see people putting themselves forward and electing for the role. We have put a job description out to the Regions and Section for the role of Chairman for the full period, so please have a read and get in touch with your Region to review it, we have put a little less commitment on the 'have-to-dos'; so talk to your clubs and see if you can increase your chances of securing the role, it's all about making a difference and contributing to the Association for the good of the greenkeeping profession.

The Board recommendations for the proposal to allow groundsman to benefit from full membership is up for discussion prior to the AGM at Harrogate - looking at the forum on the members' website there is quite a difference of opinion which is what we were trying to achieve, and see what people want to do for this motion. I for one think this is a positive move, going forward for our Association however, if there is resistance within our membership then that's all well and good and we will move forward in the necessary direction. At the end of the day we are members of an organisation and it is members who will have their final say on this.

On another front there is a big initiative on the new membership structures to target some of the big clubs on group membership as well as individuals. As we all know there is a lot of potential in the UK to increase our membership. Something we need to look into. I think there are around 12-15,000 greenkeepers in the UK and only 6500 members! It shows us there is a long way to go to get people on board but I think we have got the people in place and the structure now to take this forward, with Tracey Maddison, the new Membership Manager, working with the Regional Administrators attending conferences and golf days to help retain our members and to spread the word for new members. I know this is probably not the right time for people thinking about asking clubs to pay for a membership or pay for themselves, but if you look at it as an opportunity to increase their education and management skills it helps keep themselves at the forefront of a clubs progression, especially through the hard times it might just be the thing that keeps you ahead of the game, although it is not great at the moment in the economic climate, but joining the Association might just be the best thing to do for yourself and your club. If you are not sure, why not come to Harrogate and experience it for yourself?

I attended a couple of conferences in the autumn. Firstly, the Icelandic Greenkeeping & Grounds Association in Reykjavik, where they had a two day conference and a trade show. There were around 80 attendees and for such a small country showing such a passion to learn more about our industry was fantastic.



I then went to Berlin for the Golf Business Conference and again there was a huge turnout of 200 plus attendees. It was nice to see Ken Schofield - former Chief Executive of the PGA European Tour, receiving an award for his services to golf. How ironic that was then in the same week that saw the start of the Race to Dubai, the new initiative from the European Tour for the 2009 professional golf season.

I hope all of you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you all at Harrogate in 2009.

Best wishes.



Kenny Mackay
Chairman

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