



THE GOLF CLUB MANAGER

ISSUE 73 | JANUARY 2024

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE GOLF CLUB MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION



"TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS AWARD BY THE JUDGES AND MY PEERS IS HUMBLING"

ALSO INSIDE:
BOARD MEMBER RICHARD WEEKS, GCMA CONFERENCE IN PICTURES AND WHS CHANGES FOR 2024

AWARDS SPECIAL

WE HEAR FROM ALL OF OUR WINNERS – INCLUDING GCMA PRESIDENT JR JONES ON HIS OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

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MANAGER**
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ON THE COVER:
GCMA AWARDS WINNERS

WELCOME

ISSUE 73 | JANUARY 2024

hope that you found membership of your Association to be everything that you needed it to be throughout 2023.

As with any good golf club, it's important to recognise that there are always areas for improvement, and with that in mind we are continually looking to evolve and take into consideration any suggestions, requests and feedback that we receive from our members in order to best serve your needs, both professionally and personally.

An important step forward for us last year was to publish our new three-year Strategic Plan.

The objectives outlined within our plan are all based on achieving the things that you most want to see from your Association.

This information was extracted from the in-depth member survey conducted at the end of 2022, along with the series of member engagement sessions in Spring 2023.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed your thoughts, ideas and suggestions – we would not be able to move forward without this input.

Through the feedback that you have given us, we've been able to identify a number of key priority areas on which to focus and I have written about those elsewhere in this issue.

I would urge you to take the time to read that information, as there is much to digest and I'm confident you will find

plenty of potential benefits and opportunities for you and your golf club.

It would be remiss to comment on the year that has just passed without taking some time to reflect on the GCMA Conference, which many of you will have attended.

I cannot put into words how much this event meant to me and how thankful I am to the whole GCMA team, as well as our members, business partners and industry friends for their support and involvement.

'Team Culture' was our theme for the event and that didn't only present itself through our incredible keynote speakers and workshops, but throughout the whole event. The true spirit of the GCMA community was the absolute highlight.

Thank you everyone, and in keeping with Owen Eastwood's excellent presentation, a huge heartfelt thank you to my work 'whanau'. I am so grateful to you, and I count you not only as colleagues and teammates, but true friends.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and prosperous new year – I'm excited for what 2024 will bring, and I hope you are too.

Tom Brooke, CEO



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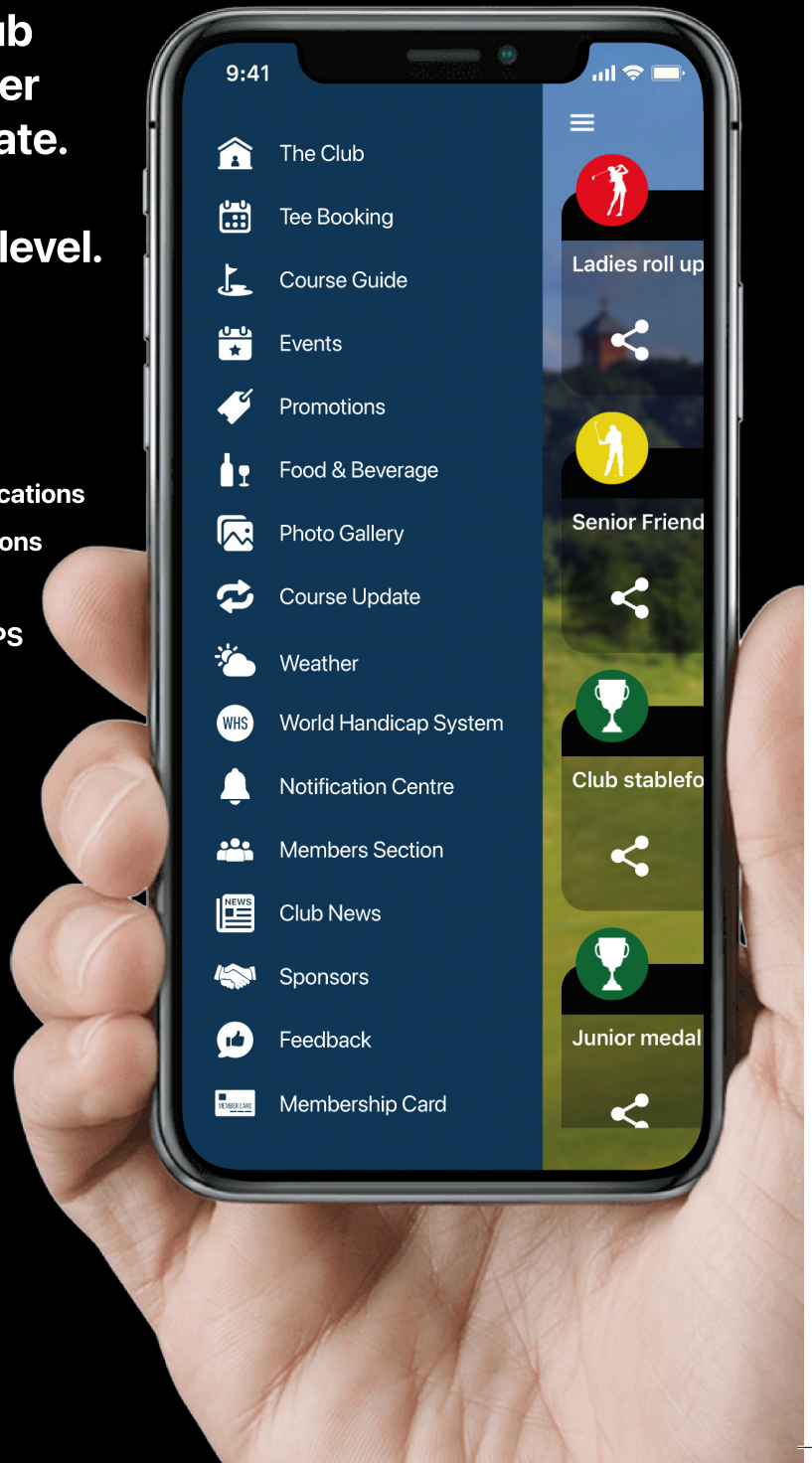
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The GCMA in



The GCMA team have been working hard to continue developing the services we provide for you, both professionally and personally, and we look forward to continuing this in 2024.

CEO Tom Brooke outlines your Association's **key priorities** this year



1 Provide improved day-to-day technical and operational support

Day-to-day expert advice, guidance and technical support across all areas of golf club management is what I refer to as our “bread and butter” and something which, if I am quite honest, we need to get a lot better at doing. Therefore, I am very pleased to report that we’re nearing the completion of a comprehensive review of our online Information Library. Working with many of our business and industry partners, as well as identifying best-in-class information from experts on topics such as compliance and health and safety

from outside of the golf industry, we’re aiming to relaunch the Information Library very early in 2024.

We’re also delighted to announce the launch of the new GCMA Members Finance and Accountancy Helpline, in partnership with Tee to Green Accountancy.

Via the member survey, we identified finance as one of the most common topics on which you’re looking to develop and increase your knowledge, and also where more support is required. So this new service will hopefully come as welcome news. I know the team at Tee to Green are looking forward to working with you.



2 Grow the GCMA's profile to increase recognition of Golf Club Managers within the industry

We've been developing our working relationships with all of the key stakeholders within the industry in recent years and I'm really pleased with the direction of travel in this area. As an Association, we're now a lot more

closely involved with the Industry Forum and use the opportunity to ensure that the voice and value of golf club managers is represented.

We were delighted to be approached by England Golf to work with them on the development and launch of their new Governance Guide for Golf Clubs, which was officially

launched in June 2023. The new guide provides clubs with guidance and recommendations on a wide range of governance and strategic matters, encouraging modern leadership structures and with the role of a professional and well supported golf club manager and team of staff at the heart of that. I'm pleased to say that both Wales and Scottish Golf are also looking to endorse this new Governance Guide, and we're looking forward to working with them both in a similar way very soon.

We'll be following this up by working in partnership with England Golf at a series of Governance and Club Leadership events to be held around the country in February. These events will be used to further emphasise and present what good, modern leadership structures in golf clubs really look like and the benefit that this brings. The events are open to golf club employees and volunteers alike with dates to be announced soon, so we hope to see you there.

I'm also especially pleased to announce our new partnership with the R&A, focusing on education around sustainable agronomy, which is a key strategic priority for the global Governing Body. It's a hugely positive move for the GCMA and one that tells us that the R&A recognise and value the role that golf club managers play in the future of our sport and the influence that you all have in ensuring environmental sustainability is at the forefront of golf club strategy.





3 Support Members in Your Career Progression and Aspirations

A year on from the launch of our GCMA Accreditation programme, it's been an absolute pleasure for us to work with and support over 60 of our members who have already taken part and successfully achieved GCMA accreditation.

Many are quite new to golf club management and are utilising the platform as a great way to map out training and development plans and career aspirations.

Others are very experienced in golf club management already and found the programme a great way to consolidate their experiences, skills and knowledge, as well as functioning as a learning and development record all in one place.

We look forward to working with many more of our members as you seek to achieve accreditation during 2024. Please do get in touch if you'd like to find out more.

We're often asked what our plans are for further extending the services we offer to members around education and professional development. We're continually looking at how we can best serve your needs in this area, and we've been busy researching a number of options and working with potential education and training providers. We're looking forward to announcing our next steps for GCMA Professional Development and Education very soon. As always, we need to hear from you so that we can ensure what we're providing meets, and hopefully exceeds, your expectations. Watch this space!





4 Develop and Improve Educational Content at Regional Meetings

One of the great strengths of the GCMA is the local community networks among our 13 regions nationwide, which are so well supported and managed by our teams of regional managers and committees. One thing that is very clear is the need to develop and deliver a higher level of education-based content at regional meetings.

We've been working closely with our regional teams to do this. Based on the feedback that you have given us, we've been able to identify the topics and subjects that are most important to you. From there, we're continually working with our business partners, fellow industry organisations and specialist training providers so that our regional teams have a wealth of suitable content

from which to choose from, in order to plan and deliver the quality of meetings that you're looking for.

If there's anything that you'd like to see at your regional meetings that you're not already getting, please do get in touch and we'll endeavour to provide it for you.

We often hear that peer-to-peer learning is something that is particularly well received, and we'd like to actively encourage any members who would like to deliver a presentation, or facilitate a discussion on a topic that matters to you or an experience you've had at your club that you'd like to share with your colleagues. For those of you who attended the 2023 Conference, you would have seen that many of the workshops and breakout groups were delivered by GCMA members, and these were particularly well received. Thank you to all who contributed to this.





5 Develop and Improve the GCMA Business Partnership Network

We're incredibly fortunate to have a fantastic network of business partners who not only generously provide the GCMA with financial support but – equally importantly – are able to surround us with a wealth of knowledge, guidance and expertise on such a wide range of topics covering all aspects of Golf Club Management.

I'd like to take this opportunity as always to thank our Premium Business Partners, Rain Bird and Fairway Credit, for their long-standing support.

We continually work with our business partnership network to ensure that our relationships are long-standing and successful for all parties and, most importantly, for you.

Feedback we have received in the past is that there is a weighting towards a "sales pitch" focus,



6 Continue to ensure the GCMA Board and HQ Team are visible and connected

As many of you will know, I had to withdraw from attending the 2023 Conference at the last minute due to a family emergency. While it was an incredibly difficult thing to have to do, I was comforted in the knowledge that we've got an incredible team at HQ, as well as a hugely committed and passionate Board of Directors. They all stepped up to do their bit for the team and for the Association. How apt that our Conference theme of Team Culture was all of a sudden even more important and relevant. By all accounts, it was a highly successful and exceptionally well received event: thank you to everyone who attended.

"Community" is without question one of the key words that always gets mentioned when we talk about the strengths and benefits of the GCMA, and this is something we can really build on to continue our journey as an Association in the years ahead. There are so many ways in which we can work more closely and effectively together and harness that sense of community and team culture for the benefit of every member and the wider industry that we serve. There are many different ways that you can get involved if you would like to, so please do come and speak to us, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

particularly at regional meetings, and this is something we're actively working to move away from.

All of our business partners are able to provide you with knowledge and support in their area of the field and this is something that you will see a lot more of in the future, through regional meetings, online content, editorial features and more.

We've recently launched several new business partnerships, and you can find out more about our full portfolio of business partnerships by clicking here



7 Prove Our Commitment to Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

We have an increasingly important role to play in providing support and services for wellbeing and mental health.

Last year it was a pleasure to announce the launch of our new Regional Mental Health First Aider service. A huge thank you to those members who put themselves forward to represent and serve the GCMA in this new role and we're hugely grateful that every one of our members now has a local colleague available to reach out to if you need someone to talk to. With the challenges of the economic climate set to continue for the foreseeable future, we see it as essential that we're able to provide our members with personal support in this area if and when you need it – whether that be advice on mortgages, borrowing, or pensions.

We've teamed up with MCB Finance who will be offering all GCMA Members a free initial consultation on mortgage and financial advice via one of their qualified nationwide advisors. I'm also proud to announce that all full and affiliate members now have access to our new member's personal insurance policy. This policy will provide you with personal cover of up to £500,000 for a number of personal and family legal matters, including employment and contract dispute matters. It also offers a 24/7 Counselling Helpline. ✉





5 things you need to know about the new WHS CHANGES

It only arrived in 2020 but the World Handicap System is changing – and what's coming is going to impact every golfer and club

Just like the Rules of Golf, the Rules of Handicapping go through a four-year review and this is the first since WHS was launched.

While the R&A and USGA-led appraisals are all already in effect in much of the world, we'll have to wait a little longer in GB&I. Here, the changes will apply from April 1.

1 Course Rating minus par will apply

Used by many other handicapping authorities in the rest of the world, Course Rating minus Par is an adjustment for the difference between the Course Rating and the Par of the course you are playing. Simply, if the par is lower than the Course Rating players will receive additional shots on their Course Handicap. If the par is higher, they will lose strokes.

It will mean players now play to par, rather than the Course Rating, and it should also make mixed tee and mixed gender events much easier to calculate.

2 Par 3 and Academy courses can apply for Course Rating

In a move authorities hope will expand the opportunities for players to get handicaps, the minimum lengths an 18-hole and 9-hole course must be to be eligible for a WHS Course Rating has been halved. They are now 1,500 yards for 18 and 750 yards for 9-holes, a move that will open possibilities for many short, academy and Par 3 courses. It's believed reducing the minimum yardages will encourage junior, beginner, and golfers with disabilities to gain a handicapping and bridge the gap between starter golf and club membership.

3 Fourball betterball scores can count for handicap

A frequent bone of contention within clubs, and a headache for handicap committee chiefs, is how to deal with fourball betterball events. Lots of golfers complain these competitions can be dominated by players who may – for whatever reason – not



If you're running competitions, or are part of a handicap committee, here's a quintet of new WHS rules you'll need to know when the new season starts

participate as often in other contests. Fourball betterball formats in competitions, such as stroke play, Stableford and Par/Bogey, will now be used for handicap purposes if a series of criteria are met.

These include one of the pair scoring on a minimum of 9-holes and the total score being at least 42 points.

4 Courses can standardise pars – if they wish

You all know the course with a hole that's a par 4 from the back tees but a par-3 further forward. While some of you might embrace this quirk, it can be confusing for players and look awkward on the scorecard. The new Rules of Handicapping will allow clubs to retain the same par for each gender and across all tee sets rated for that gender. That will be regardless of the yardage of each hole.

5 More tools for handicap committees

Golfers get emotional about their handicaps and club committees can sometimes feel uneasy, or find it difficult to decipher the clues from performances, when evaluating the indexes of their players. But the role of the handicap committee is crucial to the success of the World Handicap System and the Rules recommend regular handicap reviews - at least once a year - to ensure a handicap index remains reflective of a player's ability. New reporting tools have been developed that will be incorporated into handicap software to help committees conduct that review process effectively and consistently. ✂





GCMA matches IN 2023

England match coordinator **Cameron Dawson** reviews last year's fixtures and lays out **what 2024 has in store**

As we move into a new year, I want to offer members a quick round-up of the matches in 2023 and an update on the fixtures to come in 2024.

I am not going to go into details of individual matches other than to say, as usual, we lost to the Irish over in Ireland at Powerscourt Estate.

We then halved the remaining matches, facing Wales at Pyle & Kenfig, Scotland at Hesketh, and Sweden at Moortown, Ilkley and Scarcroft.

All of these matches came down to the final hole of the final match — competition at its finest.

I would like to thank National Captain Alan Davey for being a great Team Captain and friend, as well as producing some quality golf. I now look forward to working with incoming Captain John Barnard.

I'd also like to thank all the clubs and their managers for giving us the finest hospitality and wonderful courses to play these matches on.

I really want to thank all the

players who put their names forward for selection. I try to ensure I select a representative number of serving and retired members, but this is not always easy.

Every serving member who put themselves forward got at least one match, and I used 23 serving and seven retired members over the course of the year.

It would be great if I had a bigger pool to select from, especially serving members, and I invite anybody who wants to be involved to contact me at GCMAMatch@gmail.com 

Fixture details for 2024

Ireland (H): May 12-13

This special 50th anniversary of the Irish match will be in two parts: the regular match at Royal Lytham and St Annes and an anniversary event at St Annes Old on the Monday.

Wales (H): July 21-22 (Sheringham, north Norfolk)

Scotland (A): August 4-5 (Blairgowrie, Perthshire)

Sweden (A): September 3-5 (near Stockholm - further details TBC)

Millennium Trophy: October 6-8 (Royal Troon - further details TBC)

This is normally for Past Captains and Officers by invitation.



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GCMA Conference 2023 IN PICTURES



Over **200 delegates** enjoyed three days of learning, networking and business centred around the conference theme of **Team Culture**



1. The stage in the main Conference room
2. Comedian Conor Moore provided entertainment
3. Keynote speaker Brendan Hall



4



5



6



7



8

4. Liquidline provided a caffeine boost

5 & 6. GCMA Conference offered a great opportunity for social interaction

7. Team Culture was the theme of the Conference

8. The GCMA 2023 Member Awards



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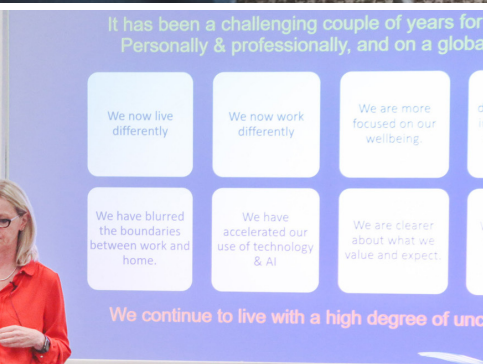
9. Delegates attend a breakout session

10. Delegates mingle in the Rotunda

11. Keynote speaker Annette Andrews

12. Keynote speaker Owen Eastwood

13. Catching up over a coffee







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THE GCMA AWARDS 2023

We salute the **outstanding efforts** of GCMA members and clubs



ROLL OF HONOUR

Manager of the Year: Warren Ryan, Newport

Team of the Year: Walton Heath

Newcomer of the Year: Luke Bearcroft, Llanwern

Support Manager of the Year: Karri Chambers,
Formerly of Minchinhampton

Outstanding Contribution: JR Jones, GCMA President

Lifetime Achievement: John Dinsdale

Manager of the Year
Warren Ryan, Newport

Warren Ryan was thrilled after scooping the prestigious GCMA Manager of the Year award. The Newport Golf Club General Manager landed the prize amid stiff competition from three other nominees.

Ryan received the award in a room full of his peers at the 2023 GCMA Member Awards, held at a glitzy gala dinner during this year's Conference at the Leonardo Hotel and Conference Venue Hinckley Island.

"It doesn't feel quite real to be honest," he said. "I'm absolutely honoured to be in the same talent pool as we have on display across the UK. It's a massive privilege.

"I'm thrilled. I don't think it's sunk in yet but I'm absolutely over the moon. You have the top-end clubs here and fantastic managers. We're all here to better the industry so you have people doing fantastic things. To be considered by the judges and my peers that I'm in that same bracket is quite humbling."

Ryan took on the role at Newport in March 2021 after two years as Director of Golf at Castleknock and he praised the efforts of his colleagues.

"I want to thank my team and the golf club – obviously without them this wouldn't have been possible. We have had a lot of change in the golf club in my time there, but we've built up a strong team and we have a clear goal of what we want to achieve.

"Also, my thanks to the board for nominating me. Again, I wouldn't be here if they didn't nominate me originally. And thanks to my family and my partner for their support."

Having attended the GCMA Conference for the first time this year, Ryan was only too happy to recognise the association's key role in the industry.

"The GCMA's devotion to education and the provision of different pathways to continue development has been invaluable. Equally, the business meetings and all of the partners of the GCMA has given us access to information or experts that we may not have had without the GCMA, so I'm really grateful for them for all the work they've done."





“I’m absolutely honoured to be in the same talent pool as we have on display across the UK. It’s a massive privilege”

Team of the Year
Walton Heath, Surrey





"We'll head into the new year with an invigorated team and a culture that has been fittingly recognised by this award"

Winning the Team of the Year prize at the GCMA Member Awards was fitting recognition at the end of an excellent year for Walton Heath Golf Club, according to CEO Alex Woodward. The Surrey club, which boasts two outstanding heathland courses, played host to the 2023 AIG Women's Open, attracting glowing praise for its presentation and organisation.

Woodward was among a healthy contingent of attendees from Walton Heath at the GCMA 2023 Conference. Reflecting on the achievement, he said: "To win an award that recognises the work of the whole team is just fantastic.

"To be judged Team of the Year by your peers in a year where the GCMA Conference theme was team culture is pretty special."

It was a busy year for the team, with a range of high-profile events and plenty happening off the course too, but Woodward cited the AIG Women's Open as a clear highlight.

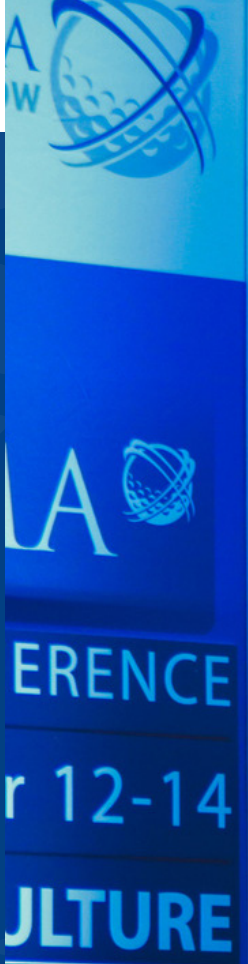
"We had a full clubhouse refurbishment, we hosted U.S. Open qualifying for the USGA, and we hosted the 100th anniversary Surrey Men's Amateur for Surrey Golf.

"But the AIG Women's Open was the pinnacle of the year and everything built up to that. To welcome the very best women golfers in the world to come and play your course is a huge thrill.

"For them to be given a true Walton Heath experience, while recognising the huge contributions from The R&A, was fantastic."

Woodward and his team will certainly not be resting on their laurels as they look ahead to 2024.

"We mentioned team culture and when you have that, you're always striving for more. We'll head into the new year with an invigorated team and a culture that has been fittingly recognised by this award."



Newcomer of the Year
Luke Bearcroft, Llanwern

“Winning Newcomer of the Year gives me a great feeling of pride and a sense of accomplishment”

Luke Bearcroft was bursting with pride after claiming the Newcomer of the Year prize at the GCMA 2023 Member Awards. The 20-year-old General Manager at Llanwern Golf Club hopes the award is just the beginning as he seeks to make his mark on the industry. And he hopes others will follow the example he has set in striving for ever higher standards. “Winning Newcomer of the Year gives me a great

feeling of pride and a sense of accomplishment,” he said. “It’s a recognition of my achievements and contributions, signalling that others appreciate my efforts in club management. It is a real boost in confidence and motivation to continue excelling in my endeavours. “Leading by example has been a key to showing my peers what is expected of us all, hard work and dedication are very important to me when I



am driving towards a goal. This has led to fantastic teamwork and collaboration enhancing my positive attitude towards Llanwern Golf Club.”

Asked to reflect on the achievement of which he is most proud, Bearcroft replied: “Growing the Junior section and working closely with our PGA Pro to ensure longevity in the club for generations to come.

“Fortunately, he was a natural at this and with some hands-on help and funding support behind him, we have been able to turn a small escalating junior section into a fantastic group of young golfers who always want to be here and learn about the

“It is a real boost in confidence and motivation to continue excelling in my endeavours”

game. We now have hope for the future as each week, we see new faces as well as some single-figure golfers.”

With the prospect of many more years in the industry ahead of him, Bearcroft will certainly not be resting on his laurels.

“I have a clear set goals of what I would like to achieve at Llanwern Golf Club over the next few years. I would like to understand my values better to improve my job performance, including productivity and efficiency. I believe doing this will help me grow quickly as a recognised General Manager.”



Support Manager of the Year
Karri Chambers, Formerly of Minchinhampton

"The year has been crazy, it feels like about two months because time has just flown by"

Winning Support Manager of the Year capped a "crazy" 2023 for Karri Chambers. She took home the prize from the GCMA Member Awards ceremony in November, with the former Minchinhampton employee left to reflect

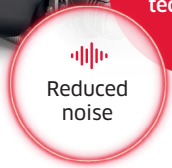
on a whirlwind year.

She said: "The year has been crazy, it feels like about two months because time has just flown by.

"I'm not at the golf club anymore, but we had an amazing team and I met some amazing people. It has been a really good experience where I learned a lot."



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Outstanding Contribution
JR Jones, GCMA President



"I'm so pleased and privileged to have served with the Golf Club Managers' Association, and I've got a lot of pleasure out of it too"



JR Jones was taken aback after being honoured at the GCMA 2023 Member Awards.

GCMA President Jones picked up the Outstanding Contribution award, much to his surprise.

After 15 years with the GCMA, Jones feels he has got at least as much out of the Association as he has put in.

"I'm absolutely amazed. I really didn't think I'd

won this award," he said.

"I'm so pleased and privileged to have served with the Golf Club Managers' Association, and I've got a lot of pleasure out of it too – I've had a great time.

"I started to serve with the GCMA some 15 years ago and I've seen a lot of changes, and through that I've learned a tremendous amount from the people who have helped me on my way and educated me in the golfing industry."



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Lifetime Achievement
John Dinsdale

“It’s been a delight. I just have to ask, ‘Why me for this award?’. It’s amazing, I can’t believe it.”

John Dinsdale had one question after receiving the Lifetime Achievement award at the GCMA 2023 Member Awards – ‘why me?’.

Modesty appeared to prevent Dinsdale from regarding his achievements in the same way as his contemporaries, who warmly applauded him on and off the stage as he collected his prize.

“Quite amazing, not expected,” he said. “I left my

main work in 1996 and the same day, the secretary of my club at Newport decided to leave, and my wife said, ‘Why don’t you try for that? It’s going to be a busman’s holiday; you love your golf so much.’

“Anyway, I did and I’ve enjoyed it thoroughly. I’ve met so many people, as you can imagine – it must be thousands of members we’ve had over the years. I’ve met a lot of people I respect greatly.

“It’s been a delight. I just have to ask, ‘Why me for this award?’. It’s amazing, I can’t believe it.”

Why your team should attend BTME IN 2024

Golf's purple patch continued throughout 2023, with clubs recording large participation numbers and competition hot as clubs sought to be the venue of choice for those picking up their clubs for the first time or after a period of absence from the game.

So, what makes golfers happy? Well, according to all the evidence, the condition of the golf course is by far and away the most important driver of satisfaction among golfers.

If that's the case, how do you make sure your greenkeepers are equipped with the capabilities to maximise the resources you make available to them and give your golf club the best chance of success?

A good place to start is by setting aside some of your budget for BIGGA membership, which gives greenkeepers access to countless career development opportunities and resources. Building on that, a visit to the BIGGA Turf Management Exhibition in Harrogate will introduce

them to the learning and education that is available to greenkeepers, and show them the latest developments and innovations that are coming out of the sports turf industry.

With more than 5,000 turf professionals in attendance, a visit to BTME and the associated Continue to Learn education programme enables your team to speak with their peers and share ideas to overcome many of the challenges faced by greenkeepers today. It's a surefire way to keep golfers coming back round after round.

Prolong the golf boom
by **upskilling your
greenkeepers**



10 REASONS people attend BTME

1 Staying current
Is your team up-to-date with the latest challenges and solutions to the problems they face? Has something new come on the market that can help improve your course? BTME is where the turf industry comes to show off their latest products.

2 Meeting major brands
The turf industry's biggest and best brands are in attendance and although it can be intimidating to approach a big-name company, the opportunity to arrange a one-to-one meeting can help break down those barriers. Building a personal relationship also means you get access to potential offers or delivery slots and you can ask lingering questions that may be on your mind.

3 Observing competition
What are the top industry performers doing to achieve their high standards? What are they doing better than you? Education sessions hosted by leading course managers and head greenkeepers discuss the root of their success and provide a roadmap to a brighter future.

4 Networking
BTME is famous for the networking opportunities provided by the trade show and its position at the heart of the beautiful North Yorkshire town of Harrogate. Throughout the week thousands of greenkeepers and turf professionals come together to talk shop and exchange ideas and solutions.

5 Stimulating creativity

Your greenkeepers may not find the exact solution that they are looking for, but exposure to new ideas may spark off some creativity that causes them to look at an existing problem in an innovative way. The solutions on offer may help the team brainstorm new ideas.

6 Finding staff

The recruitment market is tough at the moment, so if you're looking to hire new staff, why not head to the one place in the UK where you're guaranteed to meet more than 5,000 ambitious people who already work in the industry? You never know, your club may be the opportunity they are looking for.

7 Getting free stuff

More of a perk of attending than a reason to go, but exhibitors are keen to make a longlasting impression and one of the ways they do this is by giving away freebies. It's a nice boost for your staff if they come away with some souvenirs.

8 Escaping the office

There's no getting away from it, January can be pretty grim for those working outdoors in the United Kingdom, so the opportunity to get away from the course and undertake some learning and networking in a warm, dry environment is a brilliant way of escaping the humdrum of winter on the course. Who knows, if you come along you may also enjoy yourself too.

9 Shopping around

Perhaps you've been working with a supplier for some time and you'd like to see what else is out there? It makes sense to go to the one place in greenkeeping that more than 120 competing companies come together to showcase their wares. BTME gives you the opportunity to speed date with a large number of suppliers and decide which one is best for you.

10 Fun

Don't take this for granted. It's important to keep morale high, particularly during winter when things are quiet on the course and it's easy to get downbeat. A visit to BTME raises the morale of everyone involved – that's why people keep coming back year after year. Attendees are not just looking to maximise their time there, they're also looking to enjoy themselves and so the mood at BTME is generally upbeat. Teams then return to their golf club with renewed vigour and excitement about the season ahead. 📧

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about BTME visit
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FREE EDUCATION FOR YOUR TEAM

During BTME, a range of free seminars are available that will introduce your team to the learning opportunities on offer at Continue to Learn.

Tuesday 23 January

- Sustainable turf nutrition: reducing the environmental impact of fertilisers
- Nitrogen: Friend or foe? Busting the myths
- Synthetic fungicides: Have they got a future?
- Understanding measured variables and making the best decisions
- Case studies in sustainable agronomy from The R&A
- The story of grass: The journey from trial field to an Open
- The water crisis: How will you and your turf survive?

Wednesday 24 January

- The power of water: Wetting agent trials and technology
- Bio-control fungicide: The future of disease management
- Revealing the secret life of the microbial underworld
- The possibilities of natural and organic surfactants
- The benefit of sustainable organic acid in a managed amenity sports turf programme
- Choosing a herbicide: A guide to modes of action and new herbicide chemistry

Have you thought about diversifying your Club?

If so, you may well need some planning permission. Most forms of development on golf courses need planning permission so it is best to check. **Diversification could look like:**

- Replacement clubhouse
- Extension to a clubhouse
- Swing Studio
- Driving Range
- Short game area
- Irrigation ponds
- Or anything else...

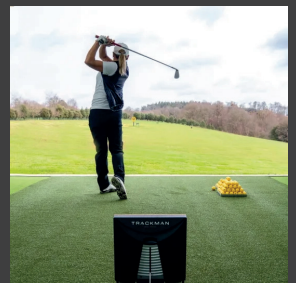
Quantum Golf is here to support you through the planning application process. We offer advice and will check whether planning permission is required.

Mike Lake

Mike Lake, Managing Director

"Mike and his team came in and helped secure the major planning permissions required to support a club of this calibre. The facilities at Centurion are world-class and have resulted in the Club hosting two European Tour Super Six and the first ever LIV event."

Centurion Golf Club



Watch our interview with GCMA
Chief Executive, Tom Brooke



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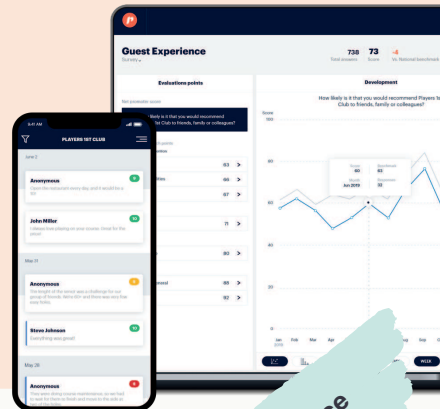
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Charles Molony, Assistant Secretary
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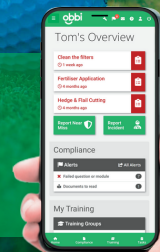




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Stefan Carter
Head Greenkeeper - West Course
The Wentworth Club



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Meet the Board

RICHARD WEEKS

We speak to members of the GCMA board of directors about their **backgrounds, motivations for joining the board, and expertise in golf club management.** In focus in this issue is Alwoodley's Richard Weeks.



Quick career background

I initially trained as a PGA golf professional while enjoying positions at Fulford Golf Club, the Berkshire Golf Club, and Roehampton Club, before becoming director of golf and then general manager at Hunley Hotel & Golf Club near Saltburn, North Yorkshire. The last role is where I transitioned into the management and administration of golf clubs.

on a podcast, someone suggested it might be something I should think about. On reflection, I realised that it would be a great way to gain a better understanding of the organisation as well as give a little back, hopefully through the knowledge I've built up over the years.

Finally, and selfishly, it was appealing to get an understanding of being on the other side of the fence! As club managers, we're often working

“Club management can be a lonely place, so to be part of an industry body that is able to offer professional advice as well as an online resource library were reasons for joining.”

In 2020, I was fortunate to be offered the role of managing secretary at Alwoodley Golf Club in Leeds, where I'm still enjoying my role to the current day. A true northerner at heart, I live with my family close to Alwoodley and I still enjoy playing the game both socially and competitively when time allows.

Why did you join the GCMA in the first place?

I saw joining the GCMA as a form of support network in the first instance. Club management can be a lonely place, so to be part of an industry body that is able to offer professional advice as well as having an online resource library were reasons for joining. Furthermore, the opportunity to meet and learn from other club managers was really appealing.

What motivated you to apply to join the board?

To be honest, I hadn't really considered it until after helping

with or for a board, so to learn the art of governing from a different direction has been enjoyable.

What skills do you think you contribute?

I feel my experience counts for a lot. I came into the industry through the PGA side and started working in pro shops before learning about other areas of golf clubs. I've also worked in the proprietary sector which has allowed me a different angle on the industry, so I feel I'm able to lean on these experiences when it comes to discussing ideas and strategic plans for the organisation.

What do you hope to achieve during your term?

I don't feel I have any set agenda, however it would be great to make sure new and younger club managers and assistant managers are fully supported in their development.





As mentioned before, golf clubs can be lonely places at times, so to get the message across that there is support out there would be a great project to develop.

What is your vision for the Association?

That the GCMA is a really useful tool for all club managers and offers great value in how it can help and support its members.

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

Change is a process that takes planning, effort, resilience, and lots of time!

What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Manage club finances like it was your own money.

What's the best mistake you've ever made?

Accepting a role as a general manager of a hotel and golf club. Deep down, I never wanted to run a hotel, however the exposure it gave me to understanding the hotel and leisure business models was incredible. I'd try to make a similar mistake again if the opportunity came up!

"Every golf club manager should read this book..."

I heard him speak at the GCMA Conference, so I'd go with 'Belonging' by Owen Eastwood. Owen's presentation was incredible, and the book so far has been just as good.

Describe golf club management in 10 words or less

Relentless, varied, challenging, broad, companionship, fun and love. 📧

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