

**Oaklands College Greenkeeping Newsletter Autumn 2014**

Dear Employer

This is a quick newsletter to keep you informed about Oaklands College Greenkeeping department and some issues that may have an impact on you

**News**

Toro Student Greenkeeper of the year

We are pleased to announce that Oaklands College student Kevin O’Neil from Muswell GC has won the Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award. Congratulations to him and his manager Matthew Plested. Kevin now gets an all-expenses paid trip to the USA. After winning the competition he was straight off to Gleneagles to join other greenkeeping volunteers at the Ryder Cup.

(Photo courtesy of Greenkeeper International magazine)

**Annual Seminar**

The annual Oaklands College/BIGGA London Section will be running its annual seminar in 2015. The date is the 17th Feb 2014. Once more this will be an event not to be missed, the 4 speakers will be Stella Rixton (STRI), Steven Chappell (Glean Eagles), Laurence Pithie MG (Turf Master One) and John Ross MG (Compliant Grounds). Numbers will be limited to 150 so make a note in your diary now.

**New Higher National Certificate and NVQ Level 4 Management qualifications**

This year Oaklands College has introduced an NVQ Level 4 for those operating at Head Greenkeeper and Course Manager Level. In addition to this we will be launching a HNC in January 2015; the HNC is open to Greenkeepers who can demonstrate they have the academic ability. The HNC is a 2 year academic course which unlike the level 4 does not require the generation of evidence from the workplace. Both of these courses will be delivered on-line. Applications from Greenkeepers interested in the HNC are now welcome, please contact [andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk](mailto:andy.wight@oaklands.ac.uk)

**GTC Approved status**

We are proud to announce we have retained approved status at Management Level from the GTC. To achieve this we must meet the standards set, including a clean audit by the External Quality Assurance officer from City and Guilds and evidence of employer engagement via an employer liaison group.

**New Apprenticeship standards for Greenkeeping passed**

David Golding and Fiona Lyttle from the GTC with the help of a number of golf course owners and Course Managers as well as input from the leading Greenkeeping colleges, has successfully obtained government approval for a new apprenticeship in Greenkeeping. This secures the future of apprenticeships in the Greenkeeping industry. This was vital work and once again the GTC has been at the forefront in securing routes for greenkeeping education. Often the work of the GTC goes unnoticed but David and Fiona were in front of a lot of larger industries in getting this fantastic result and the greenkeeping industry should be grateful for their work.

**Education**

1. Apprenticeship grant changes

The government has announced some changes to the grants for apprenticeships. They have stated that they will continue to pay a £1500 grant to employers taking on an unemployed 16 to 24 year old as a  new apprentice until 31st December this year on a first come first served basis. From January 2015 there will be changes made to the grant system. In the main these are the grant will only support workplaces with less than 50 employers who have not employed an apprentice in the previous 12 months from the date of applying for the grant. For full details of the grant go to  <http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~/media/Documents/AGE16TO24/AGE-Employer-Fact-Sheetv16.ashx>

Needless to say we offer apprenticeships in greenkeeping and horticulture but also offer apprentices in catering and business management should your club be looking at ways of increasing its staff levels.

1. Free training

There are still areas where Greenkeeper training is free of charge to the employer (funded by the government). These include 16 to 19 year olds on apprenticeship schemes, 19 to 23 years olds without a full level 3 and 19 to 23 year olds without a full level 2. In addition funding is part paid for level 2 students working for organisations with less than 250 employees regardless of age.

1. Pesticides

Pesticides training courses run every month subject to suitable numbers and information can be found on our main college website or on our employer web page (see below) or by ringing the college admissions team of 01727 737000

1. Employer web site

We have constructed a web site for employers which can be found at <http://oaklearn.oaklands.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=132> this has been designed to be a source of information on a range of subjects and has some useful links, some training packages for use with staff and sample documents e.g. a risk assessment for young people etc. If you feel there is anything you would like added to this page let me know.

1. On line learning

All our Greenkeeping courses are roll on roll off. Learners can start and complete whenever they like and as quickly as they like (except apprentices who must be on programme for a minimum of 366 days).  All of the learning is done via our web site which includes all learning materials required and templates of any documents that might be needed by the learner to complete their qualification. The learners will be assessed by an assessor from our team which is entirely comprised of ex-greenkeepers. We agree assessment visits with you on each visit and normally visit every 5 to 6 weeks

I hope you have found our new letter useful if you are interested in learning more about the courses and or funding on offer at Oaklands College please do not hesitate to contact me

Andy Wight

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