

NEW
LOOK



GREENKEEPERS TRAINING COMMITTEE

ON COURSE

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ONE MAN'S commitment to home grown talent paid dividends when he won a top prize in the small employers section of the Modern Apprenticeship Awards 2006.

Alan Gibson – on behalf of West Lothian Golf Club, Bo'ness – scooped the award in the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship programme, which celebrated the achievement of individual modern apprentices also showcasing the commitment and contribution made by employers and training providers in the industry.

He won first prize in the "employer of modern apprentices – acknowledging the commitment and support of employers" category for small businesses.

"Golf is a valuable part of the ever growing leisure industry and it needs good greenkeepers to secure its future," said Alan, who was nominated by Oatridge College, which along with his employers, supports his work with trainee greenkeepers.

"Scotland is proud of its golfing heritage and equally proud of the courses it has on offer," he added. "But without highly skilled greenkeepers, the industry would have to look elsewhere for skilled professionals.

"I believe that home grown talent is best and I would encourage all course and club managers and committees to look at the training opportunities available through schemes such as modern apprenticeships and reap the benefits as I have."

Alan has served as Course Manager at WLGC for the last 18 years. "And I have had no less than ten apprentices under my care during that time," he said. "I have been fortunate to have retained three of my former apprentices – one of whom, Iain Marshall, is now my deputy and two others, Jeff Ryce and Wayne Meikle, are assistants."

Alan celebrates commendable commitment



Glass act: Alan Gibson, right, receives his trophy from Robert Brown, Scotland's Deputy Minister for Education and Young People

His first apprentice, Richard McLuckie, took over his own course at Linlithgow Golf Club in 2000 and was promoted to General Manager in 2005 while others have moved on in greenkeeping to courses such as

Dalmahoy and Gleneagles.

"As a golf course manager, I feel I have a responsibility to the sport in which I work to ensure its future is in safe hands by producing young professionals ready to meet the challenges of maintaining their own golf courses," Alan said.

On reaching the final three in the Awards – which are sponsored by Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise – Alan was interviewed by a member of the judging panel who visited the golf club and also spoke to staff.

Television star Stephen Jardine hosted an award ceremony at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh in October where the winners were congratulated by Deputy Minister for Education and Young People, Robert Brown.

Managing Secretary at West Lothian, Ian Osborough, said the Club was honoured that

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CIRCULATION CHECKLIST Secretary Chairman of Green/Green Convenor Course Manager Others



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Inspirational, to be Frank

"IT'S BEEN inspirational" claimed Paul Woodham, Course Manager at Gay Hill Golf Club, Hollywood, Worcestershire, referring to the Professional Development Award.

The award, obtained from the European Social Fund by Lorraine and Graham Hatton-Downward of Plan-It Training, meant that earlier this year three days of management training was offered to greenkeepers by the ever-popular Frank Newberry (pictured right).

With the kind permission of the committee and the assistance of the Club Secretary Julie Morris, each of the three events was hosted at Gay Hill Golf Club by Course Manager Paul Woodham.

Employers were only required to pay people to attend the training and of course pay their wages as they develop and practice the skills learned from the sessions. This in turn enables participants to develop their portfolio and prepare for an assessment to gain an NVQ qualification.

Frank requested – and got – industry-specific training materials, developed by the GTC. These vital materials covered:

- Managing Yourself,
- Managing Information for Action, and
- Estimating Resources (Project Management).

"These materials, developed by the GTC, are as good if not better than any that I have seen in 20 years of management training in UK industry," said Frank. "I have used them a number of times most notably at Harrogate Week this year where I ran a two day seminar to an international audience called 'The Greenkeepers Guide to Project Management'.

If you missed Frank's address to the Danish Greenkeepers Conference on 26 October, you have two chances to catch up with him at Gay Hill. On 16 November he is running an interactive health & safety training event for Chairman of Green, Club Secretaries and Greenkeepers. On 5-6 December he is running his 'Communicating with Committees' Workshop.



At Harrogate Week he will be running a two-day workshop called 'Moving into Management' (21-22 January 2007), for new, untrained or aspiring supervisors. Finally he will be filling the Harrogate Week keynote speaker slot at 11am on Tuesday 23 January.

"I like the fact that they are available in a CD-ROM format as well as the traditional handbook design and I would recommend them to anyone. I personally believe that every career-minded greenkeeper should have a personal copy."

Back in Hollywood, three separate one-day events were scheduled to be separated by a few weeks so that participants could immediately put their learning into practice and then report progress at the next event. For example, one of the projects planned on the last workshop drew this reaction from Robert Tobin, Chairman of Green at Gay Hill Golf Club:

"The project management skills gained by Paul are being extensively used in a forthcoming Health & Safety project. This will involve moving mature trees to create a protective screen alongside a boundary of the course.

"Paul's communication and managerial skills will enable him to keep the membership informed about the project as when talking about increased expenditure on health & safety matters it is often a sensitive issue."

Paul himself expects this training and even more like it to come later this year will reap many rewards for greenkeepers and golf clubs alike. "The filmed interviews and coaching done by Frank was particularly invaluable," he said. "It has resulted in a change in the way the members of my greens team are now perceived by our club members. The committee at Gay Hill Golf Club need its greenkeepers to not only maintain the course but to communicate well.

"Building their confidence with this training has meant they are now able to do their duties more

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Some of the participants at the recent PDA course at Gay Hill Golf Club, with host Paul Woodham (far left) and verifier Huw Parry (far right)

The GTC receives support from a major Government funding body in a joint initiative intended to improve the quality of work-based training and assessment. Following a meeting at the offices of the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) *David Golding*, the GTC's Education Director, reports on a joint project, which he feels will result in a further improvement in the delivery of greenkeeping work-based training programmes.

Flexible learning

Bolstering work-based training programmes

NEGOTIATIONS have been ongoing between the LSC, Lantra representatives and the GTC to find a way of improving the delivery of NVQ and apprenticeship programmes.

The GTC is still concerned about several aspects of the way some providers deliver the work-based training programmes, in particular the method of assessing candidates.

The GTC is looking to agree a delivery criterion that has the full support of the LSC and Lantra.

As part of the evaluation process, current GTC approved training providers have been invited to take part in a pilot programme to explore delivery patterns that are truly responsive to employers' needs.

The trial, which was due to start in October 2006, involved GTC assessment, alongside the NVQ support infrastructure and an analysis of current Greenkeeping NVQ performance statistics across the sector. Work-based assessors, supported by college staff, will carry out the work and it is expected that four to five colleges will be involved in the trial.

Ultimately the GTC is looking to establish a Centre of Excellence for the employers to register trainees at only the centres who agree to deliver greenkeeping programmes in accordance with the agreed criteria.

The LSC, in fully supporting the project, will have a major controlling factor in that it is

they who allocate funding to approved centres to offer the Government programmes, in accordance with industry needs.

The GTC, having invested in Course Manager training to help deliver work-based training, now really is making a final push to cement the golf course/training provider relationship, to ensure both the employer and the learner receive the best possible education and skills training.

Whilst the LSC is only responsible for the funding of education and training programmes in England the GTC will be sharing the evaluation information with all of its Approved Training Providers including those in Scotland and Wales.

Look out for training seminar

All the latest news from the industry will be available to approved training providers through a GTC seminar in January.

The GTC will be inviting all its providers to the updating seminar during Harrogate Week 2007. The invitation-only event will offer delegates the chance to hear updates on all aspects of turf qualification including the very latest news from organisations such as the Lantra Sector Skills Council, awarding bodies

NPTC and SQA, Government funding bodies and the GTC.

"Many employees of the approved training providers look to the GTC for support and guidance in the delivery aspects of turf qualifications," said Education Director at the GTC, David Golding.

"And in return we have sought an input from subject specialists in all the materials developed to improve the standards of greenkeeper education and

training, such as a training manual and learning materials.

"The seminar will be an excellent opportunity for debate and to exchange ideas all aimed at improving greenkeeper education, training and qualifications," David said.

Admittance at the event is strictly by invitation only. More information is available from David Golding on david@the-gtc.co.uk or by telephoning 01347 838640.

Frank

actively and their greenkeeping skills have already become more visible to club members. It has left them in good shape for future advancement to Deputy Course Manager level and higher. "Where the training has also been valuable, has been the way it has impacted on my fellow Course Managers in the area who can now see the wider potential of the PDA programme as it is run by Frank," continued Paul. "They are now actively looking for opportunities to employ more green staff in future events. It will raise their profile in their own clubs." Learning materials are available from the GTC: CD-ROMs of Level 2 and Level 3 materials cost £30 each and printed copies including the CD-ROM cost £120 each. Prices include VAT, postage and packing within the UK.



The development of higher education learning within the greenkeeping sector is a direct response to requests from the industry to help further the lifelong learning plan supported by the government for industry, writes *Wayne Roberts*, curriculum leader for greenkeeping and horticulture at Elmwood College, Fife.

Flexible Learning

Accessible to all

THE interest in the delivery of higher education into the greenkeeping and sportsturf industry has been met with the development of HNC, HND, Foundation Degree and First Degree courses in Golf Course Management and Turf Science.

What makes these courses interesting is the accessibility to these programmes of study through the various options of delivery that are available to the industry to ensure that both the qualification aims are met and the 'employability' of the learner is maintained through the balance of academic understanding linked with vocational experience and career relevance.

Greenkeepers can now study, with the provider of their choice, through full time, part time and distance learning options and at an agreed time scale that meets the needs of the learner, the industry and the awarding body.

The main benefit to the individual is that distance is no barrier to learning with HE qualifications now available online. With learning packages only a click away, the office at work, the spare bedroom at home or the kitchen table can become the classroom as well.

This is an important development because it now provides access to learning for Greenkeepers and Course Managers who cannot give up employment to study full time but wish to continue their professional development.

But just as much as the learner gets the direct benefit of the qualification, the

employer and the golf course also benefit too, by providing the existing workforce with access to up to date knowledge and skills which can only help to benefit the long term of interests of the business.

Here at Elmwood College we are continually working closely with the greenkeeping industry, the GTC and other industry partners to develop a range of



But just as much as the learner gets the direct benefit of the qualification, the employer and golf course also benefit too

HE qualifications that meet the needs of the industry and yet are flexible enough to provide bespoke learning opportunities for individuals undertaking the programme.

One student who has benefited from the HE programme at Elmwood College is Mark Bewley. Mark, originally from Dublin, was working in the south of France when he came to Elmwood to complete his HNC in Golf Course Management. While studying here he also received an R&A scholarship of £1,000 for being an outstanding student. Recognition indeed.

The HNC course helped to open up new opportunities for Mark including joining

Gerry Byrne and his crew at the K Club in Co. Kildare, hosting the European Open and of course the recent Ryder Cup.

But what of the future? With an HE qualification supporting extensive vocational experience, Mark is returning to his native Dublin to be an assistant at the Grange Golf Club and taking on new responsibilities including the installation of a new irrigation system under the direction of Head Greenkeeper, Jon Palmer – another successful Elmwood HNC Graduate.

The success that Mark has enjoyed helps to highlight the important link that must be developed between the qualification, the industry and the progression opportunities that it can provide.

As HE qualifications improve not only their relevance and recognition within the industry, so will the opportunities available to graduates.

Over the past five years several students studying on our HE programmes have gone on to not only develop their professional qualifications through BSc and MSc programmes at university, but also develop and widen their vocational experience.

They have successfully obtained key industry positions such as course managers and developed into new industry areas such as course consultancy and research and development where their first hand knowledge and experience of the greenkeeping industry makes for an extremely employable asset to the organisation.

Alan's commendable commitment

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Alan had received the award on their behalf.

"His commitment, enthusiasm and expertise over many years in bringing through our apprentices to a very high standard is to be commended," he said. "They reflect on the Club, but more to the point, reflect the

high calibre course manager that we have. He should be justly proud of this achievement."

The GTC's Education Director, David Golding, added: "As a qualified assessor through the GTC's ongoing training programme to help the formal delivery of work-based training programmes, Alan is a

shining example of how a course manager can, on behalf of his employers, develop staff.

"This is good both for the staff's personal development but also the standards of golf course maintenance and management will improve as their skills develop. All round a great team performance!"