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Report on the GTC Trailblazer Training Provider Workshop – 1 March 2016 held at Cold Ashby Golf Club, Northampton

40 delegates attended the GTC's Trailblazer Training Provider Workshop held at Cold Ashby Golf Club, near Northampton on Tuesday 1 March.

The workshop was hosted by the GTC in association with the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) to promote the new apprenticeship for Golf Greenkeepers.

Donald Steel opened the workshop reflecting on how greenkeepers, not so long ago, were not allowed into clubhouses but thanks to education and training their status is now receiving the recognition it truly deserves.

David Croxton, the Proprietor of Cold Ashby Golf Club explained his role as the Chairman of the GTC Trailblazer Group and following a reception at 10 Downing Street, he has been fully committed to the work and development of a world class greenkeeping apprenticeship for employers to invest in. David explained how the principles of the Governments two apprenticeship reforms were to put the employers "in the driving seat". Employers were now helping to develop new apprenticeship standards and also determine policy on how apprenticeships are to be funded. He added, as a small business owner, he would be looking for support from a Training Provider and 99% of golf club employers will also be seeking the same level of support. The support would be to agree a programme of education and training for the apprentice and also to manage the funding contributions.

David pointed out that with a total of over 1900 golf clubs in England; there are still a large number of Golf Clubs who do not have any greenkeeping employees on an apprenticeship Scheme. The estimate at the moment is that there are approximately 300 apprentices registered. With the Governments aim to increase the total number of Apprentices over the next five years, he believes that golf greenkeeping is well placed to make a considerable contribution to this objective by spreading the word to clubs who are not yet tapping into the Government funding support. The work of the GTC and its ability to bring together all the relevant bodies in a co-ordinated approach should be seen as vital in a development role which in turn should provide enough business to give all parties a good market share.

David Golding, GTC's Education Director and Trailblazer Coordinator, took delegates through the journey from his first email to BIS expressing an interest to the development of new apprenticeships for the sector. David explained how, at times, he and the working group were looking at hitting a moving target but persistence was paying off as he truly believes the GTC's experience in apprenticeships was shaping the BIS Guidance for all future apprenticeships. Three new sets of standards have been developed and approved by BIS for Golf Greenkeeper (Level 2); Advanced Golf Greenkeeper (L3) and Golf Course Manager (L5+). David added

that after many years in the industry, he was confident that the new apprenticeships would improve the quality of the learners and in turn golf course maintenance and management.

An agreement between the GTC and City & Guilds has been reached and this will put the responsibility for quality assurance of all approved Centres/Training Providers with the GTC.

A presentation by Laura Rushby, Head of Training & Education at England Golf, highlighted the support, on behalf of 1900 employers in England that England Golf would be giving to the new greenkeeping apprenticeship scheme. Laura added England Golf was totally committed to educating and helping engage employers including the benefits and how to recruit greenkeeping apprenticeships. She asked delegates to identify any golf clubs where an apprentice had benefited the business, as these could be turned into case studies and circulated through the numerous media outlets now managed by England Golf.

Jim Croxton CEO, BIGGA and Stuart Green, Head of Member Learning explained the role of the Professional Body for greenkeeping in the apprenticeship reform and how their support and commitment to the GTC working group would also be captured in a Professional Register now available to its members.

All new apprenticeship standards will have to include end point assessments and Jamie Holland, City & Guilds Independent Assessment Services Manager explained C&G's role as both an Awarding Body and a Skills Funding Body Approved Assessment Organisation.

Jamie stated that C&G were delighted that the GTC had invited them to help develop the new standards, education, training and assessment plan for the Golf Greenkeeper apprenticeship. He added how the new Certificate in Golf Greenkeeping would capture the new apprenticeship standard and existing C&G centres and training providers approved to offer the Greenkeeping Work Based Diplomas would be circulated with a Fast Track form from C&G very shortly. The Guidance for the new qualification would also be available to Centres through the Walled Garden. Work with the GTC to ensure the C&G Guidance and the GTC Training Manual will be aligned, was ongoing.

The new qualification has been approved by OfQual and details for the registration of learners and the series of end point assessments are still in development but will be made available shortly. The costs were still to be determined but they will be paid in stages e.g. registration fee and end point assessment fees.

Sharon Thompson, the BIS-SFA Relationship Manager, had worked with the GTC from day one of the application and her presentation explained all aspects of the BIS Guidance and the SFA Funding Rules. Sharon complimented the GTC on how it has managed to bring the whole industry together through the Trailblazer journey and whilst Government policy was still being developed, the GTC has persisted to ensure employers and apprentices will have a quality programme. She added it was important that employers understand the commitment when looking to recruit and employ an apprentice and stated it is important that the GTC is involved at every stage of the programme. Sharon explained the CAP (CAP3) and the three incentives plus an update on the proposed levy for big businesses.

Following the series of presentations an open forum helped the delegates understand the new apprenticeship reforms and how the GTC has led the development of them

together with C&G, England Golf, BIGGA and colleges/training provider representatives.

Whilst there is still much work to do it was unanimously agreed that once all the various parts of the new apprenticeship/qualification are available to Centres they should be looking to offer it to employers rather than promoting the current SASE Framework (Level 2 Greenkeeping).

SUMMARY:

The new Golf Greenkeeper Apprenticeship will be available with a new qualification, the Certificate in Golf Greenkeeping (Level 2). This qualification will be Awarded by City & Guilds and the new graded, end point assessments will be managed by C&G as the Approved Assessment Organisation. Centres & Training Providers who are currently C&G approved to offer the Greenkeeping WBD's, will be able to offer the new qualification through completing and meeting the criteria on a Fast Track form to be circulated by C&G to Centres following the workshop.

The GTC, through an agreement with C&G, will develop a quality assurance structure to monitor all approved Centres/TP's.

All Centres/TP's will be supplied with the GTC Training Manual (hard copy and/or e-portfolio format) to use with all learners. The Manual & portfolio will form 20% of the end point assessments, a knowledge test 30% and a series of practical on the golf course tasks, 50%.

All of the assessments will be independently assessed and graded.

The new programme to be promoted and explained to the 1900 golf club employers by all parties: GTC, BIGGA, England Golf, C&G, approved Centres.

Work will continue on the Advanced Golf Greenkeeper and Golf Course Manager programmes of education, training and assessment plans.

Conclusion:

Feedback from many of the delegates has been that the day was very informative and helped them to understand the changes to apprenticeships and appreciated that the GTC, BIGGA and England Golf, as the representative bodies for the sector, have, together with City & Guilds worked hard to produce the new standards. The Provider representatives went away looking to develop new programmes of learning and flexible packages to offer employers support for staff registering on the new Golf Greenkeeping apprenticeship/qualification as soon as possible.

Report prepared by David F.Golding, GTC Education Director – March 2016