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# Greenkeeper International

## Leading by example

Lyall Burkin, Steve Chandler and Melissa Winkworth on Goring & Streatley's award-winning environmentally responsible golf course



■ **Practical Greenkeeping**

Coping with variable growth in spring

■ **Member Interest**

We meet Wales Golf's Greenkeeper of the Year

■ **From Your Association**

The BIGGA members who visited TPC Sawgrass

# Greenkeeping – it's a kind of magic



Kevin Fish  
Advisor

I'm honoured to be the only non-greenkeeper on the BIGGA Board and excited to serve as your support act

When I decided to move from insurance into the exciting world of the golf club industry, it felt like a slightly safer version of running away to the circus. Not as much time on the road perhaps, but still plenty of dangerous animals to deal with and lots of spoilt children who never quite seem happy with their candy floss.

My own golf club's general manager had come from a greenkeeping background, and I assumed that was the common route into club management. Off I went to BTME back in 1999 to form a golf club manager's appreciation of the role of the course manager. I was blown away by the professionalism, the insight, the structured training opportunities and the willingness of the old hands to help the youngsters on their way.

I assumed the same range of support would be available to help me on my way in club management – how wrong could I be?

This disappointment inspired me to set up the first meaningful structured education for club managers. In 2011, we launched the Management



Development Programme (MDP), and I made no secret of the fact that the professional organisation that CMAE was set up to emulate was BIGGA.

You can see then why the invitation to join the Board of BIGGA was so significant for me. I understand that very few non-greenkeepers get to serve on the Board, and I am under no illusion as to what my role is, and what it is not.

In my 25 years in the industry, I have had the privilege of working with some incredibly smart greenkeepers from whom I have learned a huge amount. The skills and knowledge that

greenkeepers have put them on a par with rules officials, celebrity chefs and even magicians doing card tricks – the correct way is obvious, but only when someone shows you how.

I have always been keen to learn that knowledge from those that know, and support them to make the magic happen.

I have also seen some fantastic greenkeepers attend the MDP programme, which I ran for several years. I know from their feedback that it has helped them significantly in their current roles, as well as developing their knowledge base to allow them to consider

extending their remit to the more office-based side of the industry.

Anybody who has spent some time in a classroom with me (or a bar for that matter) will know that I pride myself on always having the data behind any recommendation I make. They will also say that I help people be the best versions of themselves they can be.

In my early days of supporting BIGGA, I have been incredibly impressed with the people elected to represent you, the members, and I hope that I can continue to bring my own brand of support to the table. **GI**