



Environment awards finalists revealed

The Sports Turf Research Institute has revealed the finalists for the 2018 Golf Environment Awards (GEA), with BIGGA members comprising all but one of the nominees.

The GEA provides the platform from which the golf industry can demonstrate environmental excellence in all its forms. This has been demonstrated by past finalists and can range from relatively simple but effective projects, to grand scale schemes.

Set up over 20 years ago, the Golf Environment Awards are highly regarded in the industry and for 2018 have been joined by The R&A as lead partner.

Golf Environment Awards judge, Sophie Vukelic, said: "This is my third year of judging the awards

and it is not getting any easier choosing the finalists. We had an outstanding array of applications this year, with familiar faces and exciting newcomers to the awards. I hope you agree that we have some magnificent finalists, who showcase the highest environmental stewardship in golf.

"I'd also like to congratulate and commend those clubs and individuals who didn't quite make it to the final, you shouldn't be disheartened. Keep on shining a good light on golf and thank you for allowing me to visit your courses."

Over 25 longlisted clubs were visited earlier in the year by STRI ecology consultant and GEA judge, Sophie Vukelic, and whittled down to 12 finalists.

The finalists will attend the awards night in January, held during the week of BTME 2018, where they will be vying for the honours of Environmental Golf Course of the Year, Outstanding Environmental Project of the Year, Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year or the Operation Pollinator award.

This year, for the first time, all finalists will receive entry into the Foundation Award in Amenity Horticulture course, recognised by BASIS, and the winners will enjoy a European golf and environment trip to Portugal.

The Golf Environment Awards 2018 finalists are:

Operation Pollinator

Jaey Goodchild, Bowood
Tom Freeman, Kingsdown
Michael Halliday, Ufford Park
John McLoughlin, Warrington

Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year

Jon Keepen, Cumberwell Park
Stephen Thompson, John O'Gaunt
Les Rae, Montrose Links
Phil Stain, Notts

Outstanding Environmental Project of the Year

Abergele
Minchinhampton
Ipswich
La Moye

The winners will be announced at the GEA ceremony on Wednesday 24 January 2018 at The Crown Hotel in Harrogate.

Alex James, 2017 award winner

"It is clear to see all the hard work that goes into these awards and the dedication in ensuring we recognise we all have a responsibility to protect the environments that we are lucky enough to manage. I was guilty of thinking the awards are mainly about bird boxes and bug hotels, but it is much more than that.

"As the awards continue to grow, I look forward to reading about this year's entries and the amazing work that is happening. Good luck everyone!"



Read more on page 56

John Keepen, Cumberwell Park



Advance Grass Solutions

Following the announcement that Countrywide Farmers is exiting the turf and amenity market, the company has transferred its T&A division to an alternative provider.

Advance Grass Solutions will take over management of the T&A division from its base in Reading, Berkshire.

Sam Honeyborne, managing director at AGS, said: "We are excited by the opportunity that this new business presents and confident of a seamless transition from Countrywide, as we continue our growth plan in the UK amenity sector.

"The T&A team has made excellent progress in the past five years and has adapted to suit the evolution of the market, with the increased customer appetite for long term agronomic support.

"I would like to thank Countrywide for the help and guidance through this transition and assure our loyal customers and suppliers of service continuity throughout."

AGS will provide a UK-exclusive range of high quality turf maintenance products to include Sustane, Growth Products and Polyon in addition to established brands such as DLF Seeds, Farmura, Aquatrols and Bathgates.

Sam added: "Haulage and delivery has been problematic in recent years in the industry and most of our competitors presently outsource this requirement. Initially we are committed to delivering directly to our customers in the south but are aiming for national coverage by 2020.

"This will incur extra costs but will greatly improve our customer service and that is our number one priority"



Growth Products has confirmed AGS as its UK exclusive distributor for amenity turf, horticulture and speciality agriculture.

CEO Clare Reinbergen was confident about the future and said: "We are extremely impressed with the AGS business plan and look forward to supporting Sam and the company's key objectives.

"AGS's field based technical team is undoubtedly one of the most comprehensively qualified and experienced units in the UK and will continue its reputation for sound advice and product recommendation."

Sam Honeyborne was also pleased to announce that Sustane Natural Fertiliser's market share in the UK continues to grow and has prompted the recent appointment of Russell Riley as Sustane's UK Business Development Manager.

AGS is presently developing a high quality website and this, in addition to the AGS 2018 Product Guide, will be available in the near future.



Ask Dr Mumford

With Colin Mumford, Bayer Turf Solutions

Do you need advice with your turf problems?
Email info@bigga.co.uk

Why do products get removed from the market?

There are two main factors contributing to the withdrawal of products from the market. One is that the demand for a product has declined and it may no longer be commercially viable, but this is rare. The most common basis for removal is the revocation of an active ingredient (AI), because it is imposed by the regulatory authorities.

Without approval from the appropriate regulatory body, which in this case is the Chemical Regulations Division, products can't legally be used.

If the authorisation for an AI is removed, it could be because traces of it are found in the environment which are higher than the 'Maximum Residue Limit' (MRL), which is the greatest amount of AI that's permitted to be found in areas such as soil and ground water.

This is why best practice in product use is important, because overuse or misuse of pesticides can result in thresholds set by regulators being exceeded.

The decision to revoke an active ingredient isn't taken lightly, and the authorities rely heavily on science-based analysis, where trials are conducted, and samples are extensively tested to ensure that the results are reliable.

The manufacturer is informed of the news as soon as it's put in the public realm by the regulators, and the manufacturer will then notify its customers and offer advice and guidance.

Revocations can happen at any time, and notice periods can vary, this is why it's crucial to develop products that will surpass regulatory requirements to ensure their longevity in the turf management industry.

The real safeguards for effective chemistry are greenkeepers, and therefore it's vital to employ best practice on golf courses, to manage turf disease preventatively, rather than curatively, using chemistry responsibly, and as a last resort.

Tweet us your turf questions @BIGGALtd using #AskDrMumford for your chance to win a hamper!



New machinery releases

Innovation

E-Z-GO ELiTE

The E-Z-GO ELiTE Series is the next generation of golf cars. In collaboration with Samsung, the new range features SDI lithium technology. With high-efficiency, zero-maintenance battery power and an unprecedented five-year, unlimited-amp-hour warranty, ELiTE Series vehicles give you the lowest operating costs the industry has ever seen.

ELiTE

LITHIUM



TEXTRONGOLF

Zero-maintenance batteries

Samsung SDI lithium batteries do not require any upkeep, meaning no more watering, terminal post check-ups and cleaning. Zero-maintenance means more time spent out on the course.

Cost-saving efficiency

Samsung lithium cells are loaded into a single battery pack. This means they use less energy, charge in half the time and require less out-of-wall power.

An ELiTE golf car is 56% more efficient than lead acid competitors, saving considerable amount of time and money.

Lightweight

With batteries half the size and a fraction of the weight of lead acid, ELiTE vehicles weigh hundreds of pounds less, which protects the turf that you work hard to maintain by preventing unnecessary damage.

Consistent Performance

Lithium technology is a reliable power source that doesn't fade over time. ELiTE vehicles will give you all the acceleration and hill-climbing power needed for a superior customer experience on your golf course.

Eco-friendly

Achieve your club's environmental goals with ELiTE golf cars. Driven by zero-emissions and greener battery technology, ELiTE vehicles use less energy which will save your club money, whilst protecting the environment.



Industry Update

Turf contractor in administration

Souters Sports, which has completed projects at venues such as Musselburgh Links and North Wales GC, entered administration on 3 November, with the loss of jobs across sites at Cumbernauld in Scotland and Knutsford in Cheshire.

The business provides turf for sporting venues across the UK, with services including construction, reconstruction, drainage, aeration and maintenance.

Paul Dounis of RSM Restructuring Advisory said: "Following a difficult trading position,

measures have been taken to protect assets and maximise realisations for creditors.

"Regrettably due to viability and the seasonality of work, we have had to make the majority of the workforce redundant and we are assisting all employees with their claims.

"We have however retained a small number of employees to complete certain high-profile contracts and to assist the administrators in their duties."





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