



Promoting Best Practice
Newsletter January 2018

Introduction



Professor John Moverley OBE
Independent Chairman

John Moverley

**Happy New Year to all.
I am sure that it will be as
challenging as ever but also
hopefully with opportunity.**

The news seems to constantly focus upon bad stories and yet there are so many good ones to report. It is the same for what we do; my resolution for 2018 is to focus even more on the really good news and best practice in our sector. We need to be proud of what we do and its importance.

The Amenity Forum is the voluntary initiative for this essential and diverse sector. What happens in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen every day. Weed, pest and disease management of amenity areas is vital to ensure public safety and health and to provide surfaces fit for purpose whatever the user. **The Amenity Forum promotes best practice and is recognised as the national voice on such matters.** It seeks to ensure all aspects of the sector are represented and strives to continue to drive up standards to meet both legal and voluntary requirements and targets established by Government in their implementation of European Directives. The UK amenity sector sets a very high standard and is proud of its achievements.

This newsletter highlights just some of our recent activity and forthcoming events.

“The UK amenity sector sets a very high standard and is proud of its achievements.”

Free Updating Events 2018

The Amenity Forum is once again organising a series of free Updating Events at venues across the UK.

This series of free Updating Events seeks to address topical issues of interest and relevance to all involved in the amenity sector and will comprise short presentations by speakers drawn from the Chemicals Regulation Division of HSE, BASIS Registration, the National Sprayer Testing Service, STRI, and the various host organisations and from the Amenity Forum itself. They are timed to occupy half a day, normally mornings, and on dates between February and April 2018.

The series has been given the title of **'Meeting the challenge'** and there will be adequate time for questions and discussion. Whilst the events are free, delegates are required to register in advance. So, if you are interested in an event, please email admin@amenityforum.net for further information. These have proved extremely popular events in previous years and have been very well received.



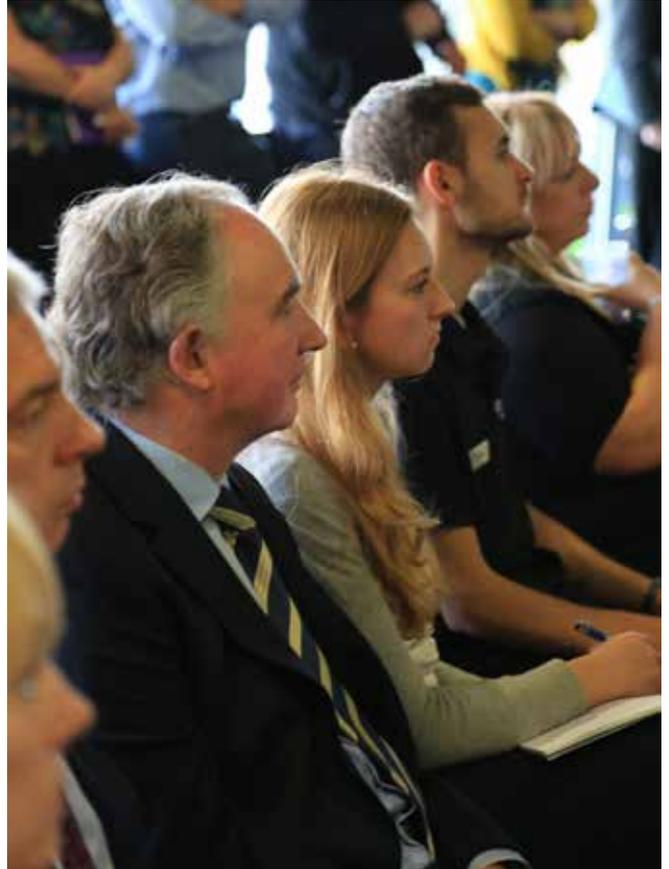
Locations and dates confirmed are:

Belfast	8th February
Peterborough	15th February
Wales	20th February
Stoneleigh	6th March
Pontefract	1st March
London	14th March
South East	20th March
Reading	21st March
York	27th March
Northamptonshire	29th March
Essex	22nd March
Edinburgh	10th April
Darlington	11th April
Devon	19th April

Conference 2018

The Amenity Forum conference has grown to become the must attend event for all involved or interested in amenity management. In October 2016, the location moved from Leicester City FC to the facilities at Burton Albion at Burton on Trent. This allowed the conference to have exclusive use of the conference facilities and **proved very popular with all attending**. Feedback from the event indicated that this had been the best yet with the high quality of speakers and topics highlighted and the implementation of well-timed punchy presentations proved a hit.

There is also an associated exhibition area which always proves very busy and delegates can hear of new innovations and products. The 2018 conference is being held at the same venue on **Tuesday, October 9th, 2018**. This year's title is **'Change, Challenge & Opportunity'** and there are again some excellent speakers on offer as well as the opportunity to network with others and discuss topical issues. So make a date now or why not book. There is a **£10 discount** on offer for all bookings made before September 1st on the delegate rates of £75 for members and £85 for non-members.



Get Moving

In October 2016, the Forum formally launched its Get Moving campaign. This seeks to communicate why weed, pest and disease management is so important and essential and impacts upon every UK citizen every day. It is vital to ensure public safety and health and to provide amenity surfaces fit for purpose wherever their location. The campaign has three key targets – key stakeholders, those working in the sector and very importantly, the public.

Get Moving comprises a resource of printed and electronic material including video clips highlighting aspects of amenity management in everyday situations. These have proved very popular and have been well received. There is a website **www.getbritainmoving.uk** and this focusses upon the Colins's family – Jim and Lynne and their children. Jim has his own blog, twitter account and email and addresses issues from a member of public perspective. Further developments are on-going.

To discover how you can best support, please do get in touch by emailing **john.moverley@amenityforum.co.uk**



National Action Plan Review

In adopting the **Sustainable Use Directive**, each member country in Europe had to produce and **implement a National Action Plan**. In the UK, whilst this did include legal requirements such as sprayer testing and training, it sought improvements by voluntary action. The Amenity Forum seeks to co-ordinate these events and report to Government on achievements. Whilst we have moved forward greatly and certainly put amenity on the key agendas, there remains more to do.

A review of National Action Plans has recently been undertaken. Whilst we await publication of the outcomes, there can be no doubt that the pressure will continue. Current indications are for more emphasis on water quality, continuous professional development, integrated approaches and more.

The Forum has produced **best practice guidelines covering many of the issues** and these are **available via the website www.amenityforum.co.uk**. We continue to add to them. The review of the National Action Plan will be a key focus in updating events and through all activities in the coming year.

External Events & Communications

The Forum is often asked to speak at conferences and other events throughout the year. Most recently these have included conferences of the **Turf Growers Association, Network Rail, BCPC** and **IOG**.

The Forum is also a regular contributor to publications including the Greenkeeper, Groundsman, Pitchcare, International Pest Control, Horticulture Weekly and Professional Horticulture. It regularly issues press releases and responds to media requests and is fully engaged in social media. Why not **follow us on Twitter?**

 /AmenityForum

 /JimColins75



Pressures on Pesticides

Last year saw increased pressures on pesticide availability with the European authorisation and review process becoming more focussed on risk to human health. We saw the loss of further actives although the re-approval of glyphosate was very much welcomed. The Amenity Forum worked hard with others to argue the case and welcome the outcome. It is very important such decisions are made on proper evidence not just opinion.

The Forum believes that it is important that all such **decisions are based upon science and evidence**. Nobody working in the professional amenity sector would wish to do anything to endanger public health and safety and should always make use of all options available. **Any chemical coming to market undertakes rigorous testing** before it is released and during its use. Those currently used in the amenity sector have been **proven time and time again to be safe**. They are used across the diverse and important amenity sector as part of an integrated approach, keeping our railways running, maintaining our world class sports surfaces, for woodlands and much more.

We recognise concerns can arise but, in dealing with them, we need a rational debate based upon science and facts. The management of weeds and pests in amenity impacts upon every UK citizen.

Continuing Professional Development & Assurance

Whilst we have seen increasing uptake of recognised CPD and registration on such, we still are seeing low participation when assessed against the numbers involved. It is vital that more do get involved. CPD is in itself important given all the new developments continually being brought forward. However it is also important that the sector shows its commitment to best practice by engagement.

To date CPD is voluntary but for how long?

The Amenity Forum is also stepping up its support for Amenity Assured. If any of us were to employ an electrician in our home, we would seek evidence of competence. Yet in many cases, no such requirement exists in our sector. We will be urging more those employing contractors to seek out Amenity Assured standards and Forum membership in future. We know it is an addition in costs but it will in the long term allow for higher professional standards and help drive out those who do not operate at the required professional levels and, in so doing, threaten us all.



Sprayer Operator of the Year Awards

These awards seek to recognise the quality and level of professional performance in our sector. 2017 saw a record entry and the three category winners were announced at our 2017 conference. The overall winner is to be announced at BTME later this month. He or she will receive the additional prize of a trip to the USA.

The Awards will continue in 2018 so why not apply yourself or put forward others from your organisations? All that is needed is an email to Admin@amenityforum.net and Kate will provide further information.

Website

The Forum website is an invaluable resource with its informative guidance notes, presentations and other information. It is now regarded as the first point of call for any questions on weed, pest and disease management in amenity. It is currently receiving a refresh and the new improved version should be available in early March.



Conclusion

This newsletter has set out just some of the issues and activities of the Forum. There has been significant progress in achievements and in lifting both the profile and practice across the sector. Our key role is helping maintain safe, healthy and sustainable amenity areas fit for purpose.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining and demonstrating your commitment to best practice further strengthening our influencing and supporting role. The annual fee is just £575.

For further information on Forum activities, please go to our website www.amenityforum.co.uk or contact us at admin@amenityforum.net

For further information on our Get Moving campaign visit www.getbritainmoving.uk



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What is Amenity?

For some reading this report, the answer is clear but to many whilst directly affected by our sector, the term remains confusing and is often interpreted wrongly. A complete definition is not possible but suffice to say it includes such areas as:



**Street and Pavement
Cleaning & Parks**



**Professional
Lawn care**



**Rail Track
& Highway**



**Sports Facilities
& Surfaces**

including golf, football,
cricket and more



**Public Utility
Areas**

including supermarkets and indeed
amenity areas in all public places



**Cemeteries &
Bowling Greens**

The list goes on and this emphasises why weed, pest and disease management in these areas is so important.

Objectives of the Amenity Forum and how they are delivered

The key objectives can be summarised as follows:



To promote and encourage proper and responsible use of both pesticides and integrated methods for the control of pests, weeds and diseases.



To lead, coordinate and encourage achievement of “Best Practice” objectives in weed, pest & disease management.



To ensure that all practices are sustainable and protect the environment with minimised risks to public health.



To run a communication programme to support these aims and to promote the image of the sector among stakeholders and the public.



To coordinate and encourage the establishment of sustainable qualifications, training and CPD activity, specifically for the Amenity sector.



To organise activities within the Amenity Forum membership and linked organisations, such that Amenity Forum objectives are developed in a coordinated way.

To achieve these the Forum’s principal activities involve:



Production of best practice guides principally via the web site, publications, newsletters, articles etc.



Regular email update service.



Organisation of seminars, workshops and our conference.



Production of a General Newsletter & regular Chairman’s Update.



Dialogue with government, media, stakeholders, etc. Influencing and more.



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