



**PRESS RELEASE:
Monday 16th October 2017**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR EVERYONE

'Making a difference for everyone' was the core message running through many of the presentations at a very well attended Amenity Forum conference held at the Pirelli Stadium, Burton on Trent on Thursday 12th October 2017.

The flagship annual conference for Amenity Forum reminded delegates that without professional maintenance of amenity areas, every UK citizen would be affected. Those involved in Amenity keep the roads and trains running, the streets and pavements clean, our sports surfaces in top condition and our parks fun and enjoyable places. Weed, pest and disease control is not a nice to have but essential and important. In his address, John Moverley OBE, Independent Chairman of the Amenity Forum, urged everyone involved to have real pride in what they do and to help communicate to the wider public the important work undertaken – vital for health, safety, our environment and ensuring green spaces are fit for purpose.

The first session of the conference focussed upon policy and innovation. Grant Stark from the Chemicals Regulation Directorate emphasised the change ahead and the need for the sector to stand together. He urged delegates to support the Amenity Forum; demonstrating their commitment to best practice. John Parker from Transport for London focussed upon how amenity maintenance keeps cities running and the scale of the task.

The second session involving five leading experts; turning the focus towards the need to adopt a holistic or integrated approach to amenity management. Andrew Kerr from Surbiton Golf Club was passionate about the need to maintain golf courses at both a high standard for playing and also to maximise environmental benefits. He emphasised the high level of professionalism needed with highly trained staff. David Carey from the Bio Control Trade Association looked at new innovations in such an approach and emphasised the role that bio control can take in a holistic approach to amenity management. Colin Mumford from Bayer sought a preventative approach to weed, pest and disease problems and Professor Alan Gange from the University of London described current research into biological control of the invasive, Himalayan Balsam.

In the afternoon, attention focussed on having pride in what the amenity sector delivers for public benefit. John Ledwidge is a highly regarded Head Groundsman responsible for maintenance and improvement of pitches used by Leicester City FC. Maintaining top quality pitches is a high pressure job and demands a very high degree of professionalism and dedication. He was followed by a thought provoking presentations from Mark De Ath (Headland Amenity) and Peter Corbett (Rigby Taylor) who looked to the future and what weed, pest and disease management might look like.

The conference was rounded up by a presentation from Barrie Hunt (Monsanto) who updated everyone on the current re-approval process for glyphosate, an essential component of almost all amenity management programmes. John Moverley then concluded urging everyone to get behind the current communication campaign seeking to increase everyone's understanding of the importance of amenity management. It really does keep Britain moving.

-Ends-

Image attached for use with caption: 180 professionals from the amenity sector gathered at the 2017 Amenity Forum annual conference on Thursday 12th October.

Notes to Editors

The Amenity Forum is the non-profit making voluntary initiative and the independent body bringing together professional organisations with an involvement in the amenity horticulture sector. This is a very diverse industry responsible for the landscape management of urban areas, highways and rail network, sports grounds, parks, industrial and utility sites. To establish and maintain these areas to a high standard, the sector requires access to pesticides, efficient equipment and trained and qualified staff. The organisation was formed in October 2003 as a key action to support the Voluntary Initiative, an industry led project agreed with Government to reduce the environmental impact of pesticides.

The membership comprises of organisations from across this diverse industry, covering manufacturers, suppliers, trade associations, local authorities, major users, landscape, sport and leisure. Equally important are those members who represent training and qualification standards. The key Government agencies have an important observer role. The objectives of the Amenity Forum are:

- *To promote and encourage proper and responsible use of 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*

For further information on this press release or the work of the Forum, please contact the Secretary, Kate Hopkins, or the Chairman, Professor John Moverley OBE. Similarly if you wish to register for future press releases, please let us know.

Please contact hayleywilliams@keystone-marketing.co.uk, admin@amenityforum.net or email John.Moverley@amenityforum.co.uk