PARKS FOR LONDON

GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

PITCH ADVISORY SERVICE

RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

RFU

SPORT ENGLAND

ECB

FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

TOGETHER FOR FOOTBALL



PAS Football Key Account Manager Introduction

Tom Rowley - National



- Involved in the programme since its creation in 2014
- Previously covered the East Midlands as an RPA has been in the KAM role since 2017
- Formerly Assistant Groundsman at Leicester City

Making sport possible

Who are the GMA and What is the PAS?

The GMA is a not-for-profit membership organisation championing the Grounds Management industry at all levels and sectors.

The Pitch Advisory Service (PAS) is a partnership between Sport England, FF, GMA, ECB, FA, RFL and RFU. The GMA are the delivery partner alongside the funding bodies.

Aimed at achieving sustainability of natural turf pitches through enhanced education and training of volunteer and professional grounds networks, through improved maintenance and provision of specialist equipment and materials

That provides an enhanced network of support expertise available to the people and organisations maintaining natural turf pitches, particularly those working at the grass roots level.

Now in the second year of Phase 3 (2021 to 2024)

Collaborates with:

- Football – CFAs, The FF, The FA, Volunteers, SPAs, Local Authorities and Sport England
- Cricket – Cricket/County Grounds Associations, Local Authorities, Cricket/County Pitch Advisors
- Rugby League –
- Rugby Union -

Which may involve:

- Visits and reports
- Support and guidance
- Advice and recommendations

And includes

- Renovations
- General maintenance
- Machinery recommendations
- Training and events

Source: Grassroots Football Survey 2018

Grass Pitches Today



1 in 3

Only 1 in 3 grassroots pitches are rated as 'good' quality



1 in 8

Only 1 in 8 grassroots clubs are satisfied with the quality of their grass pitches



150k

150,000 matches were postponed during the last full football season



60%

Of affiliated game played on LA owned pitches

THE CHALLENGE

The pilots confirmed that a one size fits all programme simply will not work...

- Some LAs allocate all pitches, some allocate none. Some LAs take all the income from the pitches, some take none
- Lack of investment, insufficient maintenance programme and machinery to improve pitches – in the main, fortnightly cuts and line marking only
- Difficult for LAs to increase their revenue budgets but would be willing to invest capital as part of a wider solution
- Lack of supervision of external contractors and challenging if they adhere to the agreed specification
- Lack of qualified staff (experienced staff but not qualified) and a lack of dedicated staff specific to grass pitch maintenance
- Budget cuts and challenging economic environment a risk
- **Sustainability is problematic, meaning ongoing future funding is likely to be required**
- **£360m+ investment required to work with 100 largest LAs**



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FOOTBALL FOUNDATION OFFER

1. **NEW - Widening of Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund (GPMF) (March)**
    - Currently the eligibility is restricted.
    - Will be widened to include town councils, parish councils and education sites
2. **NEW - LA Equipment Bank (May)**
    - Piloted with 2 LAs
    - 75% funded
    - Up to £100k grant
3. **NEW - Enhanced club offer to support asset transfers (May)**
    - 5 Projects to be piloted this year
    - 100% funded
    - Broad range of capital and revenue items to be considered
4. **NEW - LA Grass Pitch Programme (Hub LAs initially)**
    - Football owning football sites via long term lease/licence
    - Long term vision
    - Special Purpose Vehicle to be created
5. **Local Football Facility Plans - LFFP (Ongoing)**
    - Refresh and consider how your LFFP can complement the Grass Pitch Programme





WIDENING OF GPMF

PHASE 1 (Existing offer)

Grassroots clubs

Leagues

Charities

NLS Clubs Step 1-6*

Regional Feeder Leagues



PHASE 2 (April onwards)

Grassroots clubs

Leagues

Charities

NLS Clubs Step 1-6*

Regional Feeder Leagues

Town & Parish Councils (New)

Education Sites (New)

*only for pitches at the site that are used for community football

Webinars & guidance - March 2023

Comms to all LAs – March 2023

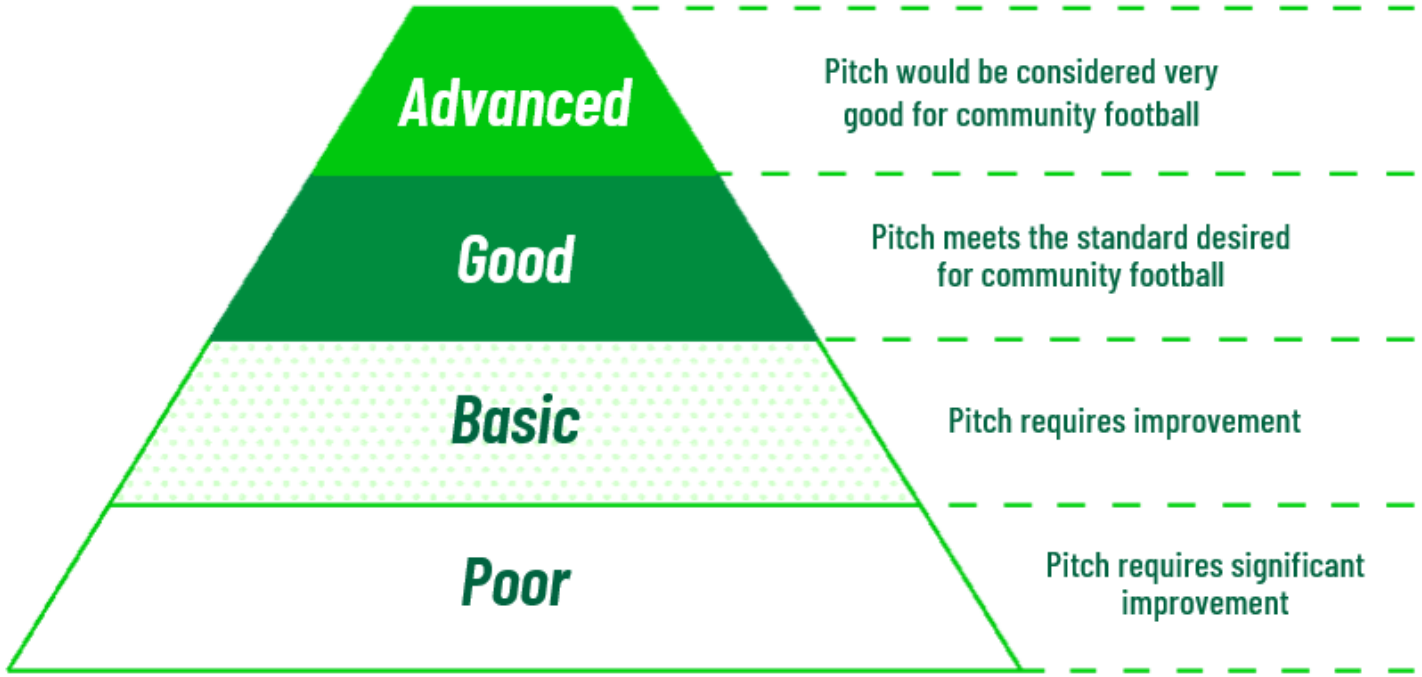
Fund opens - April 2023

Criteria – affiliated grassroots football

LA EQUIPMENT BANK

- Scheme to be created
- Pilot with Brighton and Guernsey LAs
- Strategic approach with willing and able LAs
- PitchPower inspections of pitches required
- GMA provide requirements to get pitches to “Good”
- Robotics included
- Anticipated launch May 2023





NB. Other standards exist for higher levels of the game.

ENHANCED CLUB OFFER

Attractive Package

- England Football Accredited Clubs
- LA Sites (2-4 pitches)
- ~£250k Package
- 5 Projects to be piloted in 2023
- Capital and revenue eligible for funding
- Clubs provided with an income generator

Eligible Items

- Site security fencing
- Grounds maintenance machinery
- 6-year revenue for grounds maintenance
- Storage
- Groundskeeper qualifications/training
- Organisation training & support
- Goalposts
- Legal fees & insurances
- Income generator – catering cabin

Next Steps

- EOI sent to all LAs & CFAs early summer '23





LA GRASS PITCH PROGRAMME – HUB LAs

Phase 2 of the Hub Model

Retain and recycle money back into football/multi-sport.

SPV to provide:

- Maintenance services
- Advisory Service
- Booking system
- Central purchasing of materials

Leisure United provide maintenance services to key sites within LA.

Security of tenure is provided to SPV on key sites.

Tax efficient structure

Revenue from sites goes into SPV without profit leakage



Trust's Football Hubs

Trust's Commercial Centre

Trust's Dedicated Grass Sites

Independent Sites

Introduction and background

PitchPower

- PitchPower, powered by the Football Foundation, is a free and easy to use web app that has been a game-changer in our mission to transform the country's grass football pitches..
- Since launch in October 2020, around 5000 reports have been produced, providing guidance and advice on 11000+ submitted Football pitch assessments.
- PitchPower puts the power into the palm of your hand to seek guidance on improving the quality and performance of your grass pitches.
- Every pitch inspection will receive a detailed report produced by one of the Grounds Management Association's Regional Pitch Advisors.
- Better pitches mean more opportunities to play and get active which is hugely important to the nation's physical and mental wellbeing.



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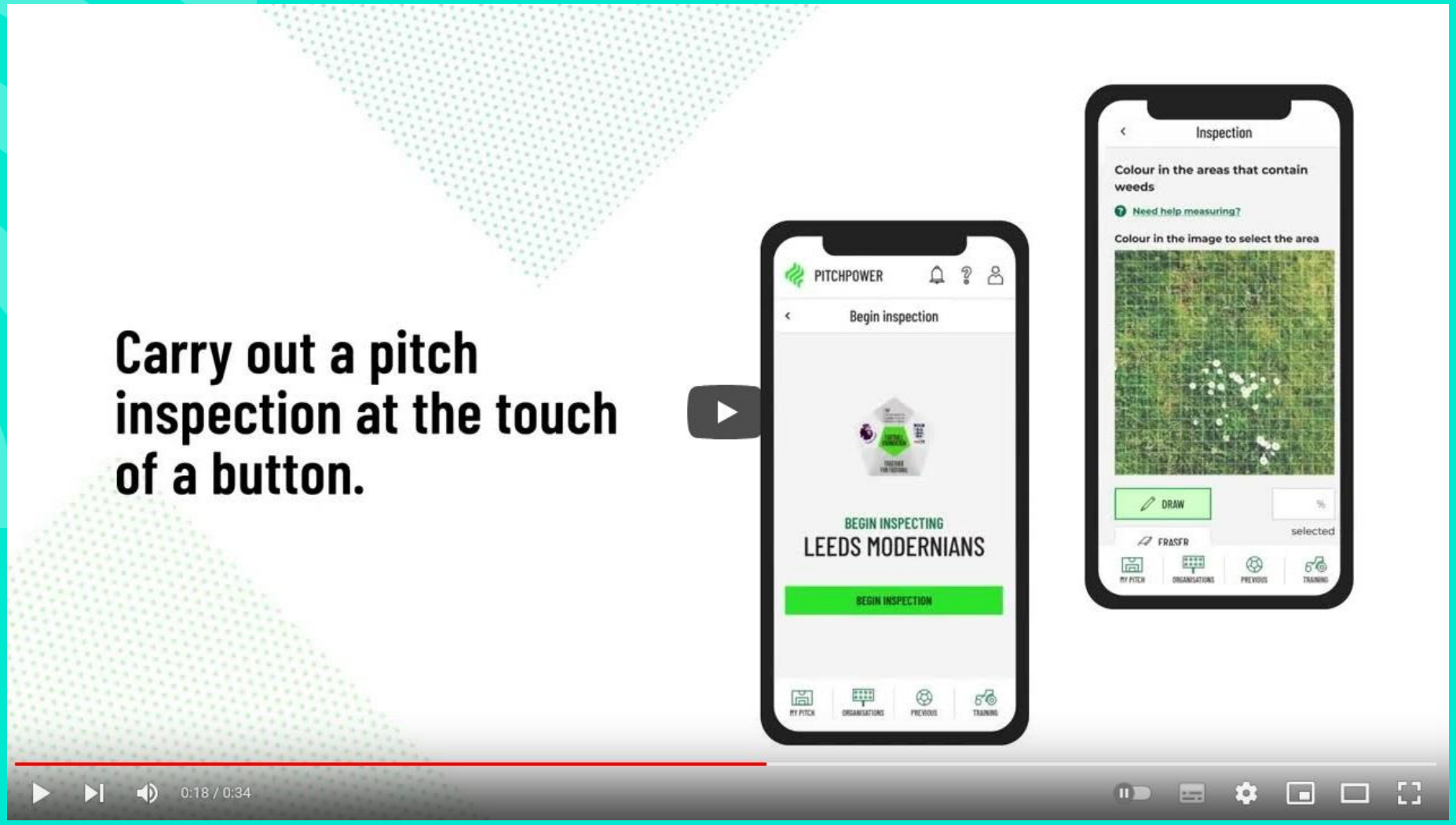
What’s new?

- By 2025, 40% of Football Foundation investment will go to projects that host an additional one or more activities, including rugby, cricket, netball, and basketball.
- To align with this, the Football Foundation have proudly launched the web app to the RFL and RFU, with the ECB to follow in the new year.
- The user journey has been improved and enhanced to allow the Grounds Management Association’s Regional Pitch Advisors to produced an even more refined report based on the increased level of details submitted.





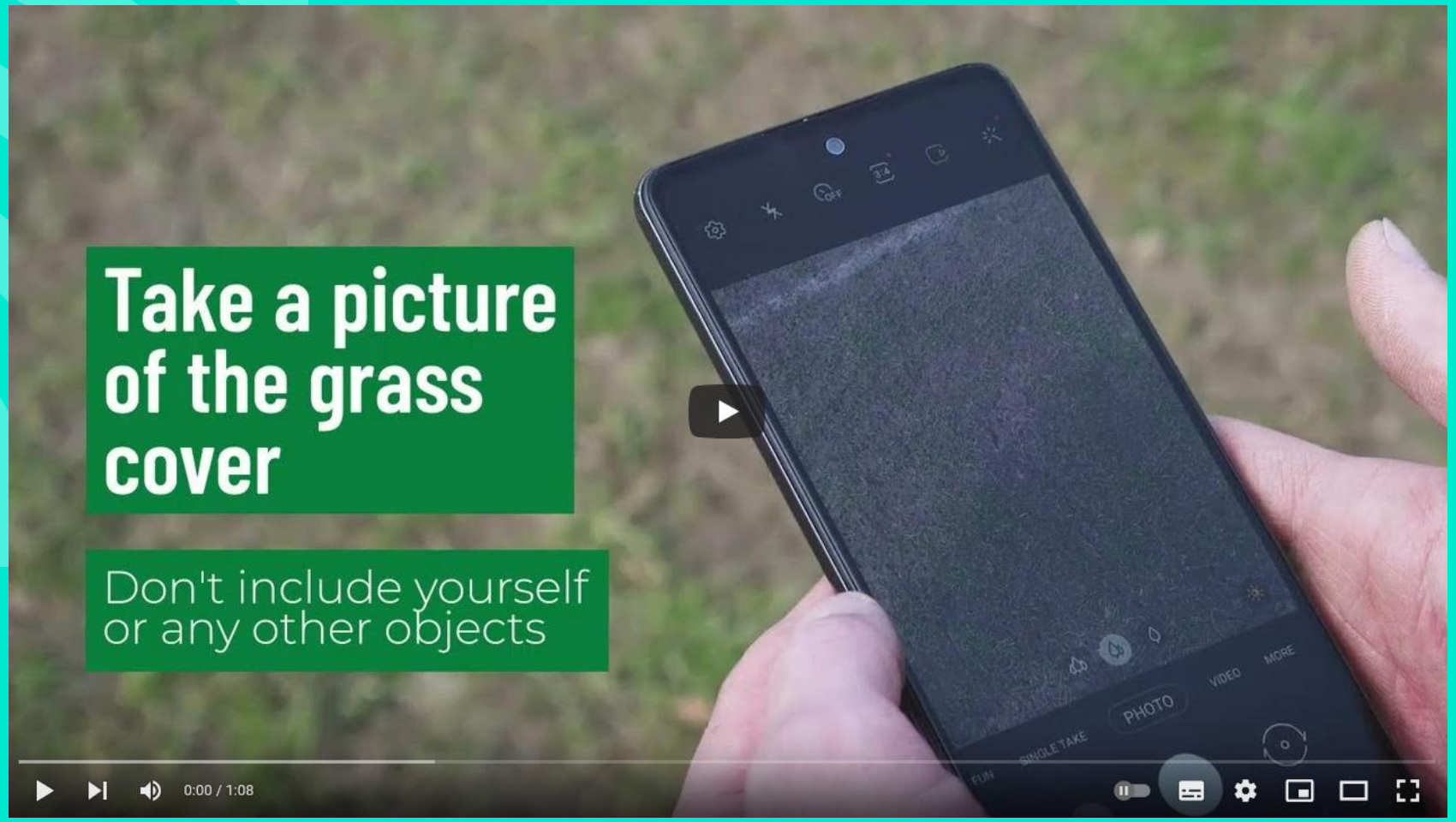
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Watch the video here





Watch the video here





GMA National Pitch Grading Framework

Mission of Grounds Management Framework

For every natural turf sport surface to be maintained by appropriately qualified grounds staff and volunteers, to achieve the best possible playing surface.

What is Grounds Management Framework

A system that measures the quality of pitches, and the skills required to achieve optimum outputs, using a national established framework developed by the Grounds Management Association (GMA).



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Performance Standard	Unit of measurement		Basic	Good	Advanced	High	What this means
Length of grass	mm	Between	60 - 75	45 - 59	35 - 44	22 - 34	The measured min/max cutting heights in mm for the season stated. In dry weather. It is often appropriate to increase grass mowing height.
Total grass cover	%	Between	61 - 70	71 - 80	81 - 90	>90	The measured % extent of grass cover, incl. unwanted grass species as well as desirable grass species.
Weeds	%	Between	16 - 20	11 - 15	6 - 10	<5	The maximum % of weeds, moss, algae and lichen within each sampled area.
Thatch	mm	Between	15 - 19	10 - 14	5 - 9	<5	The maximum depth of thatch, integrated thatch, or buried fibre averaged over the samples taken.
Root depth	%	Minimum	70	85	100	125	The measured healthy root penetration in the sampled core.
Topsoil	mm	Minimum	100	125	150	175	The measured depth of topsoil.
Goal posts	Visual	Compliance	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Uprights are to be at right angles to the surface of the pitch (taking into account the gradient of the pitch). Crossbars are to be at right angles to the uprights. All posts to be in accordance with NGB guidelines and should conform with BSEN 16579 (2018) Safety Standards. Posts will be visually assessed and designated as Compliant or Non-compliant.
Line marking	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	**Above standard:** Line markings are always clear and straight **Standard:** Line markings are always visible but not straight **Below standard:** Line markings are not visible or have been applied using a non-standard material e.g. herbicide.
Drainage	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	**Above standard:** Free draining - no standing water **Standard:** Slow draining - The pitch is playable, but soft underfoot and affects the quality of play for about 24 hours after heavy rainfall **Below standard:** Standing water - The pitch is still unplayable 24 hours after heavy rainfall
Pitch surface levels/Evenness	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	How flat and level your playing surface is can have a significant impact on the playing experience, and if not kept to a good standard, can lead to ponding (puddles) during wet weather. **Above standard:** The playing surface is flat without any significant undulations (lumps and bumps) **Standard:** The playing surface is generally flat with some minimal undulations (lumps and bumps) **Below standard:** The playing surface has significant undulations (lumps and bumps)
Surface debris	Visual	Compliance	Standard	Standard	Standard	Above Standard	Any material that may be present on your playing surface that could affect the quality of matchplay or the ability to maintain the surface adequately. This may include: grass clippings, leaves, litter and animal faeces etc. **Above standard:** Surface debris does not impact on playing quality **Standard:** Surface debris has a slight impact on playing quality **Below standard:** Surface debris has a big impact on playing quality

POOR/UNCLASSIFIED
A pitch/surface that fails to meet the minimum standards of the GMA's Pitch Grading Framework and could be deemed to be of poor quality.

BASIC
A pitch/surface that is safe for recreational sport and meets the minimum playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

GOOD
A pitch/surface that is good quality and safe for recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of community players nationwide.

ADVANCED
A pitch/surface that is high quality and meets the needs of top-level recreational sport. It meets the playing needs and expectations of both community and semi-professional players nationwide.

GMA Learning - Training

Online Winter Pitches Course Suite
Levels One to Three available

You will become part of the growing network of sports turf experts and volunteers. You will gain valuable and applicable skills. You will enjoy a fun, informative and productive course – with content from excellent and knowledgeable experts.

- Online Level 1 Courses
- Online Level 2 Course - Winter Pitches (Applied Turf Culture)
- Online Level 2 Effective Maintenance of 3G Pitches
- Online Level 2 Course - Cricket Surfaces (Applied Turf Culture)
- Online Level 3 Course - Winter Pitches (Advanced Turf Culture)

Price - from £42-£162 depending on GMA membership and level of the course

Level 3 Online (Advanced Turf Culture)

Course description

The online Level 3 course for Winter Pitches will allow you to understand about the advanced technical aspects of turf maintenance and management, and how they may form an integral part of a detailed work programme. This course will allow you to get the most from your surface in terms of quality standards and ultimately, carrying capacity.

What will you learn?

- What is meant by the term 'carrying capacity'
- The influence of drainage, soil type and compaction on carrying capacity
- Soil nutrient testing and what this might mean for your pitch
- Grass cultivars and selection and evaluation
- Controlling undesirable organisms and Integrated Pest Management
- Health and safety systems
- Planning a work programme
- Managing a surface to optimise carrying capacity.

PITCH ADVISORY SERVICE



An online community for advice and best practice tips from GMA Pitch Advisors and grounds keepers.

- 3300+ users
- RPA interaction
- Maintenance Essentials
- Learning and tips cards
- Funding/News signposting
- Materials and equipment information
- Interactive forum



‘Grounds Management Toolkit’ - a training resource aimed to support volunteers maintaining football pitches. Cricket, rugby league and rugby union information contained within the ToolKit too

Designed as a tool to continue increasing the skills and capabilities of practicing and future grounds volunteers.

The resources are free, and are made available to help the general public to engage further with common practices involved in grounds maintenance and to understand how to help get pitches ready for players across their community.

PITCH ADVISORY SERVICE



#GroundsWeek 2023 will take place from **20 – 26 March**.

#GroundsWeek is the annual celebration of grounds teams across the country, recognising their invaluable work to make sport possible and encouraging new recruits to get into this exciting and vital industry.

Last year, there was a big buzz on social media with more than 4,000 social posts reaching 52 million people. Media coverage included The Sun, Sky Sports, BBC Sports, ITV News and Reuters – all highlighting the amazing work done by grounds people and encouraging people to consider a career in the sector.

This year, we want to continue this momentum – and we'd love your help.

Supporting the campaign

Getting involved is really easy.

- Use your social media channels to post about the difference your grounds teams make.
- That could be a message of thanks for your grounds team, sharing photos of them at work, photos of your finished pitch at its best or an interview with one of the grounds staff.
- Use #GroundsWeek on your posts.
- We'll be in touch with a #GroundsWeek Toolkit with campaign info and a range of graphics and visual assets you can use to share you support for #GroundsWeek. This will include social media graphics including some for you to customise with your own club crest.
- You could also mark the week by thanking your grounds team in a matchday programme or at half time over the tannoy system at your ground.

If you have any questions at all regarding #GroundsWeek and how you can get involved, please get in touch with us at communications@thegma.org.uk

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