

SERVICE DEALER

THE VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY

- News
- Industry
- Dealers
- Training
- Shows
- Reviews
- SME Digest

January/February 2023

CELEBRATING OUR WONDERFUL NETWORK

From recruitment to succession and celebrating fantastic achievements – the Service Dealer Conference & Awards delivered it all

HITTING A HOME RUN!

Biggest ever Louisville event

EIMA & SIMA

Plenty to interest UK dealers at Euro shows



UPBEAT SALTEX

Report from GMA's show



EMBARKING ON A NEW AG-VENTURE

Charles' plans for the future following a shuffling of the pack



- The world's fastest battery charge.
- Ten times the service life of conventional OPE batteries.
- Twice the power.

Welcome to the post-fossil fuel era.



Contact your local Kress representative for more information or contact us:
KressUK.Info@positecgroup.com

kress.com



Letter from the editor **Steve Gibbs**

steve@servicedealer.co.uk



WELCOME TO THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023 EDITION OF SERVICE DEALER MAGAZINE.

This issue we get to do what we enjoy most here at Service Dealer Towers – celebrate our wonderful dealer readers! You will find full coverage of all the Dealer of the Year winners that were presented with their prizes at the glittering ceremony held in Oxfordshire at the end of November, starting on page 14. Once again it was a fabulous night, and so gratifying for the magazine to be a conduit to bring all these incredible dealers together in one room. Honouring their achievements is a real highlight of our year.

Also within these pages you'll find full coverage of our Conference. I heard immense praise and enthusiasm for the topics covered and the experts who delivered the messages from our dealer delegates. What was also clear was just how valuable it is to be able to mix with fellow dealers and suppliers in an environment of both learning and social interaction. How we missed days like these when we were forced apart for two years!

Speaking of sharing experiences, this issue we are delighted to welcome Jason Nettle of Winchester Garden Machinery who has kindly agreed to be our Diarist of the season for 2023. We know that with Jason we will hear straight talking directly from the heart each issue. So, we thank him for contributing – whilst also passing on our immense gratitude to Anthony Deacon from MKM for keeping us informed throughout last year.

We also say a fond farewell to Chris Biddle who has stepped down from his In My View column. We can't thank Chris enough for all he has given to the magazine over the years. His wise words will be greatly missed – but dealers will still be able to catch up with his wisdom via his regular podcasts.

To step into Chris's big shoes we are very lucky to welcome to our pages The Sprocket! A columnist of mystery (for the time being) – we are excited to hear what they have to say on a whole host of industry issues over the coming months.

2023 is going to be a great year for the magazine – and we are delighted to have all our amazing dealer readers join us for the ride.

THE TEAM

Publisher: Duncan Murray-Clarke

Editor: Steve Gibbs

steve@servicedealer.co.uk

Agricultural Editor: Martin Rickatson

jmr.agriculture@gmail.com

SME Digest Editor: Adam Bernstein

adam@adambernstein.co.uk

Contributor: Laurence Gale

laurence.gale@btinternet.com

Design & layout:

Iain Robinson

Produced by: The Ad Plain Ltd

Howbery Park, Benson Lane,

Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BA, UK

Telephone: 01491 837 117

www.theadplain.com

Service Dealer is produced by The Ad Plain

on behalf of Land Power Publications LLP

Advertising sales:

Nikki Harrison

nikki@theadplain.com

Telephone: 01491 837 117



The acceptance and publication of advertising in Service Dealer magazine implies no representation or warranty on the part of Service Dealer or The Ad Plain Ltd (TAP) as to the reputation or standing of advertisers' products or services. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form whatsoever without the written permission of Service Dealer and TAP. The information contained in this publication is published in good faith and every effort has been made to ensure its accuracy. The publishers can accept no responsibility for any error or misrepresentation. All liability for loss, disappointment, negligence or other damage caused by reliance on information contained in this publication or in the event of any bankruptcy or liquidation or cessation of the trade in any company, individual or firm mentioned is hereby excluded.



CONTENTS

- 4 **News**
Latest industry developments
- 14 **Celebrating our wonderful network**
All the winners of Dealer of the Year '22 honours
- 20 **Sustaining Dealerships**
The Service Dealer conference saw presentations ranging from recruitment to a specialist in succession
- 26 **Dealer Profile**
A new ag-venture for Charlies
- 32 **Equip hit a home run!**
UK contingent report from Louisville show
- 36 **EIMA & SIMA**
Plenty to interest UK dealers at Euro exhibitions
- 40 **SALTEX '22 review**
An upbeat couple of days at the NEC
- 44 **View from across the pond**
With Sara Hey
- 45 **Diary of a season**
With Winchester Garden Machinery
- 46 **SME digest**
Information for small businesses
- 50 **Business monitor**
Warranty rates '22 survey results
- 52 **New products**
Coverage of new equipment to hit the market
- 56 **In my view**
With The Sprocket
- 58 **Events**
Shows & industry events update



L-R: Jack Martin (agricultural sales), David Mann (groundcare sales), Nick Vincent (sales director), Lyn Taylor (service controller), Matthew Hodge (group general manager), John Scott (groundcare sales), and Paul Berry (technician)



Ripon's new branch holds open event

Major milestone for dealership

Ripon Farm Services held an open event at its newly opened Malton branch in the autumn.

The dealership moved into its new depot at the 30-acre Eden Business Park near Malton at the end of August last year. The 22,000 sq ft building is located immediately off the A64 by the Pickering Road (A169) junction by Eden Camp.

Richard Simpson, commercial director of RFS, commented, "The opening of our new Malton depot is a major milestone for Ripon Farm Services and signals our intention to ramp up the investment in our long-term future."

"This new building reflects the importance we place on serving the North and East Yorkshire farming, equestrian and ground care communities."

The new flagship building features offices, training suites and meeting facilities for staff and customers and has been specially designed to accommodate rapidly growing combine harvester business. The new Malton location is the company's twelfth depot in all.

Richard Simpson added: "We are especially pleased to have made such a big investment to improve our facilities in Malton, which has the enviable – and entirely justified – reputation as the food capital of the north. It is at the centre of North Yorkshire's extensive agricultural community, which we are looking forward to serving," said Mr Simpson.

Larger reach for dealers Vincent

New depot opened

Kubota (UK) Ltd has announced that Vincent Tractors & Plant has further widened its geographical area, reaching north east from its existing Devon and Cornwall locations with a new depot in Wellington, Somerset.

This extension of Vincent's sales area and customer base sees the dealership expand into parts of Somerset, and north and east Devon with a fourth depot to support agricultural and groundcare customers throughout the south west of England.

"Vincent Tractors & Plant's expansion continues to strengthen Kubota's commitment to its customers and the markets in which our business operates," says Henry Bredin, general manager of Kubota (UK)'s Tractor Business Unit. "This strategic expansion sees the Vincent family continue to develop its partnership with Kubota, as it actively supports a wider customer base in both groundcare and agricultural sectors."

The depot adds to existing locations in Holsworthy, north Devon, plus Smithleigh near Plympton in south Devon, and the company's headquarters in Fraddon, Cornwall. From Wellington, the company will provide sales, parts, service and support for the Kubota tractor and implement ranges, and Kubota groundcare equipment.

As Vincent Tractors & Plant's newest Kubota centre, the Wellington depot opened its doors to customers on November 10th 2022 and includes stores, showroom and workshop facilities, along with yard space that provides opportunities for growth as the business moves forward.

Serving customers across Cornwall for more than 50 years, the business that was started by Ken and Esme Vincent has recently welcomed third generation family members Alec and Nick Vincent into the fold.

"We're pleased to be a part of this exciting journey with Kubota, but just as importantly, we're looking forward to welcoming new and existing agricultural and groundcare customers through the doors at Wellington," said sales director, Nick Vincent.



Honda UK plays down US mower exit story

Statement issued to Service Dealer

A report in the US trade magazine Rural Lifestyle Dealer gained some traction online recently, saying that according to an announcement posted to the Honda dealer Interactive Network, "Honda will end its lawnmower production by September 2023, and leftover inventory will be offered in 2024 until it is sold out."

Rural Lifestyle Dealer wrote that the statement from Honda Power Sports & Products said the company plans to discontinue production of lawnmowers at its North Carolina manufacturing facility in September 2023 and move all-terrain vehicle production there from its South Carolina facility. The South Carolina facility will "solely focus on Honda side-by-side production," read the statement.

The magazine continued, quoting from the statement, "The decision to end lawn mower production is driven by market forces such as stricter environmental regulations, shifting customer preferences, and our focus on growing profitable products in our portfolio. Honda will continue to sell the remainder of its lawn and garden product line and industrial type power products such as GX engines, generators and water pumps, and continue to support its service and parts operations in the US market."

UK statement

Following the news, Service Dealer approached Honda UK for a statement to pass on to our UK dealer readers.

A spokesperson told us, "There is an article circulating that a production facility in North Carolina in the US

plans to discontinue production of petrol lawn mowers from September 2023. The decision was driven by stricter environmental regulations and changing customer preferences.

"As reassurance within Europe, Honda Motor Europe produces petrol lawn mowers at our Honda France manufacturing facility and is committed to producing the entire line-up."

When pushed whether this statement meant that Honda is categorically not exiting the mower market in Europe and the UK, the spokesperson reiterated, "I can confirm that within Europe, Honda Motor Europe produces petrol lawn mowers at our Honda France manufacturing facility and is committed to producing the entire line-up."



The joint statement was released in the week of SALTEX

AEA, GMA and BIGGA issue 'working together' statement

Round-table meetings have been held

Industry trade associations the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA), the Grounds Management Association (GMA) and the British International Golf Greenkeepers Association (BIGGA) released a joint statement ahead of GMA's recent SALTEX exhibition.

The associations said that in recent months round-table discussions have taken place between themselves, with the collective view of all three being that they should be "open to looking at how, on a proactive and collaborative basis, we can work better together."

They were at pains to point out, though, that a merger between the professional sports turf organisations, GMA and BIGGA, which has been spoken about in the past, is "not a part of discussions".

Published in the week of one of the industry's major national events, the statement addressed the issue of shows, pointing out how the GMA and BIGGA organise our industry's two highest-profile exhibitions (SALTEX and BTME). The joint statement said, "The revenue generated by these events provides significant re-investment into the communities both bodies serve. On a wider level, we wish to gain an understanding of the competing pressures that businesses in our sector face in a period that has created economic uncertainty and risk, and in turn, the impact on exhibitions and events."

The associations confirmed that both events "will continue for the foreseeable future".

The statement then continued: "Our associations are all aligned towards building a better industry, and we believe that by collaborating, we can create good foundations to build from and to support the vital work individuals, teams and companies do more effectively.

"Our most recent round-table was encouraging, as all represented had a sense of responsibility, an understanding of the issues, and a willingness to underpin our shared objectives to create a vibrant and buoyant sector."

The statement concluded, "The three associations have committed to renewing a conversation with the industry in general and will be appointing an independent research company to conduct a detailed survey to gather the input of those working in sports turf, including our respective members, and to discover whether a new approach where everyone can benefit is required.

"In these tumultuous times we invite associations, companies, and individuals to join the conversation and to help create a new era of co-operation so we can raise the profile, the status, and the standing of this passionate and outstanding sector."

The statement was signed by the CEOs of all three associations, Ruth Bailey, Geoff Webb and Jim Croxton.



Anthony Deacon of MKM is one of the progressive dealers offering advice

Service Dealer has launched the latest module of the free Dealer Digital Toolkit, entitled Building The Dealership Of The Future – this time offering expert advice on future-proofing the dealership.

The module, which can be accessed through the Service Dealer website, covers the following subject areas:

- WHAT FUTURE DEALERSHIPS LOOK LIKE
- THE RISE OF ROBOTICS
- DOING GOOD

The module offers practical advice on how you might future-proof your business to meet the needs and wants of your customers in the next five years. It explores what things might look like in five years' time, including the changes to the physical shop, the advances in robotics, and the social impacts and attitude changes the industry has to make.

Building the dealership of the future

Latest Dealer Digital Toolkit module is live

Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke says, "Several elements are key in this module. Technology, and keeping up with it of course, is vital. Also the look and feel of your dealership, with consumer expectations getting higher and higher, we have to keep pace with that.

"We also must think about sustainability, as this is a topic that is becoming more and more important not only for businesses, but also for individual consumers. And finally, we need to consider how to attract the right people to work in our dealerships – and how to motivate and retain them."

As ever, this module contains video content from real dealers, offering real-life advice.

Dealers can access the content through www.servicedealer.co.uk using their login details from before – or if you've forgotten your password, simply request a new one.



Louise Danbury-Peters and Steve Rossin

Ibbetts takes on Grasshopper

Chandlers appoints new dealer

Chandlers Groundscare has announced the appointment of long-standing St Neots-based agricultural and grounds care dealership Arthur Ibbett Ltd as a dealer for the range of Grasshopper ZeroTurn ride-on mowers, covering Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

Ibbetts horticultural sales team consists of Steve Rossin and Louise Danbury-Peters. Both said how pleased they are to be able to offer Grasshopper alongside their existing range of products.

Les Butters, Chandlers Groundscare dealer principal, said: "We are pleased to welcome Ibbetts to our portfolio of Grasshopper Dealers in the UK and NI. I have known Steve for more than 30 years, and I look forward to working in partnership with both Steve and Louise with the Grasshopper brand."

TRAINING

Dealers support apprenticeship scheme

Students from around country join Claas course

Claas says the high level of support from its dealer network for the new, in-house apprenticeship based at the Claas Academy at Saxham is evident in the fact that the new course that started in the autumn is fully booked.

The manufacturer boasts it's the only UK machinery manufacturer to offer and deliver a specific in-house apprenticeship scheme, using new purpose-built facilities.

Following the inaugural intake of students in February, a further 23 students from dealerships throughout England, Wales and Ireland arrived at Saxham for the start of their four-year block-release course in September.

A further cohort of students from dealerships in Scotland have also been welcomed onto their course provided and run by the Scottish Rural College (SRUC) Barony near Dumfries.

Claas says its new in-house apprenticeship scheme was introduced to help raise the standard of newly qualified engineers. By 'growing their own', the company say it can ensure that the engineers of the future have been fully trained on



The SRUC Barony intake

the latest Claas machinery and they have the skills to keep them abreast of technological advancements within the industry, including key franchises offered by the Claas dealer network.

During their apprenticeship, the students will study for a Level 3 Apprenticeship Standard in Land-Based Service Engineering Technician, delivered by dedicated Claas trainers alongside specialist product trainers.

The new Apprentice Academy, with its specialist fabrication, engine workshops and classrooms, in addition to break-out areas and on-site restaurant, provides the students with training facilities. The €3 million development is a worldwide first for the Claas Group and is being used as a blueprint for the instigation of similar programmes within the company's global operation.



and the Saxham intake

INDUSTRY



Samuele Acquisti, Rino Electric and Stuart Rose, Overton (UK) sales director

Rino charges into UK & Ireland

Overton announces new distribution deal

Overton (UK) Limited has been awarded the UK and Ireland distribution for the Rino electric mowers, made in Italy by the Del Morino company.

The electric mowers have been in production since 2019 and the Del Morino company has been in business for around 150 years.

Stuart Rose, director at Overton, said, "We have been looking for rough-cut mowers to complement the Mean Green mowers as they are for regular mowing cycles, whereas the Rino has the capability to attach a front-mounted flail or rotary mower, sweeper and weed brush. The CaRino is available as a flail, rough-cut or fine-cut mowing deck. All these mowers will achieve all-day running times and have the options of fast charging systems.

"At the recent SALTEX exhibition we were blown away with the comments and positive feedback from the national contractors and dealers. I can confirm we are looking for dealers and I'm pleased to say we had many inquiries during the show."

DEALERS



Karen Olsson and Nikki Gunner of Godstone's and Phil Everett MD of Boss ORV

Boss ORV adds another dealer

Godstone joins Corvus network

Boss ORV, the UK distributor of Corvus Off-Road Vehicles, has announced a new partnership with Godstone All Terrain Ltd.

Established in 2020, Godstone's customer base is in the south east of England covering the broad area of Surrey, Sussex and Kent, and with a showroom in South Godstone, Surrey – 15 minutes from Junction 6 of the M25. It sells an extensive range of 2wd and 4wd quad bikes and utility vehicles for farm and off-road use, and now the Corvus Terrain UTVs, road legal 2wd and 4x4 utility vehicles.

In addition to sales, Godstone has fully equipped onsite workshop facilities with a team of trained and experienced technicians.

"We now have Corvus coverage and expert support in the Surrey and Sussex areas," said Boss managing director, Phil Everett. "We extend a big welcome to Graham, Karen, Nikki, David and all the team at Godstone All Terrain Limited. We all look forward to a long and mutually beneficial partnership."



L-R: Andrew Petrie (NH area sales manager); Pat Smith (NH UK business director); Steve Petford (RVT group managing director); Simon Clarke (RVT chairman); Matthew Clarke (RVT / Dunstall Holdings); Matthew Mulligan (RVT operations director)

New era begins for RVT

Three new branches

November 1st 2022 marked a new era in Rea Valley Tractors' 38-year trading history as it embarked on new franchise agreements, and an extended territory.

Making it one of the biggest agricultural machinery dealers in the country, RVT is opening three new branches in Middlewich (Cheshire), Ormskirk (Lancashire) and Denbigh (North Wales). This is in addition to existing branches in Welshpool (Mid Wales), Sudbury (Derby), Newport and Shrewsbury (Shropshire).

This means RVT will now more than double its trading area for its new franchise New Holland, and enhance the coverage for JCB and Kuhn Farm Machinery and the other agricultural brands it already supplies.

Their Sudbury depot moves forward as a JCB Centre of Excellence and has also secured an enhancement to its current Kuhn portfolio as a dedicated Kuhn Baler Centre.

RVT says the changes have created more than 60 job opportunities throughout the company, whilst retaining 95% of its current workforce. Alongside the introduction of dedicated product specialists for harvest products, JCB and in-field parts, the dealership says it has invested heavily in its people and workplaces to maximise their customer service levels.

The dealership says it recognises that these changes and consolidations to the UK agricultural dealer network, which are happening throughout most areas of the UK, can be both exciting and unsettling for some customers.

Steve Petford, RVT's managing director, addressed its customers, saying, "New relationships will take time to build, but in a relatively short time, RVT's aim is to provide all customers both established and new, with a much more enhanced service than ever would have been possible before. Through our seven depots we will have dedicated specialists in your field, who will be operating with local support by local teams and we look forward to showcasing the outstanding service RVT has to offer."

RVT's chairman Simon Clarke added, "This is a new dawn for Rea Valley Tractors. After 38 years, we are really excited by the opportunity not only for our business, but customers alike by supplying and servicing machinery from world-class British manufacturers. Combined with our skilled workforce, knowledge of the area and drive to move our business forward, the future is tremendously exciting."



New grounds care event to debut in September

Plans for GroundsFest underway

A new grounds care trade event that promises outdoor demonstrations, indoor zones, free education, interactive workstations, machinery workshops, a wellbeing hub, a live music festival amongst other attractions has been announced for this year.

Called GroundsFest, organisers say it will be held at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire on 20 and 21 September 2023.

The event is being put together by the team behind creative agency Fusion Media, who used to work on SALTEX, under their new media arm Purple Ash Media.

They say the event has been created based on research and independent surveys over the past six years. They say the results show that September is the most favoured time of year for an event such as this and that a mix of both indoor space and outdoor demonstrations is the preferred format.

They also claim that from an exhibitor point of view, GroundsFest is cost-effective in comparison to other events which they believe opens the doors for a wider range of companies.

Promised for the show are:

- Outdoor demonstrations
- Indoor zones
- Live interactive stations
- Machinery workshops.
- Educational seminars
- Wellbeing hub
- Festival (including live music, street food, and fun, skill-based activities)

DEALERS

Cornwall Farm Machinery takes on Polaris

Two locations both offering the full off-road utility line-up

Polaris Off Road Vehicles has appointed Cornwall Farm Machinery as a new dealer covering the Cornwall area.

Having opened in 2010, Cornwall Farm Machinery has two locations in Penzance and Truro, both of which offer the full Polaris off-road utility lineup, as well as a full collection of parts and accessories.

Rob Hattam of Cornwall Farm Machinery said, "Our customers want a high quality product that they can rely on, and our experience with the Polaris brand has been very positive, so when the opportunity arose for us to find a new ATV manufacturer for our dealership, Polaris was a natural choice."

"The team at Polaris UK have been very helpful and eager to support in any way that they can – we're excited for this new venture alongside the Polaris brand."

Recently, the dealership hosted its annual open day that welcomed over 300 people. Aiming to invite new and existing customers to explore its range of products and showcase the manufacturers that they work with, the company says the open days proved to be a great social occasion. They were also a great opportunity to build and strengthen valuable relationships, and demonstrate the extra mile the company goes to service its customers.



Can-Am grows dealer network

Cowan Bros appointed in Northern Ireland

Bombardier Recreational Products (BRP) says it's continuing to grow its Can-Am off-road dealer network with the appointment of Cowan Bros NI Ltd in Northern Ireland.

The manufacturer says the new addition is part of its ongoing expansion plans to increase its share of the utility market.

Cowan Bros, a family-run business with over 50 years' experience in the construction and agricultural sectors, will be adding the Can-Am off-road line-up to the products sold at its two depots based at Mallusk (Co. Antrim) and Eglinton (Londonderry). The agreement will enable the business to meet the growing demand for utility ATVs and SSVs in the sectors in which its customer base works. At each depot there is a dedicated team on hand to help new and existing



customers find the right ATV or SSV for the job at hand.

David Cowan, director, Cowan Bros NI Ltd, says, "We viewed the Can-Am brand at several shows we attended and were impressed with what we saw. We did our own research and saw that the ATVs and SSVs were premium products and met a need for our customer base, so we decided to add the line-up to our portfolio. The teams at both our depots are looking forward to working with Mike and the rest of the Can-Am off-road team as they open up new avenues of sales for the business."

Another new partnership for PSD

Chandlers appoints new dealer

PSD Groundscare has announced a new partnership with Canycom, the Japanese manufacturer of brush cutting solutions.

Founded in 1955, Chikusui Canycom Inc has progressed from a specialist in farm tools to further product categories, ranging from agriculture and forestry to brush mowing and construction, supplying machinery to many different countries across the world.

PSD says Canycom Brushcutters are designed to work in tough conditions, clearing long grass, bushes, weeds, bracken, and brambles in a variety of sites. The machines benefit from AWD to enable ease in operation and manoeuvrability.

The new range of machinery was unveiled to the industry at the recent SALTEX.

PSD managing director Chris Gibson said, "We're extremely excited to add Canycom to our portfolio and to



L-R: Yoshimitsu Kaneyuki, Canycom president and Chris Gibson, PSD managing director

be at the forefront in the UK distribution of this fantastic product line. The capabilities of the Canycom range of ride-on brushcutters is outstanding and we can't wait to get out and about offering demonstrations to customers."

Canycom President Yoshimitsu Kaneyuki said, "We are truly delighted to start this new partnership with PSD Groundscare. We hope to expand our presence in the UK and explore new markets. Together with PSD, we will work hard to give our best to satisfy our customers. We are committed to building trustful, strong, and long-lasting business relationships."



COBRA

Why Not Become a Cobra Dealer in 2023?

With over 150 products in the Cobra range including the new Lawn Tractor and Fortis Cylinder Lawnmower ranges in 2023, Cobra is fast becoming a market leading brand in garden machinery. Contact us today to join the growing number of Cobra Dealers across the U.K.

A Few Reasons to Become a Cobra Dealer:

- Increase your business and bottom line profits.
- Exclusive special offers on selected products.
- Extensive local & national Cobra marketing support.
- An evolving range of over 150 gardening products.
- No unreasonable Cobra stocking commitment.



Cordless Mowers

Petrol Mowers

Blower Vacs

Brushcutters

Cultivators



For information on becoming a Cobra Dealer contact Andy Marvin: 07771 581 296 or call : 0115 986 6646 today

Cobra reserves the right to change models, specifications & prices without prior notice. E & OE. *Warranty period based on domestic use.



Celebrating our wonderful network

OUR PRESTIGIOUS DEALER OF THE YEAR AWARDS WERE PRESENTED AT A GLITTERING CEREMONY FOLLOWING 2022'S SERVICE DEALER CONFERENCE.



Comedian and actor Charlie Baker was once again host of our Awards

Taking place in the evening following November's Service Dealer Conference, the winners of 2022's Service Dealer Awards were revealed at a fantastic awards ceremony held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Oxford Belfry.

Hosted once again by comedian and actor Charlie Baker, the awards, organised by the team behind *Service Dealer* magazine were in their 18th edition and recognised the achievements of independent dealers in the garden machinery, professional turfcare machinery, farm machinery and forestry equipment industry.

The awards categories were judged by an expert panel who carefully considered nominations which, as ever, were submitted by dealer principals, dealership staff and supplying manufacturers.

Dealerships large or small, multi-branch or single premises were able to enter, and all entries were judged on their own merits.

Steve Gibbs, editor of *Service Dealer* magazine said, "Each of our winning dealerships and individuals represent the finest examples of trusted, local businesses serving their communities. In these times of economic uncertainty, when consumers are looking for not only great value but also exemplary levels of customer service, it's reassuring that there are still independent, specialist companies out there, such as our Dealer of the Year winners providing their customers with unparalleled levels of support."



Simon Holmes with Jonathan Snowball plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

GARDEN MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Lloyd Ltd

Branches across the North of England and the South of Scotland

Finalists: Ron Smith and Co Ltd, MowersUK

Sponsored by: Husqvarna

Presenting award: Jonathan Snowball, Head of Business Unit, Professional UK

The judges said of Lloyd Ltd, "Garden Machinery Dealer of the Year was the most popular category in this year's awards, with the judges having their work cut out choosing from a long line-up of excellent entries.

"Lloyd Ltd demonstrated a pro-active attitude to all aspects of its business – from customers, to dealerships, to considering sustainable energy in its product range. Investing in the sector is of great importance to them, with every branch having a lawn care specialist on hand."



Hannah Robinson with Kris Illingworth plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

FARM MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Brian Robinson Machinery Ltd

East Cowton, North Yorkshire

Finalists: R W Crawford Agricultural Machinery Ltd

Sponsored by: Ibcos

Presenting award: Kris Illingworth, Account Manager

The judges said of Brian Robinson Machinery,

"Despite the challenges the industry faced, 2022 has been Brian Robinson's biggest yet. Undergoing a handover and dealing with the challenges of succession, this single depot dealership is certainly proving a force in the field.

"With committed team members – six of whom have achieved over 25 years' service each – the company is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It's also clocked up 32 years selling Valtra, which makes it the longest-running Valtra dealer in the UK."

View our special film of the 2022 Service Dealer Conference & Awards on servicedealer.co.uk and via our YouTube channel



Chris Gibson with Tony Macer plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

BEST NEW INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

Winner: GGM Groundscare

for their new Service Agreement, Colne, Lancashire

Finalists: Mowers and More Ltd

Sponsored by: Kress

Presenting award: Tony Macer, National Sales Manager, UK and Ireland

The judges said of GGM's initiative "Identifying a gap in the market, GGM sought to offer its customers peace of mind when making a purchase from its dealership by developing a value-added product, available at point of sale in the form of a Service Agreement. "The judges were impressed by the clarity of execution and that the dealership was forward-thinking in the process, taking into account new, emerging markets in this process, such as robotic products. Not only did this new initiative show the professionalism of the dealership, but also promotes professionalism in the industry."



Jason Nettle with Steven Davies plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

FORESTRY MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Forest and Arb (Winchester Garden Machinery Ltd) Winchester, Hampshire

Finalists: F. R. Jones and Son

Sponsored by: Societe Generale Equipment Finance

Presenting award: Steven Davies, Head of Ag

The judges said of Forest and Arb "Investment has been key to Forest and Arb's growth. In the past year it's adapted its facility to hold more stock, increased staffing and grown its digital presence.

"In addition, taking into account the parts shortage faced by so many, and recognising the impact this has had on customers working to seasonal timescales, the company took the decision to increase loan machines, ensuring that customers waiting for parts weren't prevented from fulfilling their commitments."

PROFESSIONAL TURFCARE DEALER OF THE YEAR



Craig Hoare accepting on behalf of Gammies with Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

Winner: Gammies Groundcare Forfar, Scotland

Finalists: Wilsons of Rathkenny

Sponsored by: Toro UK Ltd

Presenting award: Craig Hoare, Sales & Marketing Manager UK

The judges said "Gammies demonstrated a strong relationship with its customer base. Its sales team and workshop professionals pride themselves in going above and beyond for their customers, acting as a reliable and trustworthy source of advice and support. While operating under the restrictions in the peak of the pandemic, they continued to maintain contact over the phone with their customers and have since prioritised face-to-face visits. "Gammies has a strong presence both on and offline, and regularly uses social media in its work. With standout staff and customer relations, its heart is in supporting the local community."

PERFORMS BEYOND OTHER BATTERIES.

The intelligent power of EGO's 56V ARC Lithium™ battery controls and monitors each battery cell to deliver maximum power and performance, while its unique Arc shape and Keep Cool™ technology helps to optimise temperature for longer run times.

It is battery performance that goes beyond.



ZERO EMISSION To find out more visit egopowerplus.co.uk

EGO
POWER BEYOND BELIEF™



Kelly and Sophie Burgess with Matt Harris plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

STAR OF THE DEALERSHIP

Winner: Kelly and Sophie Burgess

Buxton's Limited, Teddeslely, Staffordshire

Finalists: Brad Smith, B&B Tractors

Sponsored by: Catalyst

Presenting Award: Matt Harris Account Manager

The judges said "Having responsibility for the website, social platforms and planning of shows and events, Kelly and Sophie go above and beyond – not just for the dealership but also the greater community. "Using the business as a platform for good, they have coordinated two van collections for Ukraine, and even arranged for 150 personalised care packages to be put together for members of their local communities at Christmas – spending many hours of their own time to ensure these worthy projects come to fruition."



Andrew Walker with Henry Bredin plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

LEADERSHIP AWARD 2022

Winner: Andrew Walker Group Aftersales

Manager at B&B Tractors, Warsop, Nottinghamshire

Finalists: Jason Nettle, Winchester Garden Machinery Ltd

Sponsored by: Kubota

Presenting Award: Henry Bredin General Manager - Sales, Marketing & Dealer Development

The judges said "A modest man and team leader, Andrew is always keen to invest in and encourage his team. Contributing to individual training and apprenticeships, he also strives to help manufacturers and service providers improve their offering to fellow dealers. "With bags of enthusiasm and a desire to inspire people into the agricultural sector, Andrew's passion for the industry is evident and is therefore truly deserving of this accolade."

APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR



Frazer Cross with his award

Winner: Frazer Cross

B&B Tractors, Warsop, Nottinghamshire

Finalists: Brad Smith, B&B Tractors

Sponsored by: AGCO

Presenting Award: Jason Webb, National Aftersales, UK & Ireland

Group aftersales manager at B&B Tractors, Andrew Walker, said of Frazer "With greater opportunities being presented to him, Frazer has really stepped up to every challenge and given it his all. Having had first-hand experience operating machinery, Frazer now has a superior insight and sees the larger picture when it comes to working on kit and diagnosing issues." The judges added, "Frazer is not only a standout candidate in his own right, but he is also inspiring the next generation to consider a career in agriculture. Joining the dealership through an apprenticeship scheme he has gone on to mentor too. Frazer aspires to be a master technician – something we are sure he will have no trouble achieving."

OVERALL DEALER OF THE YEAR 2022

Winner: B&B Tractors Warsop, Nottinghamshire

Sponsored by: Kress

Presenting Award: Spencer Funnell, Managing Director

The judges said "With so many fantastic dealerships striving to succeed and evolve every year, this award is always highly deliberated over. There was a high calibre of entries this year, and the judges were so impressed by the time people had put into submitting their entries.

"But there could only be one winner – with not one, but two wins between them, with prizes awarded for Apprentice of the Year and the Leadership title, in addition to their finalist place in the Star of the Dealership category, B&B Tractors are worthy winners of the prestigious title of Overall Dealer of the Year 2022."



Richard Roper & Mark Hulett with Spencer Funnell plus Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke (r) and comedian host, Charlie Baker (l)

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD 2022



Service Dealer owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke with Keith Christian

Winner: Keith Christian

BAGMA

Sponsored by: Service Dealer

Presenting Award: Duncan Murray-Clarke owner Service Dealer

Duncan Murray-Clarke said, "I think the best way of describing Keith is "does exactly what it says on the tin!". A well-liked individual whose dedication and support for the dealer network is never in doubt. He is passionate about this industry and indeed has spent over 45 years in it. He started as a dealer (H Burlingham) before moving to the supplier side with Spear & Jackson and finally Claymore.

He then joined trade association BAGMA 15 years ago to champion the dealer network.

"Many of you will know that Keith, at retirement age, still plays rugby. What is more unbelievable is that he plays on the wing! But underestimate him at your peril. He was for years affectionately known at his local club as the flying pig. But in these autumn years on the pitch he is now just affectionately known as Pumba.

"We love Keith's dedication to the dealer network and all that he has done in support. He is also very much a friend and although he steps down from BAGMA we know that he will continue to stay very much in touch with the industry network."



Sustaining dealerships

The theme of November's annual *Service Dealer* conference formed a common thread that ran through the presentations given by speakers ranging from those in recruitment to a specialist in succession. MARTIN RICKATSON summarises the day's key advice.

If the farm, turf and outdoor power equipment industry thought it was facing some testing times at the point of the last *Service Dealer* conference in late 2021, the past year leading up to the November 2022 event added plenty of extra challenges, noted Duncan Murray-Clarke, the magazine's owner/publisher and MD of marketing specialists The Ad Plain (TAP) as he opened the 2022 proceedings. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and consequent rise in fuel/energy prices has exacerbated some already tough market conditions, he pointed out.

"This has been compounded by continuing product supply problems across all sectors," he noted.

"Meanwhile, recruitment issues continue to trouble many dealers. However, optimism, industry support and a can-do attitude go a long way to tackling such issues head on.

"For our part at *Service Dealer*, we've added two new modules to our Dealer Toolkit, developed in collaboration with key industry figures, and will continue offering help and advice via the bi-monthly magazine. We'll also be launching an initiative through the recruitment section of the *Service Dealer* website to help the industry's labour challenges. And, of course, we'll continue to use this conference to help dealers network and hear the latest advice on key management issues."



Service Dealer owner, Duncan Murray-Clarke

Lessons from a military man

Firstly, though, Duncan introduced the day's keynote speaker, as always a guest from outside the dealership sector, with a mission to give the audience a different angle with lessons relevant to the management of modern dealerships and the challenges they face. There were plenty of management lessons to be gleaned from the presentation – entitled 'A Life Overcoming Adversity' – of Robin Horsfall, formerly of the SAS counter-terrorism team which ended the Iranian Embassy siege of 1980.

Robin outlined how family difficulties as a young boy led him to leave school in 1972 and join the army.

"I learned from a very young age that violence and bullying are no effective way to deal with problems," he said.

"Such actions take away the ability to negotiate, and remove confidence in authority figures. Once I moved into the military, this was something I was able to largely – although perhaps not completely – leave behind.

"I wanted to join the medical corps, but ultimately applied instead for the parachute regiment. It taught me and many other lads with no qualifications to seize opportunities, learn skills, trades and leadership, and meet high standards. Our superiors knew the best way to get the most from us was not bullying or criticising but encouraging – leadership by inspiration. That began the process of change for me and others from being an insecure young man to someone trained, responsible and trusted."

After joining the Parachute Regiment in 1974, Robin served three tours of Northern Ireland. In 1978 he volunteered for SAS selection and passed on his second attempt in March 1979, going on to qualify as a paramedic and sniper. In 1980, he was a member of the SAS counter-terrorist team that stormed the Iranian embassy in London, rescuing 19 hostages from a six-day siege.

"Preparation was key, and the SAS had been training for this type of situation since the 1972 Olympics massacre, where it had been evident that forces were unprepared for events like this," explained Robin.

"The situation did not go all to plan – radio communications were compromised and a fire took hold – but we addressed our challenges promptly and overcame them. Although one of the hostages alive when we entered the building was sadly killed by the terrorists, the remaining 25 were all rescued."

After playing such a pivotal role in a major national achievement, in 1982 Robin, whose training had led him to become Britain's ninth most senior paramedic, went on to



Robin Horsfall

run the Sandy Wanderer medical team in Oman, where a serious measles outbreak among the Bedouin population had occurred. He played a key part in the implementation of a successful vaccination programme.

"That was something of which I became more proud than my role in the Iranian embassy hostage rescue," said Robin.

"It re-motivated me, and I then qualified as a Royal Marines sniper marksman."

Later that year he saw service in the Falklands war of 1982, and then undertook a fifth tour of Northern Ireland, before leaving the army in 1984 and earning his black belt in karate. Latterly, Robin became a bodyguard, during a period interspersed with spells as a private soldier in Sri Lanka and Mozambique. His achievements thereafter included helping build, train staff for and manage a medical centre in Guyana. After recovering from a broken neck and bladder cancer, he took a degree in English and creative writing at 59, with a number of books following.

"That taught more life lessons – among them how to justify my opinions and views. It helped my later work with children teaching martial arts, respect, self-defence and self-discipline. The latter, when taught, is a much better way of getting the most from people than discipline itself. Once learned, people can be given responsibility and trusted to do their job."

Ex-forces people as potential staff

The day's military theme continued with Jeremy Gibbs of Forces Farming taking the stage. Defining his enterprise as 'improving the lives of those affected by service while adding value to the agricultural industry through access to land-based work', he outlined how he works for both agriculture and the forces, encouraging the former to look to ex-forces people as potential staff, and the forces to look to what agriculture and its engineering sector offers as a possible second career.

Jeremy, who spent 10 years working for John Deere, seven of those in Germany, explained how Forces Farming – a not-for-profit community interest company – is about more than recruitment itself.

"It's also about engaging with those seeking new post-forces careers, encouraging and supporting them and tapping into their talents and abilities. In spring 2019, when I launched Forces Farming, I imagined it would develop simply via working with the armed forces resettlement system to connect people with jobs via phone calls and emails. It's turned out to be much more than this, particularly with regard to bringing ex-forces staff together, as well as helping them find work matching their skills and interests, and showing them how they can progress, plus enhancing the forces' understanding of ag/turf engineering and similarities between the two sectors."

Ex-forces staff, who typically leave the army at 29, possess not only many practical skills that can be reapplied to agricultural and engineering businesses, but also organisational ones, suggested Jeremy.

"They tend to have heightened aptitude for teamwork,

leadership, forward-thinking, planning and time management, transferable skills invaluable in situations from a farm to a machinery workshop.”

To develop the connections further, in April, Forces Farming and AGCO announced the ‘ReTrain Career Path’ to make the industry more accessible for people not from an agricultural background.

“Agricultural job benefits, such as working in different places, often outdoors, can be especially appealing to ex-forces personnel, and part of our job is to communicate to them how, while more money may be available in the automotive and HGV sectors – even the renewables (wind) sector is offering £65,000 salaries – agriculture and associated industries may better suit them due to the variety of work, the varied places and even the ability to work/earn more in summer.

“Services leavers do have a wealth of job opportunities available to them, and can perform a civilian work attachment before their departure, while still being employed by the MoD. But ag/hort engineering offers multiple benefits and attractions. They can add social value to a business, and employers can claim national insurance contributions relief for veterans – there may even be a role for a spouse in another area of a dealership, another consideration and attraction.”

The MoD is spending £100m over the next seven years on helping ex-forces members find re-employment, noted Jeremy. Initiatives in which Forces Farming is also active include the Armed Forces Covenant Signing and Employer



Jeremy Gibbs

Recognition Scheme, and the Veterans Strategy Action Plan, part of which is the Career Transition Partnership (CTP).

“We have worked to bring tractors to CTP insight days to show ex-forces staff considering a new career what modern agricultural engineering is all about, an idea that’s worked well and sparked much interest.

“We can help dealers tap into this potential staff source by working with them to match people to vacancies, and heightening awareness through promotion, such as adding the Forces Farming logo to show stands to attract interest. We will be present at LAMMA in January.”

A great business. Great people



Grace Nugent and Stuart Goodinson

Recruitment agency De Lacy’s Stuart Goodinson and Grace Nugent presented one of the two breakout sessions, and asked their audience which of these two ingredients of a successful company creates the other.

“Uncertainty, coronavirus, Brexit and the rising cost of living have made the current recruitment market difficult, and very much candidate-driven, although this may shift as recession bites,” noted Stuart.

“We’re seeing something we’ve not seen before, with 40% of applicants across all industries choosing to reject job offers. Often it’s because, while initially keen to move, there’s a last minute change of heart, perhaps caused

by uncertain partners, or even existing employers offering incentives to stay. “The person most suited to the role you’re looking to fill probably isn’t thinking of moving, so it’s necessary to make a job as attractive as possible to draw the right candidate.”

Grace suggested a resignation can cost a firm up to one third of the person’s salary in associated expenditure, and urged attendees to consider why people seek a new job.

“It’s seldom just about salary – other reasons include not feeling valued, seeking progression or the next challenge, personal circumstances, or issues with management and staff.

“Make the best of your people, before someone else does. Give them career goals, training, trust, space

TORO

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SERVICE DEALER AWARD WINNERS 2022

ANDREW WALKER
B&B TRACTORS
LEADERSHIP AWARD 2022

B&B TRACTORS
OVERALL DEALER OF THE YEAR

FRAZER CROSS
B&B TRACTORS
APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR 2022

GGM GROUNDCARE
BEST NEW INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

LLOYD LTD
GARDEN MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

GAMMIES GROUNDCARE
PROFESSIONAL TURFCARE DEALER OF THE YEAR

FOREST AND ARB
(WINCHESTER GARDEN MACHINERY LTD)
FORESTRY MACHINERY DEALER OF THE YEAR

KELLY AND SOPHIE BURGESS
BUXTONS LIMITED
STAR OF THE DEALERSHIP

Toro U.K. Limited - Proud to work with award winning dealers.

Over the past 75 years, we at Toro U.K. Limited have had the honour to work with our award-winning Dealers for many generations.

Through an expanding network of Dealers, we proudly offer a wide range of products across our two growing brands, Hayter® and Toro®. Together, these brands are trusted by golf courses, landscape and construction professionals, groundskeepers, councils and homeowners - in addition to many sports venues and historic sites around the world, such as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

If you’re interesting in partnering with us at Toro U.K. Limited then please email sales.uk@toro.com

and responsibility. Communication is essential – listen to your employees' concerns. Some 54% of employees we surveyed said they stayed in a job due to supportive management. Beyond salary, the best people tend to be concerned with location and working arrangements, life plans, progression and training. But other things matter too – culture, values, fairness, transparency and diversity. The median length of stay in a business is five years, and to retain people you need to focus on all those. And even if or

when they leave, ensure people do so well, on good terms. "Market your company to potential employees just as you market products and services to your customers – it's easier to find the right people with a great brand that attracts them. This is about explaining your principles and character, and a good experience in an interview will mean you still make a good impression as a business even if they don't get or take a job with you this time.

"Of course, a good job advert is also essential. You have three seconds to capture someone's attention, so your words need to engage instantly. Use your own language and no clichés. Stick to the facts – the what, where, when. Aim to get people who aren't actually looking to read it. Don't exaggerate and don't make it all about you. Don't give all the details – tempt the reader to enquire for more."

juniors aren't ready to come back. On the other hand, ensure you're not holding others back by carrying on, and that you make time to achieve the other things you want in life. In a family business it's important to make decisions as a business rather than a family, otherwise issues may not be dealt with professionally and questions may not be asked."

She urged business owners to be well-prepared for management changes, with a time-frame in mind and an exit/retirement plan that is fully-costed. "If you are the majority owner you have to look after yourself first. It's not a given that new business members should be debt-free – some financial responsibility and investment may be a good thing."

Pro groundscare research

Each year, communications and content agency TAP has conducted research into the professional groundscare market with a view to better understanding the sector and sharing its findings with the industry. The latest results were presented to delegates by TAP's head of insight, Shaun Cooper,

who said that TAP's findings had shown that practitioners in the groundscare sector were particularly interested in battery products, in automation and in working in an environmentally friendly way. Readers can download the findings in full from www.theadplain.com



View our special film of the 2022 Service Dealer Conference & Awards on servicedealer.co.uk and via our YouTube channel



Heather Wildman presented a breakout session and a keynote

Planning for succession

more must be done to promote the qualities of our sector so we attract and retain staff.

"Try to ensure people aren't held back, and are helped to develop and grow new skills. In a small family business, ask whether the skills your business needs are in your family, or whether you need to learn and develop them, or bring them in from outside. And be flexible where possible – some people may actually be more productive when given the benefits of a shorter working week, for example, rather than being burned out over traditional hours and more."

Referencing the global Nuffield Scholarship study travels that inspired her to start her own company, Heather explained that the common thread running through successful farming businesses that can overcome their challenges is that each has a vision, a dream and a goal.

"A dream written down with a date becomes a goal, and a goal broken down into steps becomes a plan. A plan backed by action becomes reality. These are things every successful businessperson and business has, even if perhaps they have never been written. The most successful also know their businesses inside-out – their costs, margins, competition, challenges. You need to strive to be the best if you're to win new business

and attract new employees.

"Similarly, successful businesses have a 'how to' manual for what happens if/when something happens, and a prepared succession plan. That means preparing for the six Ds – death, disability, disaster/disease, divorce, disagreements and debt. Recognise that each business solution is individual and unique, communicate openly with family and professionals, and recognise the differences in generational values within the family. And ensure you obtain quality professional legal and accounting advice – some available legal advice is shocking."

Expanding upon this theme in her main stage session, Heather stressed that succession planning cannot begin early enough.

"A plan can help families successfully manage both anticipated and unforeseen circumstances," she emphasised.

"It helps provide a clear and orderly path for transition of responsibilities and business asset management, clarifies aspirations and expectations of family members, and helps build understanding and balance to family and work life.

"Of course, inheritance may not be the right thing for the business – some sons and daughters may not want it or be ready for it. In some circumstances the seniors want to stop but the

Conclusion

Duncan Murray-Clarke concluded the day's proceedings with a reminder of how, while the conference speakers had covered a range of subjects, each had a strong connection to the skill set needed to sustain the nation's farm, turf and outdoor power equipment dealerships into the future.

"That may mean consolidating a business, continuing to grow it, or even selling it as a successful going concern. I think today's speakers have shown that all of those

approaches can have successful outcomes.

"I hope today's conference has provided entertainment, interest, help and inspiration. It couldn't be done without the help of our sponsors Kress, AGCO, Catalyst, Husqvarna, IBCOS, Kubota, Toro, Societe Generale Equipment Finance, Yamaha, De Lacy, BAGMA, Garden Trader and TAP. Feedback on the conference is important to help us continue to improve it, and we look forward to building on this event at the next conference in 2023."



A panel discussion featuring Stuart, Heather, Robin, Jeremy and Duncan helped wrap up the day

Embarking on a new ag-venture

LAURENCE GALE Msc, MBPR returns to the rebranded Charlies Ag & Turf in Welshpool, to discover the dealership's changes and plans for the future, following a shuffling of Deere's dealer pack

Earlier during 2022, John Deere announced an extensive dealer shake-up in the wake of Rea Valley Tractors' decision to part company with the manufacturer.

The knock-on effect of this caused several major changes to dealer territories in Powys, Shropshire and the West Midlands.



Liam showing Service Dealer's Laurence Gale the John Deere in-cab experience

In response, three dealerships – Tallis Amos Group (TAG), Farol and Charlies Groundcare and Machinery – revealed extensive expansion plans for their territories across the Midlands and parts of Wales.

TAG will cover East of Shrewsbury and Newport in Shropshire from a new depot in Allscott, whilst Farol, which is based in Milton Common in South Oxfordshire and has further sites at Newark, Twyford, Midhurst, Shefford Woodlands and Hinckley, will expand into Staffordshire and Derbyshire through a new premises – once it has found a suitable site.

Charlies Groundcare and Machinery, meanwhile, which is based at Coedy Dinas in Welshpool, and previously specialising in professional golf and turf kit, will rebrand because of the changes.

By taking on John Deere's full agricultural portfolio, it will become Charlies Ag & Turf, catering for customers West of Shrewsbury and across mid-Wales through a newly built agricultural facility at its Welshpool site.

Deere has said the move will ensure a seamless transition for its customers who have been served by RVT for the past 38 years.

With all this in mind, a recent return trip to Welshpool enabled me to catch up with Matt Lewis, territory sales manager for Charlies Ag & Turf, to find out more about this momentous change for the company.

Moving into ag

Charlies Ag & Turf is an integral part of a flourishing family business that was started some 30 years ago by the company owner, Mr Chris Lloyd. While the firm has grown, the passion and values it was founded upon remain the same.

The business serves the private and public sectors of the ag, professional sportsturf and domestic garden markets.

Essentially now, this new John Deere partnership enables Charlies to offer the full John Deere range of both ag and turfcare products to their existing customers – whilst at the same time taking on many new customers that were previously served by RVT.

It has meant that Charlies have already recruited several new staff members to cope with the extra workload. To date, eight new colleagues have joined, as well as two apprentices

Trade Partner Programme

✓ Competitively priced ✓ Guaranteed quality ✓ Right first time
- first choice for Genuine AGCO Parts

➤➤➤ **Become a TRADE PARTNER today!** ⬅️⬅️⬅️
(FREE to join – No Subscription Charges)

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this promotion is as accurate and current as possible at the time of going to print. However, inaccuracies, errors and omissions may occur and details may be changed at any time without notice. Therefore please confirm with your AGCO Parts dealer prior to any purchase. All parts are delivered and accepted in accordance with AGCO's normal terms and conditions which are available on request. © AGCO 2022. AGCO Parts provide worldwide genuine support to all AGCO machinery brands. Images used are for illustration purposes only.





Liam Pinchers and Matt Lewis

who will be attending the national John Deere apprentice scheme.

Charlies are now able to offer the full range of Deere's large 6, 7, 8 & 9 Series tractors, self-propelled foragers and combines, along with a new range of tele-handlers and wheel loaders from Kramer and other large agricultural equipment and machinery, including trailers, slurry tanks and spreaders.

During my visit, I met Liam Pinchers, one of Charlie's new employees who had just completed his first day at work. Liam has taken on the role of precision farming manager, dedicated to serving their existing and new ag customers.

Liam has a Level 3 diploma in agricultural engineering. Having originally started as an apprentice at a local Manitou dealer for two and a half years, he then took a job with a CNH dealer where he completed his apprenticeship. He then went to work at RVT, specialising in John Deere precision farming systems while also completing his NSTS training on

sprayers, becoming an examiner.

His new role at Charlies is in sales and support, demonstrating to farmers how to use these in-cab software control systems. In recent years we have seen great strides in this technology and Liam was keen to show me how the John Deere system works and its capabilities.

Essentially these systems guide the tractor and implements to be super-efficient and help make significant savings on fuel, seeds, chemicals and to maximise crop yields. All from the comfort of the tractor cab.

Guidance systems are now becoming much more standardised

on tractors along with ISOBUS systems. Operations such as drilling are much simpler thanks to section control and Autotrac, making the operation nearly fully automated. On operations such as fertiliser spreading and spraying, savings in advance of 20% can be made.

John Deere Autotrac can be a fully integrated system with the latest technology, complete with features such as turn automation and machine sync, down to entry-level guidance-only systems.

Future plans

Speaking of agriculture, Matt was keen to show me around the site and explain their ambitions and plans for the future – with intentions to build some new maintenance, storage and showroom space on the site.

With the sheer scale and size of the tractors, combines and ag machinery now being sold, their first priority will be additional workshop and showroom space. This will be followed by increasing the number of service vehicles they have in their fleet, which will in turn require the recruitment of even more staff.

Matt was keen to point out that recruitment was becoming an issue for everyone, both dealers and end users across the whole of the turfgrass industry. One of the solutions, he believes, is to take on more young

people and offer them a good apprenticeship.

Matt said, "The John Deere apprenticeship combines training, problem solving and teamwork with paid employment at our dealership. There are three different apprenticeship schemes so, whether you're into high tech engineering or sophisticated parts and service support there's a wide choice of careers that are on offer.

"We see this as a good way to entice the next generation into our industry."

Both the ag and turf technician apprenticeship programmes run for approximately 24-36 months and include 24 weeks of block release training spread over two to three years. This is conducted at Deere's purpose-built training facility in Radcliffe on Trent, Nottinghamshire.

"We have over the years had several apprentices go through this scheme," explained Matt, "and they stood the test of time and became key members of our team."

As for new equipment, Matt told me how they now have the full range of JD tractors, K-two trailers, Marshall muck spreaders and balers, Kramer loaders, Pottinger grassland equipment, Ritchie cattle crates and fencing systems, along with other complementary equipment and machinery.

"In terms of the groundcare side of the business," Matt said, "we have a full range of John Deere tractors and Gators available, along with a range of other manufactures' machinery that includes the likes of Grillo, Billy Goat, STIHL, Greentek, Wessex and Redexim. Also this year we took on a complete range of Timberwolf and Predator products that has allowed us to serve our growing number of arboriculture clients and customers."

Matt said the dealership is also seeing a huge uptake in handheld cordless equipment such as chainsaws, strimmers, hedge cutters and lawn mowers. According to Matt, "STIHL products are one of our biggest sellers, both online and through the dealerships."

He said that commercial customers are also now taking on the professional range of STIHL battery-powered equipment. "They tell us they like it as it's lighter, better for the environment and less noisy when they are working in public areas."

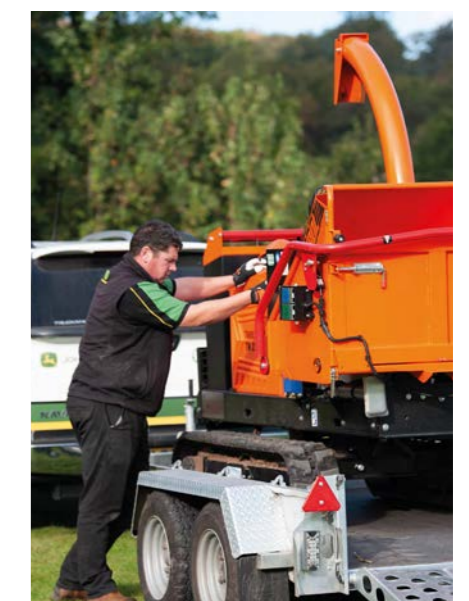
Another area in which the dealership has enjoyed particular success in recent years is with the John Deere Gators. Charlies benefits from an extensive customer base ranging from farmers and smallholders, to full commercial customers such as local councils, private and state schools, as well as golf courses and caravan parks in the Shropshire and



The John Deere Autotrac system



One of Charlies' branded vehicles



Loading up a Timberwolf chipper



The parts and service shop



A Predator unit in store

handling systems to pick and deliver goods to many thousands of customers a week.

To keep up with all these product lines, as a business Charlies is keen to make sure staff are kept up to date with the latest requirements. "As John Deere dealers, our service technicians are all fully John Deere trained through its academy," said Matt.

In total, Charlies employs 12 technicians, including one specialist Timberwolf technician as well as a delivery driver, covering all of its areas. It has one team that looks after professional groundscape customers, a team that looks after domestic customers, and finally a team that is dedicated to looking after the large range of Gator/XUV products and agricultural machinery.

Matt was keen to point out that the Welshpool site will grow substantially in the next few years with the building of more showroom, storage and workshop space that will provide more than ample room to store, showcase and demonstrate a larger range of machinery, both outdoors and indoors.

The future looks bright for Charlies now it's secured this large John Deere contract. Now serving ag, groundcare and domestic customers with specialist machinery, alongside having a well-stocked garden store, means that their eggs will never all be in one basket.

mid-Wales areas.

"Like most dealers," Matt continued, "we have found that our sales figures continue to rise and our customers are aware of the constraints of knowing there may be a waiting list for some specific large items of machinery – and there may be a longer delay on some parts."

"This has led to some customers changing their buying strategies and being prepared to buy at a fixed price and then wait 6-12 months for the allotted product. Essentially, they are willing to run their current machinery for a longer term until the new machinery is ready."

Always growing

In recent years Charlie's has been successful in growing online sales, with over 20,000 lines of products now online. They told me they can now see that figure growing substantially with this new John Deere ag contract.

Since the business acquired the new head office and vast storage warehouse in Welshpool, it has also begun its own in-house training to bring staff up to speed on the protocols, regulations and operating systems required to run such a large-scale, online sales business – particularly where it requires the use of specialist

82V The right power for professionals

82V delivers more power with lower current

Cramer's 82V tools deliver more power with less current than commercially available systems with lower voltage. The lower current means battery cells don't have to operate at maximum levels.

This generates less heat, increasing efficiency and battery life. And reducing the risk of sudden interruptions due to overheated cells and motors.

The Cramer 82V battery system supplies the required power for the powerful 3.4 kW chainsaw and is future proofed for even higher performance. You can always get high power with 82V, unlike lower voltage systems.

No overheating
No downtime

Pro power
Equal to petrol
products

Power/Weight
Provides the ideal
balance

Less stress
Longer
battery life

Slower discharge
Longer runtime



CRAMER PROFESSIONAL OUTDOOR POWER TOOLS

To find out more, please visit: www.cramertools.com or telephone: 01793 333220



Become a Webb Stockist

British brand Webb stands for quality, superior build, and simplicity of operation - all at affordable prices! Contact us today to find out how you can become a Webb Stockist.

- Increase your business profit margins
- Various point of sale solutions
- Regular special offers
- Sales and marketing support
- An ever-evolving range - covering petrol, electric and cordless

For peace of mind, all Webb products will come with a 2-year warranty. For further information please email sales@handys.co.uk, telephone 01793 333220 or visit www.handys.co.uk

Gardening Range

CORDLESS

- 20V Lawn Mower
- 20V Hedge Trimmers
- 20V Line Trimmer
- 20V Tiller



PETROL

- Lawn Mowers
- Brush Cutters
- Line Trimmers
- Blower/Vacs
- Hedge Trimmers
- Scarifiers
- Chainsaws



ELECTRIC

- Lawn Mowers
- Line Trimmers
- Shredder
- Chainsaws
- Hedge Trimmers
- Scarifiers



MANUAL

- Lawn Mowers



Best Buy Hand Mower WEH18



Slugger Field, location of the welcome celebration

Equip hits a home run!

It's been three years since *Service Dealer* last visited the Louisville, Kentucky-based trade show for the outdoor power equipment sector. Now wholly owned by the OPEI, our UK contingent that attended were able to compare how an exhibition is staged in the US and how their sector is faring, writes *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS

It was my privilege to pay a visit once again to what I believe is the largest outdoor power equipment trade show in the world, Equip Expo.

This time around I was lucky enough to attend the Louisville, Kentucky event with a *Service Dealer* contingent consisting of owner of the magazine Duncan Murray-Clarke and the winners of the OPEI competition that ran through our pages, as well as dealer Pete McArthur of Strathbogie Forest & Garden, and turf professional Dan Lewis, landscape contracts manager at Manchester City FC.

The event got underway on a Wednesday at the end of October, with the night before seeing an excellent new edition to the show's overall offering, the opening welcome celebration of the show held at Slugger Field, home of the Louisville Bats

baseball team.

The gathering of dealers, end users, manufacturers and groundscape specialists from across the US and around the world was celebrated with fireworks, hot dogs and the odd tippie – in anticipation of the main show.

This fantastic new edition clearly illustrates just how Equip completely takes over the town of Louisville for its attendees for the duration of the event. As overseas visitors, we all felt welcomed and part of a communal gathering for colleagues and peers. I can understand why the organisers of Equip refer to the staging of the show as a family reunion each year.

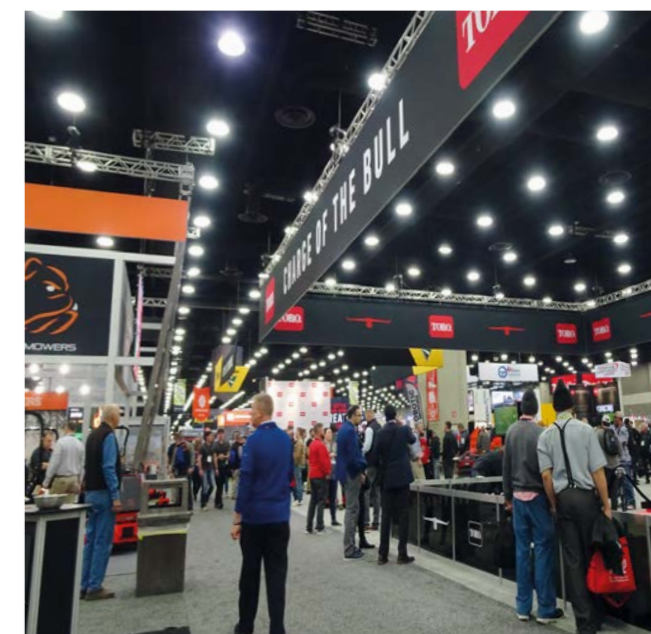
This feeling continued each night in the 4th Street Live downtown area, where a huge stage played host to free music concerts, and the area packed with show attendees in a celebratory mood.

Seriously impressive

Wednesday morning saw the vast inside and outside showground open its doors to the huge numbers who've travelled to Kentucky to experience this ever-more impressive show.

As is tradition, the show was open first to a dealer-only audience for several hours on Wednesday morning. Between 9am and noon, dealers were free to walk the exhibition halls, speaking openly to exhibitors, without the ears of end-user customers potentially overhearing what might be sensitive, or at least private, conversations.

I always believe this is a fabulous innovation of the show, and wonder whether it'd be worth any of our shows at home adopting. Pete McArthur certainly thought it was a good idea, liking the ability to get around exhibitors before the aisles became too crowded.



He was also impressed by each stand having a decent number of the suppliers' reps manning the exhibit – meaning no hanging around if you wanted a chat.

These dealer-only hours used to be a late afternoon thing, involving beer and food being distributed on stands. Whilst great obviously, it used to perhaps feel less business-y than holding them first thing. Don't get me wrong, the beers and food still came out in the afternoon on Wednesday – but this time all the end-user visitors were there too, enjoying the party atmosphere!

These first hours brought it back to me, what the sheer scale of this endeavour is – and this is before the outside demo area even opened its doors at noon. I believe the show was completely sold out this year, for the first time ever. This was clear as there was no wasted space anywhere. No strategically placed tables and chairs in empty stand space; no wide areas of nothing – it was full to bursting.

In fact, post show, the OPEI revealed that the 2022 edition set a new record, welcoming over 25,000 attendees and exhibitors. When one compares those numbers to what our home shows tend to achieve, it can perhaps make it easier to comprehend the level on which Equip is operating.

I believe our first-time attendees, Pete and Dan, were consistently impressed with the enormity of the show. As the event begins by only

having the indoor halls in operation for a few hours, when they finally open the doors to the outside demo area and the footprint goes stratospheric, one's breath is taken away once again.

I must say too, that the organisers even managed to improve the demo ground from when I had last visited in 2019. It was larger, had sculpted walkways that made navigation easier, and they included a utility vehicle demo track. Although the level of dust kicked up from all the cutting, driving and digging place on day two was something to behold!

And I won't mention the prototype mower that caught on fire late on Wednesday afternoon, leading to an evacuation and the demo area closing early! All was dealt with though, and was back up and running as normal on the Thursday morning.



What was seen?

Service Dealer has produced a Digital Special Report all about Equip '22 that features some short and longer films that hopefully convey

a flavour of what was going on at the show. There are interviews with key exhibitors, the organisers, and our UK



contingent giving their views on the event. Readers can access this for free via www.servicedealer.co.uk.

In terms of products on display, there were zero-turns galore – many of which I suspect we won't ever see on our shores. STIHL, for example, launched a whole range of mowers.

Whilst of course there were many examples of electrification of machinery options – or indeed automation – the impression our group came away with was that petrol (or gasoline as they say over there), still has a very firm place in the US outdoor power equipment sector.

I spoke to the OPEI's President Kris Kiser about this during our chat, which you can view in full in the Digital Special Report. He told me that gasoline still has a significant role to play in the future of the industry – despite the moves in California to ban the sale of gas-powered kit.

Leaving thoughts

Upon leaving Louisville, I spoke to our contingent about what their opinions were regarding the most interesting and exciting development for the industry during their time at the show.

The guys appeared to be in agreement that it was what Kress is doing with its Cyber System, allowing a battery to fully recharge from empty to full capacity in eight minutes that was the standout. As the company's Todd Zimmerman said in his presentation, this offers professional end-users a genuine "reason for

change", to move for the first time to a battery-powered machine from traditional fuel. He said in developing their range, the company wanted to compete with petrol products, not with other cordless machines.

The phrase is overused, but in this case it does seem to apply – what Kress showed in Kentucky, and recently introduced to UK dealers at a series of roadshows and end-users at SALTEX, is a game changer.

There is much more about Equip in the Digital Special Report – including coverage of the panel that Pete and Dan spoke brilliantly on (see following panel), comparing the US and UK

markets.

Our contingent left the States full of praise for the OPEI's show. Those who hadn't attended before were utterly impressed and said they could have spent even longer chatting to the representatives on stands and trying out the machines across the site.

The consensus certainly appeared to be that if UK dealers could afford the time away from the business for a few days – and of course the travel and accommodation expenses – a trip to Equip is well worth the effort. Not everything seen will make its way to our shores, but there is more than enough there to offer genuine

“A monumental success”



Service Dealer editor Steve Gibbs interviews OPEI director Kris Kiser during Mutt Madness at Equip 22

spoke with Kris Kiser on day two of the show during the Mutt Madness event, which takes place alongside the main exhibition in a separate arena.

Quite literally Kris's pet project, Mutt Madness, partners with the Kentucky Humane Society for the annual national adoption event. Attendees of the show can take a break from checking out the latest machinery to go and play with some outrageously cute puppies – and if they so desire, take one home! It's hard to picture SALTEX or BTME offering something similar, but at Equip it works.

Anyway, against this admittedly slightly noisy backdrop, I spoke with Kris

Service Dealer editor STEVE GIBBS caught up with director of the OPEI, Kris Kiser, to find out about how Equip has changed now they are in sole charge, and what shape the larger US outdoor power industry is in, post-Covid.

about how the OPEI are finding it now they no longer have any co-organising associations running the show with them.

Kris told me, "Every category has set a record. We sold out every square inch – which is the first time we've ever done that. We've had record revenue, record sponsorship and record engagement. So, by every measure it's been a monumental success."

Being in sole charge, Kris told me, has meant that decision-making is easier, and they have been able to up-spend – bringing in higher profile speakers as well as well-known music acts for the 4th Street Live events.

Kris went on to detail how the show has ambitions in subsequent years to bring in even more visitors from around the US – and indeed from the UK and Europe.

Moving on to the wider US outdoor power equipment industry, Kris spoke about how business has got back to

normal this year – following on from the "insane" levels seen during the pandemic period. Like what we've seen, he acknowledged the logistics and supply problems the US has faced.

When asked what he felt was the dominant trend in the US sector this year, he had no hesitation in citing commercial battery products and robotics. However, he was keen to point out that time isn't quite up for gasoline products yet in their market.

Kris wrapped up our chat encouraging more dealers to visit from the UK, saying "Where else will you be able to see all this stuff in one place? We have a thousand exhibitors – and their latest, greatest and newest is all right here."

You can watch our whole conversation on the Equip Digital Report, accessed through www.servicedealer.co.uk.

SERVICE DEALER SPECIAL REPORT!

The changing landscape of outdoor power equipment in the US and the UK



A panel discussion comprising dealers and professionals from both sides of the Atlantic

Also available to view as part of the Equip Digital Report is a panel discussion featuring members of the Service Dealer and TurfPro contingent who travelled to the US.

Chaired by regular Service Dealer columnist Sara Hey of dealer training specialists Bob Clements International based in Missouri, the panel consisted of dealer Pete McArthur of Strathbogie Forest & Garden and turf professional Dan Lewis, landscape contracts manager at Manchester City FC who had travelled over with our magazine. Their US contemporaries joining them

in the conversation were dealer Mike Gillum of Gillum's Service & Repair based out of Ashland, Kentucky and contractor Ryan Payne of Augusta Lawncare Services.

Subject areas covered in the debate included what areas of technology have transformed working practices in recent years and any hurdles involved in making that effective. What issues did our panellists see making their jobs difficult in the next 18 months? And how have they increased revenue streams recently?

It was truly fascinating hearing

just how similar a dealer's and a turf professional's working life can be thousands of miles apart. Many times, sentiments were recognised and agreed with from both sides.

However, there were some noticeably distinct differences. The most marked of these probably being just how much further down the line our dealers and professionals are in using battery, and especially robotic, equipment.

The panel discussion is well worth watching in its entirety, offering some fascinating insights into how our industries intersect and diverge.



EIMA plus SIMA

... means there were plenty of new farm equipment launches in November. Despite the French SIMA show, organisers choosing to move their event from March in odd years to the same month and even years as Italy's EIMA, both events had lots of new heading to dealers for 2023, as MARTIN RICKATSON discovered.

With a market that represented 37% of European tractor registrations in the first half of 2022, French tractor sales figures are a good indication of the health of the continent's agriculture sector. Its biennial SIMA farm equipment show is therefore a good measure of the mood of the nation's farmers.

Likewise Italy, the third largest European market, and its biennial EIMA show – probably the third biggest in Europe – are an equally good gauge. With the French choosing to move their show's dates to keep it a year apart from Agritechnica, it now goes head to head with EIMA as a November showcase in 'even' years. So it was that, back in the autumn, manufacturers had two chances to

present their 2023 launches to farmer and dealer visitors from all over Europe. With both countries having a strong manufacturing presence in areas from telehandlers to sprayers to crop establishment equipment, and most of the international full-liners attending both events, there was plenty new on show.

In France, tractor registrations fell 3% in the first half of 2022 versus January to June 2021, but remained well above the five-year average, as figures from European agricultural machinery association CEMA suggest. Registrations started the year strongly, but began to decline in April, with supply and delivery difficulties taking much of the blame. Taking out smaller and specialist tractors from the figures, CEMA calculates that the agricultural tractor market for the first half of 2022 was down by around 5%.

Italian market steady

The Italian agricultural machinery market is on a similar slight downturn following a strong 2021. Industry association FederUnacoma recorded registrations of 15,800 agricultural tractors in the January to September period, down from the same period in 2021, but still higher than the average of the last four years. Supply chain issues are again apportioned much of the blame by the organisation, along with higher production costs and list prices.

Despite these issues, machinery sales levels are holding up well. While figures indicate a 15.3% drop in tractor registration volumes from January to October, the average over those months in recent years was a strong 14,000 units.

Tractor developments

Case IH and **New Holland** launched new tractors at the tops of their respective Puma and T7 ranges at SIMA and EIMA, with new long wheelbase models. The Case IH Puma 260 and New Holland's T7.300 feature an FPT Industrial NEF 6, delivering 280hp maximum power for draft work, but there is a 20hp power boost for PTO and haulage tasks. The engine, which meets Stage V emissions regulations without exhaust gas recirculation, incorporates a new electronically controlled variable geometry turbo, more fuel capacity (up 18%) and longer service intervals, plus increased axle capacities and a higher gross vehicle weight. Maximum rear

tyre diameter is 2.05m.

The new models also introduce a larger, quieter (66 decibels) cab interior similar to that on the T7 HD and Optum CVX tractors, with enhanced materials and a new suspension system that coordinates cab and front axle damping. Also new are decouple-under-pressure remote valves with configurable controls, and Tractor Implement Management (TIM), which allows two-way communication between tractor and implement, and for the latter to control functions of the former.

New Holland also showed a new range of mini 360-degree excavators made in-house following a recent CNH Industrial acquisition, including a

battery/electric model. Its stand also included its next-level autonomous T8 tractor development, made partly possible by CNHi's recent acquisition of tech specialist Raven Industries.

Deutz-Fahr has added three new 136-156hp 6.4 designation models to its existing 6 series, between the 6C and 6 ranges. The four-cylinder tractors, which have a 2.56m wheelbase, are built around SDF's own powertrain and front axle, with electro-hydraulically engaged 4wd and 100% lockable diff lock. Transmission options comprise SDF's continuously variable TTV and the recently introduced RVshift CVT/ powershift hybrid, a full powershift concept with definable pre-determined



New Holland



Case IH



Deutz Fahr

ratios that can also be customised according to task and preference.

Kioti climbs the power scale still further with its new HX1201 flagship, powered by the South Korean maker's own Stage V 3.8-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine, putting 125hp through a 32F/32R mechanical transmission. Rear linkage capacity is 4,400kg, and a front linkage and PTO package is optional, while remote spool valve control is mechanical. The new machine is complemented by a smaller 103hp HX1001 model, and both feature a five-pillar cab design, with a full-length view to the right side of the cab but a B-pillar and short door to the left, aimed at those for whom big door access is less important than a cheaper bill if glass gets busted. On-farm price on 38in rear tyres Kioti is around £75,000.

Fellow South Korean firm **TYM** introduced its new 129hp T130 flagship, powered by a Deutz TCD 3.4-litre four-cylinder engine, driving through a six-range, six-step semi-powershift with power shuttle. Hydraulic output at the rear is 80 l/min, courtesy of a dual gear pump arrangement, while

the Category II rear linkage has a lift capacity of 3.74t, supported by up to six remote valves.

Sprayer news

Dutch manufacturer **Agrifac** introduced the Vanguard to its Condor range, as a companion to the Condor V and Condor Endurance. Despite a 6,000-litre tank, a key attribute is reckoned to be its overall width of 2.55m, while it also offers 75cm of adjustable track width. Maximum available track widths are either 1.8m on StabiloPlus chassis models or 3.0m on WideTrackPlus versions. Engine is a 6.7-litre six-cylinder Cummins producing 288hp, and top travel speed is 50 km/hr. Maximum tyre size is 480/95 R50 (2.2m diameter). With Balance Plus stabilisation the boom can work as close as 30cm from the ground, says the maker. Boom widths are from 24-48m, and options include Agrifac's AirFlowPlus air assistance system, which boosts crop penetration by using fans sited every three metres along the boom.

Berthoud's latest mounted machine is targeted at mid-sized farms with

hilly ground that doesn't suit typical hydrostatic SP sprayers or the trailed type which tend to require complex and expensive steering systems to track true behind the tractor. The company claims that when combined with a front tank a modern mounted sprayer can match a small self-propelled for output. The new Heracles Evo replaces its Elyte model, and can be had with a tank capacity of up to 2,000 litres, a jump of 500 litres on the largest Elyte. It can be paired with a newly designed 1,000- or 1,500-litre front tank, with attributes said to include improved emptying and enhanced vision. Booms are a new ASLR three- or four-section design from 21-30m, and the sprayer's specification can include individual nozzle control and pulse width modulation, while quad nozzle bodies are standard, as is ISOBUS control. There's also a new front-rear transfer system, which keeps the relative content of both tanks equal as the liquid is applied, to aid weight distribution and traction.

John Deere chose SIMA to announce that its See & Spray



Maschio Gaspardo

system, already offered in the USA, will be an option for its R900i trailed sprayers from 2023. It uses camera technology integrated into the sprayer boom to detect colour differences in the field, with one camera per metre of working width. Processors assess the images and the nozzles are triggered individually for spot treatment. Green detection on the field soil enables targeted application of pre-emergence herbicides, suggests Deere. Beyond pre-emergence use, the system is also suited to work in row crops post-emergence.

Drill developments

Sold in the UK by importer **Opico**, **Maschio Gaspardo's** Alitalia combination drill now features a number of upgrades for next season. A redesigned hopper means easier access and new external distribution heads, with the unit now holding 2,000 litres of seed. Each head has its own volumetric distributor with electric transmission, which Maschio says boosts seed movement precision and means automatic GPS-governed shut-off of the right or left half of the coulter bar is possible, according to the drill's location detected by the

GPS sensor. Electric metering for each side also means variable rate sowing is possible. Coulter choice spans Suffolk, single disc, double concave disc or double straight disc types.

Other drill news at EIMA included the purchase by Austria's Pöttinger of Italian precision drill specialist **MaterMacc**. Formerly part of the Chinese Lovol group, which has

withdrawn its Arbos tractor operation from Europe, MaterMacc remains an independent brand and business for now, with **Pöttinger** retaining its factory, workforce and product line. The firm won an EIMA Innovation Award for its new MiPlus EVA precision drill control terminal, which allows key functions to be operated and altered via voice commands.



Berthoud



MaterMacc



Upbeat SALTEX

Following on from 2021's edition that received plaudits across the board, the most recent GMA event had a lot to live up to – with the consensus being a positive couple of days at the NEC, writes *Service Dealer* editor STEVE GIBBS

The GMA's SALTEX took place at the start of November, once again at the Birmingham NEC. Unfortunately I wasn't able to personally attend this year due to family reasons, but the *Service Dealer* team was out in force, chatting to the great and good of the industry – and they reported a positive and upbeat couple of days. There are a selection of short videos on the *Service Dealer*

YouTube channel that give a flavour of the show, which, as you might expect, saw battery technology at the fore once again. Speaking to my colleagues, the impression they came away from Birmingham with was that the exhibition had a similar feel to last year – buoyant, upbeat, and with plenty of business being achieved. The halls felt busy by 10-10.30am, even on day two of the show, and the word was that a fair few dealers had made the trip to the NEC.

Service Dealer owner Duncan Murray-Clarke said he got the impression that several suppliers were offering some slightly different but related products to the standard outdoor power equipment ranges on their stands this year. This was giving dealers the opportunity to diversify, adding niche layers to their offerings to customers. For example, on the Toro stand were a few items of construction machinery, which one doesn't often see at a show like this.

Duncan also mentioned how he'd had an informative chat with Stewart and Lewis Anderson on the Weibang stand, who'd told him they'd had a great show. Duncan said it was brilliant to hear how well the company is doing, and what a strong relationship they have with their quality dealer network.



The Service Dealer and TurfPro team at SALTEX '22

A turf professional's view

I also spoke to the editor of our sister title TurfPro, Laurence Gale, about what he thought of the show from a commercial end-user's viewpoint.

He told me, "As usual, the show for me is all about catching up and trying to meet as many people as I can over the two days. This year I was particularly interested to discover the thoughts from those attending of the recent announcement of yet another trade show, Groundsfest 2023, scheduled for next September to be held at another Midlands location, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire."

Laurence continued, "All in all, the feedback I received was essentially a 50/50 split in opinion. Yes, potentially a good idea, but why do we need yet another exhibition? From talking to the organisers of this new show, they say there has been some significant interest in the event since it has been announced."

"The proof will be in the pudding in terms of the final take up and success of the show. I am sure, however, it will raise much debate in our industry during the coming months. I personally think that a recent joint announcement from the GMA, BIGGA and AEA prior to this year's SALTEX, was addressing their feelings towards this recent announcement."

Laurence has been saying for many years that our industry needs only one show annually. "I believe there is no reason why both major sportsturf organisations could not work together," said Laurence, "along with some other major influencers such as RHS, PMA, Landscape Institute, Fields in Trust and others, to organise a fantastic new show that incorporates our whole diverse industry and finally brings together a wider audience to our annual industry showcase. All while still ploughing the vital funds back into industry training, education and support that the trade associations facilitate."

In terms of the machinery on offer to professional users, Laurence also felt the promotion of battery-powered products was certainly at the forefront of the show, with many exhibitors now having an array of cordless products on display.

"Kress was one such exhibitor," said Laurence, "promoting an innovative new battery system. The fact that their batteries can be recharged in eight minutes will no doubt be a game-changer for professional end-users."

"Also on show was a plethora of robotic mowers, with several manufacturers exhibiting a wide range of products along with several now popular robotic line-markers, such as the Turf Tank."

Laurence continued, "I caught up with David Hart of Kubota, which has launched some new products that included their impressive battery-powered LX e- 261 26 HP compact tractor. This tractor will be made available for a long-term rental service for local municipalities in Europe starting in April 2023."

Laurence also told me he believed one of the show's game-changing announcements was the acquisition of Lloyds Mowers of Letchworth and Hunter Grinders by Dennis / SISIS of the Howardson Group (see the following section).

Loz summed up his feelings on the show this year, saying, "Overall, I found the show to be its usual vibrant self, with most of the exhibitors I spoke to pleased with the turnout."



Service Dealer catching up with Stewart and Lewis Anderson on the Weibang stand



Construction machinery seen on the Toro stand



GMA CEO Geoff Webb with Service Dealer's Duncan Murray-Clarke



Kress's stand

Visitor numbers up

At the sounding of the closing bell on day two, GMA CEO Geoff Webb was by all accounts a happy man. The feeling on the day was that visitor numbers might have been around 10% up on last year. However post-show the association was pleased to announce they were more like 15% up.

The organisers referred to “pre-pandemic confidence” returning to the exhibition, with 8,300 attendees making the trip.

Geoff Webb said, “SALTEX has long been the flagship show for the industry and, in its 76th year, showed that, after the challenges of the pandemic, confidence from both visitors and exhibitors has returned.

“With nearly 15% more visitors than the 2021 show, SALTEX delivered on offering the widest array of equipment and products to explore, with over 400 brands on display, and offered exhibitors the largest audience to showcase their products to.

“As a not-for-profit, everything we earn gets ploughed back into the industry through investment in resources and initiatives that benefit the grounds care sector, so, with the 2022 show being such a hit, we look forward to beginning work on ensuring we build on this success and make the 2023 show even better for the sector.

“We look forward to welcoming everyone back at SALTEX from 1st to 2nd November 2023.”

In recognition of current economic challenges, the GMA says it introduced a special show rate for 2022 exhibitors, meaning that exhibiting at the 2023 show will cost the same, despite increases in interest rates and inflation.

The independently audited post-show survey is underway, which the GMA says will shed insight into the effectiveness of the event for generating new leads and sales for exhibitors. The results of these surveys will be published in due course.

From what I gather anecdotally though, organisers, stand-holders and visitors alike seemed pleased with how the week turned out. Whether new players entering the sphere results in established shows like SALTEX making any fundamental changes, time will tell.



Battery products dominated the show again this year

News from around the halls...



Kubota CCFM

First unit from Kubota & Gianni Ferrari team-up debuted

Kubota’s new Centre Collect Front Mower (CCFM) was on show in the UK for the first time.

The CCFM is the inaugural unit from the Kubota Gianni Ferrari S.R.L division, created in July 2022 following the announcement of the incorporation of Officine BIEFFEBI (BFB), and its subsidiary Gianni Ferrari (GF), into Kubota Holdings B.V.

Featuring a three-cylinder diesel engine and hydrostatic transmission, the company said the patented HTC hydrostatic traction control device minimises surface damage, eliminates skidding traditionally caused by the hauling effect and guarantees permanent four-wheel traction, even when working on slopes or rough ground.

The ‘floating’ out-front mower deck conforms to undulations in the ground and features twin, retractable anti-collision blades. Available with 126 or 130cm cutting widths, the height of cut can be adjusted via a spring lever located on the upper part of the deck. A high-capacity turbine then ensures efficient collection of the clippings into the 600 or 800L collector, which can in turn be emptied with ease thanks to the hydraulic high-tip function.

Commenting on its debut, Kubota’s Groundcare Product Manager Phil Catley, said “The CCFM market has been growing steadily in the UK for the last few years and this new CCFM from Kubota will work well alongside our very successful F Series range of out-front rear discharge mowers.”



Ransomes MT503

Ransomes promotes the value of “incredibly specialist machinery”

Ransomes used the show to promote its new mission and vision, which it said is focused on providing long-term benefits to customers, consumers and the environment.

Ransomes vice president of turf, Simon Rainger, said the show and its other recent marketing activities, have been an opportunity to speak to customers about what matters most to them and to emphasise the company’s ‘Any Less Costs More’ promotional banner.

Simon explained, “We want people to be confident when they are sitting on a Ransomes mower that they are sitting on the benchmark for commercial and municipal mowing. It’s very important for people to understand the value of incredibly specialist machinery, and we certainly are that.

“So, the ‘Any Less Costs More’ campaign is really about the lifetime value of our products and how it pays to invest in us. It’s worth investing in the 250 UK-based specialists on-site at our factory, it’s worth investing in UK

manufacturing, and it’s worth investing in machinery that is compliant with clean and green power.

“You know exactly where your products are coming from, and you also know that you’re going to get superior support from a dealer network that has sold our products in some cases for half a century or more.

“Getting that message out is important, but listening is even more important. We spent the last year engaging with consumers, dealer customers and colleagues to understand what Ransomes means to them and what great will look like for the next five and ten years for the brand.”

Throughout early 2021 Textron says it focused all mower manufacturing on Ipswich, and that has created a space where the sole focus is on building fine turf machinery. For Ransomes, it says this year provided the opportunity for 15 million test hours of lithium battery technology to be integrated into its commercial mower range.

“We’re excited about developing new technologies, and Ransomes will borrow a lot of the expertise from other brands within Textron,” Simon explained.

“As a result, we will be able to safely sell technology that will be good for the environment, good for people and most importantly, get the work done into our Ransomes products.

“We’re also celebrating the fact that all of our products are Stage V compliant, and moreover, we will be able to offer electrified alternatives in the future. We feel those clean, green powertrains are worth shouting about and are important as we look forward to launching electric lithium technology and implementing it safely into the municipal and commercial market in 2023.

“You’ll have seen at shows like SALTEX and other events and launches throughout 2022 that we are going to be expanding our range into lithium technology, and in other parts of the business, we have already got turf machinery out cutting in environments that are a commercial or municipal setting. It’s very exciting to be a part of leading the charge as founders of the industry.”



Clive Nottingham and Ian Howard make the announcement

Howardson Group, manufacturers of the Dennis and SISIS range of grounds maintenance equipment, announced at the show the acquisition of Lloyds Mowers of Letchworth and Hunter Grinders.

The Group said the strategic alliance builds on the Dennis range of mowers with the addition of the Lloyds Paladin cylinder mower – renowned for cricket, bowls and golf along with the trailed Leda and Giant gangs, used extensively for wide area mowing.

Hunter Grinders is known worldwide in golf and stadiums for their grinding performance on cutting cylinders and bottom blades.

“We see a lot of potential with both brands,” Ian Howard MD of Howardson Group commented. “We have been in discussion with Lloyds for quite some time. We consider the brands much like our existing ones – well built, designed to do the job and with longevity.”

Clive Nottingham (pictured, left, with Ian Howard, centre), the well-known face of Lloyds and Hunters, will work closely with the Howardson senior management team as the two brands are embedded into the wider group of companies at Kirk Langley.

The company says the brands will be showcased at this month’s BTME 2023 with their own dedicated stand.

Hiring outside of the box

Sara Hey, vice president of operations and development at Bob Clements Inc, the dealership development company based in Missouri, shares the insights she offers U.S dealers with Service Dealer's UK readership every issue



THIS ISSUE: Thinking differently about recruiting

Knowing where to look for employees is one of the biggest struggles we hear from small business owners on a daily basis. It seems that the traditional ways are cumbersome, time consuming, and often result in high turnover, costing lots of money.

I recently read an article explaining that Microsoft assumes that the best candidates are not looking for new jobs. Actually, if a candidate reaches out to them, that candidate is less desirable. I don't know about you, but I assume that Microsoft probably has their hiring processes fine-tuned. If that is the assumption they make, we can probably make a similar one. So, what does that mean for our typical employee search? In my mind, we are spending valuable time and money on something that is not going to provide the result we are looking to receive, and with that said, how do we go about finding qualified employees?

When we are looking for a new employee at BCI, we begin our search by asking our current employees if they know anyone who is really talented at whatever position we are filling. This gives us candidates that already have a good reference from people we trust. We find that our employees only give us high-quality candidates because

their name is on the line, as well. They won't recommend someone that won't show up for work on time or have a bad work ethic. It's interesting how that works, isn't it?

I find that regardless of the industry you are in, your employees probably know people who are in similar roles as themselves. If you own a dealership, your technicians know other technicians, if you manage a hospital, your doctors know other doctors, or if you are a headteacher, your teachers know other teachers. You will come to realise that your own employees are the best recruiters when it comes to needing someone to fill a position at your company, especially since they know it so soundly. There is nothing wrong with tying in an incentive program for good leads or hires that come from a referral. This provides additional incentive for your employees to bring strong leads to you based on what they know of your business and the culture you desire.

Another way to find employees is to think about places you go and the great staff they have. Now, I'm not promoting stealing other companies' employees, however, you never know when someone is ready to make a transition, and you might just be able to give that person an opportunity. Think about the service manager at the car dealership

you visit. Is he/she the type of person you would like to run your service department? What about the friendly receptionist at your doctor's office who makes scheduling appointments easy? These people are the ones you need to be constantly on the lookout for that can help take your business to the next level. This is how we have found all of our current employees.

For example, last year at a tradeshow, I stopped at a booth and met Alex, an awesome salesperson. He was personable and engaging. The next day, I walked back by the booth and he remembered my name and details from our earlier conversation. In that moment, I thought he would be a great asset for our team! He isn't looking for a new job, but I am staying in contact with him. I encourage you to keep connected with people who represent the type of employee you would like to have on your staff. You never know who they know, or if they may be looking for a new position at some point in the future.

By thinking outside of the typical hiring methods, your candidate pool will begin to expand. Not just with leads, but from the best, qualified leads that fit your business. Ultimately, this will save you time and money.

It's all about working together

In his first Diary entry for 2023, **Jason Nettle** of Winchester Garden Machinery tells us how important it is to maintain close relationships with staff, suppliers and customers.



I was pleased to be approached by Service Dealer to write this year's Diary of a Season. Firstly, I would like to say a massive thank you to Anthony Deacon of MKM Agriculture for sharing his thoughts and views throughout 2022 and I wish him and his team all the best for 2023.

Looking back over the past 12 months – what were we talking about? The lack of stock; too much stock out of season; drought; heatwave; hosepipe bans; Russia; price rises and energy bills – the list goes on.

One thing all of these have in common for us as business owners is that these circumstances are all out of our control. Strangely, I do take light from this as it helped focus our minds on the things we could influence. I know, for example, I was walking round the yard back in July only to come across the best part of 10 mowers all with the surname 'Loan'. I thought it strange as they were all different machine sizes and brands, seemingly belonging to one person. So, I did a little more digging to find that the workshop team had supplied these units from our stock to help customers who were without their machines as they were waiting for spare parts to come in. I know this adds to the job and increases paperwork, but this is one of the many things we as dealers have had to do – and it has had a positive effect on customers. Some really have appreciated the extra mile we have gone to when they realise that things

are out of our control.

Looking back over the last five years, there really hasn't been a normal year. I know for us as a company we had the passing of Robin Nettle in May 2018, coupled with droughts in summers '18 and '19. We, along with everyone, were affected by the Covid pandemic – and now with 2022 coming to an end, this year will be another one I won't forget.

Thinking about the year just gone, I know that the manufacturers have received some grief and unrest with regards to multiple price rises, stock availability and the lack of foresight and commitment to delivery dates, etc. Despite this, I am trying to be more forgiving of them because, just like everyone else, they are being confronted with and forced to deal with problems that are beyond their control.

So, moving forward for 2023, I will be looking to see where we as a company can improve day-to-day business. It's all about working together – as a team with colleagues and with different departments in our business, so we all understand the times when each department comes under pressure. Also working together with the manufacturers and suppliers is important to help each other. I am in regular conversations with all the manufacturers that we deal with to help with the flow of information.

I also believe in working together with dealers up and down the country. During 2022 I was helped with stock and that we have also supplied stock to other dealers when they have been in need.

Finally, working together with our customers to share information right from the start is crucial, so they get an understanding about the problems we are facing as an industry and the shortfall in availability of whole goods and parts.

It's vital to remember that we are not alone as an industry and all sectors are facing the same problems. What sets us apart is that we can collectively come together, both manufacturers and dealers, as we have the opportunity as specialist servicing dealers up and down the country to flex and go that extra mile for our customers. Providing the best possible customer experience is what separates us from the sheds.

I hope this year to be able to share with you some projects I am intending to undertake. We will be looking to run an exercise with regards to warranty rates and the missed and lost hours, seeing what we can do to help reduce these. The results will be shared with our manufacturers so they can understand what we as dealers do and why. We are working on sharpening the processes within our business to make things run smoothly. I am sure they will not all work and I will come up against a few roadblocks but the fact that we keep trying to push forward is the main thing.

So, I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year and I look forward to the next challenge, whatever that may be for 2023.



Wages

The indelicate matter of pay

Employers and employees are under the cosh from rising costs. And given the inflationary pressures all are experiencing, pay is a subject that isn't going away any time soon *writes Adam Bernstein, SME Digest editor.*

How a request for a pay rise is received by an employer depends on where they are at in their usual pay review cycle, the industry in which they operate, and the extent of the competition.

Most employees expect an annual pay increase at least in-line with inflation which is currently running at its highest rate in 40 years. It's entirely understandable that employers can't afford to offer 9 or 10 percent pay increases at the moment, particularly given that employers face national insurance contributions on top.

Lucy Gordon, a director at Walker Morris, reckons that "many employees are seeing in the region of 4-5 percent awarded which is well below the current rate of inflation. This means that employees are earning less, so employers need to be inventive about what they can offer to staff that eases the strain on income but costs them less too." She's come across some really novel ideas that tick other boxes as well, such as corporate discounts on energy-saving devices, electric cars and solar panels for home offices.

Setting pay

As to how pay is set depends on the business. In unionised industries,

Gordon says that pay is negotiated between the employer and the union, and "this is why we are suddenly seeing a return to strike action when these negotiations are not successful."

In non-unionised businesses, pay is rarely negotiated with employees and is usually determined by the managing director or CEO in smaller businesses, and by remuneration committees in larger businesses and plcs. As Gordon explains, "these committees have the job of benchmarking pay both externally, in the market; and internally, between staff operating at the same levels."

Should employers link pay rises to productivity?

Linking pay rises to productivity is already used in some sectors, whether that be piecework or team or company performance. However, at the moment, even when businesses are outperforming their previous results, it may still be difficult to give substantial pay rises, given that recession is likely to be looming.

An alternative that Gordon highlights, salary sacrifice, "can present real advantages for all by offering a tax and National Insurance efficient way of purchasing items such as bikes and cars and making pension contributions.

This can definitely be a better option for employers than a pure pay increase, but it's not suitable for all employers." She says that employers have to think about what happens if an employee leaves part-way through the repayment term, and salary sacrifice can't reduce pay to below national minimum wage levels.

Industrial action

Strikes and 'work to rule' can cause severe disruption to business operations and have a knock-on effect on supply chains; for example, where production is slowed or deliveries can't be accepted, an employer may breach the terms of its contracts with customers.

But as Gordon points out, "employee relations issues can also expose the business to negative publicity - well-publicised examples of action taken by unions include the RMT successfully balloting for industrial action by rail workers."

She advises that if collective bargaining agreements are in place, employers should make sure they are followed and fully exhausted in order to try to avoid industrial action.

However, even with the best will in the world, it may not be possible to avoid industrial action altogether. How such action should be handled depends on whether the action is lawful (authorised and endorsed by a union) or unlawful (where employees take matters into their own hands). Where action is unlawful, Gordon notes that options can include "obtaining court orders to prevent an unlawful strike and considering whether disciplinary action against participating employees, including possible dismissal, is appropriate." She adds that it's also important for employers, if industrial action is threatened, to consider contingency planning as "the business may need to re-deploy non-striking employees from other parts of the business based in other locations to cover the work of striking employees."

Interestingly, Gordon thinks that if a non-unionised workforce seeks to become unionised, "the employer might want to consider placating staff" by agreeing to an informal request for

voluntary recognition which might give the employer more scope to determine the remit of the union.

The 'Big Quit' effect

Some sectors are in the middle of one of the biggest talent wars for years, with employees jumping ship for more money. But the pandemic forced some to re-evaluate their working priorities; some want to work less or from home, others remain loyal to an employer who supported them through the pandemic. Regardless, employers need to balance their offering to employees.

Here Gordon cites benefits such as flexitime, extra holiday entitlement or even unlimited annual leave, free breakfasts or lunches and employee discounts which "can all go a long way to improving the employee experience without increasing salary overheads." Some employers are looking more at employee health and wellbeing with support for mental health, new parents and carers and key issues for women in the workplace.

Working extra hours

Another option is for overtime, but unless it is expressly stated in a contract of employment Gordon says that employees don't have a right to it. Overtime is usually offered by an employer, and depending on the contract, the employee might be compelled to work it, or may be able to decline the offer. Overtime can be paid at enhanced rates, but this again depends on the contract. "The only statutory requirement is that employees receive at least the national minimum wage on average for all hours worked or treated as worked. Overtime can be a good solution if employers have such work available."

In summary

The issue of pay is not going to be topped off the news any time soon. For the moment at least, employees have the whip hand and can look for a job elsewhere with ease. This makes it imperative for employers to find creative ways of giving employees more without breaking the bank.

Business structure

Hazards and pitfalls of incorporation

Company tax law can trip up a business and its owners, especially when the rules around running a company are not understood, *says Helen Thornley, technical officer at the Association of Taxation Technicians.*

Selecting the appropriate business structure is an important decision and it is not uncommon for a business to start as either a sole trade owned and operated by one person, or a partnership where there are two or more people, before incorporating into a company. Incorporation involves the creation of a new legal entity to which an existing business can be transferred.

Separate entity

Being a separate legal entity, the company needs its own bank account and the funds in that account belong to the company. A company is owned by the shareholders and run by directors although in a small business these are often the same people; the assets of a company belong to the company, and the director-shareholder can't use the company account as their personal piggy bank, even if they own 100 percent of the shares.

If the director wants access to cash held by the company, then they will need to pay themselves a salary or vote dividends, both of which will have personal tax consequences for the individual.

Transfer of assets

On incorporation, a decision must be taken regarding what assets of any existing business are to be



transferred to the new company. The transfer of assets such as property, plant and machinery can all have tax consequences. There are reliefs and elections available to mitigate the tax costs of incorporation, but certain conditions will need to be met.

Particular care needs to be taken with assets which are used both in the business and personally, and also with land and property.

Consider a director's car. If a director transfers their vehicle to the company as part of the incorporation or gets the company to buy a car which they can use privately, then a benefit in kind will arise which is taxable on them. It is often simpler and more cost effective for a director to keep their car and recover business mileage at the approved mileage rates, although this does require them to keep records of their business mileage.

Whether or not to transfer property such as trading premises into the company is also a big decision with a lot of competing factors to consider.

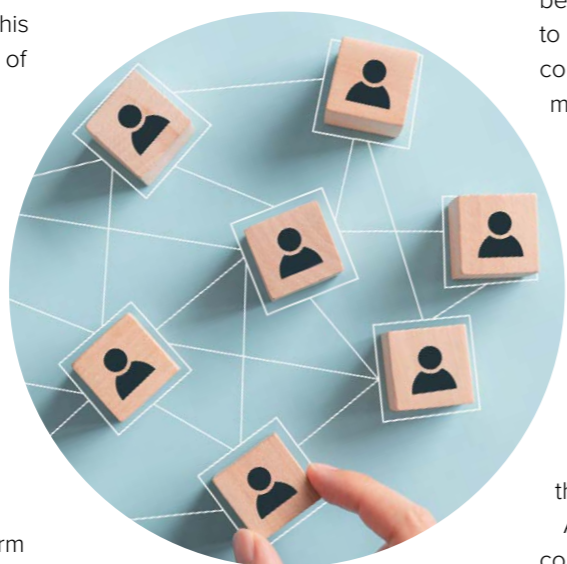
If the decision is taken to transfer in, then there will be upfront costs including fees for transferring any mortgage to the company, and taxes such as Stamp Duty Land Tax (or LBTT/LTT in Scotland and Wales) and Capital Gains Tax. The property will also form part of the company's assets in the event of a claim against the company.

But if the property is kept out of the company – which may allow for the charging of rent and help to protect it from claims against the company as well as being simpler - that could reduce the availability of Business Property Relief (BPR) in the future and claims for tax reliefs on future sales could be affected. BPR is a very valuable relief which can exempt up to 100 percent of the value of qualifying assets from Inheritance tax.

Overdrawn directors' loan account

One consequence of failing to keep company and personal expenditure separate can be an overdrawn

directors' loan account. If this is not spotted early there will be interest and penalties to pay. If the director has put money or assets into the company then the company owes the director and it can, when there are funds available, repay the director. The problem arises where a director draws more money out of the company than the company owes them, which is effectively treated as a loan to the director. If this loan is not repaid within nine months of the company's year end, the company must pay what is effectively a penalty charge of 32.5 percent of the amount overdrawn at the year end to HMRC. Either the director will need to transfer money (or assets) back to the company or vote themselves more dividends or



salary – which will have a personal tax consequence – to give them the funds to repay the loan.

If the director is overdrawn by more than £10,000 at any time during the year, they must also pay interest to the company at a minimum rate set by HMRC or be assessed to a benefit in kind.

Informing customers and suppliers

It is important to inform customers and suppliers of the business that the business has incorporated as they need to know they are now dealing with a different legal entity. In addition, all websites, email signatures, letterheads, stationery, invoices, order

book etc all need to be updated to show the company's name, where it was registered (England & Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales), the registered number and the address of the registered office. A company that does not disclose all the details required risks fines for both the company and the directors.

Statutory duties

A company director must fulfil, by law, certain responsibilities to the company. These include acting to promote the success of the business and exercising reasonable skill and care as well as avoiding or managing conflicts of interest between what is for the benefit of the company and what would benefit the director personally. Failure to do this can result in serious legal consequences for the director who might be held liable personally for any failures to uphold their duties.

Companies House and company accounts

Company accounts are more formal than partnership accounts and need to be prepared in accordance with specific reporting standards and filed with Companies House where they are then made publicly available.

Although, particularly for small companies, the amount of accounting information which is provided to Companies House is not great, there will be some loss of privacy, and personal details about the directors and controlling shareholders will also be publicly available. Directors need to ensure details held by Companies House are kept up to date.

Further, there other Companies House filings required by law such as the annual confirmation statement.

In summary

It's very easy for a business owner to misunderstand the law in relation to companies. Good advice is therefore essential.

Ibcos Gold Parts Marketplace

Advertise, Sell and Buy Aged Inventory with Ease



Create listings quickly and easily



Free to advertise and buy parts – you only pay a fee for the parts you sell



Automate sales documents



Buy new OEM parts at discounted prices



Fully integrated with Ibcos Gold

ibcos
a Constellation Software Company

Contact Your Account Manager Today!
+44 (0) 1202 714200 | www.ibcos.co.uk

BACK-PACK BATTERY 1200Wh / 33.5Ah



40V LXT-ION max

18V LITHIUM-ION

Compatible Tools:
Chainsaws, Hedge Trimmers, Brush Cutters, Linetrimmers, Blowers, Mowers, Earth Augers, Split Shafts, Disc Cutters & more

Connections Types:
x5 Direct Connection Models
x27 LXT 18Vx2 (36V) Models
x26 XGT 40V Max Models

- The cord can be routed from the waist or over the shoulder.
- Adjustable cord length for each tool.
- Adjustable harness to fit the users body
- Immediate detachment of the cord if the tool is dropped.
- The IPX4 certified sturdy housing is structured to prevent damage to the battery cells from drops and shocks.
- Weighs only 8.8kg.



makitauk.com/product/PDC1200A01



BUSINESS MONITOR

Taking the temperature of the dealer network, sponsored by Garden Trader

Dealers voice dissatisfaction with warranty rates

Once again, those who respond to survey criticise suppliers

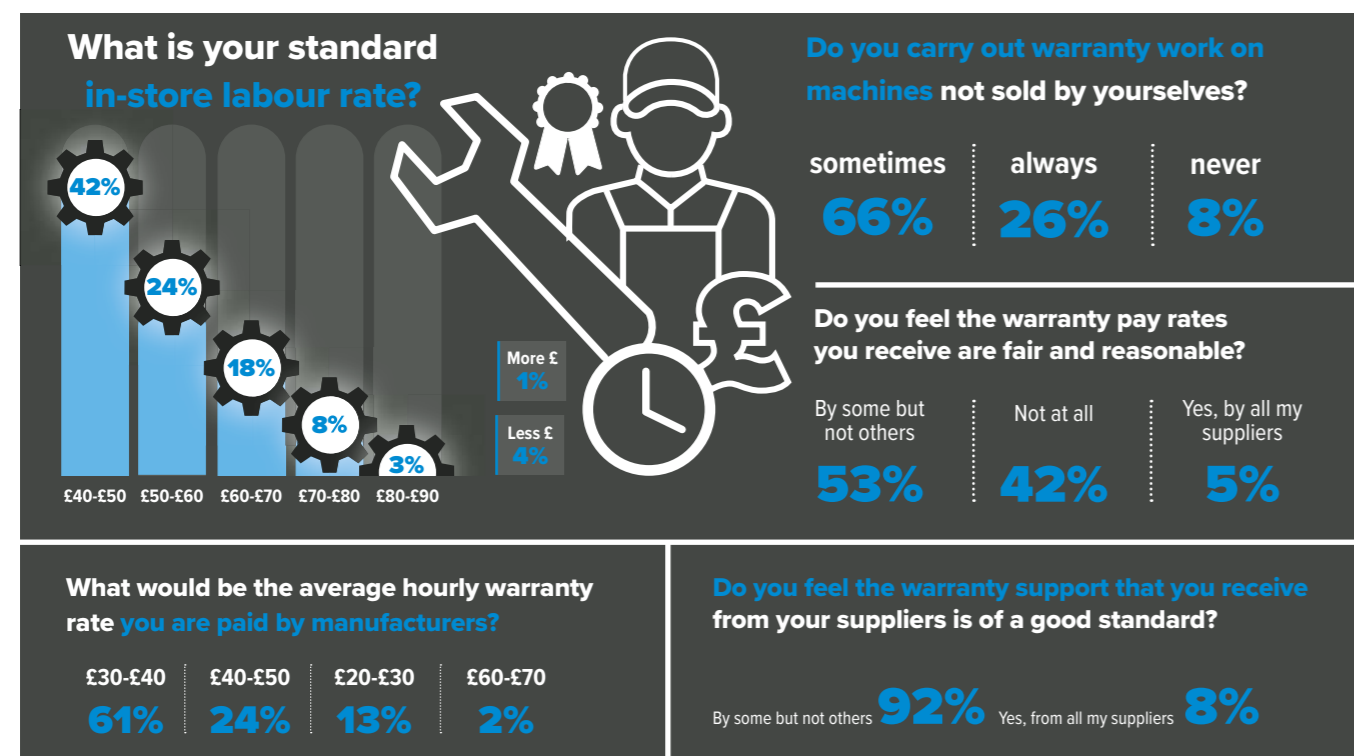
The results received from dealers who responded to our warranty rates survey, conducted in December 2022, saw a dissatisfaction voiced with the rates paid by their suppliers - similar to when we asked our dealer readers at the same time last year.

To the key question of do you feel the warranty pay rates you receive are fair and reasonable, as before, a concerning number of respondents indicated they were not from all their suppliers. Some **53%** said they received

fair pay from some, but not all, whilst **42%** believed none of their suppliers paid fairly.

In terms of whether warranty support (prompt responses, tech help, etc) received from suppliers is of a good standard, by far the most common answer (again) was that it was by some, but not others (92%).

Reading through our dealer readers comments on the warranty situation, there is clearly a level of frustration in the network with certain manufacturers.



“Your say”

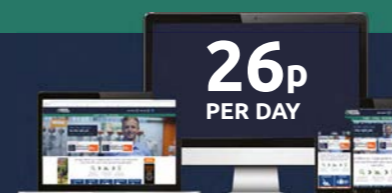
What is your take on the warranty situation this year? Is there anything you'd like manufacturers to change to make your life easier?

- Realistic labour rate and fuel / mileage charges need to improve, having not had an increase in nearly a decade. It's scandalous really. Speed of turnaround can be agonisingly slow too with some manufacturers which is also very unfair. We must pay our suppliers at the end of the month so why do they not pay us in the same manner. (Some do).
- Hourly rates need to increase. Sometimes the hourly rate is only just breaking even for us. We do warranty work for machines bought on the internet for our own franchises as we feel we need to protect the brand, however these often end up costing us money.
- Not happy at “subsidising” online retailers where we have not sold a machine but must undertake warranty work on it, having made no profit on the original sale.
- Manufacturers should pay dealers a realistic hourly rate and throw away the allocated time charts they use which do not take into account diagnosis time and the fact that working on a machine that's been in the field for a year is different than swapping a part on a new one in the factory.
- Increase rate and pay for admin at a fair cost and not expect dealers to repair machines sold online and from other sources that sell to anyone anywhere. Or if this happens pay an actual rate relative to customer charge out including parts profit.
- Some manufacturers have listened to the dealers and are supporting the claims. Others make it very difficult to submit claims and then take months to pay.
- Although the rate that we are reimbursed is our hourly rate or very close to the rate, the repair times that we are given are the unrealistic part. For example, recently we carried out a warranty which was an oil leak on a hydrostat. First there was a call out to the site to see if this could be repaired on site which it couldn't. We then had to move the machine from the course to the sheds. This was a total of 2 hours on-site plus traveling - all un-claimable. The machine was then collected and brought back to our workshop the following day. We then had to strip the machine down to remove the hydrostat so the seals could be replaced. This took a total of 5.5 hours which we were then only able to claim back 2.3 hours of as this is what the manufacturer claims was the repair time. Then to add insult to injury, the 21 litres of oil we refilled the machine with that has a cost price to us of £4.97 + VAT per litre, we get reimbursed £2.57+ VAT per litre!
- Manufacturers should treat the dealers as customers and pay the realistic going rate. If this was done, they would have no problem in dealers supporting products sold by other non-servicing outlets.

Industry first, profit second

That's the philosophy of Garden Trader and we have made our annual subscription affordable at £96 for the whole year, which equates to 26p per day and an average of just 83p for every potential customer the site delivers to dealers.

A compelling Return On Investment.



If you are not yet subscribed, please join our UK dealer network and help us to make servicing dealers more visible.





Products

DOMESTIC

Husqvarna hits a virtual boundary

New Automower NERA comes in three different models

Early this year, Husqvarna launched its first virtual boundary robotic lawn mower for private gardens.

The company says its satellite navigation system enables the robotic mowers to work within virtual boundaries without the need of a traditional boundary wire. The Automower NERA comes in three different models that cater to lawns from 2200 m2 to 5000 m2. Installation, defining work areas and stay-out zones can be managed through the Automower Connect App.

With what they describe as “breakthrough satellite navigation technology” – the Husqvarna EPOS (Exact Positioning Operating System) – the company is promising “a new chapter of lawn care is about to begin for consumers”. Husqvarna EPOS was launched three years ago for commercial users and is now a proven technology for professional robotic lawn mowers – including the Ceora that caters to lawns up to 50 000m2.

The NERA can operate with a precision of 2-3 cm and take on rough terrain and slopes with up to 50% inclination. For the NERA range to operate without physical boundary wires, it is complemented by an EPOS plug-in kit, sold as a separate accessory.

Glen Instone, President of Husqvarna Forest & Garden, said, “Husqvarna makes gardening and lawn management easy where smart robots and connected devices do most of the job. Being the pioneers and global leader in robotic lawnmowers, we are committed to leading the way. We are excited about offering both professionals and now private garden owners this boundary wire-free solution.”



Husqvarna says its overall strategy is to accelerate the shift to more low-carbon solutions through robotics and electrification.

om 2200 m2 to 5000 m2. Installation, defining work areas and stay-out zones can be managed through the Automower Connect App.

With what they describe as “breakthrough satellite navigation technology” – the Husqvarna EPOS (Exact Positioning Operating System) – the company are promising “a new chapter of lawn care is about to begin for consumers”. Husqvarna EPOS was launched three years ago for commercial users and is now a proven technology for professional robotic lawn mowers – including the Ceora that caters to lawns up to 50 000m2.

The NERA can operate with a precision of 2-3 cm and take on rough terrain and slopes with up to 50% inclination. For the NERA range to operate without physical boundary wires, it is complemented by an EPOS plug-in kit, sold as a separate accessory.

Glen Instone, President Husqvarna Forest & Garden, said: “Husqvarna makes gardening and lawn management easy where smart robots and connected devices do most of the job. Being the pioneers and global leader within robotic lawn mowers, we are committed to lead the way. We are really excited about offering both professionals and now private garden owners this boundary wire-free solution.”

Husqvarna say their overall strategy is to accelerate the shift to more low-carbon solutions through robotics and electrification.

COMMERCIAL

Hydro 80 model launched into the long grass



Etesia Hydro 80

Etesia announces MKHPF

Etesia UK has launched the Hydro 80 MKHPF ride-on mower, which it says has been designed specifically for long, rough grass areas.

The company boasts that the new mower combines the working comfort of a Hydro 80 with the mowing power of the Attila SKD brushcutter.

Etesia claims the MKHPF can mow in any weather and is suitable for mowing any terrain. It has four cutting heights from 50 to 92mm. Its short turning radius makes it suitable for small areas or heavily wooded fields.

The unit features hydrostatic transmission for instant advancing, reversing, and braking with differential lock; easy maintenance due to quick access to all mechanical parts; perfect visibility of the working environment and all functions are accessible from the driver’s seat.

The Kawasaki engine ensures a high quality of work. The company says the chassis of the MKHPF has already proven itself in the Hydro 80 models, and the bumper has been reinforced and adapted for mowing so that the

MKHPF can pass through tall grass.

The Hydro features a master stock mowing deck. It is described as impact resistant and durable. Steel reinforcements on both sides allow for a side opening for easy cleaning of the interior of the housing and for sharpening the blades. It is also corrosion-resistant.

The MKHPF offers the possibility to add many accessories including the ability to spread, scarify, and clear snow with the mower.



+44 (0)28 9081 1265
contactcentre@cyriljohnston.com
cyriljohnstontrade.co.uk



CYRIL JOHNSTON TRADEPLUS
Fast & easy online ordering!

GARDEN MACHINERY, SPARE PARTS & CONSUMABLES
 We've got a huge range of garden machinery from leading manufacturers, as well as a giant range of spare parts and consumables.

PARTS DIAGRAMS
 Just like before, we have a massive selection of parts diagrams to help you find exactly the right part you need for your workshop.

MULTIPLE USER ACCOUNTS
 Now you can have separate user accounts with different levels of access. You'll be able to hide visibility of invoices and sales history, as well as block ordering for certain users on your account.

DASHBOARD
 There's now new features on your dashboard, including the ability to view outstanding invoices.

UTILITY VEHICLES

Can-Am performs a triple axle

Traxter 6x6 DPS HD10 to debut

The new Can-Am Traxter 6x6 DPS HD10 will be making its UK show debut at LAMMA 2023 this month.

The manufacturer says this new unit delivers the functionality of a six-wheel drive vehicle SSV and will present new job opportunities in multiple sectors including farming, estate management, and facilities maintenance. This combination ensures the vehicle can handle tasks from hauling machinery to transporting workers and equipment to job sites, while providing comfort, power and performance.

Can-Am claims the new SSV enhances the comfort and control of the original Traxter with the help of its longer wheelbase and triple axle

design, which spreads the weight of the vehicle so that it treads carefully across multiple terrains. This ability is complemented by the performance of the 82hp V-twin liquid-cooled engine from Rotax.

It provides owners with what the manufacturer describes as class-leading towing, payload, and cargo capacity that come in at 1,360kg, 771kg, and 454kg respectively. These capacities are aided by the extended cargo box, which allows it to carry more goods and equipment. The integrated design elements include the LinQ quick-attach system, built-in anchors, tie-down points, and recesses for easy box separator solutions.

It also benefits from a 40-litre fuel tank and a cockpit that has been designed with functionality and comfort in mind. This is highlighted by the cab pillars being pushed forward, an open-dash configuration, and a truck-inspired VERSA-PRO bench seat that accommodates up to three adults and flips up for additional space in the cab.

James Dalke, BRP commercial manager UK, says, "This new model highlights how our off-road line-up is continuing to develop to meet the needs of the end user by providing them with a class-leading vehicle that can flex its motorised muscles to do jobs and reach areas other SSVs may not be able to reach or handle."



Can-Am Traxter 6x6 DPS HD10



Kubota EK1-261

Entry level compact from Kubota

EK1 series compact tractor added to line-up

Kubota (UK) Ltd has introduced the EK1 series compact tractor to its line-up.

The 24hp, four-wheel drive EK1-261 model sits at the foot of its compact tractor portfolio, with the manufacturer saying it represents a cost-effective choice for smallholders and the home-owner market.

Manufactured by Escorts-Kubota, the EK1 uses a three-cylinder diesel engine that meets EU Stage V emissions without the need for a diesel particulate filter (DPF). Drive is transmitted via dry plate clutch

through a nine-forward three-reverse, constant mesh transmission.

The tractor's rear-mounted three-point linkage offers a 750kg lift capacity, while a rear PTO provides 540 and 540E speeds for powered implements such as a flail mower, pasture topper, and finishing mower. One double-acting hydraulic spool valve is fitted and operates with an open centre hydraulic system.

The EK1 also offers a charging socket and mobile phone holder, in addition to a weight-adjustable, mechanical suspension seat and

foldable ROPS frame. The company says the ability to temporarily fold the ROPS frame complements the tractor's physical dimensions, helping access into low-height buildings for the 2670mm long, 1035mm wide tractor.

The EK1-261 includes a five-year Kubota Care warranty as standard, and its retail price starts from £11,036+vat. An optional front-end loader is available, and users can choose turf tyres or industrial tyres.

Introducing... The Sprocket!



A new columnist joins us this issue, who for the time being will remain anonymous! In their first column, The Sprocket considers the challenges faced and overcome by dealers in recent years and wonders what could lie ahead for the network over the coming year

What an honour to be asked to take over Chris Biddle's column. I am not sure anyone can compete with Chris on these pages, but I can but try. Forget the eloquence and experience of Chris's many years of writing and previously running this magazine, all you're going to get now is some down and dirty ramblings, which have hopefully been expertly edited by Steve Gibbs and passed by the censor.

Fortunately for all of us Chris will continue with his podcasts, and no doubt we will be kept up to date by these 'fireside chats', which can be very illuminating. Keep up the good work, Chris, and thank you for this column – I hope I can do it justice.

A rollercoaster ride

I am not a journalist, or a writer, and I asked what I should write about and was told anything you like. Well, that could be a whole page on my latest long distance motorcycle trip or maybe a dissertation about the pros and cons of Brexit. Hmm... might get back to that one.

It probably should be about dealers and manufacturers and, sorry for this, even the show scene. Not sure I would be allowed into any of our industry events if I started on the topic of trade exhibitions. Something for later perhaps, if they let me into the next edition!

As we're at the start of 2023 – and I sincerely hope some of the traumas of the last few years will be nearly behind us – I think touching on the fact that we can all get back to face-to-face meetings, even the odd show, and at least talk to each other without the need for an IT expert on hand to make sure Zoom or Teams behave, and that you can get on your neighbour's wifi if yours drops out, is a great step in the right direction. I am convinced, more than ever, that chatting with someone across a table or sitting

and having a beer with them achieves far more than a 10.30 appointment in an office.

The recent *Service Dealer Conference and Awards* showed that people want to be able to interact and shoot the breeze in a more social setting. A great day and evening and a wonderful opportunity to catch up with likeminded people.

No question that pretty much the whole world has had a hard time lately. On top of all the normal woes such as wars, oppression, drought and starvation, there has been Covid-19 and an awful and unbelievable move by Russia to take over Ukraine that has had an effect on a large part of our planet. We, in the UK, are certainly suffering from the effects of this and it is presenting challenges – but we are in no way as badly off as many others in the world and must look to our blessings and hope we can help those that are worse off.

From a business point of view, in our land based industry, it has been a rollercoaster ride for dealers with its highs and lows, but we learnt that during Covid, business has been great – although with challenges on supply and availability.

The concern for 2023 will be one of sustainability, with consumers tightening their belts, and businesses doing the same. The energy crisis and rising costs will mean turning the heating down and a few more lights off and taking on board our forebears' advice of *"look after the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves"*. Save it now to help later! I am sure those of you with teenage children are chasing them around the house now and making sure the lights are turned off when not needed and the heating is down a half or one degree.

It has not helped that our government has been in turmoil and the many changes over a very short period of time threw the country into a nosedive that we barely managed to level off from and still need to climb out of.

Hang on to your margins

Just to put the consumer market in perspective, here is some information from the BRC (British Retail Consortium) economic briefing report sent out at the end of November.

Key Data:

- GDP contracted by **0.6%** in September, following upwardly revised growth of **-0.1%** (from **-0.3%**) in August. A one-off bank holiday for the state funeral of Elizabeth II contributed to at least half of the decline. The service sector was, however, the principal driver of the fall in economic activity, led by declines in information and communication as well as wholesale and retail trade.
- Inflation rose to its highest since 1981 with the Consumer Price Index rising to **11.1%**, the peak as projected by the Bank of England. Of the headline rate, **4.9%** emanates from housing, energy and transport costs.
- In October, BRC-KPMG's retail sales grew by **1.6%** year-on-year, following September's expansion in sales of **2.2%**.

The UK economic inactivity rate was estimated at **21.6%**, **0.2 percentage points higher than the previous quarter**, and **1.4 percentage points higher than before the coronavirus pandemic**.

Make of this what you will but be sure that consumers in 2023 will generally be frugal, so dealers should hang on to your margins, be sensible with your stocking and turn some lights off. For the manufacturers who rely on a dealer network, make sure you look after them and keep in touch with them and support them however you can. You need each other, and that relationship is going to be ever more important in the months to come.

We hear about all the initiatives to save the planet and reduce emissions and the praise given to electric cars and battery-powered equipment. At what cost is this really to climate change? It seems that there are more greenhouse gas emissions involved in making an electric car than a petrol or diesel car. This is due to the mining of the various materials needed for the batteries that come from many countries around the world and must be transported to where the batteries are made. However, the 'experts' say that in the lifetime of the electric car, the overall emissions will be a third of petrol cars. It seems that we literally have to swallow it when they are first made. I wonder if they have calculated the contribution to emissions with the scrapping or recycling of

batteries, which is currently becoming a big issue?

All that said, there is work being done on less harmful ways of providing energy like sodium batteries and solar powered cars. A Lightyear car that is fully solar powered appeared on TV recently that is in production but costs £250K just now. They hope to bring this down with mass production within the next five years. Wouldn't that be great to see our industry using solar powered vehicles locally? Probably, only in our summer though!

Our industry needs to be responsible about the use and disposal or recycling of Lithium Ion batteries and not stockpile them as they are potentially dangerous.

Working together more closely

Before I run out of space and apart from all the things we all have to deal with already, 2023 needs to be the year that the land based industries start working much more closely together on recruitment of both technicians and other staff for the dealer network - and for the manufacturers and suppliers.

Look out for some initiatives that are being launched for 2023 for recruitment and raising awareness of the careers that are available to newcomers and young people. Help by making sure your local schools and colleges are aware of these initiatives and help by making yourselves available for your local schools to get the message over that we are a high-tech, innovative and progressive industry that covers some wonderful career opportunities.

Editors note;

The name **'sprocket'** (*noun*) applies generally to any wheel upon which radial projections engage a chain passing over it. It is distinguished from a gear in that sprockets are never meshed together directly and differs from a pulley in that sprockets have teeth and pulleys are smooth except for timing pulleys used with toothed belts.

What's on?

Status of the events correct at the time of going to press, but we advise confirming with organisers' websites and social media channels.

JANUARY 2023

| | |
|--|-------|
| Oxford Farming Conference www.ofc.org.uk | 4-6 |
| LAMMA 2023, Birmingham NEC www.lammashow.com | 10-11 |
| BTME 2023, Harrogate International Centre www.btme.org.uk | 21-23 |

FEBRUARY 2023

| | |
|---|-------|
| Dairy-Tech, Stoneleigh Park www.dairy-tech.uk | 1 |
| Spring Fair 2023, Birmingham NEC www.springfair.com | 5-8 |
| Golf Industry Show, Orlando www.golfindustryshow.com | 6-9 |
| Doe Show 2023, Ulting www.ernestdoe.com | 7-9 |
| Yorkshire Agricultural Machinery Show (YAMS), York Auction Centre www.yams.uk.com | 8 |
| Executive Hire Show, Ricoh Arena, Coventry www.executivehireshow.co.uk | 8-9 |
| World Ag Expo, Tulare, California www.worldagexpo.com | 14-16 |

MARCH 2023

| | |
|---|----------|
| Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia, London www.idealhomeshow.co.uk | 17/2-2/3 |
| AEA Conference 2023, One Great George Street, London www.aea.uk.com | 28 |


APRIL 2023

| | |
|--|-------|
| Harrogate Spring Flower Show www.flowershow.org.uk | 20-23 |
| Newark Garden Show, Newark Showground www.flowershow.org.uk | 21-23 |
| East Anglian Game & Country Fair, Euston Estate, Thetford www.ukgamefair.co.uk | 22-23 |

MAY 2023

| | |
|--|-------|
| North Somerset Show www.nsas.org.uk | 1 |
| Nottinghamshire County Show www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com | 13 |
| Balmoral Show, Belfast www.balmoralshow.co.uk | 10-13 |
| Hadleigh Show www.hadleighshow.co.uk | 20 |

OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE. LONG ENGINE LIFE. ETHANOL FREE.




PREMIUM PREMIXED FUEL: STIHL MOTOMIX.

FOR DISPLAY SUPPORT, PLEASE CONTACT PRODUCTEXPERT@STIHL.CO.UK

Keep customers coming back to your dealership with STIHL MotoMix fuel. When selling a domestic petrol tool to a domestic customer, don't forget you can extend the warranty from 2 to 3 years with the purchase of 5 litres of STIHL MotoMix fuel, so they can be assured they'll be getting the best performance from their machine for many years to come.

AVAILABLE IN 1, 5 & 20 LITRE CANISTERS. 55 & 200 LITRE DRUMS AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT DELIVERY TO CUSTOMERS.





GARDEN+ SERIES

40 Volt Series: The new range of battery powered tools for the domestic user. 7 quality tools - 2.0AH & 4.0AH batteries & charger.



2 + 1 year with product registration

ECHO

56 Volt Series: The battery range for the professional user. 8 quality tools - e-Force batteries 2.5AH & 5.0AH, a 16.0AH pack & a charger.



ECHO

2 Stroke range: For over 70 years, ECHO has been designing and building high performance, quality products.



X SERIES

X - Series: This means ECHO's best in class products. Designed for professionals who demand the best and highest quality tools.



Distributed by: FGM Claymore
Waterloo Industrial Estate,
Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire B50 4JH
Tel UK: 01789 490177 Tel Ire: (353) 1 8463922



Milwaukee

OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

NEW

M18 FUEL HATCHET™ PRUNING SAW 20CM

M18 FHS20

UP TO 50% FASTER CUT COMPARED TO THE M12™ VERSION

CLIMBING SCABBARD

CARABINER HANG LOOP

ERGONOMIC TRIGGER LOCK OFF

ON-BOARD SCRENCH STORAGE

POWER TO CUT 19 CM HARDWOOD

METAL BUCKING SPIKES



DISCOVER THE FULL MILWAUKEE® OPE RANGE

milwaukeetool.co.uk

