

See clear now

As there is so much pressure on course management teams to be as efficient with water as possible, **David Mears** argues that clubs need to recycle the water they use

Much has been said about the duties and responsibilities of anyone operating a washdown system, the legal requirements and the latest penalties for non-compliance, yet still a number of golf clubs don't see the need to take action. Why wait for an inspection visit from Environment Agency (EA) officers and possible civil sanctions being applied together with hefty fines? A ClearWater system may well be the answer and, with a price freeze and offers, be more affordable than you think.

Highspeed Group introduced its ClearWater biological water recycling washpad system to the UK market in 2004 and subsequently to Ireland and France to help golf clubs and sports' facilities meet the requirements of water and anti-pollution regulations in Europe. ClearWater brought an innovative approach and fresh thinking to equipment wash-off which has appealed to many; Royal Birkdale, QHotels, De Vere, Elm Park Dublin, Omaha Beach France, National Trust and English Heritage are among nearly 170 clubs and organisations that have installed ClearWater systems. With interest being shown in the system from further afield, the company now has its sights set on the US market.

Unlike most other genuine recycling systems, competitively priced ClearWater is safely underground away from prying eyes and is unobtrusive; there's very little to see of it! Below ground brings further advantages: operation is silent (all you hear is water leaving the high-pressure water guns) and the water temperature is stable and low, enabling effective biological treatment without concerns. ClearWater is an all-weather system too. It can be used in drought conditions (particularly if water usage restrictions are enforced) and it can operate in winter weather.

So what is making this system so popular? It is different, but as do other biological recycling systems, it treats and recycles water ef-



The ClearWater system can even be operated in cold weather, as Elsham Golf Club recently demonstrated

fectively. What appeals is that it is simple to operate and maintain, and operating costs are believed to be the lowest of its type. With few moving parts, there's very little to go wrong too and, if a component goes down, the company can usually have a replacement on-site the next day. With easy push-fit connections, swapping over takes minutes and there is minimal downtime.

ClearWater systems are offered with three installation choices:

1. A full 'turnkey' supply and installation package. This is where Highspeed Group supplies the system, carries out all civils' work, builds a dedicated washpad which includes the special grass trap and filters, commissions the system, trains staff and hands over with the system fully operational. Northamptonshire County Golf Club recently entrusted Highspeed Group with this work which included the provision of a petrol station and re-location of the diesel tank and ball wash, creating a complete pollution prevention area.

2. A modified 'turnkey' supply and installation package. As above, but is offered where there is an existing washpad that is suitable for modifying. This 'upgrade' keeps costs down yet still enables customers to meet legal requirements. Beau Desert Golf Club chose this option and head greenkeeper Steve Mucklow is most impressed with the new facility.

3. A 'self-install' package. This is the most economical route to compliance. Highspeed Group supplies the system (currently £5,995 plus VAT) and detailed instructions for the customer to carry out the installation and washpad build, purchasing and including the essential grass trap. A Highspeed engineer still commissions the system (chargeable) and, as above, ensures all is fully operational before leaving the site. Elsham Golf Club went down this route and completed the work just prior to the snow! Head greenkeeper Colin Hopper and his team can be justifiably proud of their installation.

Apart from its low cost, what makes ClearWater stand out from any other biological washpad water recycling system of this type is that it has received official UK government-backed approval and certification as a water saving technology. If drought orders are imposed, it may be one of very few systems that can be used! Being on the Water Technology List (WTL), the system qualifies for 100 per cent first-year capital allowances under the Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme (ECA). This means that proprietary clubs buying and installing ClearWater can write off 100 per cent of the total cost of their investment against taxable profits in the year of purchase! One golf club did this and clawed back more than £3,300 last year.

Why wait? Take advantage of ClearWater's special offer right now; free second hose, water gun and pump, free ClearWater barrow,

free year's supply of micro-organisms plus special payment terms. Effective wash-off and compliance has never been easier!

David Mears is joint MD of Highspeed Group. Visit www.highspeed.co.uk, email info@highspeed.co.uk or tel 0845 600 3572

