

Firm reaps the rewards for investing in its staff



GRASS ROOTS INVESTMENT: Alun Wright, from TH White Ltd, delivers a grasscutter to Mark Williams, of Berinsfield Community Business

BUSINESS is booming at an Oxfordshire property management firm after a major review of its operations.

Berinsfield Community Business successfully completed the Investors in People (IIP) quality standard last October and since then has won a raft of new contracts and is expanding its workforce.

The firm is taking on another two staff this month, bringing its workforce to nine, after winning two new contracts for cleaning and grounds maintenance with the South Oxfordshire Housing Association (Soha).

The firm wanted to start IIP to raise professionalism and improve health and safety. The company had already taken on some of Soha's procedures, but was looking to build its own corporate structure.

Business director Mark Williams saw an IIP seminar advertised with the local *Business Link* and found the day-long course very useful.

He said: "IIP has helped in that we are now seen to be more professional in the market place.

"When we are tendering for a bid it gives the client a sense of comfort in the

knowledge they are dealing with a quality firm.

"Internally, it has given the staff an indication of where the business is going. They are clear on their objectives — It has brought everyone together and teamwork has been improved."

BCB maintains the 320 Soha properties in Berinsfield by providing housing management services under contract, along with other services to local housing associations, parish councils and homeowners.

In 2005, BCB won contracts with eight further councils and started grounds maintenance and cleaning work for the Vale Housing Association, also a key county housing provider.

This year, BCB has won four additional parish council contracts, and retained all existing business.

As part of IIP, the company improved its appraisal process by changing it from an annual event to a monthly review.

A staff induction system has been developed further and a new appraisal system has been introduced for board members.

Mr Williams said the process would continue to examine areas that still needed to be improved.