



Gelder Group Environmental Efforts

At the Gelder Group, we understand the impact we have on the environment and are taking positive steps to reduce it. In the summer of 2008, we hired a dedicated 'Environmental Officer' to manage all the environmental impacts of the Group's activities and search for ways to mitigate these. The Environmental Officer is also responsible for ensuring we comply with all relevant legislation.

The construction industry produces a massive amount of waste, sending more to landfill every year than the U.K.'s 21 million households combined, and the government wants this figure halved by 2012. At Gelder, we have already taken effective measures to improve our waste management practices by creating Greentech, the group's own waste management company. It is a fully licensed waste treatment facility servicing the majority of the Gelder Group's construction sites. Greentech operates two skip lorries under a non-hazardous waste carrier's licence. Waste is transported off site to the treatment centre at Dunholme in Lincolnshire, located approximately six miles from our head office. Cardboard and polythene are bailed on site and some of the scrap wood is used to power a biomass furnace that heats the entire facility. The rest of the wood is sold to a commercial outside-composting facility. Scrap metal, plastic and paper waste is sold to local companies to reduce the carbon footprint of these recycling activities. Greentech has so far been a great success for the Gelder group, achieving a recycling rate of more than 90% (compared to the industry average of 72%), and we will continue to improve and develop the business as it and the group expands.

In an effort to reduce business mileage, the Gelder Group encourages a car/van sharing scheme. To efficiently supply our sites with materials, the group operates its own stores facility, which as of February this year will be supplied by our own building supplies merchant, Redline BSS. The Redline site is situated less than 3 miles from the head office. This centralisation of our supply chain will reduce business mileage by effectively eliminating the need for our labourers to make extra journeys to other builder's merchants for materials. An £80,000 18 tonne Volvo lorry replaced our smaller delivery vehicle at the end of last year. This new vehicle can transport significantly more goods to our sites than the previous vehicle, reducing business mileage by reducing the need to return to the head office to be re-loaded.

We firmly believe that the road to sustainability can be achieved, in part, by the widespread implementation of renewable energy generation. In addition to the biomass furnace heating Greentech, we have had a Solar Thermal Water system installed at our head office that is providing most of our hot water requirements, vastly reducing our heating oil consumption. We are also nearing the end of the planning stage for the installation of two 20Kw wind turbines. These are expected to provide 30 to 40% of our electricity requirements.

A rainwater harvesting system capturing run-off from the roofs and car parks at our head office has vastly improved the sustainability of our water usage. The run-off is stored in a 50,000 litre holding tank and is used to flush our toilets and wash the Group's extensive fleet of vehicles.

The 13 acres of poor quality ex-agricultural land associated with our head office is in the process of being extensively redeveloped into an 'environmental reserve'. The main aspect of the project is new woodland.



Gelder Group Environmental Efforts

Comprised of 3,200 native deciduous trees planted in December 2008 and funded in part by the Forestry Commission's 'English Woodland Creation Grant' scheme the woodland is expected to offset a total of around 80 tonnes of CO₂ a year. The other major feature of the project is an artificially created, 1 acre lake. The lake has extensive reed beds and was recently stocked with a variety of freshwater fish. The project also incorporates a 1 acre amenity lawn, areas of wildflower meadow and 1700 metres of pathways made from recycled aggregate gained from our construction sites. It is hoped in the future that we will be able to open the project to the public to provide a beautiful natural amenity for our neighbours, staff and clients, and create an important enhancement to the local ecosystem by increasing biodiversity and habitat creation.