



1851

Summer 2014

BIOMASS

Powering ourselves green!

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Renewable energy

We are finally crossing the line on renewable energy and it has been quite a struggle! We have been looking pretty closely at this for, say, ten years but have never managed to make it make sense. Every time we couldn't make it add up was even more annoying than the previous time and made us check things out even more with other people... *Nick Linney*

But we have looked again and this time we think it works. Charlie Linney and Ian Baradell have done a lot of the work, we have looked carefully at what is available and think we have a good solution.

The game plan is to heat the Bellamy Road site buildings excluding the building known as the Tertiary Warehouse with a boiler that burns wood chips. Apparently, 'wood is good' and it is a perfect renewable. The system we are going to use consumes wood chip that you could see in a garden centre but it is ideal from a handling, packing, transportation and burning point of view.

It is a big project costing £600,000 but quite a lot of this is pipe work and building (what is called civils in the trade). Once installed, keeping the supply of wood chip rolling is quite an interesting part of the project. The wood chip is delivered by a truck with a rolling floor in the container unit and dumped into our own conveyors that are located in the new building.

There will be approximately one delivery a week and the boiler, which is more akin to a furnace in that it burns at a very high temperature and emits 'no nasties', decides how fast it wants to burn depending on how much heat is required. The location of the whole set-up will be in a new building, which should start being built shortly, by the side of B7 goods in.

The boiler is supplied by Veissmann, which is a German family business company that has been in this field since 1917, has 11,400 employees and sales of just under £2 billion so they are pretty substantial operators in this field. They have been in the renewable area since 1970 and in the last ten years have installed in excess of 800 'renewable' type boilers in the UK. Our boiler is number 28 in the UK of its size and we have been to visit five user sites, all of whom have given glowing reports in terms of the performance of the kit.

The UK is under major pressure to replace 'dirty fuels', 'dirty emissions' and to move away from 'non-renewable' fuel sources such as gas. To achieve this, an RHI or Renewable Heat Incentive has been introduced and it is this that makes the difference.

If you are burning coal, oil or gas, apart from 'nasties' going up the chimney and damaging the planet, they are not renewable and in the end we will run out of them.

The RHI is the financial encouragement to persuade us all to switch to more planet friendly fuels. It is similar to the incentive being used for the wind turbines and solar panels that are appearing increasingly. Burning wood costs about the same as burning gas but it's renewable. It is our first 'big' move into heating ourselves using renewables but does not totally do the job that is there for us to do.

The next project that we are looking at is 'powering' ourselves. Although at present, we cannot see the electricity side working, all the time the kit that makes all this possible is getting more reliable and cheaper. We will continue to look at it carefully and this is not the first time lots of people have told us we should be doing something, only for us to be unable to see how the practical side will work, but we will stay on the case.

Going 'greener' has been an aspiration of ours for a long time. We are already 'Forest Stewardship Council' accredited which means the majority of the paper we use comes from paper made from fibre from guaranteed sustainable sources, and we are pretty sure that we have eliminated all nasty gases used to provide cooling wherever it is deployed, but getting to the nub of heating or providing our own electricity has been a complex and frustrating journey for us. It is nice, finally, to get one of these projects over the line and we look forward to the next one.



The Pyrotec boiler with grate combustion