

Business Monthly

DEDICATED BUSINESS TO BUSINESS NEWS

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Solar energy pioneers run with bright idea

By Carla Delaney, business editor
carlad@baylismedia.co.uk

ROYAL Borough residents are embracing a revolutionary solar panel process and earning themselves hundreds of pounds into the bargain.

They have begun taking up an offer to say no to fossil fuels by an inspired business start-up called Engensa – the first CarbonNeutral® solar installer in the UK.

Maidenhead resident David Snelgar of Chantry Road employed them to install a solar system and anticipates at least ten per cent tax-free, annual returns, guaranteed for 25 years – far in excess of most investments offered on the high street.

He is typical of the professionals, including engineers, who like to pick the brains of the outstanding professionals who run the firm leading the way to a green future.

“Not only do we generate a significant portion of our electricity from the sun but for our £12,550 investment we will get over £1,300 every year,” he said.

Behind this greening of the Royal Borough is a combination of robust investment, through the new Government subsidy called the Feed-in Tariff, and the chance for families to drop electricity consumption by up to 50 per cent.

With ambitious growth and hiring plans in the area, Engensa, run by solar

scientist Dr Toby Ferenczi and fellow entrepreneur Toby Darbyshire, has begun signing up homeowners who can benefit. “The average solar installation produces enough energy each year to cut a family’s electricity bill in half – in fact, even in the UK, an eight panel system generates enough power annually to power a fridge for almost a decade,” Toby Ferenczi said.

The company uniquely benefits from the specialist knowledge of this solar scientist who worked for General Electric in Germany where solar panels are commonplace. He has personally designed the next generation of sun power energy which major companies can only dream about.

His interest developed from studying physics at Cambridge and He has a PhD in the next generation of solar technology. He is ideally placed as chief technology officer after building up further expertise in London with New Energy Finance before moving to Munich, where he worked on new renewable energy technologies.

Toby Darbyshire is the ‘business Toby’ who is chief executive, having spent most of his career at business strategists Bain and Company working with global energy firms. He is passionate about the environment and has worked with venture capitalists and politicians to help deliver a green economy both in the UK and States.

The pair now have funding and scope

to build a company with an inspired approach to solar panelling, customer service and technical know-how. They have begun spreading the word in the Thames Valley where homes are large enough to benefit from a good number of south-facing solar panels as well as a growing interest in saving the planet.

Together the Tobys want Engensa to become a beacon for others to follow and have not been averse to getting their fingers dirty in the process before cherry picking from a crop of engineers and roofers eager to join them and become an authorised installer under the Government regulated Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS).

They have been up ladders and made deliveries themselves during the setting up process and proud that they know their systems inside out.

The pair are planning a mini conference for business groups such as the Thames Valley, Marlow and Maidenhead Chambers as well as the Institute of Directors and Transition Town movements likely to be held at Foundation Park in Maidenhead which has offered the use of one of its new office blocks.

There is to be an announcement shortly about how 200 homes could strike it lucky when it comes to solar installation and why Engensa wants to show financial advisors how installation is better than an ISA when it comes to savings.



FULL OF ENERGY: Toby Ferenczi (left) and Toby Darbyshire.

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Hale & Company move is a ‘springboard for growth’



MOVING STORY: Hale & Co partners (left to right) Daniel Cole, Sean Egan and Chris Krol. The new working environment in Belmont Place (above).

WHEN Maidenhead accountants and business advisory firm Hale & Company LLP decided it was time for a change they moved to modern offices at Belmont Place, Belmont Road in Maidenhead.

The practice, previously based in Craufurd Rise, is one of the oldest independent practices in Maidenhead, and has been supporting regional businesses and clients continuously for well over 60 years.

The accommodation in Belmont Road is a short distance from Maidenhead town centre and boasts more than 4,800 sq ft of office space set out in a modern open-plan environment which includes conference and meeting room facilities together with kitchen and

break-out areas for the firm’s 25 strong team of chartered accountants, chartered tax advisers, financial advisers and support staff.

Senior partner Chris Krol is delighted with the move: “This move is part of our overall business plan and was well overdue. We outgrew our previous offices some years ago and when Belmont Place became available we knew immediately it was ideal.

“A major attraction of the office is the flexibility of the space it gives us for our future growth plans – we have the room to keep growing.

“The office is modern, light and mostly open-plan, all important factors to ensure our team enjoy their working environment.

“The location continues to make us accessible to our clients in the region and we have plenty of convenient on-site parking for our clients and staff, factors not to be undervalued these days when space – especially car parking – is at a premium.

“This move firmly establishes our commitment to our clients in the region, and sends a message to prospective clients that we are open for business!”

Tax partner Sean Egan reinforces the message: “We are genuinely excited by the move and the opportunities that it provides. The office will allow our different specialisms to develop, and aid team-work and communication.

“It will undoubtedly help us to provide a

consistently high level of service to our clients in the future, it is already reaping benefits.”

The group, which also includes a dedicated audit company, Craufurd Hale Audit Services Ltd, provides a comprehensive set of services including audit, accounts preparation, outsourcing, payroll, taxation and a range of financial services advice to a diverse list of clients.

“The group also has a strong community ethos, and continues to be a keen supporter and sponsor of many local charitable, sporting and business groups.

Any businesses or individuals wanting to know more should contact Chris Krol or Sean Egan on 01628 626333 or visit www.haleandco.co.uk

Green Issues

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Bright ideas for money making from solar experts

Engensa

REGARDLESS of what you might think about British weather, if you have the right roof, our Berkshire sun is strong enough to make you £1,000+ a year (guaranteed) in tax free revenue.

We talked to Dr Toby Ferenczi about what makes a good roof for solar and how to avoid the pitfalls:

Q So Toby, this all sounds a bit too good to be true – can you really get a guaranteed 10 per cent return by installing panels on your roof?

A Yes, absolutely – the Government has set up a subsidy scheme called Feed In Tariffs (often referred to as FITs) to ensure people can earn a significant and guaranteed amount of money for the energy they generate via renewable energy devices such as solar panels.

So as well as cutting your electricity usage by up to 75 per cent you will:

a. Save £200-£300 on the bill your electricity supplier sends you

b. Be paid £1,000-£1,250 a year in FITs

Q OK, so what IS the right roof for solar, and how do I know if mine fits the bill?

A Essentially you need a good clear stretch of roof that faces south(ish) – uninterrupted (so not bristling with TV antennas) and open to the sun. You can find get a rough idea by using our online tool at www.engensa.com/

How much money does your roof make

Q And what are the risks and common mistakes to avoid?

A Firstly I would say pick the right installer – find someone who really understands the technology, has full MCS accreditation and crucially who can both design and install a system for your roof.

The solar market is still very new and there are a number of firms who don't have a

background in the technology so they won't be able to help you with the latest technology like the SolarEdge Optimiser that can really improve your systems performance. Secondly, avoid pushy salesmen.

Solar isn't double glazing, you need real professionals not cowboys. It is worth asking the company whether they will be installing the system themselves or just taking a commission – it does no harm to ask for a name.

And lastly get in there quickly, because the tariffs are at their highest ever level and are expected to drop from mid 2011.

Q Does that mean that the money I earn from my panels will go down?

A No, the price you get per kilowatt hour of electricity you generate is fixed on the date you connect to the grid so the sooner you install, the more money you will make for the next 25 years.

Our thanks to Dr Toby Ferenczi.

Toby holds a

PhD in photovoltaics from Imperial College London and worked in the solar industry in Germany for GE. He is also chief technology officer of local solar installation firm Engensa.

For more information see www.engensa.com/how_much_money_does_your_roof_make.

This will give you a quick idea of how suitable your roof is.

See www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/ the Government site, for information on the Feed In Tariffs and how they work.



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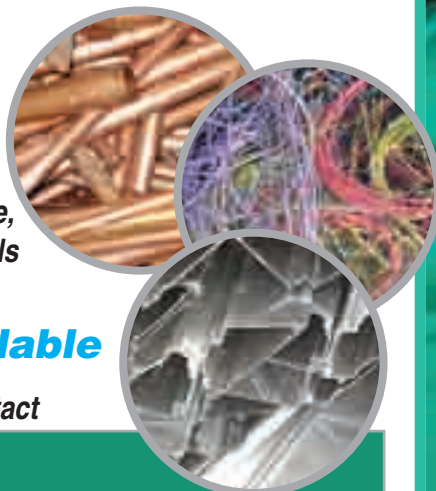
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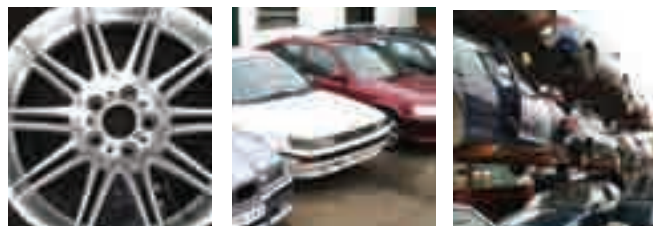
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