

Old mill proves a winner in the energy stakes

Lizzie Murphy

AN innovative office building that claims to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been built in South Yorkshire.

The Old Corn Mill, which is believed to be one of about a dozen "carbon-negative" commercial properties in England and Wales, is based at Bullhouse Mill, Millhouse Green, near Penistone.

Promotional merchandise business Booths Brothers, the company behind the £1m development, is hoping its green credentials will encourage businesses to relocate and bring jobs to the area. The five offices in the Old Corn Mill, which range from 925sq ft to 1,685sq ft are available for rent.

A combination of solar panels, wind turbines and water power means the building, near Penistone, produces more green energy in a year than it consumes, with the exported surplus effectively removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, according to the owner.

The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rates buildings from A to G, similar to the banding given to electrical household appliances. The Old Corn Mill has an energy performance rating of A-plus.

Mike Tofts, a senior consultant at National Energy Services, which is approved by the Government to accredit EPCs, said there were only 14 commercial buildings that had achieved the A-plus rating.

He said: "Most existing buildings will be in the D and E bands and brand new buildings built to the latest regulations would normally achieve a B rating, even an A rating is excellent.

"So achieving an A-plus rating is no mean feat and requires significant investment in energy efficiency measures and renewable generation technologies."

The Old Corn Mill is an original 1750s three-storey mill that has been renovated, with the addition of a new two-storey extension.

The building has a number of energy efficient features, such as triple glazing; substantial wall, floor and ceiling insulation; low-energy appliances; eco lighting, and an insulated lobby. Under-floor heating is provided using a geothermal water source beneath the car park.

The photovoltaic cells, which are on an adjoining warehouse, create enough energy for the Old Corn Mill, with electricity left over feeding the rest of the site and any excess going back into the



CHARLES BOOTH: He had a gradual conversion to using energy efficiently.

national grid. Two wind turbines in neighbouring fields also feed electricity to the whole site and a water turbine is due to be installed on the River Don this summer.

Bullhouse Mill has been in family ownership for many years and has been transformed into a commercial site by Booth Brothers.

Charles Booth is the brainchild behind the new office building, which is situated on the edge of the Pennines.

"We have everything we need here to create electricity: sun, wind and water. It all sounds like a bit of utopian dream, but we have created a sustainable building for the businesses of the future," he said.

Each of the three floors has a

KEEPING DOWN TRAVEL COSTS

CHARLES Booth runs Booth Brothers with his wife Sarah and brother John.

The Penistone-based company supplies branded promotional merchandise such as bags and umbrellas.

Its origins go back to Hoyland Umbrella Frames, which the family bought in the mid-1960s.

Hoyland made just the frames and was based in nearby Millhouse Green.

The Hoyland factory has since closed and now been turned into a housing estate.

Booth Brothers was established in 1988 to make completed umbrellas.

There is still a busy manufacturing unit at Bullhouse Mill, but most of manufacturing is now done in China. Mr Booth lives on the site with his family.

shower to encourage people to cycle to work. The Trans-Pennine Trail, part of the Sustrans national cycle network, runs nearby.

Mr Booth said he is now fully committed to promoting an environmentally-friendly way of living and working, but admits he wasn't always so green in his outlook.

"Even just five years ago I didn't think about energy use," he said. "Then I started looking at the cost and then the effect on the planet and slowly I started to think about it more and more. It really was a gradual conversion."

Now he is considering extending some of the green features, such as the geothermal heating, to the rest of the site, which consists of 75,000 square feet of industrial units, workshops and offices.

Businesses already located at Bullhouse Mill are the Booth Brothers promotional merchandise businesses, Little Trekkers children's clothes, JM Glendinning insurance brokers, Nigel Tyas Ironworks, Bryella Interiors, First Horizon Surveying and office space for start-up businesses run by Enterprising Barnsley.

Enterprising Barnsley is a business support programme which helps businesses with high growth potential. The programme has attracted £2.89m investment from the European Regional Development Fund as part of Europe's support for the region's economic development through the Yorkshire and Humber ERDF Programme.

Enterprising Barnsley also offers business coaching and runs networking events.

Martin Beasley, programmes manager for Enterprising Barnsley, said: "The new office building is exciting for us, because it means businesses in our enterprise hub can move on to a sustainable office development.

"And not only is the new space amazing because of its green credentials, it is also in an amazing location, surrounded by beautiful countryside and yet within easy reach of the M1 and surrounding conurbations such as Manchester, Sheffield, Huddersfield, Leeds and Barnsley. We really believe it will help bring jobs to the area."

From October 1, 2008, all commercial buildings were required to hold a certificate which shows the energy rating of a property indicating the energy efficiency of the building.

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