

APRIL 2026

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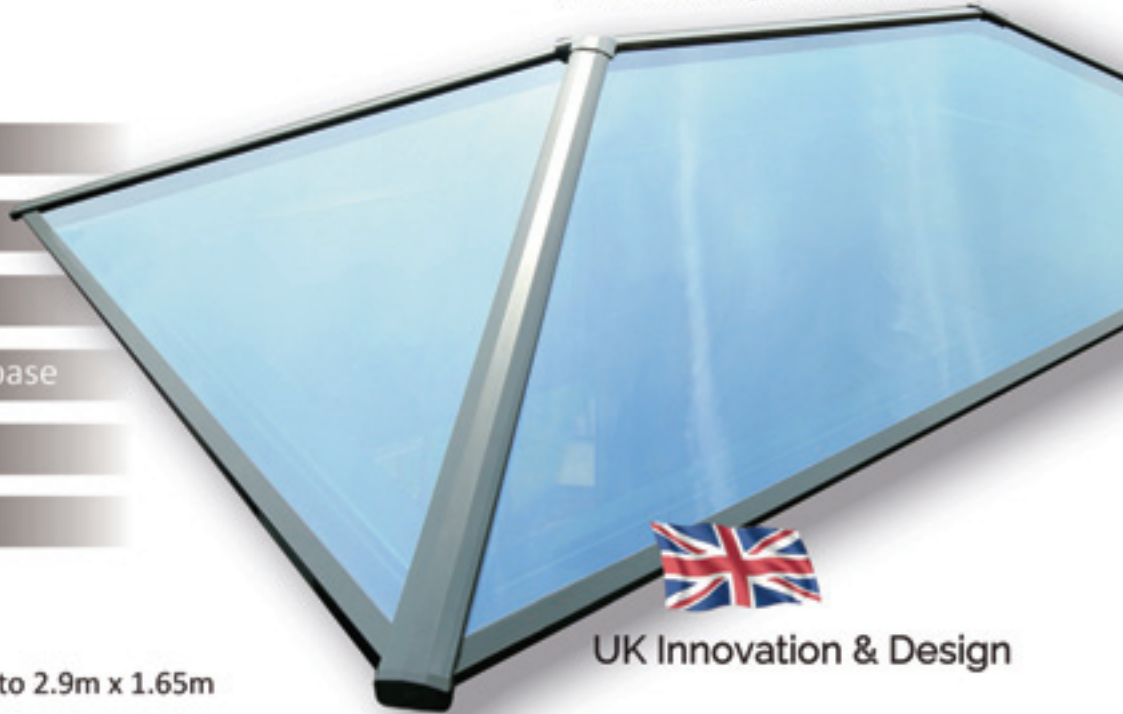
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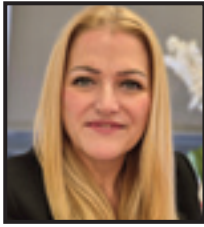
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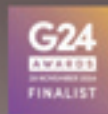
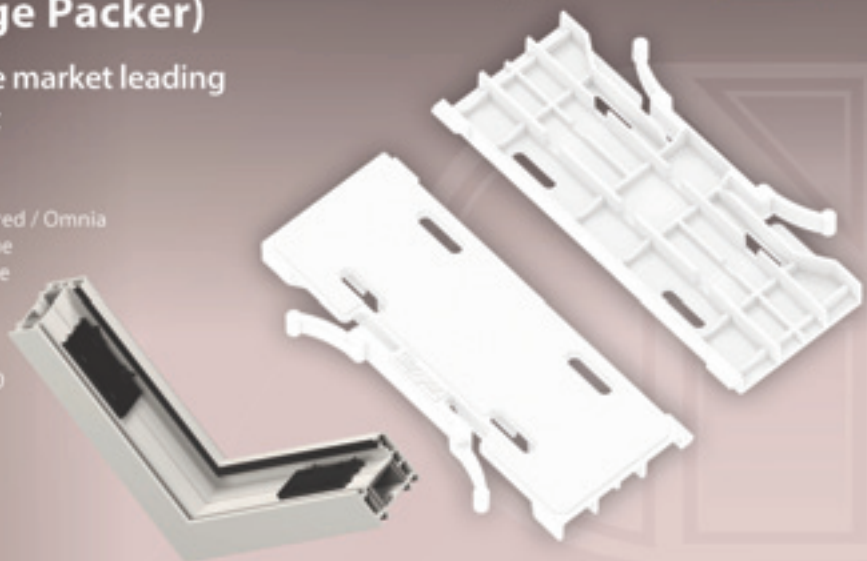
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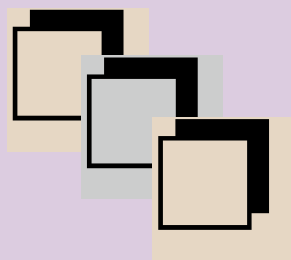
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They said it couldn't be done. Back when window rating became a thing. U values were calculated on a 'standard window'. Calculating the value of a whole window was not considered possible. Not really desirable. At the time I reported it, probably wrote about it but I never really believed the logic. That is beyond the fact that a 'standard' window did enable the boffins to compare like-with-like, prevented fiddling and entrepreneurs making outrageous claims.

Well guys, it's here: the whole window calculation and, according to a lot of technical people, things will never be the same (Page 8). True, it only applies to windows for new build properties but we can't be complacent, replacements will not be far behind.

So we must now take into account the frame, the hardware, any decoration such as astragals and Georgian bars. The sealed unit is now only one component and the whole window must achieve 1.2w/m²K as required by approved document L. The changes are not due to take place before 2027 but that is hardly good news given the complexity of the calculations that will need to be put in place by software manufacturers among others.

And if that weren't enough to be going on with, in an energy intense industry, we are having to contend with rising energy costs. Every thing we do, glass, both manufacture and processing, plastics – PVC-U – and aluminium all take lots of energy to manufacture. Even delivery costs are through the roof with the price of diesel spiralling.

Some reckon that it could work to our advantage making householders sensitive to the energy efficiency of their homes. But that's no quick fix. It will take several seasons for the domestic pinch to be felt. Householders are seldom quick to take decisions and we have to bear in mind that a lot of refurbishment is aesthetic. A new patio door to open up a garden view, a front door a roof light. None of these have to do with improving energy efficiency and are the type of job that will be put on hold if household energy bills are rising. And price rises will go beyond energy. Petrol prices are already out of control and food will follow. The cost of production and distribution will, eventually be passed down the chain and, even when they ease, will take time to fall for the consumer.

Another area is the housing market. When people move house they are very likely to do some refurbishment which, quite often, includes the fenestration. Now I don't recall anyone saying interest rates are going up but, with the economic situation worldwide, it is something we should expect. Certainly prospective buyers will be nervous about mortgage rates and postpone moves.

After a difficult 2025 we all entered 2026 with a great deal of confidence and expectation of better things. But they seem to be on hold at the moment. We may not be in the kind of world war we tend to associate with the idea. Not like WWs one and two but the world is at war right now and even we who are lucky enough not be contending with drones and missiles are feeling the impact

John Roper



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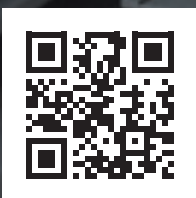
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Through the roof Best Building two years

The organiser of FIT Show is reporting strong sales momentum and growing international interest for the 2027 event (Birmingham NEC, May 18 - 20.)

Event director Nickie West says the FIT Show is continuing to build strong momentum ahead of the next edition, with sales progressing well and growing interest from both UK and overseas. She says: "The response so far has been extremely encouraging, with a healthy mix of returning exhibitors and new brands already committing to the show, alongside continued conversations with a number of international businesses looking to make their first appearance in the UK."

To develop the international aspect of the event the organiser has appointed Balland Messe-Vertrieb GmbH, as its new German sales representative.

"Having someone on the ground in Germany is a real asset for us," says West. "It gives us even greater reach into the market and helps us stay connected



Hendrik Taise and Nickie West

with businesses that are considering FIT Show as their route into the UK."

Hendrik Taise, senior project manager with Balland says: "We are delighted to be working with FIT Show and to help introduce more European brands to the opportunities the UK market offers. FIT Show has a fantastic reputation, and we are excited to support its continued growth internationally." □

Now low in carbs

Schüco UK says it is introducing Schüco low carbon aluminium as the standard material for all aluminium profiles supplied in the UK and Ireland. This change, effective from 1st April 2026, represents a significant step towards greener, more responsible manufacturing.

According to a Schüco spokesman the move dramatically cuts the environmental footprint of Schüco aluminium systems.

Schüco Low Carbon Aluminium profiles have a GWP value of 3.84 kg CO₂e/kg. This is achieved through the use of materials with recycled content or green energy during production. Compared to standard Schüco aluminium profiles, profiles made from Schüco Low Carbon Aluminium save around 3.27 tonnes of CO₂ per tonne of aluminium profile – that's around 46% of CO₂ saved. "We aim to continuously improve our supply chain to lower these values even more in the future."



Herweg Benedikt

Managing director of Schüco UK, Benedikt Herweg says: "This is an important milestone in our journey towards a more sustainable built environment. By making Schüco low carbon aluminium our standard material, we are giving our partners the confidence that they can reduce embodied carbon without compromising on quality.

"With this change, Schüco UK continues to strengthen its long-term sustainability strategy and leadership in low-impact, high-performance façade solutions." □

Keylite Roof Windows' ModuLite system has been named 'Best Building Fabric Product' at this year's Housebuilder Product Awards to take home the title for the second time.

The Housebuilder Product Awards recognises brands delivering solutions and innovations to the housebuilding industry, supporting new home development. The awards are judged by a panel of industry experts, including



Keylite's Roof Windows' ModuLite, brightening homes

representatives from the Future Homes Hub, NHBC and national housebuilders.

According to a Keylite spokesman, over the past 12 months the company has focused on developing products that support housebuilders' transition to low-carbon homes, by aligning with Part L and the Future Homes Standard (FHS).

The ModuLite dormer system offers enhanced thermal performance, exceeding Part L requirements and its ability to be installed alongside Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels supports compliance with the FHS without compromising kerb appeal.

Jim Blanthorne, managing director of Keylite Roof Windows Group, says: "We are delighted to have won the title of Best Building Fabric Product for our ModuLite system at this year's Housebuilder Product Awards. We would like to thank the housebuilders we partner with for their continued support.

"This past year, we have focused on developing products that help housebuilders meet evolving regulations, contribute to the UK's net zero target by 2050, and deliver proven cost savings for housebuilders." □

Easy come easy go

For the window and door industry, rising energy prices create a heady mix of challenge and opportunity writes **Darren Woodcock**, general manager at Deceuninck

In common with all manufacturing businesses, the window industry is energy intensive, glass particularly, but also aluminium and PVC-U.

Rising energy costs increase manufacturing costs. This is at a time when the industry is already facing increases in employment costs and overheads. It cranks up the pressure that little bit further and fabricators and the industry at large will feel it.

The flip side of that is that homeowners are also facing financial pressures and may be more receptive to an energy-efficiency sell.

It's not an easy landscape to navigate but there are, as always, opportunities, but you need the right message and the right product.

The UK remains heavily reliant on gas compared with many European countries. It produces around 45% of the gas it consumes and imports the remainder. Even relatively small disruptions in global supply therefore have the potential to influence prices.

For households, the immediate impact of wholesale price movements is moderated by Ofgem's energy price cap, which limits what suppliers can charge customers on standard variable tariffs.

The current cap for the period from April to June equates to an annual energy bill of £1,641 for the average dual-fuel household.

However, wholesale price movements take time to feed through into the cap. If higher wholesale costs persist, the cap could rise to as much as £2,500 a year for the average household later in the year, according to industry estimates.

That kind of volatility creates uncertainty for homeowners. People remember how quickly energy costs increased in recent years. When prices begin to move again, it tends to focus minds on the long-term efficiency of their homes.

The sting in the tail, however, is that the same drivers which encourage homeowners to place

more importance on energy efficiency, may also prevent them from spending.

The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply has warned that the cost of everyday consumer goods could also rise significantly during 2026.

This has an inevitable knock-on on consumer confidence. If people are paying more for energy, transport and everyday goods, it can make them think twice about larger purchases. That makes finance more important. If we can help people mitigate the impact of rising fuel bills now, while supporting them with a mechanism to fund it, it removes a barrier to purchase.

How the conflict affects the housing market is important. Analysts suggest that the expected changes in interest rates and mortgage costs, combined with lower levels of consumer confidence, are likely to slow the housing market.

Swap rates, which influence the rates lenders offer to borrowers, have already begun to edge upwards following the recent geopolitical developments. They have increased by around 0.2% points since the conflict began. Even small changes in mortgage costs can have an impact on buyer behaviour.

If borrowing becomes more expensive, it can slow down transactions or encourage homeowners to delay moving.

We know that there is a direct correlation between activity in the housing market and demand for replacement products.

While those factors strengthen the case for investment in energy efficiency periods of high energy costs have historically encouraged homeowners to look more closely at how their homes perform according to research commissioned by Deceuninck.

Windows and doors ranked among the most popular upgrades. Energy



Darren Woodcock

efficient windows and doors are one of the most tangible energy efficiency improvements homeowners can make.

For installers, turning that awareness into sales means helping homeowners understand the real-world impact of upgrading older windows and doors.

Deceuninck supports that conversation through its energy calculator which demonstrates how replacing older windows can reduce household energy consumption and heating costs.

Depending on the starting point, those savings can be substantial. Previous modelling shows that replacing older windows with modern high-performance systems can significantly reduce household energy use and carbon emissions over time.

While energy prices may fluctuate, the broader shift in homeowner attitudes towards energy efficiency is likely to remain.

The key is making sure the message is communicated clearly. If sales staff can demonstrate how new windows and doors contribute then the industry is very well positioned to be part of the solution. □

www.deceuninck.co.uk

U-calc moving on

While notional u-values were held at 1.2w/m²K for new build windows as outlined in approved document L the revision introduces a move away from the standard model of calculation writes Kevin Jones, head of technical at the Glass and Glazing Federation



The new regulation introduces a specific assessment of each individual window supplied. This is something which could force developers to move to triple-glazed specifications to achieve compliance. It means that the age of the 'standard calculation window' is effectively over for new build.

Under the home energy model, every window has to be calculated to its actual size and configuration to arrive at an area weighted average. That includes all the items that sit within the opening. That's a huge change in mindset and methodology for both housebuilders and their window and door suppliers.

It comes as the government attempts to close a gap in performance between theoretical building product performance and what is delivered in real-life applications.

At the heart of the change is the move away from SAP to the new home energy model (HEM).

This means modelling each specific window configuration. That creates a challenge because most windows supplied are smaller than the 'standard' window configuration (1230x1480 open/fixed) used to model u-values.

The smaller the glazed area, the harder it is to achieve a u-value of 1.2 W/m²K, especially where windows feature transoms, mullions, dummy sashes, astragal and Georgian bars, add-on cills, head vents and other components.

The government has been very clear that the model of the home needs to reflect what is actually built.

That means everything in the window opening that affects thermal performance has to be taken into account. Up to now, most calculations have been based on relatively simple, clean configurations. Under the new regime, the real-world complexity of modern window designs is brought into the calculation.

On a big, simple window with a high glass-to-frame ratio, you can often achieve compliance with a well-specified double glazed unit. But when you start adding dummy sashes, transoms, Georgian bars and so on, particularly in smaller apertures, you're making life much more challenging in thermal terms.

However, structural elements of the window which can negatively impact thermal performance, for example steel



Kevin Jones

reinforcements and bay couplers, do not need to be included in the HEM calculation.

The shift also puts software and systems houses in a race against time to create and integrate u-value configurators into their manufacturing processes before the end of the transition period.

The GGF is currently seeking clarification on how long the industry has to implement the changes.

The approved document states that changes 'take effect on 24th March 2027 for use in England for building work that is not in connection with higher-risk building work' and '24 September 2027 for use in England for building work that is in connection with higher-risk building work'. This would, however, mark a departure from previous – and longer – transitional arrangements.

For now, at least, for domestic replacement, the current regime, including the use of standard sizes and styles for U-value declarations, essentially remains unchanged; however an extension into window and door replacement, is the logical next step. Everything we are seeing points to this being a staging post, not the final destination.

The Future Homes Standard doesn't just tweak the numbers – it changes the rules of the game for new build window and door specification.

Those who move early, understand the detail and invest in the right tools and relationships will be in a strong position.

Those who wait until 2027 and hope for the best are likely to face difficult conversations, disrupted projects and squeezed margins. Now is the time for the trade to get on the front foot. □

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Hands-on business

A recent webinar hosted by Andrew Scott has prompted a whole new business journey for one of the event's attendees



(Left to right): Andrew Scott, MD of Purplex and Ducan Wright, MD of Lindenwood Home (UK)

Duncan Wright, managing director of London-based Lindenwood Home (UK) and Timber Windows, got more than he bargained for after listening to Andrew Scott, CEO of Purplex Marketing.

Wright says: “I joined January’s webinar, looking forward to the advice and strategies Andrew would share with the industry. He didn’t disappoint – Andrew knows his stuff and not only gave us all some fantastic ideas and strategies, but it also really inspired me. To be honest, any time with Andrew is incredibly inspiring, whether he’s delivering a session to a group or speaking to you on a one-to-one basis.”

Wright took advantage of the two-hour strategy session that Scott had offered to five business leaders that attended the webinar.

“When Andrew offered this session

at the end of the webinar I jumped at it – who wouldn’t” Wright says. “And true to his word, we met for more than two hours and went through my business top to bottom – sales, marketing, business operations and finance. We even discussed business fundamentals and the importance of getting those right.

“One thing that really stood out to me, from our conversation, was Andrew’s experience in acquisitions. This is part of my own mindset but talking to someone, like Andrew, who’s been there and done it many times was incredibly valuable and I really appreciated his thoughts and guidance on the acquisition process.”

Scott says: “The glass and glazing industry has faced some challenging times but there is still plenty of opportunities for growth, regardless of economic uncertainty or market conditions, and I’ve spent the last 20

years helping businesses capitalise on those opportunities.”

Following the success of the January webinar, Scott a second session on in February. In this one-hour session he gave an overview of the industry, highlighted where the opportunities are and provided the key strategies every business needs to adopt to buck the trend and create sustainable growth. □

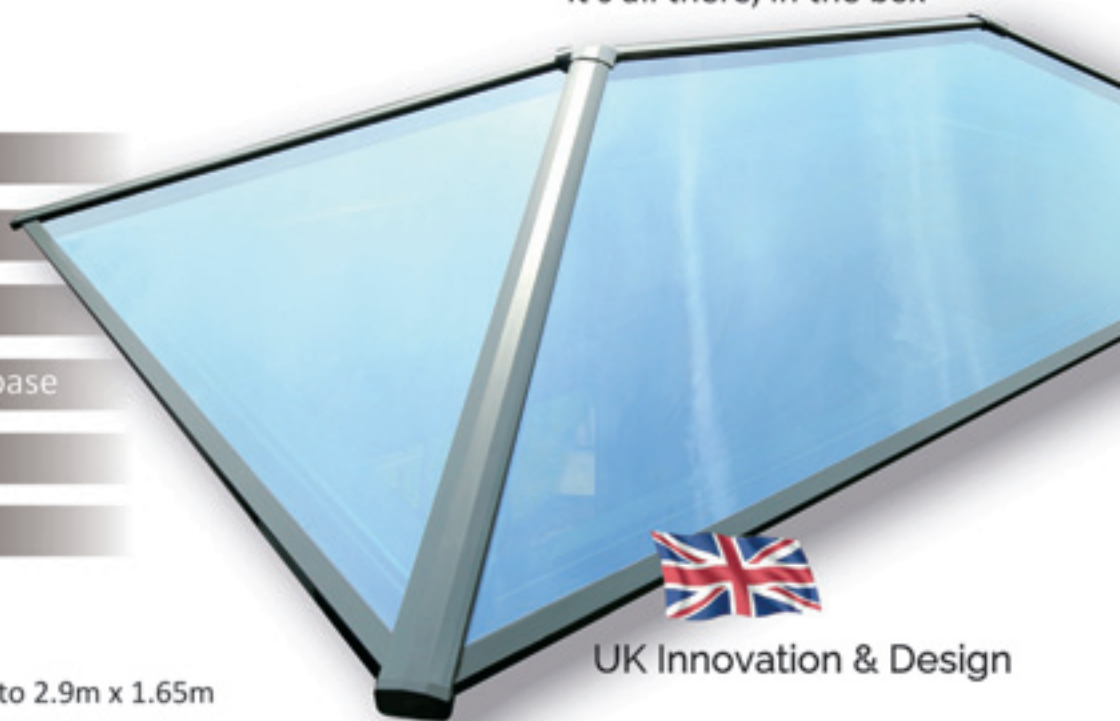
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Let's talk money

With installers and stockists at the sharp end of the market facing squeezed margins and persistently sluggish retail demand, it's no surprise that most conversations between fabricators and trade customers at the moment still start with price writes Martin Nettleton, managing director at Euroglaze

I've been in trade fabrication for enough years to know that price will always matter. In fact, I've spent 20+ years building Euroglaze into one of the most efficient, lean manufacturing environments in the industry so that we can always be amongst the most competitive on price as well as on lead times. But I still don't believe that the price you pay for a window or door dictates the profit you make on a job. It's the total amount of time you spend on that job that is by far the biggest factor.

Installers don't lose profit on a job because their window is a few pounds more expensive per frame; they lose profit if a unit is manufactured to the wrong size, it arrives scratched or damaged, a delivery is incomplete, or they have to spend 40 minutes on the phone to their supplier trying to resolve a problem.

All these kinds of errors waste time that could be spent on site and often even trigger a return visit. And calculating how much that time and revisit is actually worth to an installation business is key to understanding just how much profit is being lost.

If you take a two man fitting team on £250 each per day for example, every half day wasted costs the business a minimum of £250 between them. Just a couple of wasted half days per month adds up to at least £6,000 a year. And the cost isn't just the labour – it is the extra admin time, additional fuel and travel time and disruption to the rest of the week's schedule, not to mention the knock-on effects of rebooked customers, postponements for other trades and reputational damage.

Those wasted hours aren't just an inconvenience, they represent real margin erosion.

As I see it, fabricators who aren't focused on zero manufacturing errors, zero quality rejections and zero incomplete deliveries can effectively be costing their customers money.



Martin Nettleton

At Euroglaze, our commitment to lean manufacturing and a 'quality circles' philosophy embedded right across the business ensures that lead times are as short as three days on some products and there are close to zero QC rejections in our factory.

As a long-established trade fabricator of Rehau and Liniar frames with capacity for 800 frames per week at our factory in Barnsley, our competitive advantage comes from the fact that we offer our customers what is probably the ultimate in predictability. Our stockists and installers know that orders from Euroglaze will arrive in full and on time (our 2026 OTIF for white PVC-

U frames is 100% on a 3-day lead time), they won't have to worry about errors, and our customer service team will respond quickly via a phone call, WhatsApp, email or even video to resolve any issues. When new customers come on board with us, we get lots of feedback on how quick and easy we are to deal with.

When they buy from us they are buying confidence that we will deliver what we promise and, crucially, won't waste any of their valuable time. □

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Policarpio, M.D

Stuga Machinery and Stürtz GmbH have announced the appointment of Domenico Policarpio as managing director of Stuga and as a member of the company's board of directors.

Policarpio has more than a decade of experience in business development, commercial leadership, and strategic management across the industrial machinery and advanced manufacturing sectors. Prior to joining Stuga, he held senior roles within the Voilap Group, where he played a key role in strengthening international partnerships and supporting market development across multiple regions.

As managing director, Policarpio will oversee Stuga's operational and commercial activities, with a focus on supporting customers, strengthening the company's engineering capability and continuing to develop the product range. His appointment also reinforces the connection between Stuga's UK manufacturing expertise and the wider resources, technology and industrial capability of the Voilap Group, bringing together the strengths of companies within the Voilap Group such as Emmegi and Elumatec.

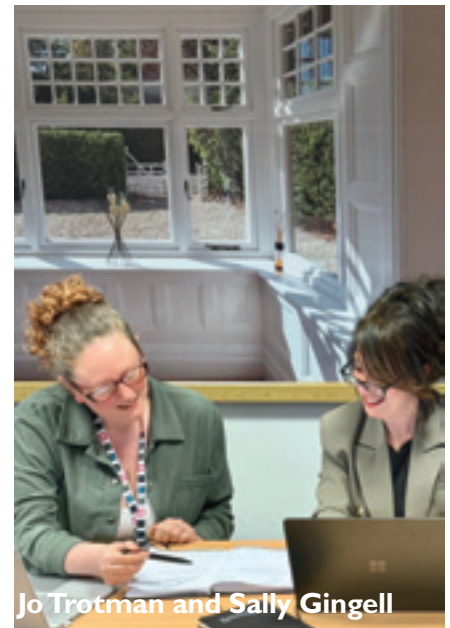


Domenic Policarpio

Policarpio says: "I am honoured to take on the role of managing director at Stuga Machinery. The company has a proud heritage and a strong position in the UK market. My priority will be to ensure continuity and to build on that legacy alongside the talented team here at Stuga." □

Trotman and Gingell

The Residence Collection, has bolstered its senior team with two internal promotions. Jo Trotman has been promoted to sales and marketing manager. Having spent the last five years with The Residence Collection following a 23-year tenure at REHAU, Trotman will now take on increased responsibility for the brand's market positioning. Her role will focus on working closely with brand Ambassadors to enhance lead generation and support the launch of a new installer scheme. Trotman says: "I'm incredibly excited to be out on the road



Jo Trotman and Sally Gingell

meeting our customers and seeing how our support turns into tangible achievements for our fabricators."

In another appointment Sally Gingell, becomes national sales manager. With 25 years' of experience, Gingell's new role is centered on aligning the business with its fabricator network to ensure a true partnership model. She says: "The industry has changed significantly, and brand names are now leading the way as consumers demand higher quality and performance.

"Success over the next 12 months for me is about building those deep-rooted relationships. I'm looking forward to being part of the business plan for every one of our fabricators, ensuring we capture growth opportunities and navigate the changing market together." □

Supportive partnerships

Purplex Marketing has expanded its partnership-led growth strategy with commercial director Sam Cross taking on an enhanced role focused on developing strategic industry partnerships.

Cross will continue in his role as commercial director while leading the agency's growing network of partnerships with manufacturers, trade organisations, accreditation schemes and industry bodies across the construction and glazing sectors.

The move reflects increasing demand from suppliers and trade organisations seeking to support their customers with professional marketing, lead generation and business growth.

Cross says: "Across the construction and building products sector, we are seeing more suppliers and trade bodies being asked by their customers for help with marketing and lead generation. These organisations want to add value,



Sam Cross

but marketing isn't their core business.

"My role is focused on building partnerships that allow them to support their customers' growth in a meaningful way, while creating sustainable routes to market for Purplex." □



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Welcome to the team

Norwich-based fabricator Genius PVC Trade Frames has announced the appointment of Karl Williamson as sales and marketing director.

Williamson joins Genius from Profine UK, where he spent four years as sales director working across the Kömmerling brand. Prior to that, he held the role of area sales manager at Window Ware.

Speaking about his decision to join Genius, Williamson says: "Genius was a customer of mine at Profine, so I already knew the business well. They have a clear understanding of what works and what doesn't and seeing how that experience has been channelled into the growth Genius has achieved, made this a very exciting opportunity." □



Karl Williamson

Abacus, part of the Contollo Group, has appointed Steve Kenny as director of project management and Paul Camac as director of cost management.

Both join the Contollo Group from global consultancy Aecom, bringing extensive experience of delivering complex construction projects across the North West and beyond, working with public and private sector clients.

Their appointments support Abacus' continued growth and investment in capability following its move into Contollo Group, which has brought together other complementary built environment consultancies including MBA, TACE, ESP and, most recently, KAM.

Endurance Doors has appointed Thomas Stockton as a business development manager.

Stockton joins Endurance with extensive sales and account manager experience. He has previously worked for leading and global companies operating across a number of industries and markets including the automotive sector, commercial catering and audio branding.

Stockton will be responsible for a territory covering northern England. His remit will entail supporting and growing Endurance's installer partner network within this region. Stockton says: "The chance to join Endurance Doors was a genuinely exciting opportunity, especially given the brand's standing in the market and the quality of its product range."



Thomas Stockton

"I am looking forward to building on these achievements and to delivering added value to installers within my area, helping them to grow and succeed." □



Mike Perry, Paul Camac, Steve Kenny, Ellis Goodfellow

Glazpart has appointed Artin Hakimi as senior product design engineer.

Hakimi, a mechanical design engineer, has extensive experience in product development across safety equipment, fire detection systems, robotics, and consumer products.

As well as mechanical design, Hakimi's specialisms include injection moulding, design for manufacturability as well as delivering innovative and cost-effective solutions from conceptualisation through to production.

Mark O'Mahoney, Glazpart operations and technical director says: "Artin joins Glazpart's in house design team in a senior designer's role, bringing his knowledge and industry experience



Mark O'Mahoney Artin Hakimi

to ensure we continue to develop, and enhance our product design team's capabilities for all our customers. "Hakimi collaborative and progressive approach will align our business objectives in giving customers a one-stop-shop, from design, prototyping through to manufacture." □

Both directors have previously worked with several of Abacus' existing clients, helping to deepen established relationships while also supporting new opportunities across residential, commercial and mixed-use development, regionally and nationwide.

Steve Kenny joins as director of project management, where he will lead the continued development of Contollo's project management capability, supporting clients through the delivery of complex, high-value schemes. Paul Camac takes up the role of director of cost management, strengthening the firm's commercial and cost advisory services. □

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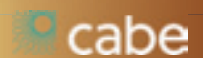
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Coffee and a chat

Over the years, it's become a truism in marketing that the noise never stops. Social media, PR, SEO, targeted adverts and automated emails all compete for attention and promise to generate leads. At Purplex Marketing, we spend every day navigating this highly digitised landscape, ensuring our campaigns hit their targets on time and on brief. Despite this, the foundation of our work has never changed

Human interaction remains at the heart of what we do because meeting people in person creates opportunities that screens alone cannot replicate. A conversation in real life flows differently. People are more open, more candid and far more willing to give their time.

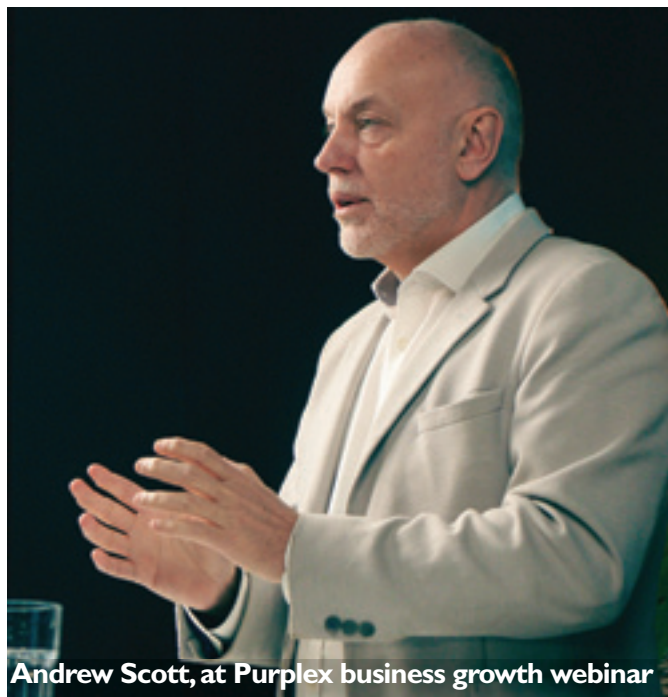
Some may argue that face-to-face engagement can be expensive and time-consuming. It is true that it requires focus and investment, but when approached with clarity and purpose the rewards are considerable. A brief discussion over coffee can reveal what truly drives a business, uncover frustrations and highlight ambitions, insights that are rarely communicated through email or report. These moments offer a level of understanding that can't be captured in a digital dashboard or an automated marketing report.

Purplex has long championed the value of face-to-face interaction. We created and developed the Glazing Summit as an industry conference for senior leaders to debate the issues shaping the sector. Bringing competitors, suppliers and advisers together sparked conversations that simply would not have happened elsewhere. The format encouraged candid discussion and allowed participants to explore challenges and opportunities in a way that is difficult to replicate online. Gatherings such as this, alongside other events and roundtable discussions we run, provide a forum for meaningful exchange and help forge connections that endure. For example, we'll be at the Installer Show in Birmingham this June, following a successful appearance last year. And even smaller, informal get-togethers or charity events offer similar benefits, allowing people to build trust and confidence in a relaxed environment.

Being present in person also sharpens perspective. Speaking directly with installers, fabricators and system houses keeps our advice grounded in the reality of the industry. It provides immediate feedback on messaging, highlights gaps and opportunities and helps spot emerging trends long before they appear in formal reports. These insights help us tailor our work to the real needs of clients and maintain a perspective that purely digital engagement cannot offer.

The impact of face-to-face engagement is rarely instant. One short conversation may lead to an enquiry months later, a chance introduction could develop into a strategic partnership, and a meeting that begins with a simple exchange of ideas can evolve into long-term collaboration. In industries like glazing and construction, relationships drive decisions. Confidence in suppliers, trust in leadership and personal rapport all influence the choices businesses make. Digital tools support this process but cannot replace the reassurance of meeting someone in person.

Face-to-face interaction demands effort, but the returns in understanding, trust and momentum are unmistakable.



Andrew Scott, at Purplex business growth webinar

Whether it is a client meeting, a roundtable discussion, a seminar or an exhibition stand, there is no substitute for sitting down and talking directly. In a world dominated by screens, this human element remains a cornerstone of successful marketing. It also encourages us to listen more carefully, to respond with greater empathy and to approach challenges with insight rather than assumption.

Ultimately, what sets face-to-face engagement apart is its ability to build connection in a way that digital channels cannot. It allows businesses to understand one another on a personal level, to identify shared goals and to establish credibility. Whether we are discussing product innovations, exploring sector challenges or simply getting to know people, those conversations form the basis of trust and cooperation. They create momentum that endures beyond the initial meeting and often shape long-term success.

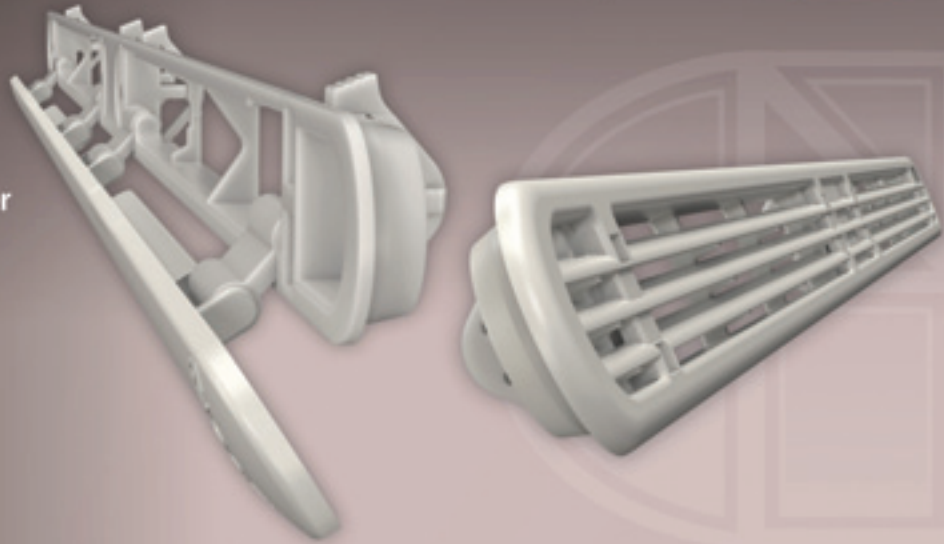
At Purplex Marketing, we continue to prioritise these interactions because they are integral to the work we do. Every meeting, every discussion and every event reinforces our belief that marketing is most effective when it starts with people. Screens can facilitate communication, but they cannot replace the confidence, insight and reassurance that come from direct engagement. In today's digital world, face-to-face interaction is still a necessity for meaningful connection and lasting results. □

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Real-life risk reduction

As Module D is seemingly left out of a landmark new homes benchmarking report, Nigel Headford, Chief Executive at the Council for Aluminium in Building, explains why ‘whole life should mean whole life’ when it comes to Whole Life Carbon calculations.

The launch of the *Future Homes Hub (FHH) Whole Life Carbon (WLC) Benchmarking Report* is a welcome first step towards providing developers with the real-life data to both understand and reduce carbon in new homes.

Building a shared dataset of WLC assessments to measure the current performance of new homes more accurately, the FHH report references established frameworks such as EN 15978 and the RICS whole life carbon assessment (WLCA) for the Built Environment (2nd Edition).

Module D matters

The RICS guidance states that ‘...a full [WLC] assessment will also include Module D,’ which concerns the carbon impacts and savings that occur after a building’s life ends, when materials are reused, recycled, or recovered.

It goes further in Section 3.1, confirming: ‘For new-build assets, either buildings or infrastructure assets/civil engineering works, all life cycle stages must be assessed, including Module D.’

Despite these clear endorsements of the need for its inclusion, Annex C of the FHH WLC benchmarking report indicates that Module D has, instead, been ruled out.

Module D considers the possibility that the materials used in a building’s construction, such as aluminium or steel, can be recycled and used instead of virgin product in the future.

As circular economy principles gain traction in built environment policy, and as environmental product declarations (EPDs) to EN 15804+A2 now include Module D data as mandatory, excluding this stage means the long-term environmental value of durable, recyclable materials is overlooked.

Without Module D, there is no way to ensure that the new homes of today do not become the waste of tomorrow.

Risk of distortion

Materials designed for circularity may appear more carbon intensive if only upfront (A1–A5) and end-of-life processing (C1–C4) stages are assessed. The benefits of reuse and recycling are omitted, potentially impacting material choices and underestimating long-term performance.

While we recognise the pressure to balance technical accuracy with simplicity to encourage participation in schemes like the FHH WLC benchmarking report, at the end of the day, we need to get it right – and not lead people to underestimate the complexity of WLC.

As benchmarking becomes more influential, consistency across methodologies is essential. Aligning with EN 15978 and the RICS WLCA ensures both comparability and credibility.

The Council for Aluminium in Building (CAB) fully supports data-capture initiatives and considers the FHH’s benchmarking efforts so far to be a constructive starting point. But we urgently need clarification of the methodology to ensure reliability and reflect true whole-life impacts.

‘Life should mean life’ is a phrase often used in support of whole-life tariffs for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes, and when it comes to whole life carbon (WLC), the same sentiment applies. In this case, that means the inclusion of Module D. □



Nigel Headford

“‘Life should mean life’ – In this case, that means the inclusion of Module D.”

For more information about CAB visit www.c-a-b.org.uk.
Email enquiries@c-a-b.org.uk
Call the team on 01453 828851

WELCOME

Entering the scifi

The Council for Aluminium in Building (CAB) welcomed members to the National Space Centre in Leicester on 5th March for its Spring Forum 2026. It was a day of industry insight, discussion and networking. Ed Humphreys reports

Set against the backdrop of one of the UK’s most iconic science and innovation venues, this year’s forum combined forward-thinking content with valuable opportunities for members to connect and collaborate.

The afternoon business forum took place in the planetarium, where delegates explored one of the most talked-about topics currently shaping the business landscape: artificial intelligence.

Carly Grant of Thinkivity led a session examining the pros and cons of AI, focusing on how artificial intelligence could impact construction businesses in practical terms.

Her presentation prompted lively discussion among members, who shared perspectives on opportunity, risk and implementation within their own organisations.

Alongside the keynote session, members received updates from CAB covering ongoing technical, regulatory and sustainability workstreams.

With continued change across competency requirements, sustainability priorities and the wider regulatory landscape, the forum provided an important platform for members to stay informed and contribute to the conversation.

CAB chief executive Nigel Headford said the event reflected the association’s commitment to delivering relevant, high-value forums for its membership.

“Our spring forum is about bringing members together to focus on the issues that matter most to their businesses,” he said.

“AI is already influencing how companies operate, and it was invaluable to explore both its potential and its limitations in a practical, balanced way.

“At the same time, we continue to support members through significant regulatory and technical developments. Events like this ensure our community remains informed, connected and prepared for what lies ahead.”



Following the business forum, delegates moved into the exhibition area for a drinks reception and formal dinner, with the National Space Centre providing a memorable setting for further networking.

Members also heard an after-dinner address from former Leicester City and

England goalkeeper Peter Shilton OBE, who shared reflections from his sporting career and insights on leadership, resilience and high performance.

The spring forum builds on a strong programme of CAB events over the past year, including the 2025 technical conference at Loughborough University and previous forums that have spotlighted sustainability, aluminium recycling and the Building Safety Act.

CAB’s 2026 events programme will continue to focus on regulation, innovation and best practice across the aluminium in building sector.

Headford said: “The National Space Centre proved to be an inspiring venue for a forward-looking event. It was fantastic to see such strong engagement from members throughout the day, and we look forward to building on this momentum at future CAB events.” □

For more information about the CAB events programme, visit www.c-a-b.org.uk/cab-events-programme email enquiries@c-a-b.org.uk, or call 01453 828851

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Under selling, labour falling

Recruiting skilled workers within the fenestration industry is becoming increasingly challenging and those within the sector are aware that it needs to do more to attract talent



Martin Hitchin, CEO at Rehau, says that the industry is more innovative and self-reliant than those outside of the sector give it credit for. “But,” he says, “it must do more to highlight the breadth of innovation, technical expertise and career pathways it offers if it is to address the growing skills shortage.”

Fenestration is still widely overlooked by young people and those looking to change careers, who often opt for more traditional and better promoted engineering, defence and construction roles.

This, according to Hitchin, presents both a challenge and an opportunity. He believes that with the right engagement, the industry has the potential to attract a new generation of skilled professionals who are looking for hands-on, problem-solving roles that combine high levels of detail with real-world application.

Rehau has been actively involved in supporting skills development through its role with the New Model Institute for Technology and Engineering (NMITE) in Hereford. NMITE offers a practical, project-based engineering degree designed to better reflect the needs of the modern industry.

“NMITE’s approach aligns closely with the reality of working life,” says Hitchin. “Students are hands-on from day one, learning how to apply engineering principles rather than just studying them in theory. That practical mindset is exactly what the fenestration industry needs but explaining that to people outside the sector is where we fall short.”

Through its close links with NMITE, Rehau has seen first-hand how exposure to industry can shape career choices. Many students enter engineering degrees without a clear understanding of fenestration but once they are introduced to the sector, they can see the depth and variety of opportunities available.

One such example is Dan James, a recent NMITE graduate who joined Rehau last year after completing his studies. As someone interested in hands-on engineering and problem solving, James was drawn to a role that allowed him to apply technical knowledge in a practical environment.

“I wanted to work somewhere where I could really understand how things work, not just at a surface level,” he

says. “At Rehau, there’s a high level of technical detail, and a real emphasis on learning and development. It’s a great fit for people like me, who enjoy understanding systems inside out.”

James’ day-to-day role involves responding to customer technical queries, supporting complex project journeys, and assisting the technical product management team. He believes these varied responsibilities demonstrate just how diverse roles in the fenestration sector can be.

“Before joining the industry, my only knowledge of the fenestration industry came from *White Gold*, he says. “In reality, there’s a great mix of creativity, engineering, digital tools and collaboration across international teams. It’s not a static or boring industry at all.”

During the graduate scheme, James was supported through structured training, including opportunities to visit facilities overseas. He spent time in Germany, as well as visits to sites in Poland and Mexico with his graduate cohort, helping him build technical understanding while forming strong relationships across the wider Rehau business.

“Seeing how products are made, meeting people across the organisation and understanding different markets makes a huge difference,” says James. “It gives you a much broader perspective and helps you develop confidence quickly.” Rehau believes the industry must be more proactive in promoting itself to students and career-changers. The company offers process and engineering roles to apprentices at its plant in Blaenau, Ffestiniog and recycling facility in Runcorn. Since 2024, it has partnered with Building our Skills which is doing vital work to try and address the skills gap in the industry. Initiatives like these, as well as greater engagement at job fairs, stronger links with educational institutions, and clearer messaging around what a career in the fenestration industry looks like could all help shift perceptions.

“There’s a tendency to undersell ourselves – fenestration is innovative, resilient and full of opportunity for people who want to build meaningful, technical careers”, says Hitchin. “We need to be more vocal about that if we want to secure the skills our industry depends on.” □

www.rehau.com/uk/en

It's a goal for mental health

Nearly seven in ten (69%) tradespeople say they experience mental health issues Trade Direct Insurance is launching a new mental health and wellbeing support service, accessible to policy holders. The firm recently partnered with Tradie Events to sponsor a charity football match in Port Talbot, Wales in March

The new mental health and wellbeing service aiming to tackle the mental health crisis affecting tradespeople comes amid an ongoing mental health epidemic amongst tradespeople, with new research from Trade Direct revealing that nearly seven in ten (69%) of tradies are experiencing mental health problems related to their work and personal life. Over a third (34%) of those affected stated that their mental health problems were at least partially caused by their work.

To help tradies take positive steps to address their mental health, new and existing policy holders of a Zurich Tradesman Policy with Trade Direct Insurance, will now be able to access Zurich Support Services for no additional cost. The service offers benefits, including mental health support, professional counselling services, legal and financial guidance. It also offers work-life balance support, such as support with childcare, elder care and daily living help.

One of the leading benefits is the mental health counselling, which includes five confidential sessions with a qualified counsellor per year, as well as assistance with referral for further support. 24/7 emotional support is also available, for issues related to stress, anxiety, depression, bereavement as well as other conditions.

As part of their wider efforts to boost awareness of the mental health crisis, Trade Direct Insurance is supporting Tradie Events, a South Wales-based charity, which runs a series of charity football matches for tradespeople.

The event in Port Talbot in March, was attended by former professional footballer, Lee Trundle, as well as trade influencers including The Welsh Erection Boys, Benchin Brickly and Ry O'Sullivan.

Patricia Gardiner, sales and marketing director at Trade Direct Insurance, says: "Tradespeople often carry enormous responsibility managing customers, materials, cash flow and tight deadlines whilst also dealing with the physical demands of the work. When you layer financial uncertainty and tool theft risks on top, the pressure can become too much to bear. That's why it is vital that tradespeople receive as much support as possible.

"What's particularly concerning is how normalised this pressure has become. Many tradies simply push through stress because they feel they have to, but sustained pressure without support can have long-term consequences. We are proud to offer tradespeople access to the one of the most comprehensive support services available, helping them to manage all of life's challenges, whether related to their work, personal life, or any other challenges that life may throw at them."

Clair Evans, executive director at Tradie Events, says: "This match was about more than just the game, it was about celebrating the trades, bringing the community together, and shining a light on mental health in an industry where stress and pressure are often normalised.



Patricia Gardiner



Clair Evans

We've been overwhelmed by the engagement and support so far, with over £10,000 raised to date.

"Events like this are central to our ethos at Tradie Events, creating spaces where people can connect, enjoy themselves, and raise awareness of issues that often go unspoken. It's fantastic to see local tradespeople, families, and supporters coming together for such a positive cause, and we believe this match inspired even more conversation and support around wellbeing in the trades."

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Breaking down the barriers

The Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF) has been intensifying its efforts to champion high-quality apprenticeships and promote the glass and glazing industry as a credible, long-term career pathway. Through political engagement, collaborative sector work, and hands-on participation in major apprenticeship events, the GGF is reinforcing its commitment to nurturing the next generation of talent





Chris Beede, head of advocacy and stakeholder relations

As the UK construction sector faces a growing skills shortage alongside regulatory reform, attention is increasingly turning not only to how many apprentices enter the workforce, but how well they are trained once they do.

A central focus of recent activity has seen the GGF continue the work of the Apprenticeship Coalition, a 31-member group led by the British Woodworking Federation (BWF).

The coalition has been engaging with government in response to proposed reforms to the apprenticeship system, including greater flexibility in end-point assessment and the forthcoming transition from the Apprenticeship Levy to the Growth & Skills Levy.

Chris Beedel from the GGF has been raising concerns with Neil Coyle MP, highlighting that proposed reforms risk diluting essential competence standards if independent assessment requirements are weakened.

With glass and glazing playing a critical role in building safety, the federation has warned that lowering assessment rigour could reduce installer competence and reduce compliance with the Building Safety Act.

“Encouraging more people into apprenticeships is something the industry fully supports. We need skilled individuals entering the sector to secure its future,” says John Mannell, technical officer at the GGF. “However, competence must remain at the centre of any reform. Independent assessment provides assurance that individuals are properly trained, objectively assessed, and capable of delivering safe and compliant work.”

For the GGF, the issue is not resistance to change, but the need to ensure balance.

“Flexibility within the system can help increase participation,” says Mannell. “But flexibility must not come at the expense of consistent and independently verified standards. In safety-critical sectors such as glazing and fenestration, public confidence depends on it.”

To safeguard standards, the GGF continues to push for constructive dialogue with government and has invited Neil Coyle MP to meet at the GGF offices to explore practical solutions that encourage apprenticeship uptake without compromising safety.

As a recognised voice of the glass and glazing industry, the federation believes it has a responsibility to ensure policymakers understand the practical implications of reform for those delivering regulated building elements.

Alongside its policy work, the GGF is actively promoting careers within the sector at major events across the UK.



John Mannell

In January, the organisation took part in the National Apprenticeship and Further Education Event in Liverpool. The team spent the day engaging with more than 200 students considering future career options.

The GGF was able to showcase the breadth of opportunities within glazing, from installation and processing to specialist and creative glass disciplines.

The enthusiasm shared throughout the day reinforced a common message from employers: ‘many who enter the sector build long and rewarding careers within it’.

Momentum continued in February at the CITB NI Apprenticeship Event in Belfast, where the GGF supported employer members such as Mourne Windows & Doors and Turkington Windows.

The strong turnout highlighted both the appetite among young people to explore vocational routes and the sector’s commitment to attracting new talent.

These outreach efforts sit alongside the GGF’s Skilled Pathways for Trainees programme, delivered via the GGF Training Hub. The initiative provides structured routes into the industry, offering recognised qualifications and clear competency benchmarks to support both employers and apprentices.

By combining advocacy at government level with practical support for training delivery, the federation aims to ensure that workforce growth is matched by professional competence.

For the GGF, building talent and protecting standards are inseparable priorities.

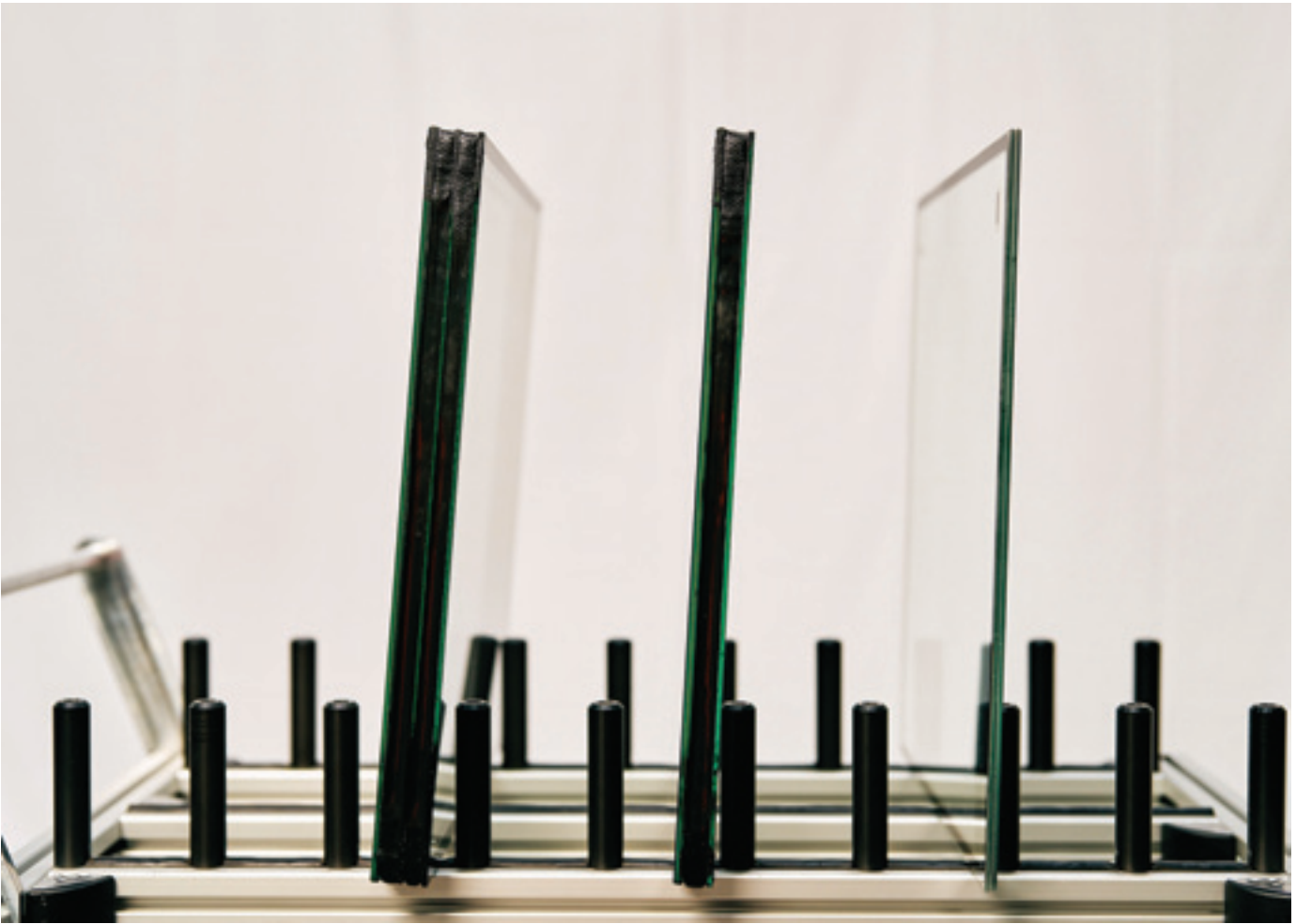
“We cannot talk about strengthening the industry’s future without investing in the people who uphold its standards,” says Mannell. “The GGF will continue working collaboratively with government and industry partners to ensure apprenticeship reform supports growth, while maintaining the competence framework that keeps our buildings safe and our sector trusted.” □

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At the DACH+HOLZ trade fair in Cologne, Velux unveiled its new vacuum insulating glass technology – a product designed to take the performance of roof windows to the next level.

Developed in partnership with Guardian Glass, the technology is specifically engineered for roof windows – a far more demanding application than facades due to higher loads and structural requirements. It provides high thermal and acoustic insulation with a reduced CO₂ footprint, contributing to more sustainable buildings and improved indoor comfort.

This new technology allows Velux to replace the space between glass panes with a vacuum that significantly reduces heat transfer. This enables excellent insulation performance within a much thinner and lighter construction compared to standard triple glazing. Instead of separating panes with argon or krypton gas, this solution uses a vacuum that effectively minimises heat loss.

As a result, the vacuum insulating glass achieves the performance of triple glazing in a slimmer, lighter design. A subtle, dotted pattern, created by tiny spacers between the panes, is characteristic of this technology but does not obstruct the view. Velux will introduce the technology in two variants: a single vacuum glazing solution and a hybrid version.

Single vacuum glazing

The single vacuum glazing variant is an ultra-thin double pane that delivers thermal performance comparable to triple glazing. By eliminating the third pane, this new solution is between 1.5 and 5 kg lighter per MK06 unit (depending on the full window construction),

making installation easier.

In addition, it offers approximately 30% lower CO₂ footprint compared to an insulating glass unit. A roof window equipped with this glazing achieves insulation value of $U_w = 1.0 \text{ W}/(\text{m}^2\text{K})$. The difference becomes clear when comparing thickness: this new glass measures only 11.5 mm, versus 26.4 mm for standard double glazing and 38 mm for standard triple glazing with similar insulation performance.

It will debut in the UK and Ireland in 2026 in the Velux Heritage range.

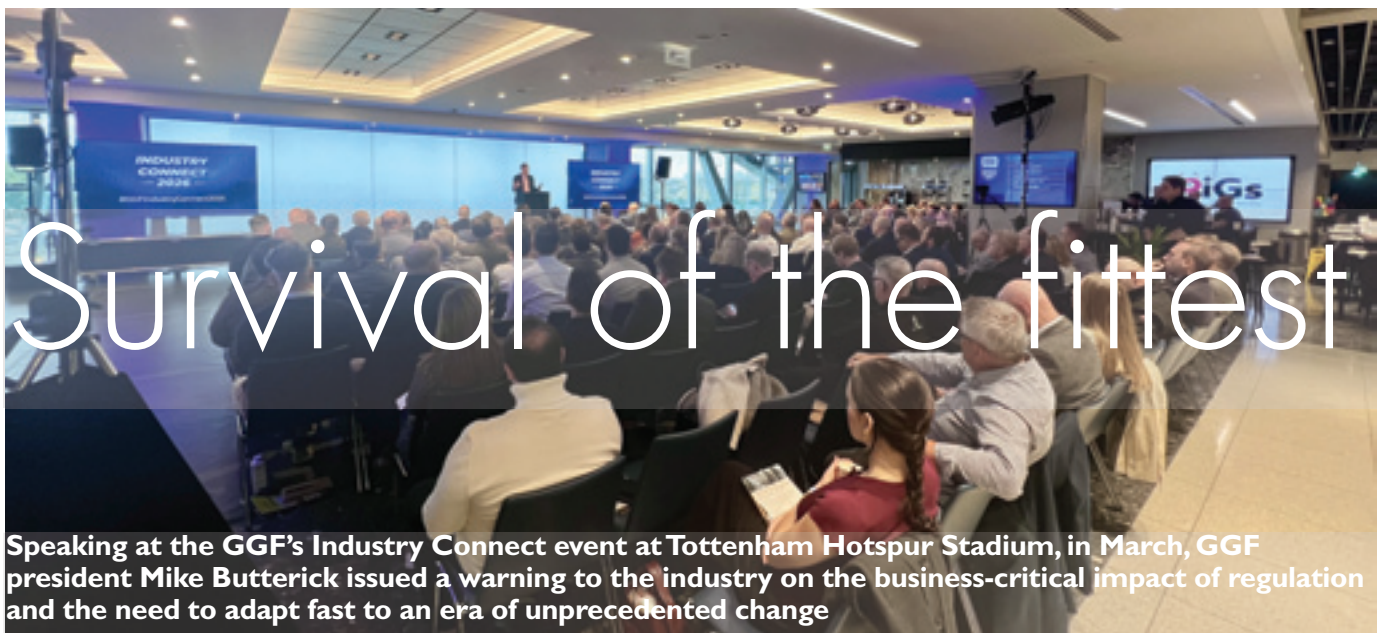
Vacuum hybrid technology

The hybrid version combines the vacuum double glazing with a third pane separated by a gas filling.

With a U_w value of $0.83 \text{ W}/(\text{m}^2\text{K})$ and a sound insulation rating of 38 dB, the hybrid solution offers high energy efficiency and acoustic comfort, comparable with the company's most efficient glazing, IGU 67. Velux says that it can reduce carbon emissions by 5% compared with a full roof window and by 12% compared with the glass alone.

"We are very pleased to introduce this product innovation at DACH+HOLZ. It demonstrates our ongoing commitment to sustainable construction and living and confirms that our product innovations are future-proof, designed to meet even the most stringent upcoming requirements for window thermal insulation values," says Tina Mayn, executive vice president for products and innovation at the Velux Group. □

www.velux.co.uk



Speaking at the GGF's Industry Connect event at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, in March, GGF president Mike Butterick issued a warning to the industry on the business-critical impact of regulation and the need to adapt fast to an era of unprecedented change

Butterick said that the regulatory framework was now “more complicated and challenging than it has ever been before”, and that the sector must treat compliance and engagement with policymakers as core strategic priorities, not a back-office task.

He said that the Future Homes Standard was just the tip of the iceberg, with even bigger changes for the sector coming down the line with an expected revision of Document Q.

He said: “You need to be aware that there is a conversation ongoing that will potentially update and extend Document Q away from just new build housing in England and apply it to accessible replacement windows and doors.

“Now that’s big. It’s actually got the potential to have a bigger impact on what we do as an industry than the Future Homes Standard. Whatever the granular detail that lands in these regulations, our products are part of the solution.”

Speaking in front of an audience of 250 GGF and FENSA members, Butterick said that effective engagement with government was more important than ever.

“In the GGF Consultation Response Group, we have a collective strength and expertise that does not exist anywhere else in our industry. Government recognises our expertise and our leadership, and it means that we can get access to the conversations that are so important in terms of making that influence,” he explained.

He underlined that rising regulatory expectations come with serious consequences for those who fail to meet them. Citing a recent Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) report, he noted it revealed a ‘deep structural compliance issue’ in the sector.

“Compliance is not a tick box exercise any more,” he said, “it is far more important than that, because it is the difference between leadership and liability, it is the difference between quality and risk. The OPSS has the power to stop businesses if they are not compliant. That is disruption none of us need, particularly now.”

Butterick advocated for better point of sale conversations with the end consumer to support them in selecting products which made homes warmer, more comfortable, secure and to help prevent overheating.



Mike Butterick speaks at GGF's Industry Connect

He also highlighted the importance of sustainability and product circularity, including as an opportunity to attract new talent to the sector, by demonstrating real environmental impact.

“When you look at our industry through that lens, we are helping to deliver the net zero plan and the energy independence plan that the country has. We can be proud that we are part of that solution.

“As we replace the 80 million windows and doors in the housing stock that do not comply with current regulations, we have to focus on the quality and the performance of those products, and position the value and benefits like never before,” he said.

This built on a theme first raised by newly-appointed GGF director, Lauren Mawford, who framed the day around the theme of change and the need to drive up standards across the supply chain.

“When we work together effectively, we do not just respond to change, we shape it,” she said. “The future of this industry is not something that happens to us, it is something that we all build together.”

Mawford said that the new Industry Connect format itself had been deliberately reimagined to reflect this drive for higher standards and modernisation.

“We decided this year we were going to step outside of the traditional format and take a big leap. We wanted to modernise this event and reshape it into something more dynamic, more engaging and more of a celebration of our industry,” she said. □

www.ggf.org.uk

Trust that pays off

Double R Glass and Roofing Systems has renewed its service contract with Flat Glass Solutions (FGS) for its Yinrui glass cutting tables after three years of successful performance in production.

The IGU manufacturer originally selected the Yinrui tables, supplied by FGS, after recognising that they delivered comparable performance to established European brands – but at significantly better value.

“For the same investment we would have spent on one traditional brand, we were able to purchase two Yinrui cutting tables, both with edge deletion and automatic double-sided glass loaders,” says Neil Spicer, operations director at Double R. “There’s been no perceptible difference in performance or product quality.”

Initially cautious about investing in Chinese-manufactured equipment, Double R relied on the expertise of FGS managing director David (Oz) Cahill and his team to ensure the solution would meet the company’s production requirements. Double R produces around 1,000 sealed units per day.

“The cutting tables are the engine room of the factory,” says Spicer. “Making the wrong decision could have serious implications. But the trust we placed in FGS and its understanding of our cutting requirements has absolutely paid off.”

FGS worked closely with Double R to plan and install the tables within tight factory constraints, designing the



Neil Spicer, Double R ops. director, with David (Oz) Cahill, FGS (MD)

layout to within 100mm tolerances to ensure safe glass deliveries and uninterrupted production.

“The positioning and integration of equipment is a fundamental part of our service,” says David Cahill. “By carefully planning around Double R’s operational parameters, we ensured the tables were manufactured to their exact specification and installed without disrupting production.” □

www.flatglassolutions.com

BiGG enlightenment

Blinds in Glass Group (BiGG) is working with Regency Glass, the manufacturer of Regency Triple featuring Corning Enlighten Glass.

The offering strengthens BiGG’s overall market position as a leading specialist distributor and enables Regency Glass to extend its reach to a broader customer base that requires smaller-order quantities. The collaboration is specifically designed to provide a service to window manufacturers operating south of Birmingham, who require smaller, more flexible order quantities of Regency Triple. Regency Glass will continue to deliver to its larger retail installers, manufacturing and housebuilder customers across the UK.

“From the beginning BiGG has focused on delivering real quality,” commented managing director of BiGG, Ian Woolley. “Over the years we have developed a strong distribution network from our Coventry HQ, delivering our range of integral blinds, IGUs and residential front door ranges, to our longstanding and loyal customer base. Our reputation for reliability and quality positions us ideally for working with Regency Glass, which can grow its own sales through BiGG with confidence”.

By leveraging its established logistics infrastructure and industry expertise, BiGG will provide an additional efficient and reliable route to market for Regency Triple, Regency Glass’ ultra-thin glass triple-glazed unit. This ensures that more manufacturers and installers can access



Regency’s lightweight solution, which offers a lower carbon footprint compared to traditional soda-lime glass.

“Regency Triple featuring Corning Enlighten Glass is a premium solution, and we are proud to make it more accessible to fabricators who may not require large volume orders but still expect the highest standards,” says Wes Clarkson, head of sales, Regency Glass. “BiGG’s experience in the market means we understand exactly what smaller installers and manufacturers need – flexibility, reliability and products they can trust.” □

www.blindsinglassgroup.com



A wreck'ning begins

A ceremony held recently officially marked the start of structural demolition works at The Priory Centre, as part of the £20M redevelopment of the Priory Shopping Centre on Bridge Street in Worksop.

The scheme is being delivered by Midlands contractor, G F Tomlinson, on behalf of Bassetlaw District Council, under The Medium Works Framework which Pagabo manage on behalf of The Education Alliance.

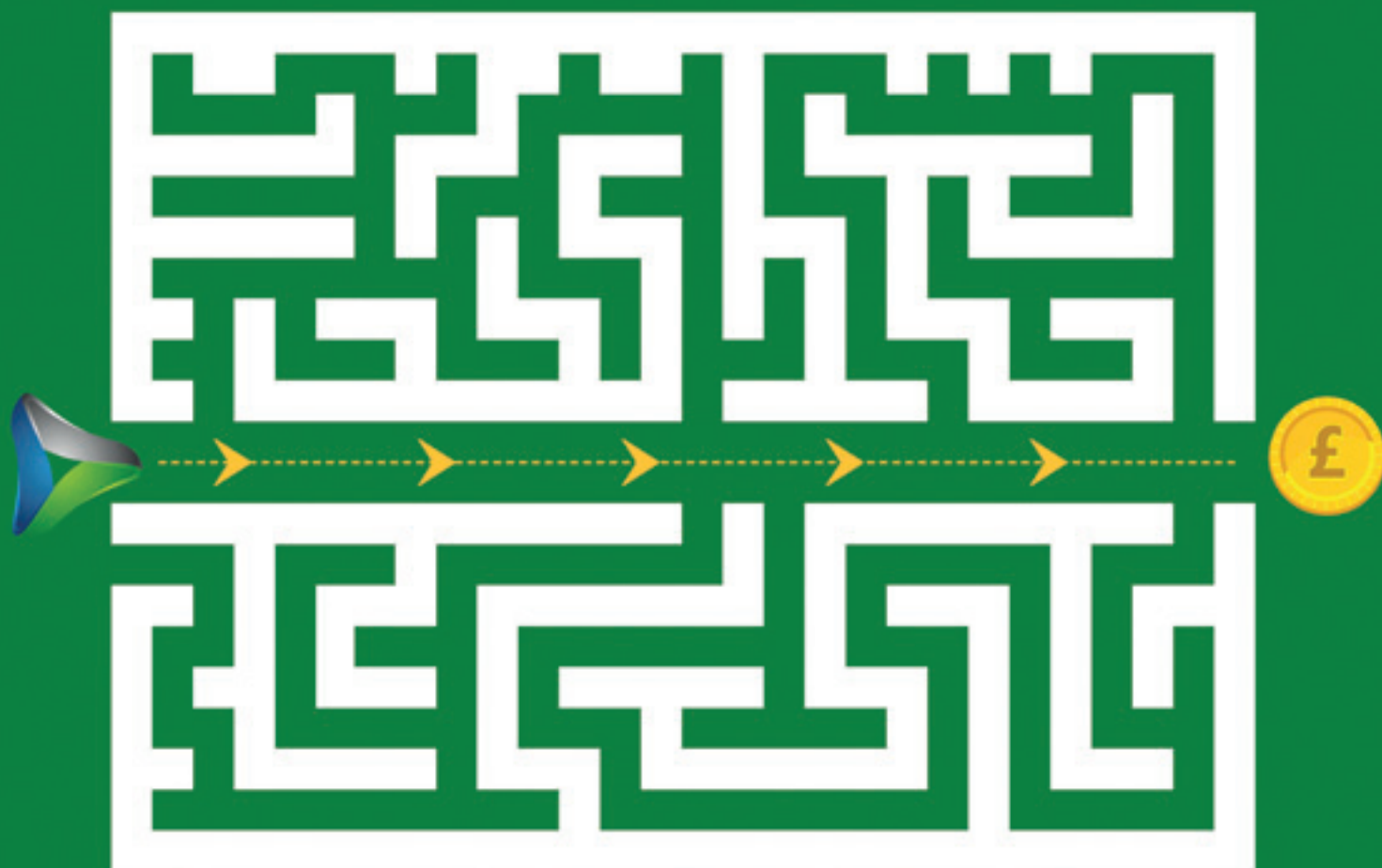
The ceremony brought together members of the council, including leader of Bassetlaw District Council, Cllr Julie Leigh, G F Tomlinson, project managers – Beyond Consult and managing agent – S80, to celebrate the start of the major redevelopment.

Enabling works began on site in February 2026, with the isolation of building services, soft strip of internal areas and erection of scaffolding to sections of the building set for demolition. Site safety hoarding has also been installed, sectioning off part of the car park between the entrance road and service ramp to separate the construction works from the general public.

The next phase includes the safe removal of the structural elements of the building using a high-reach demolition excavator, with the two elevations near the access road and service ramp set to be dismantled through careful hand separation. Demolition works are scheduled for completion May 2026. □

www.gftomlinson.co.uk

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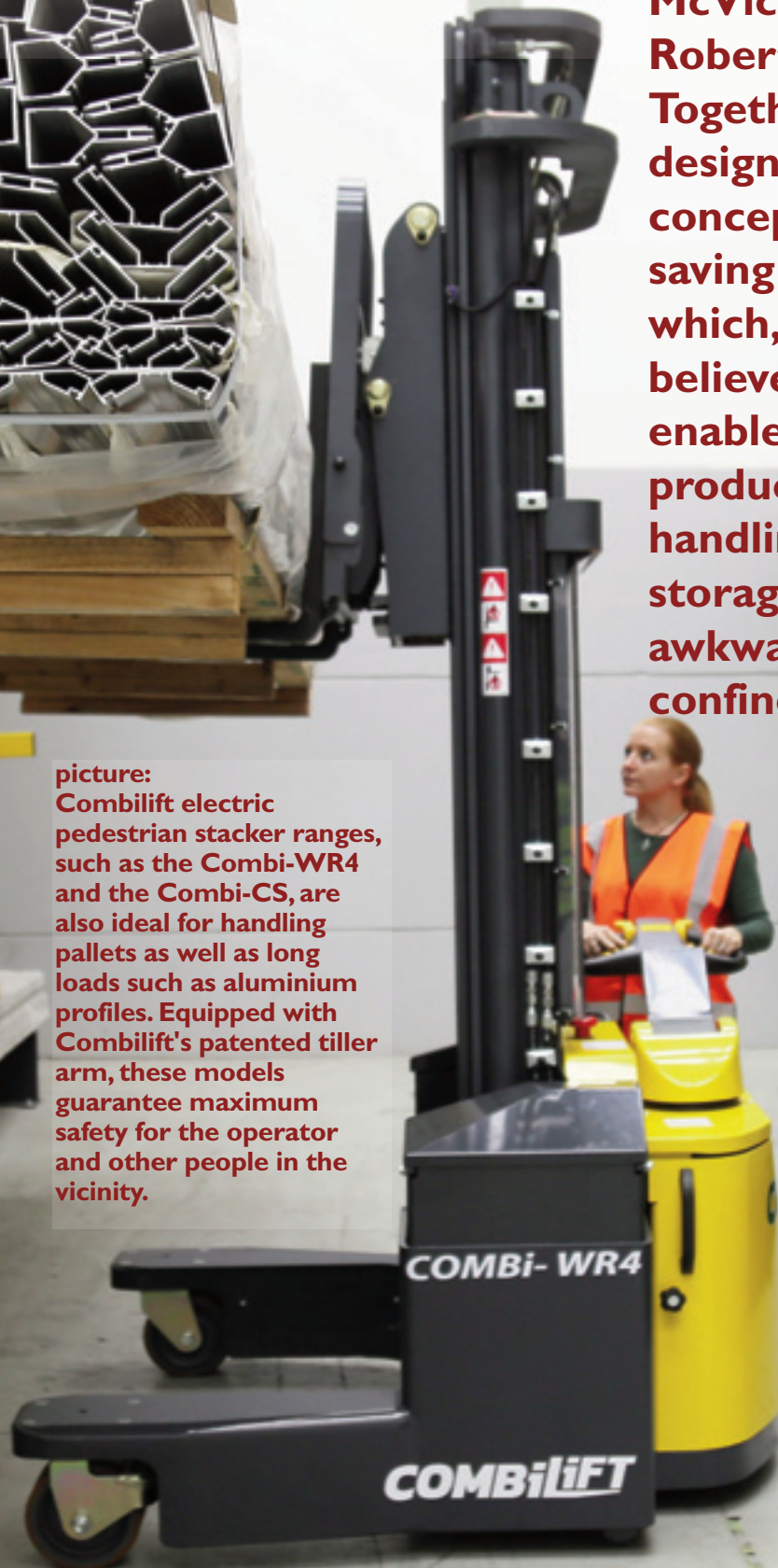
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Need a lift?

Combilift was the brainchild of engineers Martin McVicar and Robert Moffett. Together they designed a new concept in space saving forklifts which, they believed, would enable the productive handling and storage of long and awkward loads in confined spaces

picture: Combilift electric pedestrian stacker ranges, such as the Combi-WR4 and the Combi-CS, are also ideal for handling pallets as well as long loads such as aluminium profiles. Equipped with Combilift's patented tiller arm, these models guarantee maximum safety for the operator and other people in the vicinity.



The first ever Combilift truck, the C4000, was a multidirectional 3-wheel all-wheel drive forklift.

In its first year the company manufactured 18 units and all but one were exported. From the outset Combilift aimed to be major exporters and since its start it has sold more than 80,000 units to over 85 countries, most of them still in operation.

Combilift aims to invest 7% of annual turnover in research and development. Partly because of this, its portfolio has expanded significantly over the past 25 years

and there are now around 25 different product families. The company says that its products are all designed around specific needs of the customers and finding solutions their challenges.

The company has a global presence base around a strong network of dealers who operate in each of its geographical markets. According to Combilift they are all experts in their field, not only from a product point of view but also in terms of the culture, language, and business practices that characterise their specific area. □

www.combilift.com



The Combilift multidirectional C-Series forklift is engineered to provide the safest and most productive way to handle long, fragile and specialised loads, such as windows, aluminium

profiles, or extendable glass covers. It has a low centre of gravity and features an integrated platform, which provides a stable base for resting loads on while transporting.

Safety is at the core of the design of the multidirectional C-Series. A low centre of

gravity and integrated platform provide a stable base for transporting long, awkward, and fragile loads.

Multidirectional forklift models such as those in the C-Series and CB range are designed to travel sideways while handling long and bulky loads, for example, windows or glass panels. The sideways function eliminates the need for overhead carrying while navigating tight spaces, which significantly reduces the risk of injury. This in turn allows for much better and cost-effective use of all available space which is one of a company's most valuable assets. An additional safety feature is that these forklifts are built with a very low centre of gravity, allowing for a low-to-the-ground movement of your load. The C-series also includes an integrated platform, providing a stable base for resting your load during transportation.



A keen eye for quality

The difference between a production line that simply runs and one that genuinely supports profitability comes down to how efficiently processes are managed. And for Jade Engineering's co-founder and director Adam Jones, this has become one of the most important conversations in the sector, writes Jade's Adam Jones

Jade Tooling

Rising material and energy costs, tightening margins and an increasingly complex regulatory environment mean manufacturers are under pressure to produce more efficiently than ever before. Fabricators are under pressure from all sides, so the businesses that really understand their processes and optimise them are the ones that protect their margins.

Automation and new machinery are often seen as the route to improvement but the biggest gains frequently come from refining existing processes.

Large capital investments can be important, but they should never be the first – or whole – answer. Sometimes it's about looking carefully at the production line you already have. Small adjustments to tooling, workflow or material handling can remove bottlenecks and increase output without major disruption.

The spaces between the machines

A lot of the inefficiencies we see aren't actually caused by the machinery itself. They occur in how materials move through the factory, how workstations are organised, or how operators interact with the process.

Even relatively minor inefficiencies can have a significant impact over time. Profiles waiting for space, unnecessary operator movement or poorly optimised storage systems can slow down production far more than many manufacturers realise.

That's why we look at the whole production journey from when profiles arrive on site to when finished frames are ready for dispatch. If that flow is logical and well organised, the whole factory performs better.

Supporting this broader approach to efficiency is one reason we have been investing in expanding the JadeBespoke division. This focuses on designing and manufacturing the infrastructure that supports fabrication processes, including racking, workstations and material handling systems.

These elements might not be the most visible part of the factory but they can have a huge impact on productivity.

Jade's next phase

At Jade we have spent the past year preparing for growth. Having moved into our new 30,000sq ft premises, we used 2025 as a period of consolidation and investment, strengthening our facilities and internal capabilities.

Now, the first quarter of 2026 has marked the start of the next phase. We've invested heavily in our own infrastructure so we're ready to support the industry as demand evolves. The focus is on building the team and expanding our capability.

Two key appointments form part of that strategy. Stephanie Tague has joined as sales and marketing manager, while Harry Heer has stepped into the newly



Stephanie Tague and Harry Heer

created role of design engineering manager, leading Jade's technical and design team.

Heer brings experience from outside the fenestration sector, having previously managed CAD engineering within the Polestar UK research and development team.

Manufacturing challenges in fenestration are surprisingly sophisticated. Having someone with experience of high-performance engineering environments helps us bring new perspectives to solving those problems.

Aluminium growth and regulations

Another major factor shaping fabrication environments is the continuing growth of aluminium systems. Which is why we increasingly work closely with aluminium profile suppliers and the Council for Aluminium in Building (CAB) to support the development of new manufacturing solutions.

Fabricators must also keep pace with evolving regulations affecting both PVC-U and aluminium systems. These changes can influence product design, manufacturing methods and quality requirements, meaning production processes need to adapt.

For manufacturers, regulatory changes can feel daunting. But often the adjustments needed in production are relatively straightforward if they're identified early.

This is where our engineering and consultancy work comes into its own. It might involve adapting tooling, refining machining processes or adjusting workflows. But if you address those factors early, it prevents disruption further down the line.

Ultimately, efficiency isn't just about speed. It's about creating manufacturing environments that are reliable, adaptable and commercially sustainable. Our industry is incredibly resilient, but the businesses that succeed long term will be those that understand their processes inside out. The most effective operations aren't just the most automated, they're the ones where every stage of production is engineered to work as a single, integrated system. □

www.jade-eng.co.uk



From start to finish



Haffner has assisted with the successful relocation of machinery for long-standing customer Mercury Glazing.

Mercury Glazing required its existing Haffner machinery to be transferred into its main manufacturing facility in Gloucester as part of an operational reorganisation. With production uptime critical, the project demanded careful planning, efficient execution and rapid recommissioning.

Haffner’s team managed the entire process, from dismantling and transportation through to installation and commissioning. The relocation, which included four machines and the large CNC machining centre, was completed in just two days.

Martin Halford, managing director at Mercury Glazing, says: “The Haffner team relocated our machinery and had everything up and running in just 48 hours. They were incredible, and nothing was too much trouble for them. There’s no substitute for quality products or service and you get what you pay for with Haffner.”

Matt Thomas, managing director at Haffner, says: “Supporting customers goes far beyond supplying machinery. Projects like this highlight the importance of having the right expertise in place to manage relocations and ongoing support efficiently, ensuring productivity is maintained at all times.” □

www.haffnerltd.com

The right solution

John Fredericks Plastics has installed a new Graf Synergy single head CNC sill welder, supplied by Haffner. The investment follows a visit to Graf’s headquarters near Modena, Italy, last year, where the John Fredericks’ operations team explored advanced sill welding solutions.

During the visit, Graf demonstrated how the machine could streamline fabrication processes by delivering seamless, high-quality welds while removing several time-intensive finishing stages. The patented technology eliminates the need for corner cleaning, sanding, polishing of sills and penning in, significantly improving workflow efficiencies and reducing production time.

Mark Dicconson, managing director of John Fredericks Plastics, says: “Having the team visit Graf to look at sill welding options, it quickly became clear that this was the right solution to resolve a bottleneck in our fabrication process. Not only would the sill welder reduce production time and save on costs, but the finish quality of the end product was exceptional. From an investment point of view, it was an easy decision to make.”



Like all Graf Synergy machinery, the sill welder produces a precise, seamless weld free from excess sprue, enhancing consistency and reducing the need for post-weld finishing.

Dickonson says: “The feedback from our customers has been fantastic. They’ve particularly noticed the quality of the seamless weld, which really enhances the overall finish of the product.

“Working with Haffner has been a pleasure. Both Matt Thomas and Mike Moulds have been great to work with from start to finish, and the whole process has been seamless in every sense of the word.” □

www.haffnerltd.com

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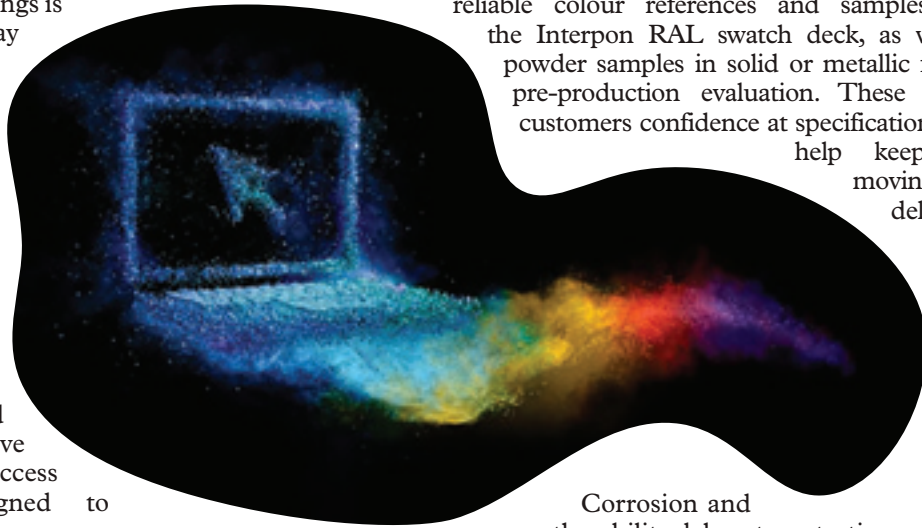
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The expanded offer brings together technical, laboratory and sustainability services that support faster decisions, smoother production and high-confidence results on the coating line. From bespoke colour development and lab powder samples to performance testing, technical audits, training and advanced application optimisation, each service is built to help customers perform at their best, even under the most demanding conditions. Sustainability analysis tools further enable coaters to understand, measure and reduce environmental impact, while also unlocking productivity gains.

Available services include tailored colour development,

reliable colour references and samples such as the Interpon RAL swatch deck, as well as lab powder samples in solid or metallic finishes for pre-production evaluation. These tools give customers confidence at specification stage and help keep projects moving without delay.



Corrosion and weatherability laboratory testing can also be ordered online, providing robust performance data to support product qualification and specification decisions. Technical audits, oven curing recording and advanced analysis of reciprocator and application-gun setup, using coating AI's exclusive, AI-powered Flightpath Pro software to help improve efficiency, optimise product usage and reduce quality issues across the coating process. □

www.akzonobel.com/en



Pioneer Trading Company has premiered the launch of its Gerda steel and aluminium residential door TV commercial. The premier was announced to the trade, in readiness for nationwide broadcast this spring. This investment is designed to drive greater brand awareness for its customer network by making the Gerda name familiar to homeowners.

The decision to invest in a TV commercial comes after three years of building the Gerda brand since it was first launched at FIT Show 2023. Manufactured in Poland, the door has filled a vital niche in the market, with an engineered structure and high performance at a more affordable price. The commercial focuses on the emotional connection a family has to the front door, centering around the Gerda 'thunk' that has become synonymous with the brand.

Pioneer managing director Danny Williams says: "We launched the 'Love the Thunk' concept last year, and the strapline has become affiliated with the Gerda brand in search engines and Ai searches. We now want to capitalise on that progress." □

www.pioneertc.com/

Sound the alarm

The 2.0% fall in construction output in the three months to January 2026, as reported in the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), should set alarm bells ringing for an industry already under strain, says the Federation of Master Builders (FMB).

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, says: "Alarm bells should be ringing loudly after another fall in overall construction output, marking the fourth consecutive drop in the three-month figures. The steep decline in private new housing is especially worrying, as this is where we need momentum if we're to even get close to the government's target of 1.5 million new homes. Taken alongside a stagnating wider economy, with 0% growth this month, these figures suggest that confidence is draining away from the sector at a critical moment."

Berry concluded: "It is telling that the only area showing growth at the start of the year was repair, maintenance and improvement work, which is largely carried out by micro companies, although even this output has dropped, overall, in the last three months. This shows that the nation's small builders are propping up construction output as a whole, but they cannot shoulder the burden alone. If the government wants to get construction back on its feet, it must push forward with its changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) quickly and ensure local authority planning



teams are adequately staffed to ensure other areas like housing can push on with delivery." □

www.fmb.org.uk

A third and a three

The Automatic Door Suppliers Association (ADSA) is sponsoring the product design and innovation – electronic award at the AI Specification Awards 2026 for the third time, reinforcing its ongoing commitment to innovation in access control and automation.

Three entries have been shortlisted showcasing electronic solutions designed to enhance performance, security and user experience within building design.

The category recognises cutting-edge developments in electronic access control and automation, highlighting innovations that enhance performance, security and usability within modern building design.

Three entries have been shortlisted for the award:

- ES8100 V-Lock – ASSA ABLOY Opening Solutions

- Finfort Smart Auto-Deadbolt Nightlatch – FinFort

- GU DTN80 UFO – Automatic Underfloor Operator – Gretsch-Unitas

These innovations could help reshape the way buildings are secured and accessed, while supporting the increasing demand for integrated architectural and technological solutions.

The winner will be announced at the AI Specification Awards ceremony on Friday 15 May 2026 at IET London: Savoy Place. □

www.gai.org.uk



QR code of conduct

Qualicoat UK and Ireland has added a QR code to its member certificates in a move which transforms a static certificate into a live verification tool. By scanning the code, stakeholders can instantly verify Qualicoat member credentials for complete traceability and assurance.

This investment supports competent decision making, helping to prevent errors and misrepresentation, or non-compliant suppliers being specified, and enables specifiers to select suppliers quickly and with confidence.

This initiative forms part of a wider programme of continuous improvement, ensuring the Qualicoat quality label remains robust, relevant and trusted.

Chris Mansfield, chair of Qualicoat UK and Ireland says: “As a quality label organisation, we value trust and transparency. Possession of a printed or digital certificate alone does not necessarily mean that a company or system currently holds a valid Qualicoat licence so, we have taken positive action to address this by adding a QR code to each Qualicoat certificate which links to the member’s profile.

“This addition aligns our certification with modern demands. The construction industry is under pressure to demonstrate compliance and competency, and decision makers need evidence not just claims. Our QR code provides practical support for those responsible for due



diligence and compliance. Better still, verification can now be completed in seconds, saving time across specification, procurement and audit processes.”

By scanning the QR code, users are redirected to the relevant record in the Qualicoat QCT360 database, where the current validity status can be confirmed. If valid, the user can access key information, including licence number and type, certification year and expiry. This additional transparency also helps specifiers identify established and experienced supply chain partners. □

www.qualicoatuki.org

It's a breeze

ERA has launched a new flush fit trickle vent. The vent is suited for bi-fold doors and ERA says its streamlined design allows doors to open and close without obstruction. Incorporating two internal canopies for simple control of each section independently, the dual-pivot hinge allows maximum canopy adjustment, enabling smooth and precise airflow direction for enhanced user comfort.

According to ERA the flush fit trickle vent eliminates the need to fit any additional header door sections or install obtrusive surface-mounted ventilation. The vent comes supplied with fixing clips to be pushed



into place for quick and easy installation.

The new design has been developed to meet the requirements of the Building Regulations part F1:2010 and approved doc F, with routing requirements of 16 x 364mm to achieve 2700mm² EQA per installed vent. For ultimate customer satisfaction, it also offers reduced external noise, even with the vents fully open.

The flush fit trickle vent is available in five colours: white, black, anthracite grey, black/white, and anthracite grey/white. On mixed vent colour options, the external vent is finished in black or anthracite grey to mirror the external profile colour, and white on the internal vent.

The new design is compatible with aluminium, PVC-U, and timber door and window systems. It carries a one year mechanical guarantee. □

www.eraeverywhere.com

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Mullion for minimalist

Modplan has reported continued growth in demand for its Veka Omnia range. Liam Isaac, head of sales and marketing at Modplan, says: “Since introducing Omnia to our product portfolio, the response from customers has been extremely positive. They value the system’s clean sightlines, premium appearance and design flexibility, which makes it suitable for both contemporary projects and heritage-style properties.”

The Omnia system has quickly gained traction thanks to its refined design features. At the heart of the system is a zero sight-line mullion that delivers a clean and expansive appearance, while invisible mullion options allow installers to achieve an even more minimalist aesthetic.

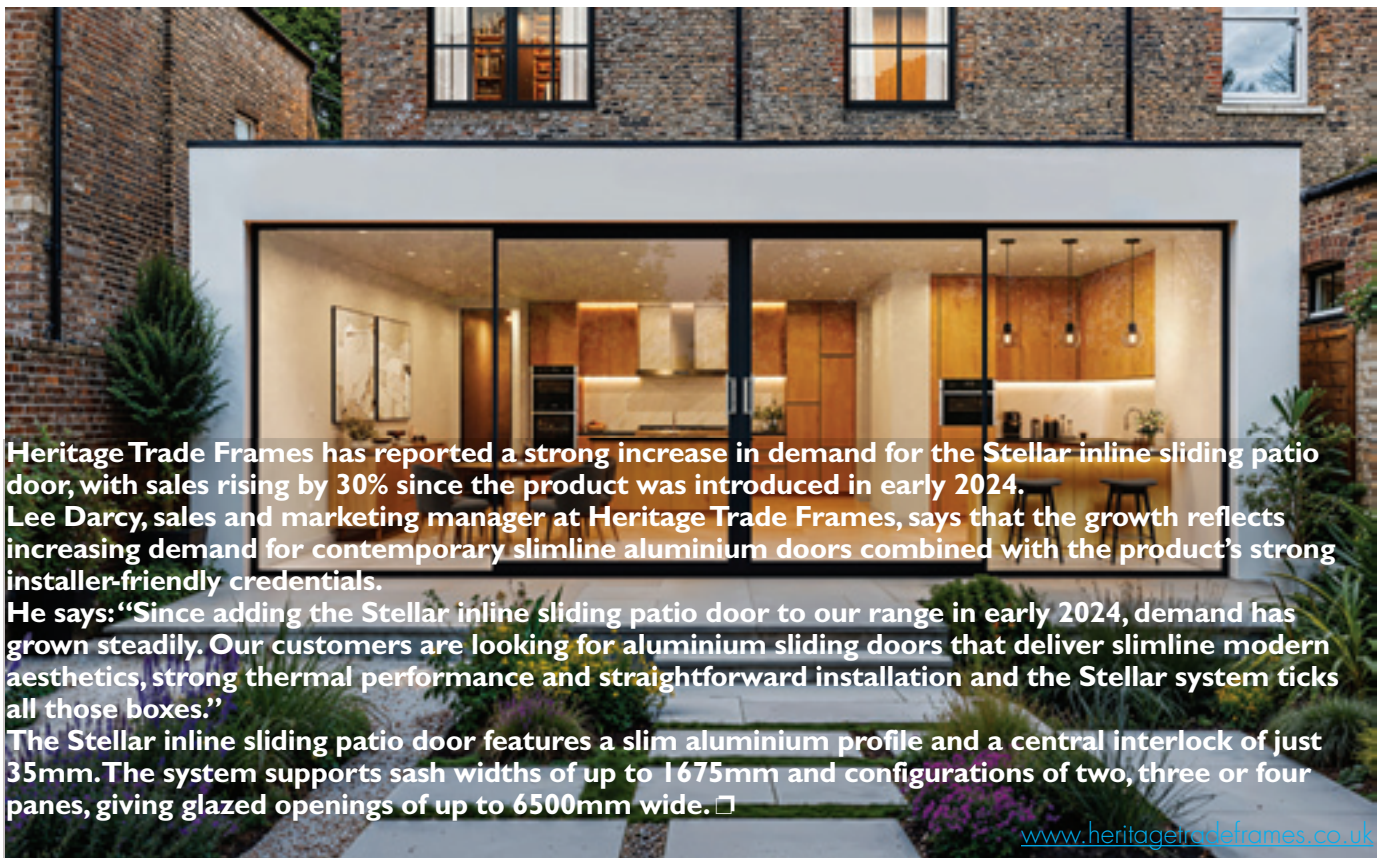
Isaac says: “Omnia offers a combination of flush styling, advanced design and installation versatility. It’s a flush window and door system that helps our customers deliver the high-end look homeowners increasingly expect, without compromising on performance.”

To support growing demand, Modplan manufactures the full Omnia suite including casement windows, tilt-and-turn windows, French doors and residential doors which it manufactures at its Newport fabrication facilities. Modplan currently offers Omnia products on a three-week turnaround.

Isaac says: “Reliable lead times are critical for our customers. By maintaining a consistent three-week turnaround across the Omnia range, we are helping them to keep projects moving while continuing to deliver the quality and service they associate with Modplan.” □



www.modplan.co.uk



Heritage Trade Frames has reported a strong increase in demand for the Stellar inline sliding patio door, with sales rising by 30% since the product was introduced in early 2024.

Lee Darcy, sales and marketing manager at Heritage Trade Frames, says that the growth reflects increasing demand for contemporary slimline aluminium doors combined with the product’s strong installer-friendly credentials.

He says: “Since adding the Stellar inline sliding patio door to our range in early 2024, demand has grown steadily. Our customers are looking for aluminium sliding doors that deliver slimline modern aesthetics, strong thermal performance and straightforward installation and the Stellar system ticks all those boxes.”

The Stellar inline sliding patio door features a slim aluminium profile and a central interlock of just 35mm. The system supports sash widths of up to 1675mm and configurations of two, three or four panes, giving glazed openings of up to 6500mm wide. □

www.heritagetradeframes.co.uk

UTF beats the niche

Shropshire-based fabricator, Universal Trade Frames (UTF), has strengthened its Spectus vertical sliding (VS) window offer, achieving an A+ window energy rating (WER) as standard.

Following independent re-testing and validation, the upgraded specification delivers a U-value of 1.4 on VS windows (1.3 on casement), using UTF's standard glass and reinforcement setup, with no need for complex glass upgrades or niche configurations to hit A+ according to UTF.

The company achieves this with RCM reinforcing welded into the profile, creating extra chambers that aren't present in bare extrusions.

According to UTF this construction improves thermal performance, screw retention and overall robustness while staying within a familiar Spectus VS platform.



Standard specification includes low iron, LowE, warm edge glazing.

“Our A+ WER rated VS puts theory into practice with boosted energy efficiency that brings real-life benefits to end-users by improving comfort and lowering energy bills,” said Richard Hammond, sales director at Universal Trade Frames.

“While many of our competitors essentially sell the same base system as us, they don't offer UTF's tested and verified A+ configuration and reinforcement. This means installers currently buying the Spectus VS elsewhere can instantly upgrade WER and performance by switching to UTF, without the hassle and expense of changing profile.

“In a nutshell, our A+ WER VS offer translates to a clear, sellable advantage for installers and fabricators who want to offer their customers better performance – and

that's what makes it really stand out.” □

www.utf.co.uk

Raising the arch

With arched frames emerging as a key design trend last year, Sheerline Bespoke is helping fabricators meet rising demand without adding complexity to their operations.

Arched, curved and shaped aluminium windows and doors have become increasingly popular in both new build and renovation projects. However, for many fabricators these non-standard designs can disrupt production, require specialist machinery and fall outside their everyday focus.

Sheerline Bespoke's in-house profile bending service is designed to remove those barriers and assist fabricators, making supplying shaped frames a hassle-free option.

“With demand growing for arched aluminium windows and doors, it's only natural that fabricators are being asked to supply more complex designs,” says



Chris Cooke, commercial director at Sheerline Bespoke. “Our specialist bending service enables them to order perfectly manufactured arched, curved and shaped frames, without changing how they operate day-to-day.”

Manufactured using an advanced Tim-Ing profile bending machinery, frames are automated for precision and repeatable quality.

“Fabricators are often asked to supply complex products that take them away from their core work,” says Cooke. “Rather than investing in specialist machinery and software they'll rarely use, they can partner with us so low-volume or niche requirements no longer jeopardise quoting for an entire project.

“For fabricators, it means focusing on high-volume square frames while we take care of the rest.” □

www.sheerlinebespoke.com

Once upon a door

DoorCo announces the latest addition to its One composite door range, Short Doors. Part of the BRiTDOR range, Short Doors is designed to satisfy the requirement for smaller entrances to older properties and outbuildings.

Ben Aspinall, DoorCo's commercial director, says: "We've created the Short Doors range to satisfy customer demand, and there's actually a staggering opportunity available.

"Around 20% of homes in the UK were built before 1919, which equates to 2-3 million homes, and many are likely to have non-standard entrances. Older UK properties were built with shorter and narrower door openings, meaning modern standard doors often don't fit. This is especially common in Victorian and Edwardian terraces, cottages, historic or listed buildings, and homes with timber frames or low ceilings. There is also a big demand for better security on outbuildings, where households store their valuable tools.

"Due to improved home security pushing thieves



toward softer outside targets, there has been a sharp rise in thefts from garden sheds according to leading insurers.

"The Short Doors range has been developed using the BRiTDOR slab, but specifically re-engineered to offer in varying sizing options with minimum widths of 332mm and minimum heights of ,555mm. □

www.door-co.com

Double-bang for you buck

Sheerline has launched SheerGlide its new inline patio door which, it says, features new technology and completes its residential range.

According to a Sheerline spokesman, SheerGlide delivers solutions to common issues associated with inline patios. In the past, it has been problematic for inline patio systems to combine thermal performance and security. Sheerline claims that its patent pending single component interlock TwinLock overcomes this problem. Developed in-house, Sheerline says it is strong, slim, integrated into every door, and features a bi-directional thermal break which offers U-values of 1.4 and 1.0 W/m²K.

The interlock is also non-bonded to make it easier to manufacture, transport, and install.

The Sheerline spokesman says that the number of components required has been reduced, and that ready-to-fabricate kits are available to Sheerline customers.

Roger Hartshorn, Garner Aluminium Extrusions chairman, says: "The launch of SheerGlide marks an important milestone both personally and professionally; it completes our residential range, and it is the first product launched under our new technical and design director, Ben Hartshorn."



Ben Hartshorn says: "By launching SheerGlide, we are ensuring we truly offer something for every project. Patio doors – including our Prestige lift and slide – have been rising in popularity over the past few years, and this trend is unlikely to change as it offers the aesthetic people see on Grand Designs and across social media." □

www.sheerline.com



P227



P280



P288



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The launch of the *Future Homes Hub (FHH) Whole Life Carbon (WLC) Benchmarking Report* is a welcome first step towards providing developers with the real-life data to both understand and reduce carbon in new homes.

Building a shared dataset of WLC assessments to measure the current performance of new homes more accurately, the FHH report references established frameworks such as EN 15978 and the RICS whole life carbon assessment (WLCA) for the Built Environment (2nd Edition).

Module D matters

The RICS guidance states that ‘...a full [WLC] assessment will also include Module D,’ which concerns the carbon impacts and savings that occur after a building’s life ends, when materials are reused, recycled, or recovered.

It goes further in Section 3.1, confirming: ‘For new-build assets, either buildings or infrastructure assets/civil engineering works, all life cycle stages must be assessed, including Module D.’

Despite these clear endorsements of the need for its inclusion, Annex C of the FHH WLC benchmarking report indicates that Module D has, instead, been ruled out.

Module D considers the possibility that the materials used in a building’s construction, such as aluminium or steel, can be recycled and used instead of virgin product in the future.

As circular economy principles gain traction in built environment policy, and as environmental product



Read The CAB column every month in *The Fabricator* – see page 20-21

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