

Sustainability And More

Robert Thiroff, managing director of profine UK and Kömmerling, outlines the group vision of sustainability, corporate and social responsibility and employee engagement.

www.profine-uk.com
www.koemmerling.com/uk/en/

As a global business with a reputation for product excellence we want to be recognised for much more than operational and commercial success, writes Robert Thiroff of profine UK and Kömmerling.

We want to make a difference – and that stems from the very top of the group through Dr Peter Mrosik, CEO and owner of profine Group. He tells each group company around the world: ‘Our sustainability policy isn’t just about ecology, it also extends to the social and economic environments’.

Credentials

We were the first major PVC-U systems house to remove lead as

a stabiliser back in 2004 and today we continue to lead the way when it comes to the environment. We have ‘Zero Pellet Loss’ certification in Germany as part of ‘Operation Clean Sweep’ which is part of the plastic industry’s global effort to keep plastic out of the ocean. There are also initiatives across all of our manufacturing facilities to follow the same stringent processes and procedures too.

100% recycled

When it comes to materials processing, we have been proud to be part of several commercial projects in Europe that have used our ReFrame solution, a range of window and door profiles that are made from 100%



Pictures: Robert Thiroff has led the way on energy, environment and sustainability for profine Group and its Kömmerling brands in the UK and been instrumental in the company's global approach – including the establishment of profine Energy's own solar farms.



recycled material and benefit from our unique proCoverTec surface finish technology. More recently we have also developed a revolutionary organic based material in the form of bio-attributed PVC, which harnesses a pine oil compound that has eliminated the use of petrochemicals in PVC extrusion.

Passive House

Other product innovations can be seen at our UK Design Centre, which includes a Passive House studio and already two of our senior sales staff have been trained in the principles of this important building standard. Our System 88 platform achieves Passive House in white and foiled finishes thanks to our proStratoTec technology and this is further extended into our lift and slide PremiDoor 88.

Recycling

In 2024 we will also be expanding our recycling facility so that we can build on the significant amount collected in 2023 as we look to integrate more recycled material in our products than

ever before and that includes both window and door systems, along with a new range of building products due for launch this year. The importance of a UK based closed loop for recycling cannot be underestimated as we look to enhance our sustainability credentials as a caring corporate business.


Better World

Away from our direct business operations, on 1 January 2020 Kömmerling Better World was launched as a charitable organisation to fulfil our corporate and social responsibilities on a broad basis by supporting diverse charitable projects, helping people and contributing to making the world a better place. Much has been done to support the people of Ukraine and together with our partners, we have raised €589,000 thus far, along with providing 21 truckloads of goods.

profine Energy and its own solar farms

As a business that consumes a considerable amount of energy

both in the UK and overseas, we do not want to be reliant on direct energy partners unless it is absolutely necessary. The spikes in wholesale electricity prices in recent years has had a profound effect on the industry as a whole, particularly for large users like profine UK and the same can be said for the glass processors too.

So arguably our largest and most prestigious investment into sustainability is the investment in profine Energy GmbH with Wirth Group as a joint energy service provider. The task of profine Energy is to make the 29 locations of the profine Group in 23 countries largely independent of current electricity price developments. Sites in Bulgaria, Serbia and Dominican Republic have already been earmarked for solar farms as profine Energy looks to build a more sustainable future for everyone. With product, people and environmental strategies in place, profine Group and the Kömmerling brand want to be recognised as an ethical pioneer under the brand mantra of 'Today for Tomorrow.' 

Get A Glow With Electrically Heated Double-Glazing

Paul Higgins, the commercial director of glass manufacturer TuffX, discusses the demand for energy efficient home improvements and explores what window and door installers will need to do next to step up to the plate.

The Future Homes Standard is set to be introduced next year and though still under review, there remains uncertainty surrounding what it will require of the window industry specifically, writes TuffX' Paul Higgins.

That may not leave us much time to implement necessary changes when the final decisions are made. However, one thing is certain, the more energy efficient products we can supply, the better.

With or without the Future

Homes Standard, consumers want warmer homes that feel better protected from the elements and they want to spend less on their fuel bills to achieve it. This is what we need to deliver and we need to start thinking outside the box to do it.

Electrically heated double-glazing

This is precisely what we have done with our Glow bi-fold doors. Glow electrically heated double-glazing works in a similar way to underfloor heating.

The heat generated is generous. It offers temperatures up to 40°C, radiating into a room to create a warm and cosy space while reducing energy consumption. It is controlled by a thermostat so it can be turned on and off as needed.

Main or additional heat source

Glow heated bi-fold doors can be used as a primary heat source or offer a great additional heat source in an otherwise colder extension or





www.tuffxglass.co.uk/products/glow-heated-glass/

Pictures: Glow bi-fold doors, featuring electrically heated double-glazing from TuffX, have hit the market and are likely to prove more popular than underfloor heating as a standalone heating source or as a booster to existing heating systems.

conservatory for example. And in the warmer months it continues performing with a U-value of 1.2 giving it optimum energy efficiency all year round.

The other advantage to using this technology in extensions or conservatories or in smaller homes or open plan spaces, is that it doesn't require the wall space that traditional radiators do. Even homeowners with more spacious properties, can struggle to fit furniture in a room by the time you've taken account of internal and external doors, windows and radiators, so saving space is a great selling point. It's a similar benefit to that offered by underfloor heating but without the level of disruption required during installation.

Invisible technology

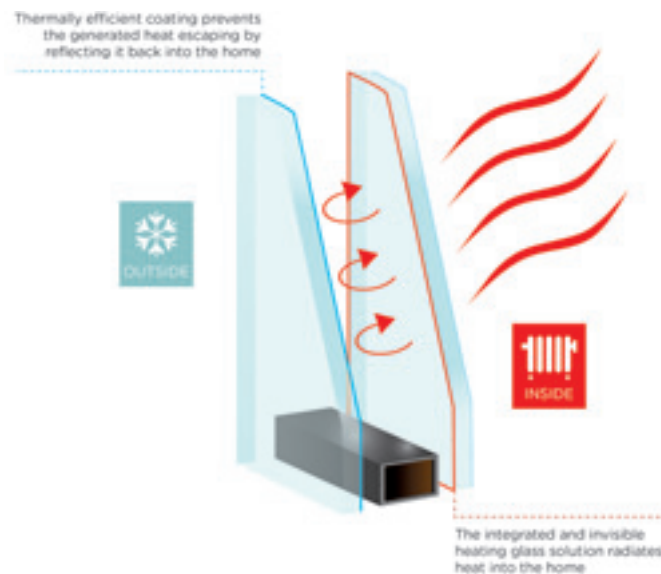
Homeowners can also rest assured that Glow bi-folding doors will look the same as any other bi-fold door. The system uses a standard sealed unit that is layered with invisible intelligent coatings to create conductive heat transfer into the home. The glass is not tinted and there is no other visible trace of a heating system within the glass. In fact, the only difference

they may notice with Glow bi-folds, is that there is no more condensation on the glass, which also means that these doors will need less maintenance than other bi-fold options.

The complete package for installers

From an installer's perspective, Glow bi-folds offer a great addition to any portfolio. They are straightforward to install as they have been designed to connect directly to a property's electricity supply, although we would recommend that a qualified electrician carries out the job to ensure a completely safe and hassle-free installation.

Every order comes complete with a full installation guide and we are offering additional support to our trade partners to pass on to their installers. This support includes full training on the features and benefits of Glow as well as correct installation methods. It will also cover the product's compliance



credentials including the fact that it conforms with EN12150 and EN1279 Parts 1 to 4 and is compliant with the Future Homes Standard (FHS) 2025-2.

Above and beyond

Whatever form the final Future Homes Standard takes, energy efficient home improvements are now an essential part of any portfolio. Going above and beyond this basic requirement will become more important to installers that want to stand out from the competition and Glow bi-fold doors offer a fantastic solution to do just that. [i](#)

Sustainability Built In

Sternfenster claims to have taken a holistic view on sustainability – building it into everyday working practices. We talk to Sternfenster’s managing director Mike Parczuk to find out more.

Energy efficiency & sustainability are often seen as the two sides of the same coin, with both being flagged by homeowners as key features when buying new windows and doors, says Mike Parczuk of Lincoln based trade fabricator Sternfenster.

“Yet, when it comes to selling new products, energy efficiency tends to be an easier sell,” he says. “Whether you have specifiers wanting low U-values for newbuild or homeowners reducing their energy use, how energy efficient a window or door is, is often more important than how sustainable it is.

“But you can’t really discuss one without the other. Part L of

the building regulations is designed to reduce carbon emissions and most households will already be doing their bit to reduce their impact on the environment.”

Sustainability journey

It is this mindset that underpins Sternfenster’s sustainability strategy, which earned it a shortlisted spot in the G23 Awards. Parczuk says he wants to use Sternfenster’s influence as a national fabricator to provide the tools to customers and suppliers so they can plan their own sustainability journey.

He says: “Key to our success, since we started mapping out our strategy in mid-2022, is the

commitment to do the best we can at every stage. It isn’t about creating a nice story to tell but to help improve the image of the industry – and to ultimately drive sales of energy efficient and sustainable windows and doors.”

Solar

One headline development is a recent £400K investment in photovoltaic panels, which will provide more than a fifth of the energy that the fabricator uses. The new PV array is estimated to produce 490,000kWh per year, offsetting 115,000kg of carbon in the process.

The new panels will join the PV array Sternfenster already has in





Pictures: Sternfenster's Mike Parczuk says the company has many sustainability credentials including £400K worth of new solar panels on its factory roof.

www.sternfenster.com

operation. Together they will produce around one third of all the fabricator's electricity needs.

"To put our new investment into context, it is the equivalent of planting 11.5K trees or driving 852,000 fewer miles per year in your average family saloon," Parczuk asserts.

Environment impact

Before the new solar panels were installed, Sternfenster measured its current impact on the environment. It found that 100% of its manufacturing waste is recycled; 100% of post-consumer waste is recycled; 24% of the aluminium it uses is from recycled resources; 20% of its current fleet is electric; and it made a 7% overall reduction in carbon emissions in 2022.

Measurement

"The key to a successful sustainability strategy is measurement," says Parczuk. "How can you determine how successful your investment in sustainability is if you don't measure its effectiveness?"

The company then set itself a set of sustainability goals, which included a commitment to reduce carbon emissions at all stages; to

completely move to energy efficient lighting and heating; work with sustainable supply partners; increase the use of green energy; increase the use of electric vehicles; promote energy saving products to reduce CO₂; and help customers follow a similar sustainable journey.

Since the company works with its suppliers to develop energy efficient products – its Styleline windows achieve a WER of A as standard, for example – Sternfenster is developing initiatives with companies such as Deceuninck, Smart Systems, Saint-Gobain Glass and Edgetech to work together to place greater importance on the environment and communicate this to the end user.

The company also introduced a buy-back scheme through Starglaze (its retail arm), where frames are recycled via its downstream partners.

These initiatives are supported by a dedicated sustainability landing page on its website, developed to simply and effectively communicate Sternfenster's commitment to sustainability and provide the foundation for its continuing sustainability story.

Making it real

"As one of the largest trade fabricators in the UK, our operations affect many corners of the glass and glazing industry, from raw materials, through suppliers, used by us in manufacturing, distributed across the UK, which are then installed by our customers and relied upon by homeowners," Parczuk says.

"We know that not only do we have to make energy efficient products (which reduces energy use over their lifetime) but we must ensure that our operations are run as efficiently as possible (including partnering with like-minded businesses) and that we educate our customers – providing them with the tools to improve their operations.

"When you talk about sustainability, you don't say things because people expect you to say it. Like any message connected to your brand, it needs to be there for a reason.

"And, ultimately, I think we've got a real opportunity here to make the world a better home for all of us." 