

Latest News
December 19th 2012

South West's Largest Collaborative Retrofit Programme Wraps Up for Winter

This Christmas elderly residents in Somerset will be waking up to a rather substantial gift under their Christmas tree.

The UK's largest ever heat pump retrofit programme is underway in Somerset, working against the clock to bring green technology to 200 homes before Christmas. The unique project between the social housing provider, Yarlington Housing Group, and the UK's largest supplier of ground source heat pumps, Kensa Engineering, will benefit the most vulnerable residents living in sheltered properties.

Mr & Mrs Coombe were one of the first residents to receive the free heating upgrade. They said: "Everything went so smoothly, the workmen were wonderful and we are so pleased with our new ground source heat pump and radiators.



"We were concerned with the upheaval and the new technology but after living with the system now over this cold spell we have heat and hot water when we want, the hot water temperature and pressure is lovely, and we have never run out, even after a long hot bubble bath. We would advise everyone to fit a Kensa heat pump."

Residents' Christmas wishes were answered following Yarlington Housing Group's successful bid for Government RHPP (Renewable Heat Premium Payment) funding, which was supplemented further via Kensa's partnership with Scottish and Southern Energy. In order to satisfy funding conditions installations must benefit the most vulnerable residents, hence the decision to focus the programme on sheltered bungalows.

Paul Dennison, Kensa's Project Director, said of the work: "We are delighted to have assembled the necessary financial support to allow Yarlington Housing Group to embark on this major programme. In addition to responding to the pleas of their tenants to provide lower cost heating, each heat pump will contribute a significant environmental benefit, reducing carbon emissions by around 60%."

As a 'green' project the carbon footprint of the whole scheme including its delivery was considered, which favoured Kensa given the heat pumps are manufactured in Cornwall.

To support the programme, Kensa has recruited several employees for its production and project management departments. In addition, the pioneering retrofit collaboration involves a team of resident liaison officers from Yarlington, five heating and plumbing companies, three drilling contractors, two ground works companies... and a partridge in a pear tree.

The timely installation of the ground source heat pumps ahead of the winter's coldest weather will help significantly reduce Yarlington residents' energy bills. Replacing night storage heaters, the ground source heat pumps will provide all the heating and hot water needs by extracting naturally occurring heat stored in the garden using a 90m borehole.

Mr Coombe, who used to work at Mount Wellington mine in the seventies where Kensa now manufactures its heat pumps, feels his health has improved after living with the new heating, "Heavenly heating, such a pleasant heat throughout the property", he says.

The requirements of elderly residents like Mr and Mrs Coombe were considered during the specification of the heat pumps. Kensa modified the heat pumps to feature easy-to-use controls. The appliances were also located outside the property in custom made weather-resistant enclosures to maximise space within the house, and ensure straightforward access should any maintenance be required.

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Kensa Engineering Limited
Mount Wellington
Truro TR4 8RJ
Tel: 01872 862140