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## **Oakland's eco-friendly reed beds inspire next generation**

The management team at Redditch based Oakland International Ltd, have taken the unusual step of enlisting the help of teenagers to assist with the formulation of energy saving initiatives; progressive environmental change that will directly impact on their business future.

Brother and sister, 13-year-old Ben and 12-year-old Emily, are the children of Oakland Directors, MD Dean Attwell and wife Sallie, who after many years of hearing their parents discussing environmental issues and seeing firsthand the benefits of waste management initiatives, asked if they could join Oakland's Energy Committee, a successful and high profile team of Oakland staff.

Oakland's Business Development Manager and Energy Committee chairman, Pete Vaughan, will be driving through a number of key environmental objectives during 2008. Said Pete: "Kids of today are so aware of their environment, they see it in the news and hear about climate change and the impact our actions make on the environment from lessons at school. Although unexpected, the Energy Committee is delighted that they want to be involved."

2008 sees the Company celebrate 10 years of sustained growth, with Oakland implementing a number energy saving initiatives over the years. The installation of the company's on-site sewage treatment plant, backed up by a secondary treatment using reed beds uses substantially less energy than conventional sewage treatment methods and requires little maintenance, with the reeds themselves creating an important wildlife habitat and a product that can be used for thatching. The £30,000 treatment plot is capable of handling waste from 400 people and achieves treatment standards far in excess of those laid down by the Environment Agency.

Said Pete: "An aim in 2008 is to become one of the first companies in Redditch to become carbon neutral. Already we have implemented a number of changes to reduce our carbon footprint and that of our customers, achieving an 86% saving in road miles for our smaller suppliers through the company's pallet sharing distribution scheme when compared to their own depot distribution solutions.

"Incorporating Ben and Emily's ideas will be fantastic as we can combine environmental projects from school with Oakland's energy saving initiatives; putting theory into practise."

A Redditch-based storage and 3PL logistics firm, Oakland runs a policy of recycling all plastic, cardboard, wood and works with charities distributing short coded food products, recycling

initiatives that have helped the company reduce by half the amount of skips sent to landfill, even though the business has doubled in size.

In 2006 Oakland installed energy efficient chillers and motion detection lighting as part of the Government's Carbon Trust initiative and the recent installation of a £35,000 power factor corrector and voltage optimisation will considerably increase the efficiency of the company's electrical usage; result a significant reduction in the company's overall energy consumption and waste.

Said Emily: "We're both really excited at the prospect of being part of the energy committee and actively taking a role in the company's environmental policies. It's going to be great."



Image details: 12-year-old Emily Attwell inspects Oakland's reed beds.

**Editors Note:**

Oakland is actively investigating a number of renewable energy sources to reduce their energy consumption. A leading authority on all aspects of multi-temperature supply chain practice, Oakland International is a strategic player within their market sector.

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