

CEW AWARDS 2012

Derwen Aggregates – SME

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Derwen is at the cutting edge of waste management in Wales and has been expanding its waste recovery solutions in its efforts to tackle the pressing problem of environmental waste in the construction industry. The company is a keen supporter of the Welsh Government's waste programme, managed by Constructing Excellence in Wales and was one of the first to achieve Green Compass accreditation in recognition of its commitment to best practice in waste management.

Derwen won the CEW SME and waste minimisation awards in 2010. As evidence of its continuing commitment to waste management, it was nominated for the SME award this year by City & County of Swansea Corporate Building & Property Services, in recognition of its role in overhauling the department's waste strategy and improving recycling rates. The company has proved itself to be a dynamic and proactive supply chain partner, and is a business that all organisations can learn from.

PROCESS

Derwen was established in 1993 as a plant hire company, developing over time into a groundwork and construction contractor. Recognising that waste is one of the most important issues facing the Welsh construction industry, the company decided to become a specialist in the recycling of inert waste.

In 2007 it built a unique, £2.8 million state-of-the-art aggregate washing plant in Neath Abbey, capable of processing up to 350,000 tonnes of crushed construction waste and excavated inert material each year. More than 99% of the waste is converted into clean, high-quality aggregate; the plant is the only facility in Wales able to produce granular sub-base type 1, aggregates ranging from 6mm to 40mm, and the highly popular low permeability clay. In a further innovative move, customers can bring waste materials for recycling and take away sustainable aggregates in a single return journey.

Determined to promote waste management in the construction sector, Derwen has recently opened a waste transfer station at its Neath Abbey site and accepts a wide range of waste streams for treating, recycling or safe and legal disposal, including plasterboard, wood, plastics, glass, PVC, paper and cardboard, packaging waste, general waste and more.

Derwen has shown it is willing to continually evolve its services in line with changing government strategy and customer demand. But more than that, the company is an active and committed advocate for sustainable waste management within the construction industry. The company challenges the industry's traditional reluctance to use recycled materials by encouraging visits to its site, enabling clients to see the technology in action and appreciate the quality of the end products. Derwen is always ready to visit clients' premises to spread best practice and resolve any concerns over its product.

Derwen is working collaboratively with a number of organisations including the Welsh Government, Constructing Excellence in Wales, Wales Environment Trust, WRAP and some local authorities to help them maximise their contribution to the Welsh Government's 'Towards Zero Waste', the overarching waste strategy for Wales, and 'One Wales: One Planet', the Welsh Government's vision of a sustainable Wales.

RESULTS

In January 2011 Swansea council's Corporate Building & Property Services department approached Derwen to carry out a case study, sampling 30 loads of general waste from the department's depot and empty properties. The aim was to determine how to reduce the amount of waste created, how to reuse materials instead of discarding them, and to suggest recovery and recycling options for the waste being produced. The case study made recommendations and proposed solutions for improving processes that have since been taken on board by the department, contributing to increased recycling rates.

Swansea council commented in its nomination submission: 'Derwen is a company who by demonstrating and promoting best practice are supporting Corporate Building & Property Services' waste and sustainability agenda by assisting us in embedding the use of recycled aggregates in our organisation and maximising our reuse and recycling options.'

It added: 'Derwen is a company whose activities are contributing towards a more sustainable Wales by avoiding unnecessary landfill and the use of virgin stone, reducing carbon emissions and conserving fossil fuels. Their process is lessening the impact on the environment and preserving the countryside and Welsh coastline by reducing the need to quarry for virgin stone and dredge for sand.'

