

LAWSONS

'Family Values - Professional Service'

WCoBM CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AWARD 2020



**Worshipful Company
of Builders' Merchants**

Lawsons (Whetstone) Ltd have been actively delivering building and fencing materials in London since 1921, the year of our founding, and run a fleet of over 90 vehicles from our 17 branches in and around London. With vehicles ranging in size from 3.5 tonnes to 32 tonnes, we aim to replace them every seven years, keeping the fleet modern and in line with the latest emission standards.

As a Builders Merchant, we deliver heavy building products necessitating the use of big delivery vehicles fitted with hydraulic cranes as well as heavy loading equipment in our branches.

Traditionally these vehicles have always been powered by diesel, but we wanted to challenge this practice and adopt a more environmentally driven and friendly approach.

Our objective was to identify an efficient way of delivering materials cleanly and quietly to our customer sites in and around London.



Leading the way we developed the first gas/electric 26 tonne HGV delivery vehicle alongside IVECO and Hiab. A key beneficiary, with the addition of this CNG vehicle to our operation, was the general public by way of the 50% reduction in noise, 99% reduction in particulant matter and 95% less CO₂ when using biomethane. The second beneficiary of course is our driver who no longer has to operate the crane in a noisy, noxious environment.

We have numerous customers who work within areas of London, where councils are particularly aware of noise pollution, and the CNG vehicle has become an essential tool for these contractors to carry out their work.

Manufacturers are already developing their own solutions to the environmental issues facing the planet, however they are reluctant to share information between themselves, but our intervention has offered them a possible channel of communication. We continue to talk to manufacturers and other third parties with a view to reducing our Carbon Footprint still further and are actively working on a project which could be a world's first if it comes to fruition. Watch this space!

We have found over the years that major vehicle suppliers are reticent of initiatives towards change if they are not being driven by themselves, however if you knock loudly and often enough, people do listen.... eventually.

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We have radically altered the make up of our company car fleet over the last 12 months with our sales representatives cars being replaced with hybrids and, where range anxiety hasn't proved a concern, fully electric models. This adoption of electrically powered vehicles has necessitated us adding charging points at employees' homes and at their places of work.

The charging points on our depots are open to all users so both employees and customers can make use of them - at zero cost to themselves.

We have solar panels installed at two of our branches and are proposing to add solar panels and possibly a wind turbine at our Head Office to power the electric vehicles based there and reduce the carbon footprint of the branch operation. Additionally, we have upgraded the lighting infrastructure at branches with LEDs both internally and externally.



We collaborated with JCB in their development of an electric Teletruk and purchased the original demonstrator and the first four subsequent machines that went into production towards the end of 2019. Alongside our existing electric Combilift machines, this has resulted in the plant at our Edgware and Bedford branches being totally electric which again benefits our workforce by providing them with a cleaner, quieter working environment.

Not only do our employees benefit from a cleaner, quieter working environment but the company car drivers benefit through a significantly reduced tax liability.

Additional long term benefits for our customers are cleaner and quieter delivery vehicles, and a happier and more relaxed workforce. As the cost of alternatively fuelled vehicles reduces there will be additional financial gains as it will become cheaper to run these vehicles allowing these savings to be passed on to our customers.

Lawsons' of course benefits through its status as industry leaders and being acknowledged for adopting new technologies and continually striving to become as environmentally friendly as possible.

We were the ninth company to join the FORS scheme in 2009, immediately recognising its benefits, and we have recently gained FORS Gold accreditation. Although several of the requirements for certification are focused on safety, many deal with environmental issues. For instance, we recently carried out a survey amongst our staff on travelling to work and are working with employees towards reducing their individual carbon footprints by offering a cycle to work scheme and car share initiatives and investigating alternative methods of travel on their behalf.



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Lawsons would be honoured to be considered for this prestigious award as recognition of the fact that we are continually seeking ways for the builders merchanting sector to improve their carbon footprint by working alongside manufacturers and other agencies in developing more environmentally friendly working practices and practical delivery solutions for our industry.