

# Willerby

## The power of green networks

Willerby is the UK's biggest manufacturer of holiday homes and lodges and was founded in Hull over 78 years ago.

Sustainability has long been a driver of Willerby's business and the company has worked over the years to make its products and its production process as low carbon as possible.

"Everything we do as a business is focused on three factors – product, people, and place," says Chief Financial Officer Sue Allan, who drives the business's sustainability agenda.

A typical holiday home can emit upwards of two tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per year, but since October 2022, all Willerby holiday homes have been built to the 'Willerby GreEN standard', with upgraded windows and doors and a doubling of interior wall thickness improving thermal performance by up to 28% and reducing CO<sub>2</sub>e by up to 250kg/year.

In addition – anticipating the phasing out of LPG gas boilers – the company has developed the first all-electric caravan that will be suitable for most 32 amp park pitches.

"We're working up and down our supply chain to ensure the units can be manufactured and operate to the highest levels of efficiency and sustainability," says Sue, "including field trials with clusters of all-electric units on test parks to understand the practical constraints and record the performance of the homes in use."

Willerby is also the first manufacturer in the industry to produce a sustainability report.

"It involved scrutinising everything we do in our day-to-day business and working out what the business needs to commit to, now and in the future," Sue explains. "Even though we're quite a big company with around 1,000 employees typically, we're like many other companies with limited time and resources to support our sustainability activities."



**Sue Allan**  
Chief Financial Officer



Oh Yes! Net Zero Member #38



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### Making connections, sharing knowledge

Oh Yes! Net Zero has proved invaluable in helping Sue streamline the process of sustainability reporting.

"It was at an Oh Yes! Net Zero meeting that I met up with Axiom, a local company with a software platform that hosts all of our sustainability data in one place. It can examine our suppliers' sustainability reports, (if they produce them) or similar companies with the same Companies House SIC codes if they don't. That gives us a baseline to help prioritise which of our suppliers have the biggest impact on our carbon footprint and which ones we can work closely with to try and reduce our scope 3 emissions and our impact on the planet.

"It's been a great tool and absolutely essential to help us bring it all together into one place. And it's really easy for people to use, which is vital when you don't have people dedicated to sustainability, but plenty who need to monitor sustainability impacts nevertheless."

Willerby had already started its decarbonisation journey before joining Oh Yes! Net Zero and was able to use its experience to help other local businesses.

"We installed a biomass plant in November 2020, and I was able to explain how we use it to generate heat from waste products made into pellets. That's how we heat our factory, and how we have drastically reduced our use of gas."

A lengthy interruption to a journey – caused by a Network Rail 'meltdown' during the return trip from the Oh Yes! Net Zero visit to parliament in March 2023 – gave Sue time to talk with Caroline Morris from KCOM and Ash Wray from C3 Group, who had worked together on KCOM's solar panel project.

**250kg/year CO2e reduced**

through improving **thermal performance** of holiday homes.



"We were planning our own installation, and I was looking for a recommendation for somebody decent to work with. They suggested a really good local partner – GW Power-Safe. I learned so much because of that cancelled train! It just proves the power of that connection and the network. And I know that if we work on something else and get stuck, there are other members I can call to find out how they did it."

Willerby's decarbonisation measures are paying off. 96% of the business's total waste was recycled or recaptured in the 2022 financial year, and 3.5GWh of energy was produced from the biomass boilers. All Willerby buildings in Hull have been upgraded to LED lighting, and staff are encouraged to travel to work via environmentally friendly means, supported by a bi-annual cycle-to-work scheme, on-site bike storage and a company car policy that rewards those who choose electric and hybrid vehicles.

"We're looking to be as close to energy self-sufficiency as we can," says Sue, "so we're going to carry on looking at investing in projects like an organic Rankine cycle plant, solar panels and wind turbines. We're a major employer and player in the local economy and we're committed to actively contributing to the sustainability of the Humber region."

**"It's obvious when I talk to people that I'm local, with the Humber region in my heart. And I'm really quite practical. So if somebody asks me how easy it was to install solar panels or EV chargers, for example, I can tell them about all the permissions they'll need to get in place and what it's like working with the National Grid – and most importantly, to be patient but persistent!"**

**Sue Allan**  
Chief Financial Officer  
Willerby

