

Green Dentist signs up Sir Bobby Robson

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On September 8th, Sir Bobby Robson will turn his back on football and take up an appointment with a dentist.

The dentist he will visit is no ordinary practitioner but a man who has realised a dream – to build a luxurious, state-of-the art, new dental clinic which is at the cutting edge not only of dentistry but also of energy efficiency.

It has taken Dental Surgeon Richard Grant six long years to complete the project in Cramlington, a fast-expanding town in Northumberland. When the privately funded new surgery, Cramlington Dental Centre, is officially opened by Sir Bobby on September 8th, it will provide five consulting rooms and associated facilities. Dr Grant has funded the building with his business partner, Nick Clunies-Ross whose Physiotherapy and Sports Clinic shares part of the ground floor.

What the average patient, most of whom are NHS, will not appreciate at the Centre, is the sophisticated renewable energy system which supports the new building. Discreetly positioned glass solar panels on the roof will provide sufficient hot water for the clinic for up to 9 months of the year, even in a poor Summer. In cooler months an air conditioning system acts as a heat engine to extract heat from outside and circulate it around the building, This supplements the heat recovery system which recovers heat from extracted stale air and recycles it back into the building with fresh air.

“I wanted the building to be as energy efficient as possible within the constraints of private funding but I wasn’t sure how to go about it. I found a company in Eastbourne, Riomay Heating, who designed and installed the solar heating system and were brilliant in advising us on renewable energy and various concessions,” says Richard Grant. “ Other green features such as computer controlled waste amalgam separators and a self-contained water supply for the dental machinery, go far in making a real contribution to environmental safety.

Although most of the Centre’s patients are NHS, Dr Grant found there was nothing from the NHS to help with the capital investment he was making. “If I had been a manufacturing business, or creating jobs or building a private house, I could have got a grant but there is nothing to help green developments like mine,” he says.

What he did do, on the advice of Riomay, was contact the Carbon Trust. The Carbon Trust, an independent company set up by the government to help UK business to cut carbon emissions, promotes the Government's Enhanced Capital Allowance Scheme for energy saving investments. The ECA enables a business to claim 100% first-year capital allowances on their spending on qualifying plant and machinery such as Riomay’s solar panels.

“What Dr Grant has done is demonstrate how a small business can use renewable energy efficiently and cost effectively. I hope he is a trailblazer for the other NHS doctors, dentists and clinics who need to reduce carbon emissions and want an energy efficient practice,” says renewable energy expert Tony Book, a member of the International Solar Energy Society.

The new Cramlington Dental Centre will be opened by Sir Bobby Robson at Quarryside House, Middle Farm Square, Cramlington, NE23 1BA on Wednesday, 8th September.

EDITORS NOTES

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The Carbon Trust

1. The Carbon Trust works with UK business and the public sector to cut carbon emissions and capture the potential of low carbon technologies. An independent company set up by Government to help the UK meet its climate change obligations, the Carbon Trust creates practical business-focused solutions to carbon emission reduction through energy efficiency, carbon management, and investment.

2. The Carbon Trust's annual funding amounts to approximately £50m a year in grants from Defra, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and Invest NI. In addition, the Carbon Trust manages the Government's energy efficiency Enhanced Capital Allow