Renewables training provider gets visit from Rishi Sunak

Tuesday 20 April, 2021

16/04/21 – GTEC, Hawes, North Yorkshire: MP for Richmond (Yorks), Rishi Sunak, visited renewables training provider, GTEC – a company leading the way when it comes to creating the 'green' installers needed to meet carbon reduction targets.

Making our homes low carbon offers a real business opportunity for people working in heating, plumbing and related trades, and Rishi went to see how GTEC and the installers its training are taking advantage of this growing market; despite the challenges of Covid 19.

At the end of last year, GTEC won a bid to provide heavily discounted training and certification to individuals and companies looking to upskill into heat-based renewables, backed by The Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through Midlands Energy Hub (MEH).

Named the Renewable Heat Installer Training & Support Scheme (RHITSS), the scheme offers vouchers which provide up to 70% off the cost of becoming a renewables installer. There are currently 1,000 individuals and 150 businesses signed-up to RHITSS – spaces that were filled within 10 days of the schemes launch. Vouchers can be used at GTEC and also other LCL Awards and BPEC approved centres throughout the UK.

During his trip, Rishi met with local installers to find out how training was helping them, reviewed the range of renewable technologies available at GTEC – heat pumps, solar thermal with battery storage coming soon - and heard about the company's recent successes.

While at the centre, Rishi also met other industry representatives, including Awarding Organisation LCL Awards, NAPIT an installer certification body and the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), all of which GTEC has worked with to make the RHITSS scheme a success.

GTEC's MD, Griff Thomas, is a key representative for his industry, Chairing the Decarbonising Housing Group for Richmondshire and having contributed to most of the national renewable technology standards. Griff is also called-upon for training advice from much further afield - he is currently working with the British Commission in India, as part of the countries drive to de-carbonise its cities.

Rishi's visit coincided with confirmation from Midlands Energy Hub and BEIS that the RHITSS scheme has had its deadline extended to 30th
September 2021. The extension was granted in recognition of the difficulties that some candidates have had in securing a place due to Covid restrictions (previously it was May 14th.)

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Quotes:

Rishi Sunak. MP for Richmond (Yorks), said: "Despite Covid, and with the knowledge that there is a framework of national funding support introduced by government, GTEC has really seized an opportunity and are now a key player in the UK's national strategy to achieve Net Zero.

"The RHITSS scheme has been a great success; GTEC has been able to pull together many different parts of the low carbon sector to deliver this ambitious programme very quickly. It's been great to meet a local company playing their part in such an important national cause."

Griff Thomas. MD for GTEC, said: "It was a pleasure to meet Rishi and see his obvious enthusiasm for a low carbon future. We discussed the need for long-term and sustainable support to give to installers the confidence to invest in career development and the green agenda. The achievements of RHITSS is an example of what can happen when industry collaborates, thanks in particular to MEH which helped us get the scheme up and running in just three weeks."

Darren Jones, from local renewables installation company, Jones Plumbing and Heating, said: "We're seeing a lot of interest in renewables from the retrofit market – i.e. individual homeowners who want to make their existing houses green. The financial support we've benefitted from through RHITSS is exactly the kind of incentive we need. It was an honour to show Rishi round some of the renewable technology

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we’re currently fitting in the area.”

Mark Krull. Director for LCL Awards, said: “To ensure Net Zero is met, a long term and well defined plan is needed so that installers, manufacturers and training companies are able to warrant future investment. Recognised, high quality qualifications are key to this approach, and as Griff’s work globally is proving, the UK has an opportunity to lead in this field.”

Michael Gallagher. Regional Energy Project Manager for MEH, said: “We recognise the hard work invested by GTEC in delivering such a large scale and time limited project, which not only looks to support a national low carbon economy deliver, but also the government’s longer term decarbonisation objectives.”

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