Going green: Our judges’ pick of some of the best sustainable businesses of 2022

From holiday resorts to wind farms – businesses up and down the country are taking big steps to make their operations more sustainable.

This year, we have celebrated those firms that have put sustainability first and have been recognised in Reach business awards held across the country in 2022 in partnership with our brilliant sister live brands.

Our Reach events team has run business events in England – from Devon to Tyneside – in Wales and in Scotland through our sister site Insider.co.uk.

Here, we take a look back at the companies that have won in the environmental, green and sustainable business of the year categories at our Reach events across the country.

The companies here span sectors from tech to tourism – and our list demonstrates that even when faced with fundamental challenges, businesses have ploughed on with their key aims to protect the environment.

We’ll be honouring more businesses in our awards across the country in 2023 – keep reading BusinessLive for more details.

Orsted – Grimsby

Orsted wins Large Business of the Year at Humber Renewables Awards 2022, sponsored by Specialist Engineering Solutions. (Image: Richard Addison)

Winner of Large Business Award at [Humber Renewables Awards 2022]

The Danish multinational behind the world's largest wind farms – operated and maintained by a 550-strong team in Grimsby – was celebrated by peers for its incredible contribution to the region.

As it rang up a decade of delivery on the Humber, efforts to engage the next generation were also saluted. Arriving to build Westermost Rough, it acquired then added Race Bank before launching into the Hornsea zone – with the unprecedented scale bringing global attention to the 'Energy Estuary'..

With assembly at Hull and using blades manufactured in the city, it now occupies hundreds of square kilometres of near North Sea, with the business a fulcrum for the wider industry’s growth, as vessel operators and supply chain partners take advantage of a world-leading cluster.

Patrick Harnett, vice president for projects with Orsted, said: “I have worked in this area for over 10 years, I have seen it go from strength to strength, I have seen the talent in the region transferring from one industry to another, and we see a great future here where we can keep growing through the years.

Cofton Holidays – Devon

Cofton Holidays took home the Environmental and Sustainability Award
(Image: Mike Lister Photography)

Winner of the Environmental and Sustainability Award, Western Morning News Business Awards 2022

Cofton Holidays, near Dawlish, impressed judges with its investment in sustainability in every element of its business.

The family-run holiday park this year made a £200,000 investment in 11 electric vehicles for its housekeeping and maintenance teams. It has also installed 24 public electric vehicle (EV) charging points, undertaken a a two-acre rewilding project, introduced wildlife corridors and installed solar panels on the park's 12 luxury lodges and toilet blocks.

Earlier this year, Cofton also invested £17,000 in 16 e-bikes for guests to hire and heats the park with a woodchip biomass boiler.

Chris Jeffery, Director at Cofton Holidays and a driving force behind sustainable projects at the holiday park, commented: "For us, sustainability is the future of tourism. It's why we're investing heavily in green initiatives.

"As one of Devon's leading holiday parks, we're encouraging other South West businesses, and those who live in and visit our beautiful region, to become more environmentally aware."

Cofton Holidays has long been committed to sustainability. It was won the Western Morning News Business Awards winner for Environment and Sustainability two years in a row and has achieved Gold at the David Bellamy Conservation awards for more than 20 years.

Purple Planet Packaging – Coventry

Purple Planet Packaging with its awards for Green Business of the Year and Company of the Year
Winner Green Business of the Year and Company of the Year at CoventryLive and WarwickshireLive Business Awards 2022

Purple Planet Packaging, which is based in Whitley, supplies customers across the country with plastic-free products including cleaning supplies, cutlery and food and drink containers.

The eight-strong company is run by husband and wife team Mark and Joanna Farr who bought what was then an online distribution venture based in Devon in 2019 and established it in Coventry.

It is completely independent and therefore able to work with specialist environmentally friendly packaging firms across the world to develop and manufacture more than 500 products.

Many are made from plant crops like corn and sugarcane with

around 60 per cent of the range being compostable. It also offers a warehousing and logistic service to its customers which are short on storage space.

Mr Farr said the business started in a log cabin and now occupies 45,000 sq ft. It hopes to double the size of its team next year.

The Appliance Recycling Group – West Bromwich



The Appliance Recycling Group, winner of Green Business of the Year
(Image: AF1 Photography)
Winner of Green Business of the Year at the Birmingham BusinessLive Awards in association with the Birmingham Post 2022

The Appliance Recycling Group is a UK waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling business based in West Bromwich which ensures old electrical appliances are not sent to landfill.

Its services are used by the majority of UK electrical retailers as part of their responsible recycling programmes.

It also helps with waste within the community and educating the next generation.

Vortex IoT – Neath

Vortex IoT managing director and co-founder Adrian Sutton
Winner of Tech Company of the Year at the Swansea Bay Business Awards

Neath-based Vortex IoT business develops and builds environmental sensors – designed to provide clients with detailed and comprehensive data.

With a particular focus on fighting air pollution, Vortex aims to help make cities greener and safer – and has expanded significantly in recent years. In particular, the business recently opened a new office space and moved to a new industrial facility – and is now capable of producing 100 air sensors per week.

Phillips 66 Humber Refinery, North Lincolnshire



Mike Wailes, right, receives the award from Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, Shevaun Haviland.
(Image: Grimsby News And Pictures Agency)
Winner of the Hull & Humber Chamber of Commerce Special Award, Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards 2022

Sustainable aviation fuel production alongside development towards switching to green hydrogen and the introduction of carbon capture saw an oil refinery take a huge step towards Net Zero.

Phillips 66's Humber Refinery now supplies British Airways, while making huge strides to clean up operations at the heart of Britain's most emission intensive cluster. It also produces materials used in batteries used in electric vehicles and mobile phones.

The efforts to decarbonise won it a special accolade from Hull

and Humber Chamber of Commerce, with Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, Shevaun Haviland, presenting it at the northern Lincolnshire Business Awards.

Ms Haviland said: “I am pleased to hear about Phillips 66 and their work at the forefront of creating an economy of the future, driving sustainable growth.

“Seizing opportunities now makes the UK a global leader, and it is Chamber members like Phillips 66 that drive this. This is a special award for outstanding achievement.”

The first batch of sustainable aviation fuel was sent to British Airways in March, after a significant multi-year contract was agreed, while progress continues at pace on wider transformations at the complex South Killingholme refinery.

Mike Wailes, director of European strategy for Phillips 66, said: “We have been working with the government for the last couple of years on these advanced fuels, it is a fantastic opportunity to decarbonise air travel and it has been a real joy working with BA, who are very keen to get domestic supply, and for us it is a significant output.

“There is so much to talk about in terms of what we are doing, but sustainable aviation fuel is here now, physically coming out. The longer term is Humber Zero – our CCS project – and Gigastack – green hydrogen – both working with partners.”

E-Verve Energy, St Helens

Winner of the Environmental and Sustainability Award, Regional Business Awards from the Liverpool ECHO and BusinessLive

E-Verve Energy is successfully contributing to the road-to-zero with its electric vehicle charging infrastructure. A primary installation partner for major manufacturers, it installs approximately 700 electric vehicle charge-points each month with the plan to facilitate 1,000 by the end of the

year. E-Verve Energy has a zero-emissions travel to work strategy and promotes a sustainable office environment.

Naturbeads, Bath

(From left) Professor Janet Scott, chief executive of Naturbeads Giovanna Laudisio and Professor Davide Mattia. (Image: Nic Delves-Broughton)

Winner of the Environmental Business of the Year category at the BathLive Business Awards 2022

The University of Bath spin-out company has developed biodegradable alternatives to microplastics that are used in products including toothpaste, cosmetics, adhesives and paint to act as sensory agents, structuring agents or emulsifiers.

Naturbeads' alternatives to the plastic microbeads are made from cellulose, a naturally occurring substance that gives plants their strength and structure, which the start-up says biodegrade into "harmless sugars".

The cleantech, which is looking for industrial partners to help commercialise its tech, was recognised by the judges for

its pioneering research and for the development of “such a promising material” in the fight against climate change.

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