



# Contractors Mechanical Plant Engineers

## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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### CMPE NEWS

#### Reminder - Annual Subscriptions

Welcome to another edition of our National Newsletter.

We are now well into the current financial year and it would be timely to remind all branches and members of the following:-

- “Annual Subscriptions” are due from the 1st April 2022.
- Any member whose subscription has not been paid by 31st May 2022 will *ipso facto* cease to be a member of the Association.
- Branch Honorary Treasurers are to remit to the Honorary National Treasurer half of the Annual Subscriptions paid to the branch by the 30th June 2022 and all new members subscriptions thereafter are to be remitted every three months.
- The Annual Subscriptions remitted to the Honorary National Treasurer must be accompanied with a list of the members names and addresses, telephone numbers, email address, and whether they are a full fee paying member, retired member, or a National Life member.

Your co-operation to the rules of the association would be appreciated.

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#### National AGM

The **National AGM** will take place on Saturday 11th June 2022 and will be held at the Premier Inn, Trentham Gardens, Stone Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 8AX (Agenda and details to follow in due course).

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### **The building regs are about to change but they forgot to tell the builders.**



The building regulations are changing in just seven weeks' time but it seems that more than half of Britain's builders know nothing about it.

According to a survey by the Federation of Master Builders, which represents more than 7,000 small building firms across the UK, 52% of builders are neither prepared for nor aware of the impending changes. Only 44% are ready – 5% couldn't even say one way or the other.

Revisions of the approved documents that give practical guidance on the requirements of the Building Regulations 2010 come into effect on 15th June 2022.

The revised documents are: Approved Document F (Ventilation), volume 2; Approved Document L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) volumes 1 and 2; Approved Document O (Overheating); and Approved Document S (Infrastructure for Charging Electric Vehicles).

Centred around improving the energy efficiency of buildings, they are interim measures ahead of the Future Homes and Building Standards expected in 2025.

The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) says that the government needs to pull its finger out and tell small builders what it expects from them. The FMB says it needs “clear guidance to help make sure small builders are informed of the changes”. It adds: “These are complex changes for small, time poor, builders to take on, especially without good communication from government.”

Pressures facing small building firms were also once again highlighted by the FMB's latest quarterly survey. Prices are really impacting bottom lines with 98% of builders having had material costs increase and only 83% passing on these costs to customers.

Material shortages and a lack of skills still plague the sector causing job delays for most builders. 73% of FMB members have delayed jobs due a lack of materials and 55% are delaying work owing to a lack of skilled labour.

Carpenters/joiners, bricklayers and general labourers continue to be the most difficult occupations to recruit in Q1 2022, with at least two in five FMB members reporting difficulty recruiting either occupation (45%, 40%, and 39% respectively). Difficulties in hiring bricklayers is fairly stable compared to Q4 2021 (41%) along with general labourers (38% in Q4 2021). Difficulty in hiring carpenters/joiners is also relatively stable in Q1 (45%) albeit slightly up from 43% in Q4 2021. Difficulties recruiting plasterers has continued to decrease since Q3 2021.

In Northern Ireland 31% of builders reported an increased workload during the first quarter of 2022, which is a fall from the 37% that saw an increase in the fourth quarter of 2021 and 60% in Q3 2021.

FMB chief executive Brian Berry said: “The FMB’s state of trade [survey](#) highlights just how underprepared the building industry is for regulatory changes coming into force in June. Builders can’t be blamed for this situation given the poor communication and engagement coming from government. The government need to help address this issue by providing clear guidance to help builders understand what is expected of them.”

He added: “The [survey](#) also shows that availability of materials and skills shortages are not going away. These issues, coupled with crippling price rises, are causing real problems for the building industry. Delays and increases in prices will put off consumers, who are already reluctant to commission new work as their own costs spiral.”



## Pilkington puts Vp up for sale.



Jeremy Pilkington, chairman and majority shareholder of Vp plc, has put the business up for sale.

The Vp board said that it was seeking a buyer “who will respect Vp's unique heritage, family culture and committed employee base”.

Ackers P Investment Company Limited, a company connected to Vp's chairman Jeremy Pilkington, controls 50.26% of the issued share capital of the company. It has told the board that it wants to explore opportunities to dispose of its interests.

Jeremy Pilkington said: "Vp's controlling shareholder, a company connected to me, has decided that it wishes to diversify its investments. This does not in any way reflect a dissatisfaction with the company or its direction. Indeed, they are strongly supportive of management and highly satisfied by the continuing strong performance of the group. But they do have to take into account their current and future obligations to my family as a whole."

Vp began life in 1954 as Vibratory Roller & Plant Hire Limited, set up by civil engineer Geoffrey Pilkington. It became Vibroplant in 1960, floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1973 and was re-launched as Vp in 2001 following a move away from general plant hire to specialist equipment rental.

When Geoffrey Pilkington died prematurely in 1978, his 27-year-old son Jeremy joined the company and became chairman three years later. The group today includes UK Forks, Brandon Hire Station, Groundforce, TPA, ESS, MEP Hire, Torrent Trackside, Airpac Rental and TR Group in Australasia. The group's market capitalisation is currently £380m.

But Jeremy Pilkington turned 71 last month and wants to call it a day at Vp.

His chief executive, Neil Stothard, said: "Following the indication from the controlling shareholder that they would like to explore opportunities to dispose of their shares, the board thoroughly considered all strategic options in partnership with our advisers. In considering these options the board, including Jeremy, has had regard to the interests of all the company's stakeholders. The board has unanimously concluded that it would be appropriate to investigate the sale of the company and is therefore launching a formal sale process.

"The board intends to seek a buyer who will respect our unique heritage and highly valued employee base, whilst supporting our longer-term growth ambitions and ensuring we continue to develop our business and maintain an environment whereby the business can continue to deliver long term, quality returns, to our shareholders."

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## Cooks joins Cat network.



Caterpillar master distributor Finning has added Leicestershire-based Cooks (Midlands) Ltd to its network for compact Cat equipment.

Cooks Midlands is now an authorised sales and service centre (ASSC) selling compact Cat machines across Leicester, Derby and Coventry.

Cooks Midlands will stock mini excavators, skid steers, compact wheel loaders and backhoe loaders. It is also a dealer for Mecalac construction machinery and Kubota

tractors.

Stewart Carter, head of building construction products at Finning, said: "To ensure we can continue to deliver sales and service excellence, we are expanding our network and partnering with established companies to provide improved coverage and customer support to meet demand."

Cooks Midlands managing director Darren Cook added: "This is a prestigious appointment and shows how far we've come in the three decades we've been in business. To work with Finning is something special and we look forward to welcoming customers old and new to view – and buy – the full range of Cat models we now stock."

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## Fox acquires waste firm.



Fox Group, the acquisitive Blackpool plant hire firm formerly known as Fox Bros, has added a waste management contractor to its stable.

Fox Group has acquired Blackpool-based Woods Waste Ltd, which specialise in inert waste disposal, recycling, soil supplies and aggregates.

Managing director Paul Fox said: “We have a very strong longstanding relationship with Woods Waste and them becoming part of our

group makes perfect sense. They are a successful family run business, employing great people. It allows us to build on our already strong Blackpool presence and their scope of services fits perfectly with us.”

Already this year the Fox Group has acquired Cotswold Roller Hire (CRH) and Blackledge Plant Hire, as well as Woods Waste now. Last year it bought JJ O’Grady Civils and in 2020 it took over Clive Hurt Plant Hire (trading as CMP Plant Hire).



## JCB joins jubilee pageant.



If you are watching Her Majesty The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee on Sunday 5th June, be sure to look out for the diggers.

JCB machines from the past and the present will be taking part in the parade in the streets of London near Buckingham Palace.

The Platinum Pageant tells the story of the 70-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II, recalling transformations in society and industry over the years. It will involve more than 10,000 people, telling the story of the monarch’s seven-decade reign through music, dance, and fashion.

And as JCB is very much part of Britain's heritage of the past 70 years, it will have five machines from across the years joining the parade.

Leading the way will be the Mark 1 JCB backhoe from 1953, the year of Her Majesty's coronation. Next in line will be JCB 3CX backhoes manufactured in the silver, gold and diamond jubilee years of 1977, 2002 and 2012. Bringing the parade right up to date for platinum jubilee year will be a 2022 JCB backhoe loader powered by hydrogen.

JCB chairman Lord Bamford said: "It will be a very unique occasion and a wonderful way of saying thank you to the Queen for 70 years of service to our country and the commonwealth. We are very proud to be taking part in the pageant and proud of the role JCB machines have played over the course of the last 70 years in helping shape the world we live in today. We are also thrilled about a future where our machines will be powered by hydrogen and delighted to be able to highlight this technology."

The event will culminate in front of Buckingham Palace and is expected to be watched by a global audience of up to one billion people across various platforms.

Pictured above are JCB engineering graduate James Ownsworth (left) and engineering degree apprentice Jed Brandreth with the hydrogen-powered backhoe loader that will take part in the pageant.



## **Graham cleared to start £150m M25 junction upgrade.**

Another M25 motorway junction upgrade project has secured planning permission, this time in Essex.



*Above: Aerial view of the M25 J28 scheme*

Transport secretary Grant Shapps has signed the development consent order (DCO) for the expansion of junction 28 of the M25, its intersection with the A12 and A1023 near Brentwood.

John Graham Construction was awarded a £124m contract for the main construction works last year. Overall project cost is estimated at up to £150m.

Last week the DCO was signed for the £250m upgrade of junction 10 of the M25, its intersection with the A3 at Wisley in Surrey. Balfour Beatty Atkins JV has the main works contract for that job.



Main construction at both of these junctions is now expected to start in the autumn, with preparations taking place through the summer.

Graham's work at J28 includes construction of a new two-lane loop road with hard shoulder, for traffic travelling from the M25 on to the A12. There will also be two new bridges put in – over the A12 eastbound exit road and over the M25 anti-clockwise entry road. The M25 anti-clockwise carriageway will also be widened at the approach to the junction for the new exit road.

There will also be works on the A12 eastbound to maintain existing access to Maylands Golf Club in Romford.

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## JMS stocks up on Snorkel scissors.



Access hire company JMS Powered Access has bought 17 Snorkel lithium-ion-powered rough-terrain scissor lifts.

The machines are made in the UK, at Snorkel's Vigo Centre facility in Washington, Tyne & Wear, and were delivered throughout March 2022.

The new arrivals comprise eight Snorkel S2755RTE narrow rough-terrain scissor lifts, four Snorkel S3370RTE and five Snorkel S3970RTE compact rough-terrain scissor lifts.

It was one of the largest single orders that Snorkel had taken from an independent UK hire company for its battery-powered scissor lifts.

The S2755RTE rough-terrain scissor lift has a maximum working height of 10.1 metres in a narrow machine. The S3370RTE and S3970RTE have maximum working heights of 12 and 13.8 metres respectively.

JMS was founded in 1994 by Mark Jackson and Justin Lynn, serving the mechanical and electrical (M&E) industry with pipe threaders and welders. After outgrowing their first commercial property, they moved to a location in Harpenden, Hertfordshire in 2001, and began hiring out their own aluminium towers in 2004, adding low-level access equipment in 2008. In 2017, the mechanical tool business was sold to MEP Hire Station (part of Vp plc), leaving the focus solely on powered access.

JMS Powered Access now has four depots in Harpenden, Radlett, Dartford and Leeds. It runs a fleet of 2,100 machines.

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