

Renewables innovation – networking is back on the agenda

A SHOWCASE IN EXCELLENCE – FIFE RENEWABLES INNOVATION CENTRE PUTS BUSINESS SUPPORT & NETWORKING BACK ON THE AGENDA

Hailed as a showcase in excellence for its sector, the Fife Renewables Innovation Centre in Levenmouth continues to play a significant role in generating and sustaining enterprise in Fife.

Currently operating at over 80% occupancy, twenty small businesses are located in the business centre, owned and operated by Fife Council Economic Development, with approximately sixty people, in sectors ranging from recruitment, renewables and professional services, to training, community, and mental health & wellbeing, located there. Many have been in situ since the business centre first opened nine years ago.

Located at Ajax Way, Leven, FRIC offers approximately 2,000sq metres of space over two floors, including high quality conference facilities. Numerous Networking events, seminars, conferences, product launches and photo shoots regularly take place, with the business centre becoming the meeting place of choice for both the Local Area Committee, and the Levenmouth Rail Group. Additionally, this “BREEAM” Excellent rated business centre offers a virtual office service too.

Accountant and Recruitment consultant, Stewart Kirkwood, is a

long term tenant who moved his business to FRIC just two weeks after it was opened. Commenting on his experience of being based at FRIC, he said: "Prior to coming to FRIC, I was operating from a cabin in my garden. I have found that basing both my businesses here has been a terrific asset for me. Having a friendly, professional reception service, plus the use of meeting rooms, benefits me greatly. The icing on the cake is that as a serviced office I am not exposed to increased energy bills, as all heat and light is included in my lease."

A FRIC tenant for the past five years, Marianne Lynch, who runs a bookkeeping & payroll business, first established her business at FRIC, operating as a sole trader. She's now grown her business into a limited company, employing four staff. She commented on the "business community" feeling within the premises, whereby tenants are introduced to one another through events and networking.

"This has had a huge impact on the growth of my business," said Marianne. "Over the years I have gained long term clients through these introductions, but also strong connections with other businesses within my sector with whom I regularly gain and pass referrals between."

Newer tenants, who have made the move to FRIC recently, include Mary Walker of Ferguson Walker, Solicitors, who explained that following the pandemic, she continued to work from home.

"As a sole practitioner I realised I no longer required my larger office premises, but chanced upon an advert for FRIC and enquired about the space. Business Centre Manager, Ann-Marie Balcombe, showed me the space available, providing a wealth of background knowledge about the premises during my visits. I was immediately attracted by the quality of the accommodation, the economics of what the lease provides, including the whole atmosphere at FRIC. I have been welcomed

by all the other tenants and am already being sought out where there is a potential business opportunity. Without exception clients have commented positively about my new office space. I only wish I had found FRIC sooner!"

"It's fantastic to be hailed as a showcase for our sector. Moving somewhere collaborative where businesses can access high quality office space and network at the same time is really beneficial to them, especially in post covid business recovery," said Ann Marie Balcombe, FRIC Business Centre Manager. "As our tenant Stewart pointed out, all heating and light is included in the lease arrangements. As the building has an underground heat source pump and solar panels, it is extremely energy efficient, which is helping keep energy costs down at the moment."

Ann Marie finished by saying: "We maintain everything in the building to a very high standard with the very latest equipment. We'll let tenants personalise their offices and workspaces to their requirements too."

Pamela Stevenson, Service Manager for Fife Council Economic Development said: "We want to make Fife the very best place in which to do business. Fife Renewables Innovation Centre epitomises this ethos, offering a supportive and highly collaborative environment with flexible operating terms. Our satisfied clients demonstrate that they have found a place which works for them."

"As it approaches its tenth anniversary next April, there is no doubt that FRIC has played a significant role in generating and sustaining enterprise, particularly within the SME sector."

For details of existing units for let in FRIC, please contact the InvestFife's Business Property team which falls under the remit of Fife Council Economic Development.



Picture Caption left to right -Left To Right – Joe Griffith (Griffiths Inspection and Training), Stewart Kirkwood (Kirkwood CA), Gordon Macdonald & Mel Orsini (independent 1-1), Liam Anderson (Liam Anderson Architectural Services), Marianne Lynch (Lynch Bookkeeping & Payroll), Carolyn Ward (Gillespie & Inverarity & Co Accountants), Jennifer Auchterlonie, Andrea Carr & Helen Adair, (Gibson Care), Azaria Lynch (Social Media Co), and Ann-Marie Balcombe (Balcombe Business Services).