



After a short foray into the wider world for the previous post, this column has returned to Blighty to bring news of the opening for entries of the 2014 Greenbuild Awards. The awards celebrate what the organisers claim are “truly green buildings that show the project teams are serious about sustainability”. In the wake of an entertaining discussion at this year’s Greenbuild Expo – as part of which the awards are presented – entries need to provide energy performance data for the building in use, proving that it lives up to its design. There are many examples of building with impressive energy performance specs that fail because they don’t take into account the actions of people. They open windows and stuff like that!

One of the categories, that for New Retrofit Product, is in association with Salford University, which is my own *alma mater*. There I learned much about Kierkegaard and how to operate a TV camera – neither of which had anything to do with my course.

Once again the shortlisted entries will be on show at next year’s Greenbuild Expo in Manchester next May. The awards dinner will take place at the city’s Radisson hotel on 7 May.

- Finance totalling £5m has been announced for SMEs keen to embark on energy efficiency measures or install renewables. It is being provided via ReEnergise Finance’s SmartEnergy fund, with backing provided by renewables equity managers SI Capital.

Adam Hewson, the director of ReEnergise Finance, voiced what all owner-managers of small businesses know to be the truth in an article published on the Sustainable Homes website.

“Banks are simply not lending to SMEs, particularly those wishing to improve their energy

management, as they do not see this as a priority,” he said.

He continued: “More traditional commercial finance providers lack the in-depth knowledge that we have of the energy efficiency and renewables market. We have expertise in technical solutions, in-depth knowledge of installation and project management and we understand how to tailor the right commercial finance solution to meet our clients’ specific requirements.”

Renewables projects that will qualify for the fund include those valued between £25,000 and £250,000 involving biomass, solar PV, solar hot water, wind turbines, anaerobic digestion and ground or air-source heat pumps.

Energy efficiency measures such as lighting, insulation, building monitoring and management systems, voltage optimisation and machinery upgrades will also qualify.

There has been a great deal of huff and puff about promoting energy efficiency, but little practical support for small businesses – those best placed to make a difference. Now, at last, there is money where hitherto there has only been hot air.

- Energy Secretary Ed Davey has responded to the IPCC report on global warming, as one would expect and demand.

Mr Davey said: “The message of this report is clear: the Earth’s climate has warmed over the last century and man-made greenhouse gases have caused much of that global warming. The gases emitted now are accumulating in the atmosphere and so the solutions must be set in motion today. The risks and costs of doing nothing today are so great, only a deeply irresponsible government would be so negligent.”

Hmmm.

**Chris Stokes**