

## Domestic RHI finally gets the green light

The long anticipated domestic RHI scheme has now got the go ahead from Government. Many manufacturers and suppliers of renewable heating products believe that it will give a shot in the arm to the industry.

The domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), which has been repeatedly delayed since it was originally set to launch in 2011, is finally up and running following an announcement by Energy Minister Greg Barker. Described as the first incentive scheme of its kind in the world, it offers financial incentives for low carbon heating technologies such as biomass and heat pumps and will apply to MCS-certified systems fitted since 2009.

Around 18,000 households who have installed the technologies in recent years are already eligible to start receiving the payments, which will be made quarterly from public money over seven years. Although the scheme is open to anyone, the upfront and running costs of the technologies means they will be most attractive to homes off the gas grid reliant on oil or electricity for heating.

Announcing the launch, Greg Barker said: "It shows yet again that the UK is leading the way in the clean energy sector. Not only will people have warmer homes and cheaper fuel bills, they will reduce their carbon emissions, and will also get cash payments for installing these new technologies. It opens up a market for the supply chain, engineers and installers - generating growth and supporting jobs as part of our long-term economic plan."

The official launch of the scheme has received widespread welcome from manufacturers and suppliers who believe it offers a good opportunity to boost the uptake of renewable technologies in the UK.

"It certainly feels like Government has been listening to industry and has learnt from previous incentive schemes, such as FIT," says Paul Hardy, MD at Baxi. "It's really refreshing to see a well thought out strategy that incorporates some of the key tools that industry has been championing for so very long."

Paul Joyner, MD of Sustainable Building Solutions, part of Travis Perkins Group, argues that the way RHI ties renewable heat generation with the need to get the fabric of the building right first will provide opportunities for installers.



Energy Minister, Greg Barker

To qualify for RHI payments, each building has to undergo a Green Deal Assessment to prove the fabric of the building is sufficient to keep the heat in.

He says: "This is a great opportunity for installers to maximise their income by adapting their business to cover all aspects of each RHI project - the assessment, the retrofitting of the building fabric, and the installation of the heat pump, biomass or solar thermal technology."

### Installer readiness

With everything in place for the RHI to take off, Worcester's Neil Schofield is asking if the stagnant market, so different to what it was five years ago when renewables was a subject of great interest, can recover: "The stationary market we currently have on our hands is certainly a lot more difficult to kickstart than one which is showing signs of growth."

Installer readiness for the RHI is a nagging issue according to Schofield, because if there are not enough trained engineers to deliver the service, there will be a significant gap in the supply chain.

"The total number of installers registered under MCS is now at its lowest since 2010, which suggests that an alarming number of heating engineers have lost faith in the market for renewable technologies," says Schofield. "The fact is, we need a strong base of qualified

installers to make the RHI a success, so DECC has a lot of work to do if it is to reverse this decline."

Jerry Hamilton, Director of Renewables, Rexel UK, adds: "It is imperative that education around renewable technologies and the infrastructure development needed to support them continues in order to ensure sustained growth of the market and future mass adoption."

### United front

Phil Hurley, Managing Director at NIBE Energy Systems, has welcomed the Government's announcement but argues that it is now up to the industry to promote the scheme to potential customers: "To ensure the RHI vision now translates into reality, it's also paramount that the industry pulls together to become the mouthpiece for the scheme. Effective marketing is the only way to drive consumer awareness about the long-term financial and environmental benefits of renewables. Spreading the right message now will lessen the need for incentives like the RHI in the future, and will help lay the foundations for sustained, organic market growth."

The response of UK householders is clearly crucial to the success of the RHI, but OFTEC, representing the views of the oil heating market, believes that only a very limited number of people are likely to be benefit economically by the scheme. The association argues that high up front costs will mean that the scheme is only fit for the wealthy few.

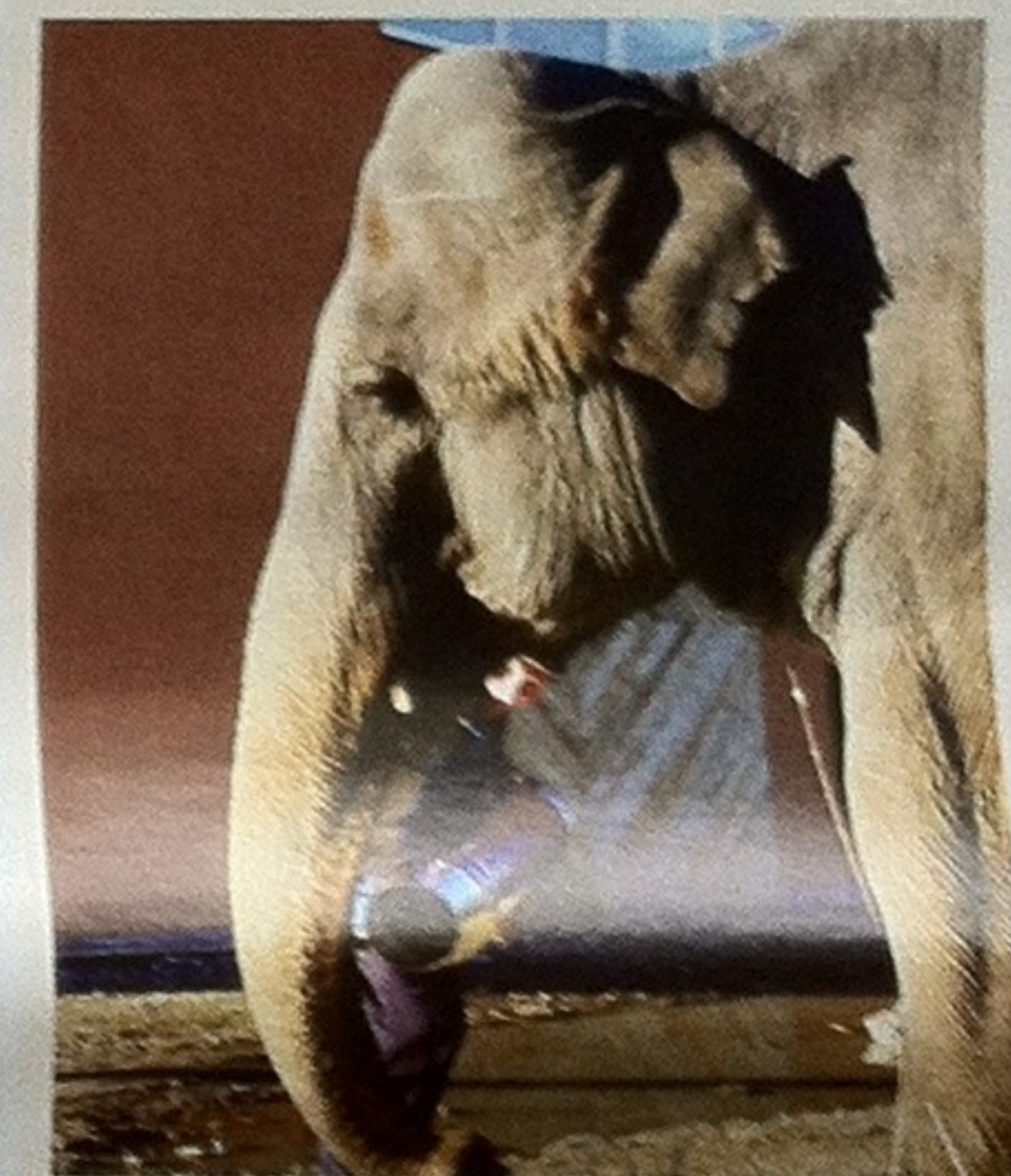
Jeremy Hawksley, OFTEC Director General, says: "Whilst we support the need to reduce CO2 emissions from heating and recognise the potential of an RHI policy, the current scheme is highly unlikely to benefit the large majority of rural households as they simply will not be able to afford it."

OFTEC argues that a simple boiler scrappage scheme, such as that which ran in 2010, would be more attractive to most homeowners and would be more effective in cutting fuel bills.



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## Jumbo chimney



Valli the temple elephant at the Skanda Vale ashram in South Wales is basking in the warmth provided by a biomass system used to heat the new 500m<sup>2</sup> elephant barn. Schiedel supplied its ICS chimney system to work with an HDG Navora Wood Log Boiler from Euroheat. Schiedel's David Wright says: "We've had our products installed in many different places, but this has to rate as one of the most unusual. The installation at the elephant house certainly shows how our products can be adapted to different structures and situations, no matter how large or small."

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## Stripping pipe has never been easier

PipeStrip is the answer to dealing with painted pipes that need to be scraped down before joining them with fittings. Oxfordshire builder, Mark Hatlee, invented this simple little tool to strip paint from 22 and 15mm pipes.

"Cleaning paint from old pipes was my least favourite chore," explains Mark. "Using a flat blade, it could take ages. Even on the rare occasions when it's safe to use a blowtorch, you still



have to strip off the burnt paint. It was time for an alternative solution that did the job quickly and

efficiently, without damaging the integrity of the pipe."

PipeStrip retails at about £9.99 + VAT. It's no bigger

than the average spanner, but because it has a bright yellow handle, it's easy to find in your toolbox. The blade stays sharp for up to about eight uses (depending upon the state of the pipes) – and it saves so much time that it pays for itself in a single use.

PipeStrip is available from a number of trade outlets, including Plumb Centre, or you can buy it online. See a demo at [www.pipestrip.com](http://www.pipestrip.com)

## Videoscope opens up new vistas



Known for its thermal imaging cameras, Flir is now offering test and measuring instruments.

Part of the initial range is the VS70, a videoscope designed for use in the industrial environment. It features intuitive handset controls that enable the user to guide the probe into tight areas to deliver clear video images to a large 5.7 inch colour LCD display.

The VS70 provides 180° and 90° camera views and SD card storage of video, image and

audio files. Voice comments can also be captured via the product's headset. Battery life is six to eight hours and a USB port is included for easy recharging.

"The Flir brand is synonymous with highly reliable and cost effective thermal imaging and we now want to bring these values to more instruments used for predictive maintenance and condition monitoring," says Flir's Sales Manager Andy Baker.

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## Compact blowtorch

The Handyjet is a mini version of Sievert's Powerjet, giving you a small but powerful multi-purpose blowtorch. Versatile and easy to use, the Handyjet has an ergonomic grip and piezo ignition. Safety is ensured by the handle's sturdy neck, which protects the gas cartridges and prevents cracks in case it is dropped. There is also a simpler version without piezo ignition.



[www.sievert.se](http://www.sievert.se)

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## For the dirty work

Big Wipes has launched its all new 4x4 range of industrial strength wipes, containing four powerful cleaning agents and four skin conditioners, making these wipes tough on grime and kind to your hands. There are three varieties to choose from, with the red top offering additional wetting agents, the black featuring a tougher fabric material and the green being biodegradable.



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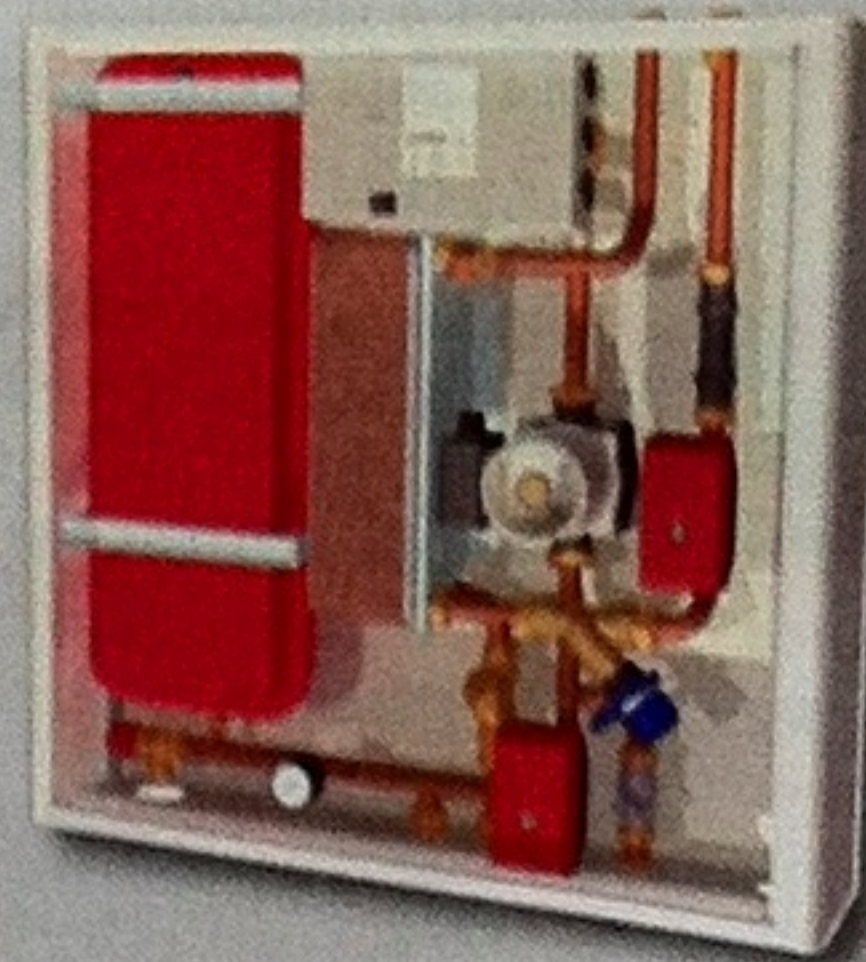
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