



## Woodpicker's mission to "make biomass easier"



A newcomer to the renewable energy market, The Woodpicker brings a brand new service to make biomass easier for domestic and commercial users.

Wood pellet boiler owners and entrepreneurs Charlie Henderson and Tim Barlow recently launched an unprecedented service after deciding that getting prices for pellets could be so much simpler. After an efficient start-up and only a few months down the line, The Woodpicker is already the first place in the UK where it's possible to order blown wood pellets from anywhere at any time.

The achievement of this goal is really the starting point for the business because Charlie,



**“Opting for biomass was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made.”**  
Tim Barlow

an environmental consultant, and Tim, a digital marketing expert, together plan to systematically bring digital technology to tackle niggly aspects of the whole boiler owner experience.

Tim says: “Opting for biomass was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I love my boiler! However, biomass heating isn’t quite as easy as oil: buying pellets isn’t straight-forward, there’s more maintenance, there’s cleaning and generally just a little more monitoring to do. Our aim is to change that. Little things will make a difference and ultimately lead to greater uptake of biomass.”

The Woodpicker intends to make suppliers’ lives easier, too. The company operates as a broker-like business, with no set-up fees, giving access to more orders and saving time on administration by collecting all the information needed, while making orders fit with suppliers’ existing systems.

For Charlie and Tim, The Woodpicker is more than a business: “As biomass enthusiasts, we are passionate about this project as a way preserving the environment. We hope that our dedication shines through in the service we offer.” says Charlie.

The initial concept behind this digital start-up was to help people to easily find good quality, price-efficient fuel online. “Charlie and I found that as well as filling in complicated forms, comparing quotes was difficult - and that ringing around suppliers during office hours was time-consuming for everyone concerned, leading to apathy which isn’t good for the market overall. We’ve introduced a friendly service, offering transparency around pricing and allowing people to order instantly, 24/7. Our customers tell us it’s saving them time and hassle every time.” says Tim.

“We knew that in order to get to this stage, our challenge would be to make this work for

suppliers as well as customers; we have made some headway towards this and are driving orders to both national and local suppliers across the country. We want to support those suppliers who focus on quality of pellets and service.” he added.

With less than £1000 of initial investment, the Woodpicker was set up in just ten hours on this year’s leap day (29 February) with help from staff at Tim’s digital marketing agency, Attacat, and students from the University of Edinburgh Business School. Together they worked on market research, creating a company name and brand, building an initial website, setting up supplier lists and developing online tools and resources.

Things have since moved on, with The Woodpicker now investing significantly in marketing, customer service, technology and developing supplier relationships. The co-founders have been joined by biomass trader and consultant, Brodie Govan of Voyage Power Ltd; relationship manager, Lisa Lumsden; and the sales team of Juliet Henderson and Clare Calow. The new website went live in September, offering instant quotes and 24/hr ordering, and a high quality supplier list has been assembled. Making quick progress, the company has handled hundreds of enquiries and is successfully fulfilling an increasing number of orders and annual contracts with suppliers across the country.

“The Woodpicker is and will remain an agile business.” comments Charlie. “Right now we’re speaking with additional suppliers to grow our contacts in the industry and we are considering diversifying into other biofuels, starting with bagged pellets.”



The Woodpicker is keen to build relationships within the industry. Whether you’re interested in joining the supplier list or just want to chat, contact: [lisa.lumsden@thewoodpicker.com](mailto:lisa.lumsden@thewoodpicker.com) [www.thewoodpicker.com](http://www.thewoodpicker.com)