

phs Greenleaf bring train station vending services to life

3 years ago



The UK's first 'living vending machines' are now in operation in an English train station thanks to a unique project between phs Greenleaf and Decorum Vending Services.

Setting a whole new standard for future vending services, three eco-friendly vending machines wrapped in living walls have been unveiled at Bournemouth Train Station. The unusual pairing is designed to raise the standards in eco-conscious vending services whilst improving the platform environment for travellers.

phs Greenleaf, which has been providing planting, grounds and landscaping services to businesses for over 25 years, partnered with Decorum Vending, a market leader in unattended retail solutions, to bring the innovative project to life.

Aiming to reduce vending services' impact on the environment, Decorum wanted to use plants on its new energy efficient machines to offset some carbon emissions and bring the benefits of plants and biophilic design to train platform users.

Over 18 months, the teams at phs Greenleaf, Decorum, South Western Railway and Regency Design worked together to bring the living vending machine concept to life. They designed an innovative brace system that could be used on top of the vending machines to support living walls, adding a burst of green to the train platforms.

phs Greenleaf designed each modular living wall using a trusted system made from recycled coffee grounds. Each wall measured 1.4 square metres and contained 54 handpicked plants from four different species, all known to thrive in darker settings and absorb maximum carbon to create a healthier space for travellers. Each wall system contains a series of interchangeable plant cassettes and rails with reservoirs

for water fed by a water tank, which is filled by hand, making it easy to maintain.

The new machines from Decorum use 54% less energy than previous models, and each year the living wall will consume nearly 5kg of carbon, and produce 2.4kg of oxygen, contributing towards cleaner, healthier air for travellers and a significant reduction in environmental impact. It is also hoped that the living walls attract biodiversity to the unusual setting by providing small habitats for insects.

phs Greenleaf installed the living walls over the vending machines in situ on three different platforms at the station.

Stephen Dieppe, Managing Director of phs Greenleaf, said: "We have loved bringing our expertise and knowledge to the table to bring the UK's first living vending machines to life. We enjoy working with like-minded customers who share our sustainability ethos and understand and embrace the power of plants in business. We hope it sets a new standard for the unattended retail industry.

"It was a brilliant project because it was so unique. No-one had designed a living wall to wrap over a vending machine before so we were pioneering the way, looking at ways to adapt good quality wall systems that we know and trust to this unique setting. A special strap/brace that could fit snuggly around the machine was needed and it still had to allow space for the cassettes and gutters to work effectively. We also had to consider the machine's setting during this process, allowing for any other features around the vending machine, such as electrical boxes, to remain uncovered and easily accessible after install. It was a great challenge and we were proud to be part of the team."

Declan Sewell, Managing Director of Decorum, said: "Our new machines and living walls are part of our commitment to improve energy efficiency and environmental impact, and we knew that phs Greenleaf shared our passion and dedication to sustainability. We have been impressed with their knowledge, experience, responsiveness and attitude. They have been a valued partner throughout the whole process."

The living vending machines have already attracted interest from big drink brands, keen to support eco innovations and forward-thinking approaches. Britvic already sponsor the three current machines and other global brands are in talks to sponsor future machines.

phs Greenleaf supplies over 8,000 UK customers, including hospitality and leisure venues, retail, public buildings and commercial premises, with quality horticultural services such as indoor and outdoor plants, living walls, gritting and grounds maintenance and Christmas trees and decorations.

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