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Press release

Former Welsh Rugby Union captain calls on Wales to cut its carbon footprint

Rugby legend, JPR Williams is calling on householders in Wales to help Wales become a low carbon nation by making the change to wood fuel, a cleaner, greener and more efficient way of heating the home.

The former WRU and British Lions star, who has been using a wood burning stove to heat his home in the Vale of Glamorgan for the past nine years, is backing a new campaign by Woodfuel Wales, the Welsh Government funded body which represents all sectors of the Welsh wood fuel industry.

The campaign is encouraging householders across Wales to consider using wood as a form of biomass fuel to heat the home, in line with the Welsh Government's 2020 target of reducing green house gas emissions by at least 40% compared to the 1990 level*.

The call by JPR Williams comes as Wales gears up for the start of the much anticipated Six Nations tournament next month. The former captain is appealing for people to focus on supporting the nation's future as well as its team: "Wales is a passionate nation and when we get behind something we have the power to make great things happen".

"If the Welsh nation could use even a quarter of the support it gives our national rugby team and put it towards protecting its environmental future then we would be well on our way to preserving our beautiful country for generations to come.

"I have used wood fuel to heat my entire home for many years now and I know that our heating supply comes from a reliable source. We buy our logs from a company based just six miles away helping to keep our carbon footprint low while also supporting a local industry and jobs.

“Wood fuel works for us and we feel like we’re doing our bit for the environment. I hope my showing of support can help make people sit up and realise how wood fuel can help make a real difference to Wales long into the future.”

According to Woodfuel Wales, using wood as a form of fuel is one of the best ways people can reduce their carbon footprint and help slow down the effect of climate change, as Nic Snell, Chair of Woodfuel Wales, explains: “The greenhouse gases we all produce through our day-to-day activities including the way we heat our homes are all factors contributing to climate change.

“Wood is a carbon neutral fuel that is greener and more sustainable than any other form of non-renewable fuel. It can offer savings in terms of energy efficiency and we have a plentiful, sustainable resource here in Wales.”

Woodfuel Wales also claims more people are realising the benefits of switching to wood, as official member statistics released by The Stove Industry Alliance in autumn 2011 showed a 32% growth (year on year) in the sales of wood burning stoves (October 2010-2011).

Nic Snell continued: “As prices for oil and gas have risen in the past year, we and our members are seeing that wood fuel is being viewed as a more viable option than ever. Over the next decade, we can expect demand for wood fuel to grow as fossil fuels deplete, making people realise that Welsh forestry provides one of the best renewable energy resource in Wales.”

To lead the way in tackling carbon reduction in Wales, the National Assembly for Wales announced that it was almost halfway towards achieving its own target of reducing carbon emissions by 40% across the organisation by 2015. During the year 2010-2011, carbon emissions reportedly fell by 19% compared to the previous 12 months and some of this reduction was attributed to the installation of a biomass system at the Senedd building in Cardiff.

For further information, visit www.woodfuelwales.org.uk.

Ends.

**Statistics taken from Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Wales July 2011 - www.assemblywales.org/11-042.pdf and the Welsh Government’s One Wales: One Planet document.*

Notes to editors Woodfuel Wales is a membership organisation funded by the Welsh Government that promotes the efficient supply and use of wood fuel as a clean, low carbon and sustainable energy source in Wales and the Marches. From woodburning stove retailers to woodland owners, Woodfuel Wales works with around 120 members to help them deliver quality products in the form of logs, chips, briquettes and pellets to the energy market. Woodfuel Wales works with industry body, HETAS, a UK wide body that provides a certification scheme, Quality Assured Fuel (QAF), to promote quality across the industry and to help members bring the best products and services to the market. The scheme is attracting increasing numbers of wood processors as an industry-recognised way of producing consistently high quality fuel. Visit www.hetas.org.uk for further information.

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