

Striking new CLAAS UK headquarters officially opened

Following three years of construction work, during which time the headquarters site for CLAAS UK and their dealer MANNNS of Saxham has been completely redeveloped, the striking new headquarters building has been officially opened by Cathrina Claas-Mühlhäuser, Chairwoman of Supervisory Board and Chairwoman of Shareholders' Committee CLAAS KGaA mbH.

Work on the redevelopment of the site, at the centre of which is an impressive new 33,000m² state-of-the-art headquarters building, commenced in November 2017. Construction work has been carried out in phases to enable day-to-day work for the 130 people employed on the site to continue with the least possible disruption.

“By supporting this major redevelopment and impressive new building, both the CLAAS Group and the Claas family have shown their commitment to CLAAS dealers, their customers and UK agriculture as a whole, and also to Bury St Edmunds and west Suffolk where we are now one of the largest employers,” says Trevor Tyrrell, Senior Vice-President (Western Europe & Oceania) for the CLAAS Group's Sales and Service division.

The new 16.5 metre-high building, which stands prominently alongside the A14 near Bury St Edmunds, was designed by BCR Infinity Architects of Cambridge and built by R G Carter Ltd. It serves as the headquarters for CLAAS UK and for their East Anglia dealer MANNNS. In addition to offices for both companies, the design also incorporates an impressive full height, glass fronted TECHNOPARC machinery showroom. This will be an important alternative to national exhibitions which are at risk due to the pandemic, and therefore a further field training and demonstration area is also being developed to complete a Customer Experience Centre.

To the rear of the office building is a new 10-bay workshop complex for MANNNS and a large 4,336m² parts warehouse for CLAAS UK, that supports its dealers throughout the UK and Ireland.

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“The new building vastly improves the experience for customers and visitors from the UK, Ireland and around the world. It also enables CLAAS and MANNS to provide a superb working environment for their employees,” states Trevor Tyrrell. “Customers are welcome to use the new on-site Seasons Restaurant, where 70% of ingredients are locally sourced. The new offices, showrooms, modern parts logistics warehouse and more efficient workshop environment allow us to make far better overall use of the site, which will have an impact on the recruitment and retention of employees, in addition to a considerable improvement in Health and Safety procedures.”

The new state-of-the-art building makes use of the latest energy efficient systems in order to minimise its environmental impact. The passive solar design of the building makes full use of its north facing aspect, and features a full height glazed facade, and the building incorporates 2,860m² of glass. Renewably generated electric power and heating for the whole site is sourced

from the neighbouring 1.4MW Symonds Farm AD plant. Power for the electric car charging points on site comes from a photo voltaic solar panel array on the roof generating 112 MWh. A water harvesting system with a total capacity of 30,000 litres serves a specially designed washdown bay for machinery, saving over 1 million litres of water a year.

The new central UK Parts warehouse has streamlined parts handling and replaces five individual buildings. It accommodates over 47,000 line items or 850,000 individual items totalling 700 tonnes, with space to spare for future expansion. For larger items there is now 45 metres of cantilever racking and the amount of bulk racking has been doubled, while a mezzanine area holds 70% of the total contents of the previous warehouse over three levels. All parts are identified and located using a scan and bar code system to help improve pick rate accuracy and efficiency for the 1000 tonnes of parts that pass through the warehouse each year.

The Saxham site is also home to the CLAAS Academy, which provides industry leading training for dealer sales, service and parts staff, in addition to customer operator training. Here the team of 11 staff provide over 4,000 hours of training each year, both on-site but they are also leading the way in the development of remote online training programmes.

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Founded over 100 years ago and still privately owned by the Claas family, the CLAAS Group is one of the largest family-owned agricultural machinery manufacturers in the world. Based at Harsewinkel in West Germany, the company operates 14 manufacturing plants around the Globe and employs over 11,400 people. In the UK it employs over 100 people at Saxham and a further 300 throughout the UK and Ireland. CLAAS is the UK market leader for both combine harvesters and forager harvesters and has a rapidly growing customer base for CLAAS tractors.

The MANNS dealer group has six dealerships throughout the eastern counties where it employs 33 people. The roots of the company go back to the 1930's when local farmer Bill Mann started importing CLAAS combines from Germany. The MANNS company moved to the site at Saxham during the 1950's and the previous headquarters building has been a landmark alongside the A14 for many years.

Saxham redevelopment in numbers

Total footprint	32,907m ²
Construction man hours	170,832
Total concrete used	3,560m ³
Steel tonnage total	770 tonnes
Glass area	2,860m ²
PV array capacity	112 MWh
Water harvesting capacity	30,000 litres

