

Q&A: Project of the Year

MacGregor Flooring Company Ltd

MacGregor Flooring Company Ltd has been an award-winning member of Recofloor for a number of years and is a genuinely enthusiastic supporter of the scheme, putting sustainability at the heart of their business.

Here, Kenny Smith, Managing Director explains their approach to sustainability and how Recofloor works for the business.

1. Why did you first join Recofloor?

Originally the manufacturers persuaded us to join in the early days of the scheme. It wasn't something we were actively looking to do at that time as the flooring industry was not as engaged in sustainability actions as it now is. More manufacturers were saying 'look, you guys should really be doing this' and that's primarily the reason. It wasn't through any sort of requirement from main contractors or any desire on our part to be a greener company, albeit that's now changed. We're pleased that we joined Recofloor in 2013.

2. What type of projects have you used Recofloor for?

We use the Recofloor scheme primarily on large projects that we are working on for multiple months. This allows us to maximise the amount of materials that we return. This could be large colleges, hospitals, student residences and the like. We are now looking at how we can use the scheme on smaller contracts, which are slightly more challenging logistically.

3. Can you tell me about one or two of the more challenging projects for which you've used Recofloor, and how you tackled the challenges?

The most memorable one is the Louisa Jordan Hospital in Glasgow, which was a temporary hospital for Covid patients. We laid approximately 12,300m² of loose lay vinyl. Due to the nature of this project and the extremely tight time frames that we were working under there were no product specifications or detailed tender documents to work with. So, in tandem with our partners, we proposed the use of the Polyflor Quicklay product as we knew this could be reused or recycled at the end of use, which was extremely important as this was only a temporary hospital.

In May 2021, we were drafted back in to lift the flooring that had been laid at the start of the pandemic. In total we lifted around 12,300m² of product. 2000m² was gifted to local charities within the Glasgow area. The remaining 10,300m² was recycled via the Recofloor scheme. Our team worked across the course of a week to uplift the material, palletise and wrap it to keep it safe before collection. Two articulated trucks transported the 250 rolls of vinyl for recycling.

I'm certainly very aware of the environment, much more than I used to be, and I'm very passionate about using materials that we can recycle and other sustainable construction methods. Although it may have been easier to dispose of the uplifted material to landfill, this was never an option for us at MacGregor Flooring Company.



4. Have you been part of any zero waste project initiatives – if so, how well did you find these worked in practice and what lessons would you pass on to others?

We've worked with Zero Waste Scotland and implemented their recommendations on reducing waste. Certain things we couldn't implement because of cost. For example, we'd like to get a machine that could crush plastic containers, so they save on space. We will continue to take part in Zero Waste initiatives.



We have also invested in Circular Economy principles and everyone in the office took part in a 12-week CE course. We learned a lot from this, and we try to implement parts of that in our business as well.

We are committed to trying to make ourselves greener. It's definitely the future; we are trying to get ahead of the curve to a certain extent.

5. How well do you think the flooring industry as a whole is tackling sustainability, and what more could be done?

I think there are certain companies, such as Recofloor members, who take it very seriously and realise that it's imperative to the future. We're all going to have to do more to save the planet.

I think unless legislation is put in place and businesses are told they must do something then they might be less inclined to do it.

6. What would you say to any flooring firm unsure about joining Recofloor?

From a conscientious point of view, it's the right thing to do. It's not difficult; I think maybe a lot of contractors, flooring contractors think it's problematic, adds another layer of paperwork, getting the guys on site to do things differently – but it's really simple and straightforward.

The benefit, apart from doing your bit to try to reduce waste, is that the main contractors on site are very appreciative. Anytime we say to them like 'look, we're going to recycle our waste', you can see them say 'fantastic!'.

So, it ticks a box for them in their list of things that they have to do to try to minimise waste. But it's still a box that they wouldn't necessarily have been able to tick if we hadn't suggested that we recycle waste vinyl flooring. I think flooring contractors will get a benefit from the main contractors if they start recycling more.

7. What's been the best thing for your business about being a Recofloor member?

I think it's great to have the Recofloor awards and we've won several awards from Recofloor over the years. I think that in promoting these successes, hopefully it will encourage others to join Recofloor. That can only be a good thing for us all.

