

Woolley Project Management Ltd & The Old Rectory

Woolley is a property management company that thrives on creating sustainable, autonomous eco-homes and sustainable developments – at no appreciably greater cost than conventional housing. Woolley was set up in 1995 to manage property assets for institutional funds and for private clients, creating urban and rural projects to meet strict investment criteria. At present, there are four full time employees in the office with numerous managing agents and consultants working under Woolley across the UK to project manage some forty planning projects all over the UK. We are a company with our own, unique research software, providing a quick, easy and robust way to learn what communities and other stakeholder groups really think about a planning proposal and the key issues relating to it.

Woolley have green values and a reputation for achieving outstanding financial performance in property investment.

Nick Woolley is the UK Fund Asset Manager for two UK Portfolios. His day-to-day work includes following sustainable practices and so it is important to “practice what you preach”. It is also something that he totally believes in and feels passionate about. Therefore, he has sought to make improvements to his own property which have not only cut his own bills and carbon footprint, but which can be an example to others. Carrying out these works has also undoubtedly improved Nick’s quality of life, both at The Old Rectory and also, now, Rectory Cottage. “They are both more comfortable and cosy and have a great ‘feel-good’ factor.”

Nicholas Woolley moved to The Old Rectory in 1991 which is when he started planning on how to live in a greener way. In so doing, he not only modernised the Old Rectory, but re-landscaped some of the gardens, cleared scrub and ancient elder and planted instead over 500 trees under a small woods scheme. This has not only increased valuable habitats but



also augments the source of all firewood for both The Old Rectory and also, now, Rectory Cottage. To add to this The Old Rectory’s drawing rooms’ floor is made from Beech from the garden.

The Old Rectory is now a private residence, but has been both a home and, for many centuries, The Rectory for the village and so also an office and general community facility. Parts of The Old Rectory date back to 1540. It was built and enlarged through the centuries always to a very high standard of design and build quality and so we can be proud to live and work in this special environment. The rooms are of good size, have flexibility in many respects and feel good to work in. With a property of this age size (600m²) and importance (Grade 2 Listing) it has been an interesting challenge to reduce the carbon footprint and increase the energy efficiency and comfort of this wonderful old building.

Woolley was based on the 2nd floor of The Old Rectory, but earlier this year, whilst looking to expand, the business moved the short distance to Rectory Cottage.



Before this the Cottage was a separate residential residence from the early 1990's and before that the property was a fully functional stable and bothy at one end. Rectory Cottage is an ideal office as it is light and airy and has a wonderful outlook across the paddocks. Nature is all around and that in itself is healthy and therapeutic.

The garden and woods of the Old Rectory are managed mainly for conservation and wildlife and over the years have become a wonderful haven for numerous species of flora and fauna. Although our work is in many ways an extension of our client's central city office, we are fortunate to have the chance to handle often highly stressful work and long hours from this wonderful natural environment.

Green Projects

To create a more sustainable working and living environment Nicholas and Woolley have undertaken many projects to reduce the running costs of the premises and their carbon footprints. These projects consist of;

The Old Rectory

- Solar PV Panels in the paddocks
- Solar Thermal Panels hidden in the roof valley
- New high efficiency double condensing oil fired boiler and thermostats to all radiators
- Secondary Glazing for all windows and doors. This is not conventional double glazing but bespoke for The Old Rectory
- Seal all second floor cupboard doors
- Draft-proof all chimneys
- LED's installed around the house
- Massive Loft insulation wherever accessible

Rectory Cottage

- LED's installed
- Massive Loft Insulation and upper exposed side wall insulation
- New double glazed door
- Water-butt fed from roof water and fittings



In 2008, solar thermal panels were installed on the roof of the Old Rectory to reduce the energy demand of the oil-fired central heating/hot water boiler. Since the solar panels were installed, virtually no heating for water is required from May to September, inclusive. For the rest of the year, there is a great reduction in oil used to heat water. For example, at midday on a January morning, when freezing outside, water was leaving panels at 80⁰C and the minimum temperature at the base of the tank was 60⁰C.

In 2011, a 7.9kw Solar PV was installed in an adjacent field which was linked to the Old Rectory. Over the last three years, using these panels has reduced the draw on electricity from the grid by 43%.

Since the Woolley move, Rectory Cottage has had a number of improvements carried out to increase energy efficiency. These have included the installation of a new, double-glazed front door, extensive extra roof insulation and LED lighting throughout. Since moving in, heating is frequently provided (or central heating augmented by) an efficient wood burning stove, using home-produced firewood.



Excluding business travel, Woolley has seen a 40% reduction in their carbon footprint year on year since 2011.

Both Nicholas and Woolley have been aided in sustainable practices with grants from:

- a) Grants 4 Growth - £520
- b) Greener Business Grant - £1,000

To continue with our high standards and beliefs regarding sustainable practices Woolley has a strict recycling policy for everything that can be re-cycled (both in Rectory Cottage and in The Old Rectory). Nothing is thrown away if the old version can be effectively repaired and re-used.

Our buildings have greatly helped us to win our second successive Carbon Charter Gold Award from Suffolk County Council and also to become one of the top 100 Green Businesses in the East of England.

Retro fitting is costly compared to sustainable new builds, but the results can still be just as impressive. Moreover, they then ensure that historic, beautiful buildings are made fit for (modern) purpose for centuries to come.