

Bringing sustainable low-carbon design to the luxury accommodation market

An interview with Clive Bonny,
Commercial Director of PassivPod

Environmental sustainability is a design trend that has already grown in popularity in Scandinavia and Canada in recent years. Based on this success, PassivPod has developed an innovative and unique concept to spread this phenomenon across the UK. Better still, they even have a lucrative referral scheme so that happy customers can share their joy with friends, family and colleagues whilst earning thousands of pounds in the process. To learn more, LTG spoke with Clive Bonny, Commercial Director of PassivPod.



Clive Bonny

Can you briefly outline the concept behind PassivPod?

It is widely known that human health has been damaged for many years by the chemical environment in the aftermath of the industrial revolution. Chemicals in modern building materials such as surface coatings, plaster, paints, bricks and mortar are known to damage our skin, lungs, and organs. Asbestos remains in buildings built before 1980. Offgas chemicals like formaldehydes remain for years in the building structure in which we live and breathe.

The concept behind PassivPod is to ensure occupant health and safety with no harmful chemicals, using only natural materials with improved natural light, acoustics, ventilation and thermal efficiency. Our unique combination of technology and design has been proven to reduce energy consumption by 93% compared to the average home. Our first example of a carbon neutral, biophilic dwelling (image left) was designed and built by award-winning Koru Architects in 2012 for PassivPod's Design Director Mark Pellant. It has generated energy saving credits of £2,000 per year and, with rainwater harvesting, has reduced water bills by over 90%. The cost savings for home owners, schools and offices are substantial. Our design also improves resale and rental values.

How has your own background influenced your involvement in this project?

My first UK work experience was as a builder on construction sites. I saw first-hand the waste created by traditional build methods, the damage to local had



environments by heavy trucks and the long time to build, often six to 12 months. 30% of waste in the UK is caused by construction. I and seen other nations use natural strong timber frame materials, building homes in a fraction of the time without damaging the environment.

When I qualified as a management consultant I began showing the big cost savings by improving materials and build processes. In the last 20 years as a volunteer school mentor with the support of a charity (The RSA), I've also shown students the long term value of environmental conservation. Young people really understand the importance of this and we need to support future generations.

Can you describe the dynamic of PassivPod's design and construction process?

Our unique ellipsoid shape is thermodynamically more effective than rectilinear shaped buildings.

It reduces wind resistance, energy consumption and improves structural strength and resilience. Using modular renewable timber frames enables us to manufacturer off site and then erect onsite within weeks avoiding noise and pollution and damage caused by heavy trucks. Canadians and Scandinavians have been successfully using timber framed buildings for centuries in very tough environments. PassivPod is zero carbon and exceeds EU PassivHaus standards. This allows it to be built "off grid" in almost any location without national electrical grid connections.



Traditional UK brick and mortar designs bring very high costs in labour, materials, energy consumption and waste. Modern design and technology allows property developers and buyers to reduce all these costs and at the same time improve their health and quality of life.



Environmental sustainability has been a trending topic across many industries in recent years and yet the luxury accommodation sector is still largely dominated by high-carbon design. Why do you think this is and how can PassivPod change the status quo?

Traditional UK brick and mortar designs bring very high costs in labour, materials, energy consumption and waste. Modern design and technology allows property developers and buyers to reduce all these costs and at the same time improve their health and quality of life. The luxury accommodation market is now recognising that high cost does not equate to high quality. Globally the new generation of low carbon designs using sustainable materials is becoming the preferred option. PassivPod's recent recognition for Most Innovative Sustainable Accommodation in the *Corporate LiveWire Innovation & Excellence Awards* is recognition of this change.

What do you feel is the greatest challenge when it comes to designing for environmental sustainability?

The greatest challenge is not the availability of renewable materials which are in abundant supply nor the skills needed for modular build. It is educating property developers and buyers to recognise the true value of modern design for living, leisure and learning. For example timber frames and hemp insulation are natural humidifiers, allowing the building to breathe



and automatically balance humidity and temperature when the outside is wet, cold or hot. When people learn about these properties and feel the difference they recognise the value.

PassivPod's can be utilised as community centres, visitors' centres, classrooms, garden offices, studios, health and wellness clinics and luxury homes. How do you see the applicability of PassivPod's evolving in the future?

Besides the leisure market we are also responding to interest from schools and colleges. Our biophilic design, bringing

nature into buildings, has been shown to improve learning and cognitive abilities by up to 15%. Enhancing the environment for teaching and learning will make a big difference to the lives of our children in the future.

Finally, PassivPod has introduced a new referral scheme which can earn individuals thousands of pounds from just one referral. Can you tell us more about how this works?

Everybody knows somebody who can buy a PassivPod. It may be their local school, an estate agent, a Park Lodge owner, or

just somebody with garden space who wants an office or garden room. We'd like to reward anyone who can refer potential buyers to us. Our referral commissions are paid when we get paid. We offer 2% to 5% of the sale value subject to the standard published terms and conditions. 5% of a garden room can give someone £1650, a 5% classroom commission is £5750, a two-bed lodge at 5% is £17500, a four-bed lodge at 5% is £25000. We know our design is loved and our technologies have been successfully tested for five years. Our motto is "ahead of the curve" and our offer is online at www.passivpod.co.uk.

