

Press Information

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FOX GROUP ON A CHARGE: THE UK'S FIRST ELECTRIC TIPPER TRUCKS ENTER OPERATION IN THE NORTH WEST

Family-owned Fox Group is championing the transition from diesel to battery electric heavy trucks, with the introduction of two new Volvo FE Electric tippers into its fleet – the first of their kind to be delivered anywhere in the UK.

The pair will operate from the company's depot on the Enterprise Business Park in Leyland, where charging infrastructure has been installed to support both the trucks and staff cars, as a clear demonstration of the firm's road-to-zero commitment.

Volvo Trucks and supplying dealer Thomas Hardie Commercials worked closely with Fox Group to determine the optimal specification for the vehicles, using the manufacturer's Electric Range Simulator – which considers multiple factors about a customer's operation, including payload, routes, driving hours and charging infrastructure.

Paul Fox, Managing Director of the Blackpool-based business, says: "This purchase marks the start of the electrification of our fleet. We understand we are the first company in the UK to invest in electric tippers – and one of the first in Europe.

"We are strongly committed to playing our part in the UK's push to reach net zero and we will be making more of our fleet electric in the future. This milestone is just the beginning of the journey, and we believe if the country is serious about substantially reducing carbon emissions, the construction sector needs to join the party – and we are proud to be playing our part and leading from the front.

"We are extremely pleased to be partnering with Volvo Trucks on this project and throughout the process we have received excellent support from Neil Crook, Customer Solutions Manager at Thomas Hardie Commercials."

Both Volvo FE Electric 6x2 rigids are plated at 27-tonnes – one tonne more than a standard three-axle rigid – which helps to offset the additional weight of the batteries. Mounted with Thompsons tipper bodywork, they will operate primarily on local contracts for customers such as Lancashire County Council, being used to move materials to and from construction sites, before returning to base each night to be recharged.

Christian Coolsaet, Managing Director of Volvo Trucks UK & Ireland, explains: "We have an obligation towards the planet and future generations to be sustainable, and the team at Fox Group are setting a fantastic example by becoming early-adopters of a new generation of vehicles which are cleaner, greener and quieter – and which have been developed using the same technology already deployed by Volvo Group in thousands of electrified buses operating worldwide."

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V O L V O

The two trucks feature a day cab, full air suspension and a hydraulically-steered rear axle for exceptional manoeuvrability – perfect when operating in urban areas or accessing building sites with restricted access. They offer a range of around 150 km on a full charge from their four battery packs, taking into account PTO usage – making them ideal for Fox Group’s local work.

The FE Electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a two-speed gearbox, with power being generated by an electric motor with an output of 400 kW. The trucks can use different drive modes to help set the desired performance, comfort and energy usage levels.

Thomas Hardie Commercials delivered them into service backed by a comprehensive five-year Volvo Gold Contract, which includes preventative maintenance and repairs, and the monitoring of key systems including batteries and other critical components. This will see all scheduled maintenance take place at its Preston dealership, which is equipped to maintain electric vehicles on a six-weekly maintenance schedule.

To support their delivery into operation, Thomas Hardie Commercials has also provided Fox Group with specific driver training to help the transition for its drivers from diesel to electric.

Both Volvo FEs also carry a striking new livery, highlighting their green credentials.

Fox Group currently operates from 20 locations nationally, specialising in the supply and haulage of aggregates, recycled materials, muck-shift, earthworks and civil engineering projects. It has a fleet of more than 270 vehicles, consisting of six- and eight-wheel tippers, artics, low loaders and road sweepers to work alongside its impressive 2,500 pieces of plant and machinery, and team of more than 700 people.

In 2020, Fox Brothers acquired Hurt Plant Hire and since then the group has expanded further with the acquisitions of Bacup Clay Company Ltd, JJ O’Grady Ltd, Blackledge Plant Hire Ltd, Cotswold Roller Hire (CRH) Ltd and Woods Waste Ltd, making it one of the largest providers of haulage and plant hire services in the country.

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Caption for photograph:

Fox Group has become the first business in the UK to introduce electric tipper trucks into its fleet.

(L-R) Neil Crook, Customer Solutions Manager at Thomas Hardie Commercials; Paul Fox, Managing Director of Fox Group; Christian Coolsaet, Managing Director of Volvo Trucks UK & Ireland and Jim Murray, Managing Director of Thomas Hardie Commercials.

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