

Grant's plans to plant trees given Clinton's support

SHARON WARD

PROPERTY entrepreneur Peter Grant has enlisted the help of leading recruitment consultants Finlayson Wagner Black (FWB) to persuade Scottish business that saving the environment is vital.

He is hoping to tap into FWB's exclusive contacts base to persuade business leaders that donating a few pounds a month to plant trees will help prevent global warming.

Talks with a recycling firm with 140,000 customers and an airline to allow them to offset their carbon emissions by planting trees are also ongoing.

Grant, whose property firm, Grant Management, has a £12 million annual turnover and manages more than 1,300 properties, set up his Global Trees not-for-profit organisation after hearing "inspirational" former US President Bill Clinton saying global warming was the real issue facing the planet.

"I was amazed when Bill Clinton sent me a handwritten letter after we set it up and invited me over for dinner where I met Hillary and Chelsea. I explained to him the company offers a web service with details about climate change and shows how to donate money to fund the planting of trees. Just two weeks ago he sent me a book about trees. He is inspirational," said Grant.

Global Trees has no paid staff and every pound donated will go towards the planting and maintenance of trees, as well as a verification programme to ensure they are not quickly cut down. If the company does grow, Grant says 95 per cent will always go back to the bottom line.

Discussions are already in



Peter Grant felt inspired by Bill and Hillary Clinton to create Global Trees

place with private landowners, including the Duke of Buccleuch estates and the Earl of Dalkeith, about their willingness to have trees planted on their property and for their help elsewhere.

"To date, we have planted the first 25,000 mangrove trees in Cambodia, which help the fishermen in the swamps by improving the storm barriers. In India we are linking into a Himalayan Institute project which produces seeds which can be used

for biodiesel and, in Scotland, we have joined forces with the Central Scotland Forest Trust," which aims to plant up to 900 hectares of trees a year across central Scotland by 2015.

Grant accepts there will be those who knock his efforts and decry carbon offsetting as no more than a "sticking plaster", but he argues it has an "important role to play if the planet is to be salvaged".

The initial challenge he is setting people and companies is to reduce emissions by 20 per cent.

He added: "It's not that diffi-

cult. There are advantages to be gained for companies, it hits the right buttons for customers and need not be expensive.

"However, Britain is planting just a quarter of the trees it did 30 years ago. There is a greater awareness and if we can educate or help, then it is worth it. As Clinton said to me "It doesn't matter how many trees you plant, it's more about the inspiration you give to others. Hopefully, there will be a pinball effect and lots of companies will get involved."

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