

Gibbs rolls out new vans with Mercedes-Benz Agility

Fast-growing asphalt and bitumen macadam contractor Gibbs Surfacing has hit the ground running after investing in its first clutch of Mercedes-Benz Sprinters.

All 313CDI models powered by low-emission, 129hp Euro 5 engines, they were supplied to the Swindon-based company by local dealer Rygor Commercials. Three of the new vehicles are Medium-length Dualiner panel vans with second rows of seats, while the other three are Long chassis with four-door crewcabs that seat up to seven personnel.

Wessex Vehicle Services, of Compton Chamberlayne, near Salisbury, lined and installed special shelving and washing facilities in the Dualiners' cargo areas, and fitted the chassis crewcabs with 3.2-metre (10' 6") dropside bodies and 500kg capacity DEL column tail-lifts. It also painted all six vehicles in the operator's corporate shade of yellow and added their roof-mounted beacon bars,

Founded in 1967, family-owned Gibbs Surfacing is employed by multi-national contractors, government and local authorities, as well as civil engineering and building firms. Its reputation for high standards of workmanship, coupled with a strong commitment to customer service, has seen the company double its turnover to £10 million in just five years.

Gibbs Surfacing's new vehicles are the subject of a highly flexible Agility contract from commercial vehicle finance specialist Mercedes-Benz Financial Services. This offers all the benefits of conventional hire purchase with a balloon payment – including low monthly repayments – but gives operators extra options at the end of the term.

Key to the Agility concept is the agreement of a Guaranteed Future Value (GFV) for the vehicle. At the end of the agreement the customer can choose whether to pay off the final lump sum and keep the vehicle, extend the agreement by spreading the balloon payment over a further term, or return it free of any further obligations, apart from an excess mileage charge if the initially agreed limit has been exceeded, and damage charges over and above fair wear and tear.

Gibbs Surfacing's new Mercedes-Benz Sprinters are each contracted to cover 40,000 miles a year, the Dualiners are on three-year deals while it plans to run the dropsiders for an extra 12 months.

The company has invested more than £1 million in new plant and equipment over the last couple of years, but all capital expenditure is tightly controlled.

"We went through a lengthy cost comparison exercise before ordering these new vans," confirmed Commercial Manager Martin Grounsell. "It came down to three makes of vehicle and as far as the acquisition was concerned there wasn't a great deal of price difference between them. But the Sprinter was streets ahead of the other two in terms of quality and safety features, while its fuel and other running costs were very attractive too.

"We're a very image-conscious company, and I'm delighted that we've managed to secure premium Mercedes-Benz vehicles within the available budget. The Agility package has enabled us to keep our monthly costs down, while the fact that those costs are fixed also helps with forecasting. And when the contracts come to an end we intend simply to part-ex these vehicles for our next set of Sprinters."

Gibbs Surfacing works throughout the south-west and typically sends a 'gang' of six or more men with one of each of the two types of Sprinter to a job – the Dualiners carry tools such as breakers and whacker plates, while the dropsiders are used to transport hand rollers and barrows.

"The heavy rollers are chained to the body while the vehicle is on the move and deployed using the tail-lift," said Mr Grounsell. "It's a lot less hassle than using trailers, as we've done in the past."

And he added: "Our new Sprinters are very smart for what are essentially workhorses, but they also look well built and rugged enough to stand the pace.

"Rygor's sales executives Chris Carter and Jill Dixon have looked after us very well too - Jill's been on the phone since we took delivery to check that we're happy with the vehicles, and it's clearly a very professional operation."

More information can be found at www.gibbsurfacing.com



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