

GROUNDING - SPECIALIST PILING EDITION

# VAN ELLE'S GROUTING TEAM DIG DEEP AND ACHIEVE RECORD GROWTH



The Drilling and Grouting team, part of Van Elle's Specialist Piling division, has reported record profits and growth, just three years after a full review of the sector and business plan. Contracts Manager, Dave Bourne and Steve Bray, a contracts estimator from the Specialist Piling division, faced a challenge in 2017 when the business review meant an upturn in efficiency was required.

With just half a dozen rigs and 15 men, 12 of whom were on lay-off and three from the Specialists Piling division, Dave and Steve formulated a plan to bring in work and build the team back up.

Between them, they revised the pricing structure and started building better relationships with customers right across the UK, offering drill and grout, mine consolidation and compaction grouting. Dave said: "Steve really listened to what our customers needed, with his experience in the industry, he was able to reassure new customers and build loyalty, which turned into an increase in demand."

In the financial year ending 2019, the department stabilised its turnover with breakeven margins. However, the predictions for this up coming year end reveal that the department will have almost tripled its turnover in just two years, with profits in line with market expectations. Moreover, the team has more than doubled in size, recently took receipt of two new rigs and has work booked in for the next five months. In fact, there is so much work booked in that the team has had to hire in additional resources.

Dave Warner, Specialist Piling Director, said: "These results are a testament to the work that Steve, Dave and the team have put in to getting this section of the division back on its feet and securing jobs right across the country. Steve Bray added: "During the lockdowns over the last year, we never lost a day and never needed to put anyone on furlough – and I think that is worth celebrating!"





# MEET THE TEAM



**W**e always enjoy meeting the people behind the project, those delivering some of our flagship activity across the country. In this edition, we're meeting Conor and Will.

Conor White joined Van Elle in 2018 and is currently one-year away from completing his civil engineering apprenticeship.

Just as lockdown hit in 2020, Conor was working on the M6 project and quickly showed his aptitude for liaising with clients and supervising sites.

Describing his team as hardworking, determined and fun, Conor credits the guidance of his divisional director, Dave Warner – who often provides advice on assignments – for helping him pick up so much on the job and for helping his grasp different concepts and projects quickly.

Conor is currently working on a housing development project in Liverpool.

Splitting his time between the Liverpool site and the Blakemore Manor housing development in Hertfordshire is Will Seage, who joined the team in late 2020.

Will is working hard to gain as much experience as he can before beginning his Civil Engineering degree at Trent University in September 2021.

Will and the team are currently filling voids in the ground, which have occurred naturally in the chalk landscape. Drilling down to 34m to fill the void with grout, his team are consolidating the ground before major works begin to build housing.



**Dave and Steve regularly hear back from clients who appreciate the way the whole team go above and beyond at every phase, from enquiry to handover.**

Most recently, a project manager at Morgan Sindall, sent in the following words of praise for the team following work on an extra care scheme in Seacroft, Leeds.

“Following completion of the grouting at Greenmill Gardens scheme I thought I’d take a moment to say thank you for such a great service.

“Throughout the scheme, from tender to completion, you have performed beyond expectations.

“Right from the outset giving comfort to ourselves commercially and managing the coal authority permit submittal while appreciating our frustrations with the client delaying the commencement date.

“Site works went smoothly with good record keeping from a well-mannered team. Having the benefit of the second rig really gave us a big push on programme, which is something we don’t often get in construction, let alone this early on in a scheme.

“All in all a great performance, one that has been well communicated to my seniors. We all agree, we look forward to working with yourselves again in the future.”

## INVESTMENT BY VAN ELLE

**As part of a scheme of investment in rigs for Specialist Piling Division, the Drilling and Grouting team recently took receipt of a new Soilmec SM15 and Casagrande C6 drill rig which will allow Van Elle to deliver multiple larger ground engineering projects requiring soil nails, ground anchors and compaction grouting.**

### Some of the division’s latest projects include:

- **Compaction grouting for Blakemore Manor, Hertford, for Croudace Homes Group**
- **Compaction grouting for Stoneham Park, Reading, for Darcliffe Homes**
- **Drill and grout works for Seacroft Crescent, Leeds, for Morgan Sindall**

