

COURTAULDS PLC

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The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Prime Minister:

*Aside Edwards will
be discussing this with
3rd October 1985*

*Courtauld's next week - I
will let you have the
comments of the Welsh
Office as soon as
possible*

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Dear Prime Minister,

Greenfield and Wrexham

4/10

You suggested when we last met that we should, as soon as practicable following the cessation of production at Greenfield and Wrexham, make a statement outlining the many constructive things which are being done. I attach a copy of such a statement in draft, which we will be discussing with the Welsh Office and the local authorities concerned with a view to publishing early next week.

I myself am about to depart on a short visit to China where, amongst other things, our paint company will be holding its Board meeting since we are now very actively engaged there. My colleague Norman Wooding or Mr Guy, whom you met, will be available to deal with any points arising out of the draft announcement.

I do appreciate your help. In the last two months all parties concerned have been engaged in a lot of constructive dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hogg

Sir Christopher Hogg.

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NOT FOR RELEASE

COURTAULDS SEARCH FOR NEW JOBS IN NORTH WALES

Following the closure of the Wrexham and Greenfield fibre factories in North Wales, Courtaulds PLC announces the completion of the first stage in implementing a package of initiatives to help with new jobs.

"Our aim" said Sir Christopher Hogg, Chairman, in a company statement issued today "is to give maximum assistance to our former employees to obtain new jobs, and as part of that to facilitate the speedy return of the sites to constructive use". The actions taken have concentrated on:

- Intensive searching within a radius of 15 miles from each factory for jobs in existing enterprises.
- Harnessing the assistance of specialist consultants with experience throughout Europe in industrial regeneration work.
- Identifying training needs and arranging appropriate training.
- Clearing the sites of hazardous materials and asbestos lagging.
- Providing a detailed civil engineering report on each site to local authorities.
- Reaching agreement on transferring of sites to local authorities.
- Arranging senior management input to the Delyn Enterprise Agency.

Much remains to be done but in the two months since production finally ceased more than 400 of the 1,000 employees made redundant have found new jobs. A further 120 have expressed interest in retraining and the company has provided for all of these to attend appropriate courses, some of which have been specially designed.

JOB CENTRES

Job centres have been set up at both factories under the charge of specially trained Courtaulds' managers. They provide individual counselling and information on all jobs available. Personal contact by visit, by letter and by telephone with local employers has brought to light many unadvertised job opportunities. In some cases it has been possible to provide individual training to enable the requirements of a new employer to be met.

These centres will continue to operate for as long as necessary.

All craft apprentices affected by the closures have been successfully placed with other employers where their training as apprentices will be completed at Courtaulds' expense.

TRAINING

INDEVO, specialist consultants in industrial regeneration, have been retained to give additional group and individual counselling. The object of this is to help each person to identify latent skills and, by providing structured training, enable the person wherever possible to take on a new job. In some cases special training in starting and running a small business has been provided.

SITES

Courtaulds is giving the major part of each of the sites at Wrexham and Greenfield to the local authorities for new industrial development.

Wrexham Maelor Borough Council is receiving 88 acres of land, several existing production buildings, and a range of workshops currently occupied by 50 small businesses employing about 250 people. These businesses, all established on the site in recent years, will continue in these premises.

Courtaulds other activities on the Wrexham site, employing 350 people in plastics and in clothing manufacture, are unaffected.

The company has just authorised capital expenditure of over £400,000 on a new extrusion line for the plastics operation.

At Greenfield Courtaulds is giving its No 1 unit to Delyn Borough Council. This 60 acre site contains several buildings, some of which are available for immediate occupation by new business. Delyn will also be given a workshop and its equipment for training purposes. Courtaulds will keep the No 2 unit for about two years while efforts are made to sell the plant and machinery.

In order to ensure that both sites are environmentally safe, Courtaulds is clearing all hazardous materials, decontaminating plant and equipment, and removing asbestos lagging. This is largely complete in Greenfield No 1 works and is well advanced at Wrexham.

Specialist scientific testing facilities have been provided and liaison with environmental authorities maintained to agree satisfactory completion of these tasks.

Each site has been surveyed and a report provided to the appropriate local authority giving details and drawings of all site buildings and service facilities.

ENTERPRISE AGENCY

The Delyn Enterprise Agency is to have its work extended and intensified. To assist with this Courtaulds is seconding Mr David Watson, the senior executive in charge of the Greenfield plant, to the agency, together with another senior manager. Mr Watson will be able to call upon specialist professional and advisory resources within the Courtaulds Group where appropriate.

Pm: John Marek MP April 85

