

Firm's green policy wins Beacon status

■ by Business editor Bev Hawes

CHELLENHAM-BASED Commercial Group has gained Beacon status for its commitment to the environment.

The UK's largest independently owned office services company says its green credentials has also helped it win £5 million worth of new business.

Funded by the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Beacon South West aims to bring together the region's most forward-thinking companies to cultivate excellence within business. It has more than 205 members, of which 35 are based in Gloucestershire, including UCAS, Corin Group, Prima Dental and Cult Clothing.

The Commercial Group was founded 18 years ago by brother and sister Arthur Hindmarch and Simone Mann with school friend Alistair Adams.

Since then the company, which provides office services to clients ranging from global blue-chip organisations to small start-ups, has grown year-on-year by 25 per cent. Today, its turnover is £25m and it



■ **DELIGHTED:** Simone Mann, left, with Sue Baker and Barry Lindgard

employs around 135 people.

Al Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* inspired Simone Mann to actively reduce the company's carbon emissions by 50 per cent and, in the process, earn the company widespread praise for its work.

The most significant savings followed the decision to convert its 60-strong fleet of vehicles to bio-diesel and radically reassess the way the business undertook deliveries, which has reduced the carbon emissions of the fleet by more than a half.

Simone Mann said: "The Commercial Group doesn't have all the answers

when it comes to the environment but it is proud to be leading the way in tackling climate change.

"People say you have to choose between being profitable or being environmentally-friendly. I believe our carbon reduction programme will show that you can in fact be both."

Sue Baker, director of Beacon South West said: "While much has been said about reducing a business's carbon footprint, it is rare to see a company such as The Commercial Group that has taken such radical steps to bring about positive change."