

# New Kid On The Block

**While new to the glass industry, owner of Thermoseal Group customer Glass Express Midlands, Arun Photay, is focused on driving up quality – rubbing shoulders with ministers in the process. We talk to him to find out more.**

Oldbury-based IGU manufacturer, Glass Express Midlands, is undergoing a period of significant investment following its acquisition by Arun Photay, after its previous owner, Bill Singh, semi-retired.

While new to the industry, Arun explains that his key strategy is to concentrate on professionalism, focus on quality, and to surround himself with professionals.

“I’ve only been in the glass industry for the last 18 months,” Arun explained. “Before that, I was in investment banking, and I’ve been in the corporate finance world for all my life.

“I know that some investors target the glass industry and promise to double – or even triple – turnover, but I know from my time in the city that this is vanity.

“Some of the drivers for a successful business that I brought with me from the city are: branding, work-life balance, and maintaining a high quality product and good margins. And they are what I am focusing on initially.”

Off the bat, Arun audited all of the machinery in the Oldbury-based factory, to make sure they were working at an optimum level, before turning to product quality.

“It is vital we stay on top of innovation, so that we aren’t at risk of being left behind,” Arun said. “That’s why we’ve got a very clear five, 10, and 15-year strategy for this business going forward.

“Another important distinction is that we are ‘Made in Britain’, and that we have a low carbon footprint, because we insist on buying locally sourced material.”

This includes partnering with Thermoseal Group, which has a manufacturing unit in Wigan, and a vast injection moulding and distribution facility just seven miles away in north Birmingham.

“Not only are Thermoseal’s products produced here, but they are also made to a high standard,” Arun said. “And if I want to make a high-quality unit, then I need to make sure the components used to make it are of the best product quality as well. These include the spacer bars, the desiccant, and the sealant.”

Arun’s close working relationship with Thermoseal Group’s sales director, Mark Hickox, also initiated a trip to Number 10 Downing Street for members of the GGF.

“Mark and I were talking about the gap between the vast knowledge within the industry and some of the things that the government was proposing,” Arun explained. “And I told Mark that I firmly believe that government should be surrounding itself by experts in their fields, so they have all the information to hand before making decisions.”

This was following Arun’s first meeting with the GGF as a member in early 2023, where he quickly realised that there was a barrier between the industry and the government.

“Setting up a meeting between the GGF and government ministers was the right thing to do,” Arun continued. “Government would then have access to experts, and the GGF could get their message to the people who mattered.

“Since then, key documents have been read by government ministers, and I’m aware of future meetings to build on that relationship.

“Looking ahead, the glass industry can concentrate on making the best products without worrying that it will be undermined by uninformed legislation,” Arun concluded.