

From flood barriers to princess castles: Yanmar SV26 does it all

Blackburn-based flood defence specialist Dig Dig UK has strengthened its compact fleet with a Yanmar SV26 mini excavator, bringing precision, durability and dependable dealer support to infrastructure projects across the North West.

Approaching its 20th anniversary, groundworks specialist Dig Dig UK has built a strong reputation across the North West for delivering technically demanding flood defence and water authority works. With a team of 15 – 20 operatives, the business works predominantly on Environment Agency and water board projects, where reliability, safety compliance and consistent performance are essential.

To support its expanding workload, Dig Dig UK recently added a Yanmar SV26 mini excavator to its fleet, supplied by trusted local dealer Mellor Plant. Compact yet powerful, the zero tail swing SV26 boasts a 2,740 kg operating weight with a Stage V Yanmar diesel engine, strong digging forces and a carefully balanced undercarriage designed for stability in confined workspaces.

Compact performance on critical projects

While larger machines handle bulk earthworks, compact equipment is vital on constrained flood defence and utilities sites. The SV26 supports trenching, service installation and excavation around live infrastructure, combining a transport width of 1,550mm with a max digging depth of 2,995 mm to deliver strong performance in restricted spaces.

Stephen says the machine has proven itself in these conditions. “We do a lot of work around cables on utilities sites, so precision matters,” he explains. “The SV26 is extremely strong, very well balanced and just a great little all-rounder.” Its balanced design and responsive hydraulics deliver strong lifting capability and precise control when working on uneven ground or close to existing services.

The excavator has also taken on heavier duties where access has ruled out larger machines. On one recent project, the team used the SV26 to construct a stone compound within a tight working area. “There wasn’t enough room to get a bigger machine in,” Stephen explains. “We were levelling and pushing out 20-tonne loads of stone, and it handled it no problem.” The responsive hydraulic system supports smooth, simultaneous movements for efficient grading, trenching and attachment use, including breakers.

Dealer support that delivers

For Dig Dig UK, machine capability is only part of the decision-making process. Dealer support is equally important – particularly on high-profile projects where downtime can have a significant knock-on effect. Licenced Yanmar CE EMEA (Yanmar) dealer Mellor Plant, owned by Gordon Hayes, has supported the business for years. Gordon and Stephen share a longstanding friendship, with close personal ties further strengthening the partnership.

“You can have a great machine, but if the dealer support isn’t there, it makes life difficult,” Stephen says. “If I ring Mellor Plant, they respond straight away. They know our machines inside out, and if we need a part, they send the engineer with it.”



As project requirements have become increasingly driven by health and safety and contractor assurance, Dig Dig UK has also moved towards main dealer servicing for added peace of mind – including planned maintenance and formal service arrangements.

“With modern machines, there’s a lot more going on under the bonnet,” he says. “If something isn’t right, the dealer can plug in and run diagnostics straight away.” The SV26’s wide-opening engine covers and easy access to daily inspection points also help keep routine maintenance straightforward and downtime to a minimum.

From flood barriers to fairy tales

Away from site, the SV26 has proved its versatility closer to home. Stephen has also put the machine to work on major landscaping projects, most recently digging footings for a 26m x 26m walled garden ahead of concrete being poured, its compact footprint allowing accurate trenching with minimal disturbance. It also played a starring role in what Stephen jokingly calls “Project Princess Castle” – transforming a wooden play structure (around six metres long and 2.5 metres wide) into a fully reimagined fairytale hideaway for his daughter.

Complete with turrets, a drawbridge and a 13-metre underground tunnel, the project was far from a simple garden makeover – Stephen dismantled the original structure, excavated new foundations, sank a 1.8-metre diameter pipe two metres into the ground and reshaped the surrounding landscape to create a castle fit for a princess.

“She’s more into Anna than Elsa,” he laughs. “But she thinks it’s magical either way. The SV26 is big enough to do serious work on site, but precise enough for something like this at home,” Stephen says. “It just gets on with it.”

From precision utilities work and heavy-duty site prep to ambitious landscaping projects at home, the Yanmar SV26 is helping Dig Dig UK deliver – backed by Mellor Plant’s responsive support and servicing expertise.