

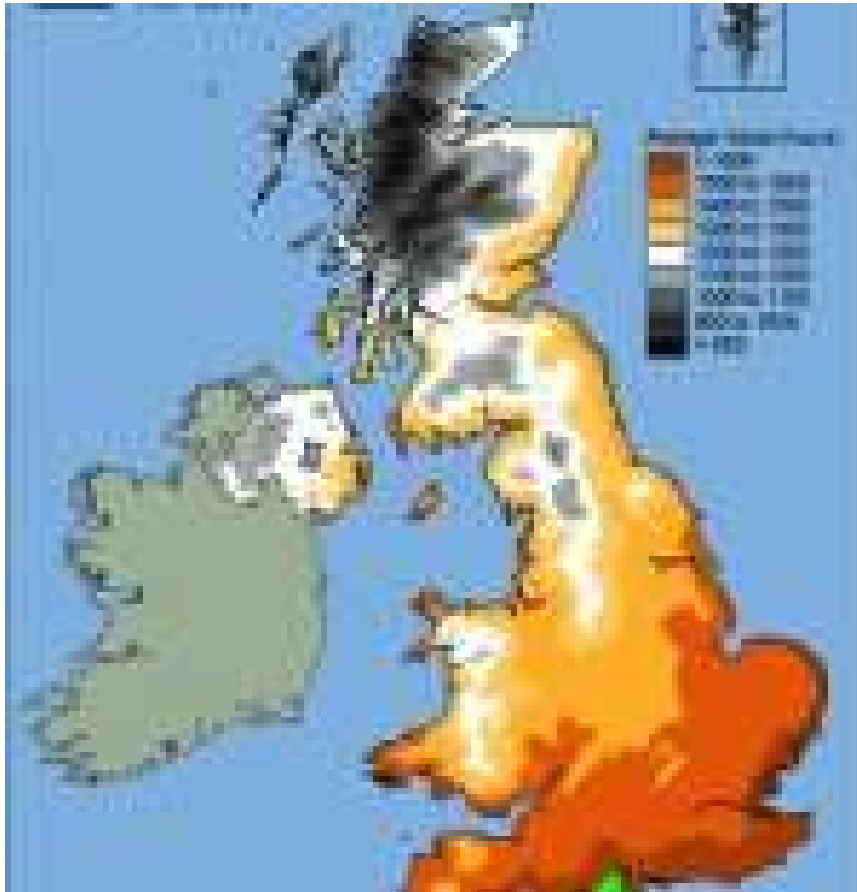
# Introduction



# Introduction

## Topics

1. All about West Solent Solar Cooperative.
2. Its role in the local economy.
3. Why it came about.
4. Why the membership invested.
5. Biodiversity measures.
6. Open for visitors.
7. Grant fund.
8. Measures the UK government has taken to make life difficult for Community Energy



We have more sunshine than most of the UK

# The vision completed – the sheep arrive



# The vision completed – fencing around inverter clusters



# The vision completed – the sheep arrive



Lots of Visitors.  
Southampton Quakers  
14<sup>th</sup>. November 2015



# Where does our electricity go?

1.5 miles.

To Lymington and Pennington.







# West Solent Solar Cooperative Facilities for visitors



- 10 local schools in each year, about 300 children
- Guides are members of the co-op
- Open day for members
- AGM
- Open days for politicians
- Probably c.500 adults each year
- Have obtained Awards for All grant for composting toilet with disabled access..

# West Solent Solar Cooperative Facilities for visitors



Completed  
composting toilet



# West Solent Solar Cooperative Growing evidence of biodiversity



24 newts  
relocated



West  
Solent  
Solar  
Coop

Solar  
railway  
being  
tested





# West Solent Solar Cooperative site layout



Site layout –  
gap for  
neighbours  
and avoiding  
sewer line



# West Solent Solar Cooperative

## Not too big



12.65 acres.  
Not too big – it  
sits in the  
landscape and  
does not  
dominate it.

# West Solent Solar Cooperative

## Technical facts



- 2.39 MWp, 2MW grid connection
- 9,372 Q cells solar panels
- 65 ABB inverters
- Contacted to the grid on 27<sup>th</sup>. June 2014

# West Solent Solar Cooperative

## Some other useful features



- Used local press media.
- On BBC South 3 times, on BBC Solent Radio twice and on BBC Inside Out once.
- Teamwork. Board has, and used, planning, legal, sustainability, film making, engineering, business start up and IT experience.
- Used every network the team had – eg. Friends, Family, Transition, Friends of the Earth, Beekeepers, Quaker Network, HREC, Energy4all Coops.

# West Solent Solar Cooperative

## More useful features



Cost £2.6 million. SEIS and EIS helped.

- No grants. New Forest deemed to be Urban by Rural Communities Energy Fund.
- Worked with Energy4all to raise money. Took about 8 weeks. Used their model rules to create coop.
- Oversubscribed. Had to return £300k.
- 453 shareholders and 50 bondholders.

# West Solent Solar Cooperative Community benefit



Shares given to local school

55% of shareholders and all bond holders live locally so income goes to local residents

Community fund

Schools and community group visits

Biodiversity

# West Solent Solar Cooperative Community benefit



We funded a  
composting  
toilet for  
Hordle  
Primary  
School

# West Solent Solar Cooperative Community benefit



Very linked in with local schools. NPA funding very helpful.

Cathy Cook – Schools energy conference and schools energy competition.

Gill Hickman – helping schools get green flag.  
Postcards to Paris. West Solent Solar Coop funding  
Solar Aid lamps as prizes for “best” post cards.  
Over 1,000 received..

# West Solent Solar Cooperative Biodiversity



Biodiversity –  
a bee orchid  
discovered on  
site



# West Solent Solar Cooperative Hedge planting



Community planting the new  
hedge

# Involve the politicians...

4<sup>th</sup>. July 2015

## Farm helps 650 homes cook on sunshine!

A NEW £2.6m solar farm in Lymington has been hailed a "fantastic community endeavour" by New Forest West MP Desmond Swayne.

Mr Swayne was among 100 visitors to the West Solent Solar Cooperative Limited (WSSC) facility at Lower Pennington Lane during an open day on Saturday.

Built on a former gravel pit and landfill site, the 9,372 solar panels are helping to power 650 homes in the area.

With no emissions of any kind, two megawatts of pollution-free electricity can be produced by the farm at maximum output.

The open day coincided with a new landmark figure for renewable energy generation in the country,

with around 16% of the UK's energy produced by solar power last Friday.

My Swayne told the 'A&T': "This is a fantastic community endeavour, and is extremely important in terms of our future energy security.

"From my ministerial point of view, it's one of the key developments we're really excited about in Africa. Lack of power is one of the great limitations on economic development, and without it, even more people are trying to cross the Mediterranean to come here."

New Forest Transition group volunteers have helped to plant several thousand hedging plants and trees around the field to start forming a wildlife corridor, and wildflower seeds have been sown

across much of the 12.5 acre field.

Sheep will be grazing in the autumn, and a collection of beehives has been installed on site.

WSSC members have already shown over 200 primary school children from seven New Forest schools, plus a group from the Lymington Rotary Club, around the facility.

New Forest District Council chairman Alison Hoare, who also attended the open day, said: "I think it's a wonderful project, and I like that it's powering local houses.

"The importance being placed on bioersivity, like the bees and sheep in winter, is great, and it shows that even with the panels you can still make a good use of the land."

Landowner and chairman of the project, Anthony Woolhouse, said: "In 2011, Quakers in the UK committed to become a low-carbon, sustainable society. This gave me the spiritual strength and determination to make West Solent Solar

Co-op the success it has become."

Project coordinator and founding director of WSSC, Cathy Cook, said: "The solar farm tour is a great experience, opening children's and adults' eyes to the fact that people living just up the road are actually

cooking their lunch with sunshine."

For more information visit [www.westsolentsolar.coop](http://www.westsolentsolar.coop) or to organise a tour email [cathyc@westsolentsolar.coop](mailto:cathyc@westsolentsolar.coop)



Grand tour: (l-r) Anthony Woolhouse, Desmond Swayne MP and Coun. Alison Hoare

# Involve the politicians...

## They can be helpful

Desmond Swayne MP New Forest West

Helped us get accreditation for the Feed in Tariff after months of trying. Overnight success.

Julian Lewis MP New Forest East

Making representations to Treasury on early removal of EIS and SEIS from community energy projects.

# Involve the politicians...

## They can be helpful 2

Keith Taylor Green MEP for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Came on site Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup>. November

Has just published report: *Taking Back the Power: Community Energy in the South East A Report for Keith Taylor, Green MEP for South East England Researched and Written by Emma Leigh*

# Why did our members invest?

In August we asked our members. 59% responded.

- 1. To get involved in generating clean, renewable electricity.*
- 2. To help tackle global warming.*
- 3. To make an ethical investment.*
- 4. To support the solar and renewable industry.*
- 5. To jointly own a solar facility as a member of a cooperative.*

# Measures that the UK government has put in place to hinder the development of Community Energy.

- 1. Removing the SEIS and EIS tax incentives.*
- 2. The FCA has stopped the creation of any new renewable energy cooperatives since 2014 and has challenged several existing energy cooperatives.*
- 3. Reducing the Feed in Tariff too quickly and stopping it absolutely in March next year (including the Export tariff).*
- 4. Stopping extensions in 2016. Example Hordle School.*
- 5. Stopping pre-accreditation.*
- 6. Promoting fracking and nuclear with tax incentives and subsidies.*















# Introduction

