



CASE STUDY:

Community-financed solar panels on Dorset schools and village halls

Dorset Community Energy is a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society supported by the Big Lottery 'Communities Living Sustainably in Dorset' programme to enable local people to purchase shares in solar panels on schools and community buildings. The level of public interest has been beyond initial expectations. Dorset Community Energy successfully raised £136,000 through an initial share offer in June 2015 to finance solar panels on 3 village halls and 3 schools, including Dorchester Middle School and Thomas Hardye School, Dorchester. A second share offer in November 2015 raised £352,000 in less than 3 weeks to finance solar panels on a further 7 schools in Blandford Forum, Bridport, Swanage and Weymouth and on the roof of Bridport Arts Centre. Members who have purchased shares will receive a target 5%-6% per year income from Feed-in Tariff receipts and their capital returned in instalments between years 4 and 20.

By providing free or low-cost solar electricity the solar panels will save the 10 participating schools and 4 community buildings an estimated total of £600,000 over a period of 20 years and also save over 3,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. In addition, Dorset Community Energy intends to work with the schools to provide solar energy teaching resources for pupils.

There is further information on the website www.dorsetcommunityenergy.org.uk



Community-financed solar panels at Dorchester Middle School