

SOLAR BENEFITS US ALL

STOP

CLIMATE CHANGE

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT



BOLDER ACTION NOW!



THE FACTS ABOUT SOLAR FARMS

wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk

Developers should: Take local feedback into account when designing projects.

Maximise biodiversity opportunities on sites, with wildflowers, new hedgerows, trees etc.

Improve access to land with new footpaths, bridleways etc.

Deliver community benefit funds for local people and opportunities for shared ownership.

References + more information



Two years to save the world UNFCC bit.ly/3ylwDMA

DEFRA UK Food Security Report bit.ly/4azqq35

Ecological trends on Solar Farms in the UK bit.ly/3wPFEYt

England can produce more renewable energy fast bit.ly/3KcR1bd

UK renewables still cheaper than gas bit.ly/4buqlcz

National Grid Future Energy Scenarios bit.ly/3yARAJp

The Facts about Solar Energy bit.ly/4aw67n6

About Wiltshire Climate Alliance

Wiltshire Climate Alliance (WCA) is an umbrella organisation for local groups and individuals to campaign for action on climate change. WCA welcomes a wide variety of groups and individuals whose common characteristic is that they care passionately about the challenges of climate change and the impact of human activity on the environment.

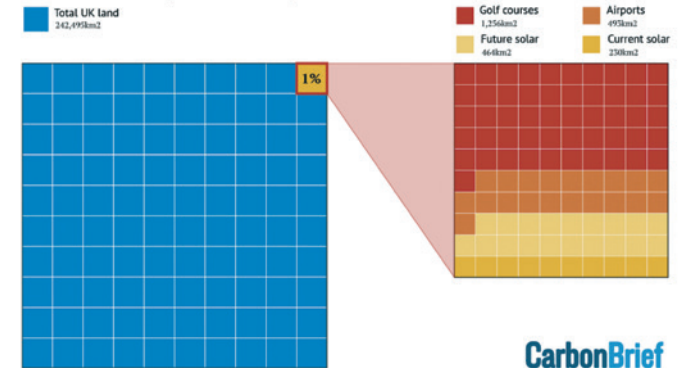
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Golf courses take up more space than solar power in the UK

Current and future solar power land use compared to other uses



CarbonBrief
CREATING AN ENERGY TRANSITION

Solar farms are time-limited, completely reversible, and occupy a tiny proportion of land.

The government has a target to fully decarbonise our energy system by 2035. Currently about 43% of our electricity comes from renewables (2023).

Solar has a key role to play, with a government target of 70 GigaWatts (over four times current capacity) by 2035. We all need to get used to living near solar farms.

Government planning policy already steers development away from “Best and Most Versatile” land. Cumulative landscape and visual impact is also taken into account in National Planning Practice Guidance.

Wiltshire was one of the first councils to declare a Climate Emergency in 2019, with a target to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Wiltshire currently meets only 6% of its energy demand from renewables (Wiltshire Council Climate Strategy 2022).

Wiltshire has no commercial wind turbines anywhere in the local authority area.

We need to go further and faster to decarbonise. Wiltshire is best suited to solar generation and we need to act now for the sake of future generations.

Solar is an excellent energy source helping address three major challenges that affect everyone: the climate crisis, the ecological crisis and rising prices. Solar farms provide homegrown energy – they are good for our energy security and support our farming communities. They are part of the solution, not part of the problem. Wiltshire has abundant sunshine, plenty of land and access to the electricity grid – we need to play our part.



“Two years to save the world”

There is no doubting the urgency of taking action to limit global warming. As UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said recently:

“More and more people want climate action right across societies and political spectrums, in large part because they are feeling the impacts of the climate crisis in their everyday lives and their household budgets...Every voice matters.”

Tackling the climate crisis

We have just over a decade to fully decarbonise our energy system. We are barely halfway there. Solar power is the only technology that can deliver clean, renewable energy at the pace and scale needed. Offshore wind farms can take 15 years to develop, nuclear power plants take longer still, and onshore wind is still effectively banned in England.

Tackling the nature crisis

Farming relies on pollinators and biodiversity, but intensive farming reliant on chemicals and removal of habitats have caused dramatic declines in wildlife. Solar farms are proven to increase biodiversity by becoming mini-nature reserves, with wildflower meadows, new hedgerows, ponds, beehives, etc.



Supporting food security

Climate change is the biggest threat to food security and is already having devastating consequences for many farmers. Solar farms are tackling this directly. The rental income helps farm businesses diversify, tiding them over when times are tough. They can also continue to farm the land between and around solar panels. Solar helps secure UK food production – now and in the future – by supporting farmers over the long term. Numerous research shows that the proportion of farmland needed to deliver our 2035 solar targets is tiny – less than 0.5%.

Cheaper energy prices

Solar PV is our cheapest form of power generation – less than gas, oil, coal, wind, hydro or nuclear. If we want to keep our energy bills down, while continuing to use electricity for all our daily activities, we need more power from the sun. Onshore wind is the next cheapest source of energy, but still banned in England, and Wiltshire is less windy than many other counties.



Solar on roofs

We need much more of this too – but it's not going to be enough on its own. Retrofitting is technically complex and not always viable for many buildings, but all new buildings should have solar. Unfortunately the government has watered down green building standards and removed financial incentives encouraging domestic solar.

The role of battery storage

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) smooth out the peaks and troughs between renewable energy supply and demand, making the grid more resilient and contributing to lower energy prices. They are designed to strict industry guidelines subject to UK health and safety legislation.

BESS have been operating in the UK since 2006; as of July 2023 there were 100 BESS sites in the UK. There has only been one UK reported BESS fire, in Liverpool, in 2020. No one was injured and there was no lasting environmental damage.

