

Moor energy options

David Stevenson, Mole Energy



I was joined by our Commercial Manager Luke Francis at a recent Renewable Energy event on Dartmoor. Organised by the Dartmoor Hill Farm Project (DHFP*) it set out to demonstrate the best options for maximum cost savings and opportunities to ensure renewable energy becomes an integral part of farming infrastructure.

The DHFP is a small team, working across the region providing advice, support, training and skills, all of which are vital for a more sustainable future for our farmers.

The practical, in person, on-farm events have proved to be one of the most effective ways to demonstrate sustainability where farmers can ask questions and learn from others' first hand experience.

Our host farm, Broadaford, had an existing 50kW PV array, installed by Mole Energy in 2014 and the business is now planning on extending PV capacity and adding battery storage.

Dartmoor Farming Officer, Hazel Kendall, who organised the event, said: "The event helped illustrate some key facts and figures when considering such an investment.

"The technology in renewables moves quickly. Not only are solar panels performing more efficiently and being driven by greater sustainability in production but battery

storage has also improved greatly. The Tesla Powerwall was one of the items demonstrated that could form part of such a package."

Planning

More than 30 farmers also heard about planning regulations relating to potential installations from the Dartmoor National Park Authority.

There is a misconception national parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) have different planning laws. Generally speaking, solar installations that are roof mounted do not require planning permission regardless of being in an AONB (National Landscapes) or a national park, unless the property is listed.

However, for good practice, we work closely with national parks to minimise the visual impact of installations, although this isn't a planning requirement. Planning is only required if you are installing a ground mounted array.

Mole Energy's FREE viability study for solar PV and battery storage installations

We will advise on:

The optimum system for your business

Using information about your current energy bills and site infrastructure we will produce an estimate quotation on anticipated returns.

Battery storage

Based on your usage and the size of your proposed array, we will design a bespoke storage solution.

Grid connection

We will consult with your District Network Operator/the National Grid to confirm whether your proposed system can be connected to your existing supply.

Suitability of your buildings

We have years of knowledge and experience, so understand which types of building are optimal for solar PV.

Planning

We will advise if planning consent is required.

Detailed site survey

We will carry out a pre-installation survey to ensure smooth delivery of your project. This will include checking your existing electrics, access, health and safety and how to keep your business running smoothly while we install your system.

Completion of viability study

We will confirm your final design and quotation, in writing, for your agreement and sign off.

"We originally decided to invest in solar to reduce our exposure to ever increasing energy costs, whilst also providing some additional income for the farm. Fortunately, the investment decision was helped by the incentive of Feed in Tariffs index linked for twenty years.

The benefits of the solar array enabled us to remove oil-based heating and cooking systems and convert them to

electricity. **This has considerably reduced our running costs**, combined with the advantage of being able to mitigate some of the dramatic price hikes we have seen in recent years.

We chose Mole Energy as our installers having engaged with a number of companies. This was based on a combination of factors including price, but also the security of having the backing of Mole Valley Farmers who gave a little

more confidence, in what appeared to be an extremely volatile market.

We are investigating expanding the production of solar energy to further utilise available roof space and create enough battery storage to cover night time usage and power cuts. Given our remote location and heavy dependence on electricity, we believe this to be a sensible plan."

John Dracup - Broadaford Farm

To find out if solar and battery storage is right for you, give our consultants a call today



01803 732946
info@moleenergy.com

