

# Switch to solar energy shows the Coal Authority shine

Solar power is helping the Coal Authority save energy and reduce costs. With sustainability a key focus for the organisation, the Coal Authority has been looking at ways to harness clean energy sources to help run mine water treatment schemes, which need a steady supply of power to run correctly.

Mine water treatment schemes need energy to work hard cleaning mine water for safe release into watercourses. The push to incorporate green energy into these schemes aims to protect the wider environment, to add to the existing role the scheme has to protect the immediate natural environment.

The solar power installation at the Bates mine water treatment scheme near Blyth, in Northumberland, with 2,112 solar panels, has the capacity to produce 550,000kWh of electricity each year and is performing above its expected capacity. In a typical year, 200,000kWh is used for mine water treatment and 350,000kWh is exported to the grid.

Bohdan Iwanskyj, the lead for solar energy projects at the Coal Authority, said:

The use of solar power at our mine water treatment schemes is part of our aim to significantly reduce the energy use of these schemes through innovation, research and development.

We conducted extensive investigations before setting up solar power installations at several of our mine water treatment schemes. The decision on the size of the scheme ultimately depends on the capacity of the local electricity grid as well as the energy being consumed by the pumps. There is no point in producing excess amounts of electricity if we cannot make use of it and export it. Every site is individual in its layout and the problems it poses. However, they all have one factor in common – each site must have the potential to pay for itself and continue to play its part, protecting the environment.

At its peak, the Bates solar installation can generate 570kWp. Underground cables carry the electricity across the Port of Blyth and the site of the Morpeth Academy School to the control room, which is over 400m away. The solar power is directed into the main motor control centre panels where it feeds the electric submersible pump, whilst excess power goes to the grid.

The solar installation started operating on 1 March 2019. It was the seventh Coal Authority site to set up an installation in the first tranche of an

innovative solar programme that began in 2016. Projections estimated that the scheme would reduce energy use significantly and drive down electricity costs by around £25,000 a year. The Coal Authority will also benefit annually from £8,250 in generation payments from the government's Feed-in Tariffs scheme, as well as £20,750 in export payments to the National Grid.

Since it was commissioned, the installation has generated 1,370,000kWh of electricity and has saved around 200 tonnes of CO2 emissions. This has enabled the Coal Authority to stay true to their mission to improve sustainability across the organisation and make use of assets where possible. The cost of the electricity for running the water treatment scheme was in the region of £75,000 per year and is now effectively £21,000, a cost reduction of 72%. The electricity used keeps the pumps working around the clock, due to high water levels and tidal pressures at the site's coastal location. By implementing technology to use natural resources better, like solar energy, this means schemes will not only be lower in cost to run but also even kinder to the environment.

The Coal Authority's Dawdon, Deerplay, Chester South Moor, Old Meadows, Taff Merthyr and Woolley mine water treatment schemes also host solar power installations of varying sizes.

Colin Lambert, the Coal Authority's Innovation Manager added,

As environmental sustainability technology develops and we see more opportunities to make use of these solutions in our schemes, we can make sure that we continue to have a positive impact on the environment.

Our approach is about assessing and implementing the most recent, suitable advances in solar energy generation to enhance the production of clean renewable energy. This emphasis on innovation and investment has enabled us to further our ambitions in sustainable development. We have drafted plans to set up further solar power installations in the future which we are equally excited about.

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## **Bristol fly-tipper with fake name caught by investigation**

Owen Crumlish, 41, of Green Close, Bristol, pleaded guilty to dumping domestic and household waste on open ground near Severn Beach on 28 June

2019.

The Environment Agency had been investigating several reports of fly-tipping in the area and secured CCTV footage of two men using a vehicle to dump waste. The registered keeper of the vehicle was recorded as 'Leo Freel', which turned out to be a bogus identity.

But with the licence details known, police stopped the vehicle when it was next sighted and Crumlish confirmed his identity.

Stephanie Marriott of the Environment Agency said:

Waste crime is a serious offence like any other type of crime we will catch and prosecute you using all available resource and means.

The landowner who was the victim of this fly-tipping has cleared the land at their own expense but taken necessary steps to prevent them from being targeted by waste criminals again.

To avoid your waste being fly-tipped in this way, check for a waste carrier's licence, ask how and where the waste will be disposed of, don't pay cash and get a receipt or waste transfer note which includes the details of the company or person taking your waste away.

If you spot fly-tipping or know someone involved, [contact your local council](#) or [Crimestoppers](#) to report it in the first instance.

Crumlish was ordered to pay £498 fine plus £250 costs.

## **Notes to editor**

Owen Crumlish pleaded guilty to one charge of depositing controlled waste without an environmental permit on 28 June 2019, contrary to section 33(1)(a) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. He was sentenced at Bristol Magistrates Court on 14 June 2021.

You could be prosecuted if your waste is fly-tipped. [Find out more about your Duty of Care](#).

[Find out more about fly-tipping and who is responsible](#).

For advice on preventing fly-tipping visit <http://www.tacklingflytipping.com/home/1508>.

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## [Motorists warned of websites charging a premium for DVLA services free on GOV.UK](#)

DVLA is urging motorists to beware of websites that charge a premium for DVLA online services that are cheaper or free on GOV.UK. The agency is reminding motorists that they should always use GOV.UK, to be sure they are dealing directly with DVLA and not paying more than they need to.

This comes as new figures released today show that since January 2020, DVLA has been contacted by customers more than 1,200 times about websites that are not affiliated with DVLA but which purport to offer DVLA-related services.

Using any website other than GOV.UK can mean motorists are charged more for services that are either cheaper or completely free on GOV.UK, such as [changing the address on your driving licence](#) or [V5C vehicle registration certificate](#), and [renewing a driving licence from age 70](#).

Applying online will always be the quickest, easiest and often cheapest way to transact with DVLA – and by going to GOV.UK motorists can be sure their application is safe and secure. [Find further information on the services available on GOV.UK](#).

Julie Lennard, DVLA Chief Executive, said:

GOV.UK is the only site where customers will find our official services, many of which are free. You may be charged a premium when using other websites offering services that are not connected to DVLA.

We recommend you always double check you're using GOV.UK when accessing our online services or looking for information. This means you won't be paying more than you need to for services that are cheaper or free of charge on GOV.UK and can be sure that you're dealing with us directly.

Guy Anker, deputy editor at MoneySavingExpert.com, added:

These copycat sites aren't illegal, but they dress up like legitimate webpages, and use clever tricks to appear higher on search engines. They get you to fill in forms, which requires no more work on your part than if you'd done it yourself via the official sites, and then they overcharge you for 'administration' or 'services' – which is really just passing it to the relevant body, with no extra work involved. These services are usually free or much cheaper if you do it yourself, which can leave a very sour

taste.

The obvious red flag that you're on a copycat site is if you're being charged for something that's usually free – such as updating your vehicle log book (V5C) when you've changed your address. Another tell-tale sign is the web address, so if you should be on a government website, carefully inspect it to make sure it says GOV.UK. It's also worth knowing the true price of a paid-for service – in the past we've spotted firms offering 'checking services' for driving licence renewals at a cost of £60, more than four times the £14 it costs to do it through GOV.UK.

### **Notes to Editors:**

Since January 2020 DVLA has been contacted by members of the public 1,210 times regarding third party websites. Such websites are not connected with DVLA in any way.

Information about the range of DVLA services available online is on GOV.UK at [www.gov.uk/browse/driving](http://www.gov.uk/browse/driving).

DVLA's online services are unaffected by the pandemic and will always be the quickest and simplest way to deal with us.

We regularly publish advice for customers across our channels about how to stay safe online and we regularly remind our customers that they should only use GOV.UK when looking for DVLA services or information.

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## **[Give your views on the OECD's stocktaking exercise](#)**

News story

Online public consultation to gather views and experiences of all stakeholders in relation to a stocktake of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.



The OECD is launching a public consultation to ensure the [stocktaking exercise](#) on its [Guidelines](#) benefits from views and experiences of all stakeholders.

The public consultation is open to stakeholders from all countries, including:

- businesses
- industry groups
- civil society organisations
- trade unions
- academia
- interested citizens
- international organisations
- governmental experts (including from non-adherent countries)

Along with this the OECD is also conducting a consultation process to seek input on the stocktaking exercise from other relevant OECD committees and working parties.

## Have your say

### Stocktaking exercise

In 2020, the OECD Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct (WPRBC) initiated a stocktaking exercise to assess:

- the OECD Guidelines
- their implementation
- the OECD's work on responsible business conduct

The purpose of the stocktaking is to take account of the important developments, achievements and challenges related to the OECD Guidelines.

It will also look at their unique grievance mechanism the National Contact Points for RBC, as well as the ecosystem in which the OECD Guidelines are implemented. In support of the stocktaking exercise, the WPRBC has developed a draft stocktaking report.

## OECD Guidelines

2021 marks the 10th anniversary since the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises \(OECD Guidelines\)](#) were last revised.

The Guidelines set out the voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct, covering:

- disclosure
- human rights
- employment and industrial relations
- the environment
- combating bribery
- consumer interests
- science and technology
- competition
- taxation

The UK National Contact Point (UK NCP) is responsible for promoting the OECD Guidelines and for operating the complaints mechanism set out in the guidelines.

Published 30 June 2021

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## [Jet Zero Council keeps up momentum with £3 million government funding for zero emission flight infrastructure as UK pioneers first-ever net zero carbon freighter flights](#)

- government launches first round of £3 million Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure (ZEFI) competition, supporting development of infrastructure required to aid electric and hydrogen aircraft such as charge points for planes
- British Airways completes first-ever net zero carbon freighter flights powered by waste materials such as cooking oil
- this comes as Jet Zero Council meet for a third time setting out a plan to put aviation at the heart of building back better and greener from the pandemic

The UK continues its track to deliver the world's first zero emission flight

across the Atlantic within a generation following 2 progressive announcements by the Transport Secretary today (30 June 2021).

Launching the first round of the ZEFI competition – the government will award businesses and universities around the UK up to £50,000 each to pioneer critical research into infrastructure, such as charge points and hydrogen fuelling tanks, that will enable the mass uptake of electric and hydrogen aircraft. Part of the Prime Minister's [Ten Point Plan](#), the £3 million fund will ramp-up the move towards sustainable flying to support aviation reach net zero by 2050.

This follows on from news that members of the Jet Zero Council, British Airways (BA), this week carried out the world's first net zero carbon freighter flights powered by a mix of sustainably sourced waste such as cooking oil. This is set to be the first of many flights with BA ordering 1.2 million litres of the fuel.

Offering emissions savings of more than 80% compared to conventional jet fuel, this marks a milestone moment putting UK aviation at the forefront of global decarbonisation efforts and forging the pathway to sustainable commercial flying in the future.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As the first major economy to commit to net zero by 2050, we've gone further than any country in the world to slash our aviation emissions – providing leadership, funding and the framework needed to lead the charge.

Now is the time for organisations and companies to take advantage of the opportunities we have provided to harness the economic and environmental benefits building back better and greener has to offer.

This comes as the [Jet Zero Council](#) meets for the third time today, setting out plans to put UK aviation at the heart of the UK's pandemic recovery – building back better and greener through the uptake of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and the development of zero emission aircraft and infrastructure.

Through the work of its dedicated delivery groups and £18 million of new funding, the Council has led the global charge on the uptake and development of trailblazing SAFs.

With [COP26](#) on the horizon, the UK hopes to showcase the progress made by encouraging delegates to fly on planes fuelled by SAF, showing just how far the collaboration between government and industry has come.

This funding, taken together with the £3 million of ZEFI funding announced today means the government has provided over £20 million of new funding for the decarbonisation of the sector since the Council formed last year.