



Orchard Community Energy

Considering Community-Owned Solar on your Commercial or Community Roof

Orchard Community Energy develops and runs community-owned renewable energy projects in Swale and Medway.

We are currently seeking opportunities to install solar panels on long leases on the roofs of commercial and/or community buildings in Swale and Medway, with the energy produced being sold on a long-term contract to the building occupier.

The Benefits

The benefits for the building owner/user include:

1. No capital investment required
2. Electricity for the next twenty plus years at a predictable price linked to RPI
3. Contribution to Swale/Medway's journey to Net Zero and generation of a fund to benefit the community, with associated opportunities for positive PR, employee engagement, stakeholder relations, etc.
4. A trusted community partner with a track record and a transparent financial plan for rooftop solar installations that operates its installations on an "open book" basis so that you can understand the relationship between your energy generation and the community benefit achieved.

Suitable Projects

A suitable project currently needs to have the following main characteristics:

1. A base energy demand during daylight hours every day sufficient to use all energy generated by the panels (as financial viability currently requires the user to use all or very close to all of the energy generated rather than this being exported to the grid)
2. Sufficient energy demand and suitable unshaded roof space to support 100kW or more of panels (approximately 700sq.m.) – minimum size will depend on the particular site circumstances
3. Ownership of or a long lease on the site meaning that the panels will be able to remain for a term of twenty to twenty five years; no expectation that the site will be redeveloped or refurbished in that time in a way that will affect them
4. Willingness to sign a power purchase agreement to buy the electricity generated during that time
5. Ability to sub-let the roof space to us (if relevant)

Next Steps

To explore this further, please contact us with brief details about

- your site, including how we can locate it on Google Earth
- your approximate total energy use and usage pattern.

About Orchard Community Energy

Orchard Community Energy is a community benefit society (registration number 7217) that was established in 2015 to develop community-owned renewable energy, low carbon and energy efficiency projects in Swale and Medway. It concentrates on projects that reduce the impact of climate change and increase energy security, whilst at the same time generating significant donations to its community fund.

Its 5MW solar array near Iwade occupies low grade farmland that was formerly used for brickearth extraction. The current output from the array is enough to meet the equivalent annual electricity demand of around 1,400 homes (2019 figs.).

Its first rooftop solar array, in Sittingbourne, was commissioned in March 2021.

Profits after the payment of costs and interest are distributed to local community organisations. Criteria for eligible projects supported through the community fund currently include wildlife conservation, climate change mitigation, the alleviation of fuel poverty and support for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Details of past grants are available at www.orchardcommunityenergy.org.

In 2018, Orchard Community Energy was recognised by Kent County Council as a Kent Environment Champion for its commitment and innovation in creating a positive outcome for the environment, health and economy of Kent.

Contact details

Email: info@orchardcommunityenergy.org Mob: 07904 333019

Registered office: Vox Studios, Room W106, 1-45 Durham St, London SE11 5JH

This briefing provides general information and, while we believe that its contents are accurate at the time of writing, no warranties are given as to its accuracy and/or completeness. It is not intended to document or form part of any contractual relationship.

May 2022