

Update from Hampshire County Council – September 2024

Tap into solar power to save on bills and tackle climate change

An opportunity for Hampshire residents to benefit from competitively priced, high-quality solar panel installation and save on future energy bills is once again available through the 2024 Solar Together scheme



The solar energy group-buying scheme, offered by independent experts iChoosr and promoted by Hampshire County Council, enables residents to invest in solar panels for their homes, fitted by pre-vetted installers, to reduce reliance on the national grid and lower their energy bills, as well as boost local renewable energy generation.

Through Solar Together, over 28,400 solar panels have already been installed in Hampshire – it is estimated that these installations alone will reduce carbon emissions by 59,205 tonnes over 25 years – equivalent to taking over 32,600 cars off the road during the same period.

Those interested need to register online at www.hants.gov.uk/solartogether by 18 October for a free and without obligation quote.

Participants who register will receive a complimentary quote that demonstrates their potential savings on energy bills through solar panel installation. They can also learn about the opportunity to earn extra income by selling excess energy to the National Grid. Additionally, participants have the flexibility to choose to include battery storage or electric vehicle charge points at the time of registration or when they accept their offer.

To participate in the Solar Together scheme, residents need to own the property or have permission from the property owner to install a solar system on the roof. Small- and medium-sized businesses and Commonhold Associations that meet these requirements can also participate.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240819SolarTogether>

Make attendance top of the ‘back to school’ checklist for 2024/25

Hampshire County Council is renewing its call for parents and carers to prioritise regular school attendance in the new academic year

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Rates of school attendance have continued to improve in Hampshire but as with other local authority areas across the country, they remain below the levels typically seen before the Covid-19 pandemic. Latest figures show that 93.4 per cent of all possible sessions, recorded at daily registers in both the morning and afternoon, were attended by Hampshire pupils in the 2023/24 school year. This is compared to 95.5 per cent in 2018/19, the last full school year before the Covid-19 pandemic. Promisingly however, Hampshire has maintained its historic trend above the national school attendance rate, which was 92.8 per cent in 2023/24.

Educational specialists advise that attending school every day, unless unwell, is best for children to ensure that the solid foundations for their future education and employment can be laid. It is also one of the best ways of supporting a child's mental and physical health.

The [County Council's website](#) provides advice and guidance on school attendance including parental responsibilities; how schools record attendance; and what to do if a child is unwell or expected to be away from school for a long period of time.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240827schoolattendance>

£1.5m boost for people led climate change action

Lower energy bills could be enjoyed by more people in the future as more communities are given the ability to lead the charge on climate change through greener, more efficient energy initiatives that will reduce carbon emissions and, in turn, lower costs

Thanks to £1.5 million National Lottery funding, Community Energy South, supported by Hampshire County Council, is set to expand its staff and volunteer numbers so that it can train and mentor a larger number of community groups, including providing expertise in human resources (HR) and marketing, so that community projects can get up and running more quickly.

The funding will boost employment and skills related training opportunities. Nicola Davidson, from Community Energy South said: "Most of the groups we work with have done amazing things with a small core team of volunteers. But it's hard to grow projects and impact from volunteer time only. This funding will create 33 jobs across 11 community energy groups, bring on 100 volunteers and provide up to 50,000 people with energy saving advice. We will also see the creation of more renewable generation projects that are community owned, with the increased energy generated helping to reduce the overall demand for electricity from the carbon intensive national grid."

More information:-

Community energy includes a variety of initiatives including community heating schemes, domestic energy advice and group purchasing schemes – schemes which enable householders to benefit from the most competitive pricing for green energy in Hampshire.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20240807CommEnergyLotteryAward>

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