

Harvesting energy



Lark Energy's 33MWp Solar Farm at Wymeswold, Leicestershire



LarkEnergy

Powered by the Sun



Using your land for a Solar PV farm Your questions answered...



What is PV?

Solar photovoltaic (PV) technology harnesses the power of the sun to produce electricity. PV is a very widely used technology and benefits from being silent, having low visual impact, being relatively easy to install and requiring little maintenance.

What is a Solar PV Farm?

A solar farm involves the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on open land. The PV panels are mounted on frames which are either driven into the ground or surface mounted. Their height above ground is usually up to 2.75m. For maximum efficiency, the panels need to be south facing and connected to the local electricity network. The site is usually fenced for security purposes and may also be screened by hedges.

Is PV a new technology?

PV was first commercially developed for the space industry in the early 1960s.



Land based PV farms started being constructed in the USA nearly 20 years ago and more recently have become increasingly common in parts of mainland Europe, particularly Germany, Spain and Italy.

The introduction of various government incentive programmes in these countries over the last decade has stimulated significant development. Germany is the market leader when it comes to PV with over 100 large scale Solar PV farms now built and operational.

Lark Energy's 33MW_p solar farm in Leicestershire is the UK's largest

Are there any incentives for PV in the UK?

In April 2010, the UK Government introduced an incentive programme modelled on the German scheme called the Feed in Tariff (FIT).

The Feed in Tariff scheme requires energy companies to pay generators for electricity produced from renewable energy technologies such as PV. The scheme provides renewable energy generators with guaranteed payments for 25 years which enables developers such as Lark Energy to pay back their loans and make a return on their investment.

For larger scale solar farms, the government has mandated the use of Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs) to generators of renewable energy. These are tradable certificates designed to encourage the production of renewable energy. The certificates are valid for 20 years and their sale, together with the sale of the energy itself, enables investors to make a return on their investment.

Why should I consider using my land for a Solar farm?

Lark Energy is able to offer excellent compensation to a landowner based on a long-term 26 year lease with an option to renew for a further 10 years.

What happens at the end of the lease?

The owner of the solar farm will decommission the solar farm and remove all of the equipment within the final year of the lease.

However, our preference would be for the original lease to include an option to renew the lease subject to the agreement of both parties. This is because the equipment will continue to provide valuable energy even beyond 25 years of use.

How will I know if my land is suitable?

The most suitable site for a solar farm is either Industrial, Brownfield or lower grade agricultural land. Old airfields make particularly suitable sites.

Ideally the land would have the following characteristics:

- Owner willing to enter into a lease for 26 years
- Size of approximately 5-250 acres. We are interested in all sizes of solar farm from 1-30 MW
- Cost effective grid connection, preferably in to overhead lines on wooden poles (we will investigate this at our cost)
- Mainly flat and clear site (no buildings, not sloping northwards, no major preparation required, no shading)
- Good site access for construction and maintenance
- Not significantly overlooked by neighbours
- No underground pipelines crossing the land
- Not of specific natural, scientific or public interest (e.g. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, SSSI etc.)
- Not situated in a flood plain
- No rights to land involved that restrict PV park development (e.g. hunting/fishing/shooting etc)
- Wayleaves/servitudes between site and grid connection point can be obtained at no major cost
- Can be made secure at relatively low cost
- Ideally within boundaries of a local authority that has a progressive policy on renewables

Should your land not be suitable but you know of other potential sites, we would be willing to pay you an attractive introduction fee should planning on such a site be achieved.



Once my land has been identified as being suitable what is the next step?

Whilst Lark Energy carries out its initial appraisal, we would require you to enter into an exclusivity or lock out agreement.

During this period we will be committing funds on grid capacity and planning studies and this provides us with reassurance that we retain first option on the land.

If the feasibility work provides a positive outcome we will enter into a lease option agreement. The lease would become operational once planning is secured and we have a viable grid connection offer from the District Network Operator (DNO)

We will cover all development costs at each stage and also your legal costs should we take the project forward.

What experience does Lark Energy have in this field?

Lark Energy is part of the Larkfleet Group of companies, a privately owned construction and development group based in the East Midlands. The company specialises in the design and installation of high quality commercial and utility-scale solar PV systems.

We have particular expertise in financing, developing and installing solar projects for our clients, partners and investors.

We have developed 235 MWp and installed over 140 MWp of PV across the UK since June 2011, including the largest solar farm in the country at Wymeswold. We have a further 100 MWp of solar farms consented, making us one of the UK's market leaders in the solar sector.

We believe solar can play an important role in delivering clean, locally generated power to the UK's domestic and commercial energy users. We are committed to being a responsible developer and builder of solar projects and follow the Solar Trade Associations' good practice guidance.



How long will a solar farm site take in planning?

The solar farm is likely to be classed as a temporary structure and therefore a decision will be determined within 13 weeks from submission. Public consultation will take place at both the pre-planning stage and during the formal consultation period.

Some planning permissions may specify that the site is returned to its previous use after 25 years.

What about maintenance once the PV farm has been built?

Operation and maintenance activities will be performed either by Lark Energy or another similar company. Performance of the solar farm will be monitored remotely on an ongoing basis.

The racking and wiring are checked periodically and occasionally the panels may require cleaning.

On green field sites, the grass requires mowing and this can be carried out by the land owner or an external contractor.

Alternatively, sheep may be grazed on the land to keep the grass down. It is possible that by retaining the land in agricultural use in this way, the landowner may be able to apply for stewardship schemes around the site perimeter and Lark Energy will work with the landowner to try and include this where possible.

Who do I contact for more details on the Lark Energy PV Farm Programme?

We are looking to develop up to 15 solar farms over the next 18 months. We have built up a team of project managers, construction specialists and expert consultants to enable us to deliver these sites within the targeted timeframe.

For enquiries about solar PV farms please contact:

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A 5 MW solar PV farm



The picture above illustrates the relatively low visual impact of solar farms - please note that Lark Energy is not involved in wind farm developments.



Lark Energy's 5MWp Solar Farm at Hawton, Newark

For a land owner, a solar PV farm provides:

- a quick development timescale
- long-term guaranteed index linked income
- potential for discounted, low carbon energy supply
- a reversible, low impact and low maintenance land use that can be partially retained in agricultural use

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