

North Tawton Community Primary School

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Solar PV Project at North Tawton Community Primary School

Background

North Tawton Community Primary School is a medium – sized state sector Primary School within the Devon Local Authority, with 155 children aged 4 to 11 on roll. We are particularly fortunate in that our wonderful grounds include 2 football pitches in the winter months, which in the summer are converted to a relay oval and 60 metre running track. We also have an orchard, small woodland, a pond and outside performing stage - used for assemblies and other performing arts, when the weather permits.

One of our key school aims is to emphasise the importance of understanding and caring for the environment as an underlying principle. The specific aim, taken from the school prospectus, is shown below;

To develop respect for their learning environment and the world in which they live

To put the project in context it is important to understand that this is part of a broader package of environmental awareness measures which the school has used. We have a long-standing commitment to environmental conservation. This includes a Gardening Club every summer, which looks after the Rainbow Garden at the front of the school, plus an annual whole school Environment Day, in which a range of environmentally-focussed activities take place. This year the latter included tree planting, leaf prints, bird cake making, bulb planting, raking leaves and other activities.

The school is part of the Okehampton Community Composting scheme and has 3 compost bins used to collect waste after lunchtime. This scheme enables the school to use its own waste materials to fertilise own grown produce such as tomatoes, which are grown as part of the science curriculum. The older children also develop investigations in support of

In 2009 and again in 2010, the children took part in the National 'Switch Off Fortnight' during which everyone was encouraged to save energy by switching off lights both in school and at home. This included posters made by the children, assemblies, with a guest speaker from the College and daily 'Energywatch' checks. This was very successful, with many parents commenting about the impact of this campaign at home.

The Solar PV Project

The school first became part of this locally-based initiative in 2008, when Keith Webber from Okehampton College gave a presentation to all headteachers in the Okehampton Learning Community on the benefits of developing a sustainable approach to energy consumption. He promoted solar panels as one of several initiatives and the College supported the funding of an Environmental Audit and application for grant aid towards a solar PV array.

The school managed to obtain a 50% grant towards a 7.2kwp array from LCBP, however the remaining 50% was at that time too great an amount for the school to fund. Thanks to 2 further successful grants from the LA Green Fund and Naturesave we are now in a position to fully fund the installation.

This will not only become the focus of the school's energy conservation initiative, it will also support future funding for further measures, including Educational initiatives, due to the revenue returns from the Feed in Tariff. The solar panels will have a weather station attached to them which will then provide further opportunities for science investigation. The power saving will be monitored by an online facility, so that everyone can see the benefits of this measure.

We are very grateful to the Naturesave Trust for the additional £1,100 grant aid which has enabled this project to be fulfilled.