npower Funds Solar Panels For Swimming Centre

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Author: **npower**
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Funding from npower means that a swimming pool that is part of a multipurpose centre on the Stackpole Estate in Pembrokeshire has been installed with enough renewable technology to make it the largest collection of solar thermal panels across the National Trust.

Funding from npower - as part of the National Trust Green Energy Fund - enabled a total of 19 flat-plate solar panels to be installed on the roof of the pool at the Stackpole Centre by local contractor West Wales Solar Heating. The Green Energy Fund project invests in small scale renewable energy generation and other carbon saving projects at Trust sites across Wales and England.

The Welsh produced solar panels now provide free heat to a pool that used to cost thousands of pounds a year to heat. The result is not only lower running costs for the Trust but another important small step towards lowering environmental impact and reducing climate changing carbon emissions

The project, which cost £18,000, will enable the pool's water to be heated by the power of the sun; supplemented for now with a gas system but with plans to move to a biomass heating system in the near future. The system works by water continually being pumped from the pool into a storage tank where it is heated up by energy created from the solar panels.

Keith Jones, Environmental Practices Advisor for the National Trust in Wales, said: "The National Trust is committed to reducing our own energy footprint and in developing projects that can enable people to learn about adaptation and efficient resource use and saving money. This is the largest solar panel system of its kind within the National Trust, and it is estimated it will produce 58,400Kw every year or the equivalent of almost 160 electric heaters left on for an hour every day of the year (saving over a third of its previous energy consumption).

"As far as we were concerned this was a very simple calculation - an investment equivalent to 18 months' worth of gas costs to heat the pool and it will have paid for

itself in six years. In summer and the warmer days this system will provide most if not all the heat for the pool."

The solar panels also have a digital display, which will enable members of the public and resident guests using the pool at Stackpole Centre, to see exactly how much energy is being produced by the solar panels during their visit.

Allan Robinson from npower said: "npower is proud to have funded the National Trust's largest ever solar heating system at Stackpole. In partnership with the National Trust, npower is providing expertise and financial support to help those looking for ways to be more energy efficient and make financial savings along the way."

The Stackpole Centre, a multi-purpose venue at the heart of the famous Stackpole Estate, formerly home of the Cawdor Family. The estate is a designated Grade 1 Heritage landscape and a National Nature Reserve. The centre has a unique and versatile range of cottages and group houses with associated facilities.

About npower:
npower is one of Britain's largest electricity supplier and supplies electricity and gas (and related services) to 6.6 million customers across the UK. npower is a market leader in renewable energy and sources the green energy for juice directly from renewable sources, at no extra cost.

RWE npower has been awarded the prestigious CommunityMark from Business in the Community (BITC). npower is the only utility business, amongst 21 other companies in the UK, to receive this accolade. The CommunityMark is a new BITC standard which has been created to recognise companies that are good investors in local communities and who have brought about real and positive changes.

npower PR Contact:
Nick McHugh
npower
Oak House
Worcester
WR4 9FP
01905 340 854
07795354628
www.npower.com

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