



WESTMILL SOLAR
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

Westmill



WESTMILL
WIND FARM
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED



- In the Vale of White Horse, 8 miles NE of Swindon
- The only location in the UK with large-scale community-owned wind (6.5 MW) and solar generation (5 MW)
- 2 pioneering co-operatives - and a sustainable energy charity, WeSET
- Wind has around 2,400 members, Solar nearly 1,700 - around 800 people estimated to be members of both co-op's so 3,300 individuals own the assets
- Developing onsite 3 MW battery storage (has outline planning and an exorbitant grid connection offer = unnecessary hurdle)



← 5 wind turbines

← 21,620 PV panels

- 1996 – Initial planning application for Westmill Wind Farm by Adam Twine
- 2008 – Westmill Wind Farm opens (cost £8m), the first 100% community-owned wind farm in the south of England
- 2008 – Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET) established
- 2011 – Solar park built (with option for its purchase by community)
- 2012 – Westmill Solar Co-op purchases solar park (cost £15.1m), the UK's first community-owned solar park
- 2021 – Launched Trading Dividend where members receive a payment for purchasing the electricity we produce. It enhances member economic participation, one of the seven guiding principles espoused by the International Co-operative Alliance. <http://westmillsolar.coop/westmill-trading-dividend/>



Some figures

- Westmill Wind has 5 x 1.3MW Siemens turbines, generated 11.5 GWh in 2020
- Westmill Solar is a 5MW solar park generated 5.3 GWh in 2019
- Together generate enough clean electricity equivalent to annual consumption of 5,000 UK households
- Westmill Solar annual revenue nearly £2.3m, Westmill Wind around £1.1m, respectively the largest and sixth largest UK energy co-ops (per Co-ops UK, based on 2018 figures)
- Co-op Energy (Octopus) buys the electricity from both Westmill Wind (since 2011) and Westmill Solar (since 2017)
- Estimated 20% of Westmill Wind and Westmill Solar members currently buy energy from Your Co-op Energy's Co-op Community Power Tariff



Co-operative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community

- Apart from taxes and keeping the surplus' money local of course!
- Westmill Wind currently makes annual £7.5k contribution to WeSET
- Westmill Solar currently allocates more than £120k annually to community funding, representing 20/80ths of surpluses paid to members:



Westmill Centre – on hold ☹️

- WeSET (with support from Westmill Wind and Westmill Solar, a LEADER grant and a Getting Building Fund grant) was planning to build a visitors' centre.
- Currently this is on hold despite considerable progress to mitigate risk, some risks could not be sufficiently mitigated and were growing, like completing in time to claim the LEADER grant.
- These risks, combined with higher-than-budgeted-for costs, due in part to the impact of COVID-19, means the funding ask and risk on the Westmill Wind Farm Co-op and the Westmill Solar Co-operative exceeds what they could reasonably bear.
- WeSET, the Westmill Wind Farm Co-op and the Westmill Solar Co-operative are all very disappointed. We are reviewing what is needed from the Centre and alternative ways in which this might be achieved.



Who owns this offshore wind farm?



- Orsted owns the 10 northern turbines and Middelgrunden Wind Turbine Cooperative the 10 southern one turbines.
- <https://www.middelgrunden.dk/middelgrunden-windmill-cooperative/>

Further co-operation

Areas for change include:

- Grid issues key - improved storage connection regime – non-science that the Westmill site with 11.5 MW of generating plant needs to pay for reinforcement for adding 3 MW of complementary storage
- More government promotion of co-operative model
 - Helps ordinary people be more part of solutions
 - Sharing directly in the financial supply chain
 - Being more inspired to embrace a low carbon future
- Especially like to see community ownership for of new generation capacity especially 5% of each offshore wind farm over 300 MW



Take a tour Use our resources



- Virtual tours have had visitors from over the world and will be an ongoing feature – book at www.weset.org
- Onsite tours have resumed – book at www.weset.org
- Use our learning resources – Energy, Electricity, Story of Westmill, Wind, Solar, Sustainable future, Hydro, Osney Lock Hydro and The fish pass www.weset.org/ks-2/
- Be aware of the Community Grant Scheme – will be a 2021 deadline: <http://westmillsolar.coop/westmill-community-funding/>



Mike Blanch; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michaelblanch/>

Westmill Wind Farm Cooperative Ltd

- Founder member
- Advisor to board from its formation in 2004
- michaelblanch@btinternet.com

Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust

- Founder and chair
-  Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust

Sign up to our newsletter at:

www.weset.org – via Contact Us



BVG Associates

- Associate Director
- Consulting in energy policy, wind technology
- mjb@bvgassociates.com

