



norfolk solar

why us?

our carbon footprint

Norfolk Solar offers products and services that help people to reduce their impact on the planet. However, in order for individuals, local and global communities to benefit from low emissions renewable energy, we as an organisation unfortunately have to create emissions and consume energy and resources during the manufacture, supply and installation process.

We could simply claim to be environmentally friendly because of the products we install, but we take the view that technology offering people a more sustainable way of living should be supplied and installed in an equally sustainable way.

Therefore, we have looked at the way Norfolk Solar operates, how much energy we consume, the greenhouse gas emissions we produce, the waste we generate and how we can be more sustainable. This is what we have discovered and what we are doing about it.

ENERGY FOR OFFICE EQUIPMENT

We have measured the electricity consumption for each item and have found that we use a very small amount of energy for computers, telephones, printers and a fax machine. All computers and printers are switched off when not in use and all of the electricity we consume is purchased through a green energy supplier, so our indirect emissions from electricity are extremely low.

ENERGY FOR PORTABLE EQUIPMENT

Wherever possible portable equipment is powered by rechargeable batteries to try and reduce the amount of disposable batteries we use.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste from our activities is separated and all metals, paper, cardboard, ink cartridges, wood scraps, old CD's and some plastics are either recycled or reused wherever possible.

FUEL CONSUMPTION AND EMISSIONS FROM VEHICLES

Our use of vehicles is by far the biggest single impact Norfolk Solar makes on the environment. We have tried to reduce the number of miles we travel but this has proved impractical. Therefore, we have looked at ways of reducing the damage caused by each mile we drive. For light duty journeys we often use a small motorcycle. This reduces wear and tear on the road network, cuts fuel consumption to as little as one gallon per one hundred miles and lowers exhaust emissions thanks to a catalytic converter. We are also experimenting with a petrol and Bioethanol mixture to cut emissions further. For heavy duty journeys, we continue to experiment with running our vans on a Biodiesel and mineral diesel blend where suitable fuel supplies permit.





norfolk solar

why us?

One of our vans is trying out fuel magnets that claim to improve fuel economy. We continue to look at alternative fuels including electric, LPG, compressed air and straight vegetable oil and plan to adopt whichever fuel matches our commercial needs and environmental goals.

Occasionally we need to travel abroad and wherever practical will use trains instead of flying.

Note on Biodiesel

There is concern that certain countries are cutting down large areas of tropical rain forest that absorb carbon dioxide, in order to grow crops for Biodiesel production. We have looked into how our supplier sources vegetable oil for making Biodiesel so that we do not indirectly contribute to rainforest habitat destruction.

carbon offsetting

There are some concerns about commercial carbon offsetting schemes (EG: paying a company to plant trees to absorb future carbon dioxide equal to your emissions).

These concerns include:

1. The number of years a tree needs guaranteed protection in order to absorb the CO₂ being offset (EG: 30 years) compared to the number of years the carbon offset company guarantees its protection (perhaps 5 years), and the CO₂ deficit if the tree were cut down prematurely.
2. The time delay between emissions entering the atmosphere now and the CO₂ absorbed by those trees in the future.
3. The planting of small trees that absorb small amounts of CO₂ compared to the purchase and protection of more mature trees and woodlands absorbing large amounts of CO₂.

Not all carbon offsetting companies operate in this way but we have not found a scheme we liked enough so have come up with an alternative.

We have purchased 11 acres of mixed broadleaf and coniferous woodland in the heart of Norfolk (our main operating area) and in a location which would likely be under threat from housing development in future years. Our aim is to try to protect this woodland from destruction, improve the habitat for wildlife and ensure its future as a carbon dioxide "sink". The woodland already contains a wide range of young and mature trees including ash, alder, elm, oak, sycamore, hazel, birch, sweet chestnut, scots pine, elder, hawthorn, poplar, willow and blackthorn and we have flora and fauna experts helping us with our plans.

From a global perspective, we make regular donations to fund the vital activities of GREENPEACE, and are working with the Sumatran Orangutan Society (SOS) to help repopulate the endangered tropical rainforest with native trees.





norfolk solar

why us?

our trading ethics

A lot of the world's destructive human activities are undertaken by unethical companies, focused purely on profits at the expense of all other considerations.

We believe that companies should be economically sustainable (profits ensure longevity for both the company, its employees and suppliers) but this shouldn't be at the expense of workers rights, community welfare and the environment.

Norfolk Solar must buy goods and services in order to operate effectively and we try to choose wisely:

- we never knowingly buy goods from companies employing child labour
- where possible our work clothing is fairly traded, certified organic and purchased from local independent suppliers
- all of the paper products we use are made from recycled paper or come from sustainable sources and are supplied by local businesses
- many of the pens, pencils, rulers and other stationery we use are made from recycled materials or from biodegradable cornstarch plastic
- we use a bank with a strong ethical and environmental policy

We also try to trade fairly and professionally with our customers:

- we do not believe in pressure selling tactics
- our activities are intended to limit environmental damage so we will not send you unsolicited and unnecessary glossy sales literature
- we regularly review our products and installation procedures against relevant UK building regulations, water regulations, electrical installation regulations, British and EU standards and Health and Safety regulations
- we take an honest and practical approach and will not offer you solar water heating if we believe it is not suitable for your circumstances or property

In addition, we're keen to create a better future in other ways.

We work with key organisations including Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors, Solar Trade Association, Logic Certification, BPEC Certification, the Centre for Alternative Technology, LILI, Cred, Renewables East, the Energy Savings Trust and many of the Norfolk District councils to improve the quality and choice in solar water heating products and services. This work includes public speaking, operating community focused workshops, participating in technical consultations and initiatives aimed at promoting renewable energy in domestic buildings.





norfolk solar

why us?

what people say about us

Extract from Eastern Daily Press article 13th November 2007:

TREE-MENDOUS EFFORT TO KEEP GREEN TEAM NEUTRAL

“Selling green products does not necessarily make you a green company. For one business, however, making sure they walk the walk has led to the purchase of an 11-acre woodland in a bid to offset emissions from the work they carry out. Norfolk Solar installs solar water heating in homes and is a major player in the design, consultancy and training aspect of the industry.....” (by Tara Greaves)

Extract from Renewables East newsletter October 2007:

NORFOLK SOLAR – SPREADING THE WORD

“In a world where business expansion and diversification are seen as the holy grail, it is refreshing to find a company that believes in developing a successful specialist business and using this expertise to spread knowledge through the training of others.”

“Norfolk Solar owner Lee Rose sees the promotion of solar water heating technology to a wider audience as a vital part of his work.

He is personally involved in teaching regular solar plumbing courses at the Centre for Alternative Technology, while a colleague teaches at a local gas engineering college.”

“The company has an impressive list of green credentials... Most of Norfolk Solar’s vehicles use biodiesel or bioethanol... Recycling of waste and materials is high on the agenda... Regular donations are made to Greenpeace and the company uses an ethical bank... In addition, all electricity used in the office is... from a renewable energy source.” (by Rachel Ouseley)

Customer Feedback – Ms Webster

“Just a note to say how delighted we are with our solar installation... So thank you... for such a tidy installation. I shall be recommending you to everyone I know until they get sick of listening to me!”

Customer Feedback – Mr & Mrs Gwynn

“Just to say thank you for Norfolk Solar’s prompt and efficient installation.”

Customer Feedback – Mr Peters

“Thanks for a really well done job. Your men were courteous and efficient, and no mess”

Customer Feedback – Mr & Mrs Woodroffe

“Just a short note to thank Norfolk Solar...for your sound professional advice... We were very impressed with your firm”

Customer Feedback – Dr Spencer

“Thank you so much for the really efficient service you have given, also the information and advice”

