



Creating a Bright & Sustainable Future

An insight with Giles Barker,
Pre-Construction Manager





INDUSTRY LEADERS & INNOVATORS

Creating a bright & sustainable future

Vital Energi's Pre-Construction Manager, Giles Barker, gives us an insight into solar technologies.

Why did you choose to specialise in Solar?

I first installed solar panels in 2004 during a social housing development project, and really liked the idea of residents being able to save money on energy costs and benefit from free electricity, and properties as a whole being more self-sufficient. I enjoy thinking outside the box to overcome different challenges when improving energy efficiencies, introducing solutions which will truly benefit the client. Solar energy is good for the planet too, so I'm passionate about introducing it wherever I can.

What are the main advantages of using Solar?

Using solar energy reduces your dependence on the grid and fossil fuels. It's a mindset. It also saves you money, a fair amount depending on your system size. It reduces carbon and your carbon footprint, and once installed, it's low maintenance and there are minimal running costs.





Have you introduced any unique techniques to add value to Solar projects?

Yes, bee bombing! Not all fields have to be mowed, so I have introduced wildflower meadows to fields where we've installed solar farms. The beauty of wildflower meadows is that the flora and fauna grow to roughly the same height as the solar panels, so they don't affect efficiencies. This of huge benefit to the environment, as the world is short of bees (mother nature's gardeners), and these meadows provide a feast for them.

Do Solar Panels still work on cloudy days?

Solar panels work all year round. It's actually radiation from the sun, rather than temperature, heat or direct sunlight, that enables solar PV panels to generate electricity. The most optimum conditions are surprisingly on a sunny winter's day because cold temperatures help

How does Solar benefit the Environment?

It's a renewable source of energy, so it won't run out, plus it's environmentally friendly because it doesn't generate greenhouse gases. Renewable energy technologies help reduce your carbon footprint, meaning you'll personally be doing your bit for the environment.

Can you share 2 surprising facts about Solar?

1. 90% of the aluminium frames are produced from recycled materials
2. Installed product prices have reduced by 75% in 10 years

"Using solar energy... reduces carbon and your carbon footprint, and once installed, it's low maintenance and there are minimal running costs"

Giles Barker, Pre Construction Manager (Solar & Battery Energy)



How does Vital make use of Solar Panels?

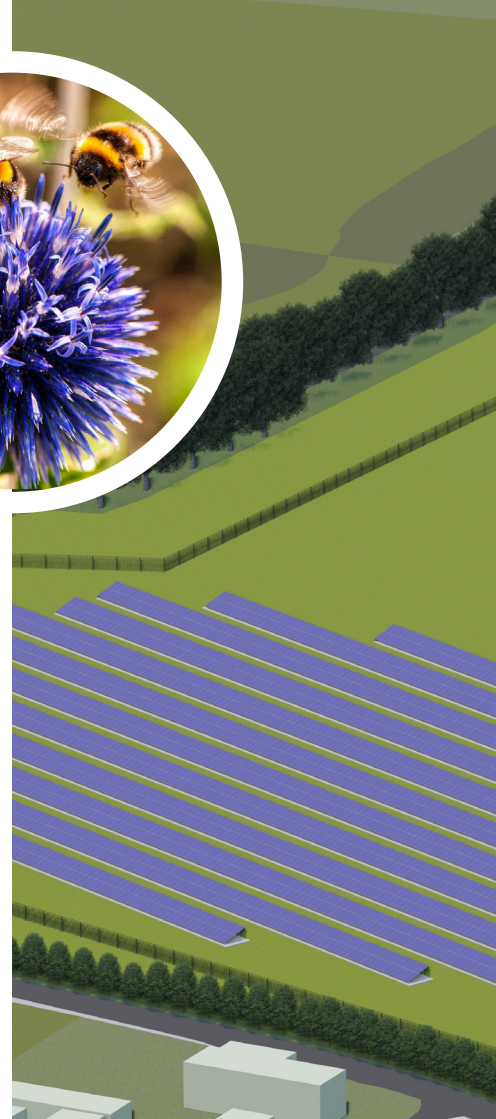
At Vital's HQ in Blackburn, there are 264 solar panels on the roof which power the fleet of electric vehicles. Many of the company vehicles are electric and there is the facility to charge 22 vehicles at once. So far, the solar panels have powered over 400,000 electric miles, saving 8,000 gallons of fuel, which is really impressive!

Does Solar PV work best as a standalone energy source or combined with other technologies?

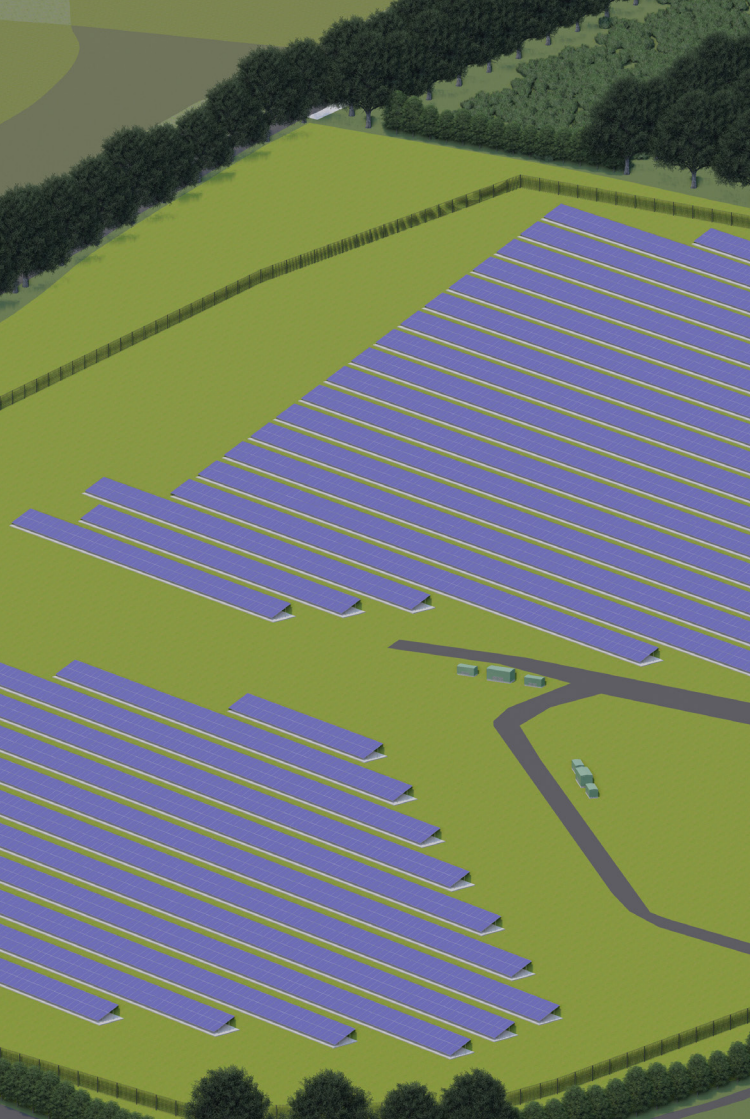
Solar PV works very effectively both independently and connected to further technologies. It works incredibly effectively with both Air Source Heat Pumps and Ground Source Heat Pumps.

Do Solar farms pose an Environmental threat?

There is a common misconception that solar farms pose environmental challenges, however when installed correctly, they can have a positive impact on the surrounding land. For example, the land where solar farms are located can be used for active grazing, and the solar panels create man-made shelters for livestock, which stops them overheating during summer months.



< [Check out the Swansea Bay Solar Farm here](#)



Decarbonising your development

Accelerating your journey with a more sustainable energy source.

What advice would you give to an organisation who are considering going down the Solar route?

- > Listen and take advice from experts and people who have experience in solar energy.
- > Think about how solar can work with other low carbon technologies such as battery storage and heat pumps to provide more significant benefits.
- > If it's installed properly, you can reap the benefits for many years.

What kind of Solar projects has Vital been involved in?

During my time here at Vital, we have delivered a broad range of solar schemes from freestanding solar farm projects and private wire schemes, to on roof schemes delivered as part of larger projects. It's fair to say Vital Energi can deliver it all.

[Learn more about Solar here >](#)



If you would like more information on our energy solutions and services then we'd be more than happy to help.



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