

Surf operator The Wave to start work on solar initiative for summer 2023

Surf park operator The Wave has announced plans to create a solar and energy storage array at its facility near Bristol.

The Wave, which was established by social entrepreneur Nick Hounsfield in 2019, has said it is aiming for sunshine-powered waves to be rolled out from June 2023. Planning, funding and contracts are now all in place for the solar installation, which is designed to help make the business [Net Zero carbon](#) in terms of its operational energy consumption.

The inland surfing centre has secured just over £1.45m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Growth Programme, alongside match funding from South [Gloucestershire](#) Council in the form of a commercial loan.

The £3.2m project, will include a range of solar PV modules installed across the site, plus a solar canopy over part of the car park and a solar 'Smartflower', which will act as an engaging renewable energy educational tool for visitors. In addition, an electrical vehicle charging hub will be installed and a co-located 380kWh flow machine battery to increase onsite usage from the solar panels.

In total the installation is forecast to generate 3,000,000 (kilowatt hours) in year one – and The Wave's current annual power consumption is c. 2,250,000 kWh – approximately 50% of energy use is for wave generation and filtration, whilst the remaining 50% is for wider site operations. Excess power generated will be exported, contributing towards decarbonising the National Grid.

Mr Hounsfield explained: "From the word go, we said we would

use 100% renewable energy – it would have been so wrong for us to be using fossil fuels to power our waves, thereby contributing to climate change and the acidification of the oceans. The plan was always to progress to be able to generate our own energy and to know that this will be a reality by next year is a dream come true.

“This installation wouldn’t be possible without the match funding loan from South Gloucestershire Council. It is brilliant to be working alongside a local authority that is so proactive in its response to the climate change emergency and so supportive of businesses looking to make a positive difference.”

The Wave made a commitment from the outset to only use renewable [energy](#), which is currently sourced from the grid via Wiltshire-based supplier [Good Energy](#). The company said: “The long-term vision has always been to incorporate its own renewable energy generation on site – and this is now more important than ever, for environmental and financial sustainability.”

Last year the inland surf operator [signed the partnership agreement](#) with specialist technology provider Wavegarden to build six more sites around the UK and Ireland after striking a deal worth more than £2m.

The new installation of the Solar PV at the [Bristol](#) site is being project managed by specialist renewable energy consultancy, Syzygy, and is due to be complete and start generating energy from June 2023.

South Gloucestershire Council leader Toby Savage, said: “We are delighted to be able to support The Wave in bringing forward their solar and energy storage proposals at their surfing destination in Easter Compton. The solar farm and EV facilities will help increase the amount of renewable generation in South Gloucestershire as well as encouraging

visitors to sustainably travel to The Wave in electric vehicles.

“We all need to play our part in reducing carbon emissions and finding sustainable alternatives for energy and travel, and initiatives such as this are an excellent way to achieve net zero carbon and help meet our climate emergency aims for the area.”

As part of the installation The Wave plans to seed wildflowers alongside the solar panels, to help create valuable habitats for pollinators. Recent research from Lancaster University has found that managing solar developments in this way would boost bumblebee numbers beyond the borders of the parks, to about 1km (0.6 miles) away. This is in line with the business’ focus on improving the biodiversity of its sites.

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