



Tips for catering concessions switching to using renewable energy

The Pembrokeshire Beach Food Company won a Sustainable Development Fund, which they used to install The SDF support was used to part finance the installation of solar PV panels and a small wind turbine, along with a solar inverter and a battery bank to their catering concession Cafe Mor. Instant benefits to the business included a reduction in generator noise, less staff time required for generator operation and maintenance, fewer trading days lost due to generator issues and increased power security as a result of having a battery back up. In the longer term the new system will also reduce operation costs.

Installing renewable energy systems can present challenges and any caterer looking to do the same should bear in mind some issues. Here are some top tips compiled by the Cafe Mor team:

- **The height and weight of renewable systems need to be carefully considered for safe transport of the mobile unit, and the design of the system needs to minimise shading and/or turbulence.**
- **Designing-in renewables whenever a new unit is being considered will give the maximum potential for self-sufficiency and significant reductions in running cost and greenhouse gas emissions.**
- **Before taking the system to events a bedding in period to test it's capacity to run completely off-grid is required to ensure the van or trailer can run self-sufficiently for the duration of the event**
- **You will probably need the safety net of an overnight or back-up plug in to charge your batteries, or an emergency generator, for at least the first year of operation.**
- **A sizeable battery system is highly recommended - this will help to reduce some of the uncertainty around potential generation at unfamiliar sites or associated with unfavourable weather conditions.**
- **Coffee machines use a lot of power! Even with the huge reductions made in electricity consumption of other kit the 3.2kW generator struggled to power the coffee machine. Consider other options if possible e.g. Cafe Mor now offer filter coffee in a cafeteria with hot water from an LPG water boiler instead.**

Read the full Cafe Mor case study on the Powerful Thinking website:

<http://www.powerful-thinking.org.uk/casestudy/pembrokeshire-beach-food-company/>

Powerful Thinking is a not-for-profit industry think-do tank working towards an energy efficient, low carbon and cost effective future for festivals. www.powerful-thinking.org.uk

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