

Business

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Luxury B&B looks to reap sun power

BY GORDON RICHARDSON

A LUXURY bed and breakfast set in rolling East Devon countryside has just finished installing 16 state-of-the-art solar panels to help strengthen its green credentials.

Larkbeare Grange owners Charlie and Julia Hutchings have invested £13,000 in adding two rows of photovoltaic solar panels to the roof of their adjoining south-facing barn.

The system was installed by Exeter firm SunGift Solar, a recent finalist in the Business of the Year category at the Express & Echo Business Awards.

During daylight hours the panels will produce up to four kilowatts of electricity, with an estimated annual output of at least 3,650Kw. Via a link to the house, it means all the electri-

city used by the business to run utilities and domestic machines during the day will have been generated by the sun.

Under the Government's 'feed-in' tariff scheme, any excess electricity will be exported back into the National Grid to be used by local houses.

Larkbeare Grange, at Talaton, between Exeter and Honiton, opened in 2002 and already has a Gold Award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme, five stars from Visit Britain and is included in Alastair Sawday's Ethical Collection. Existing energy saving and environmental initiatives in place at the B&B include extensive recycling, low energy appliances and lighting, growing their own fruit and buying locally.

Charlie said: "The panels will generate income in three ways.

Firstly, you get paid for all the energy that you produce. You then get an additional payment for any energy that is not consumed on site and sold back to the grid, and finally, you make a saving from not buying in the energy that has been generated on site instead.

"We expect to save 2.3 tonnes of CO2 a year, and of course our electricity bill will be nearly non-existent. By being less reliant on fossil fuels we have taken a big step to protect ourselves against escalating price increases in the future.

"There is an estimated nine-year payback on this initial investment and we would absolutely encourage other businesses to do something similar. It makes brilliant financial sense and is seriously good news for the environment."



ENERGY BOOST: Larkbeare Grange owners Charlie and Julia Hutchings have invested £13,000 in solar panels

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Commercial Property

Be in the Vanguard with this modern first-floor suite

GREG Walkerdine, at the Exeter office of property consultants King Sturge, is to market the 4,400 sq ft first-floor office suite at Vanguard House on Matford Business Park.

The detached, modern, two-storey office is about two miles to the south-west of the city centre and has convenient access onto the A30 and M5/A38.

The self-contained, first-floor office suite provides mainly open plan accommodation with client meeting rooms and a modern kitchen/break out area.

The suite is finished to a good specification and includes suspended ceiling with recessed Category II lighting, comfort cooling and fully accessible raised floors.

There is a large communal entrance with an eight-person

passenger lift to the first floor, which has 25 allocated car parking spaces.

Mr Walkerdine said: "The first-floor office suite in Vanguard House provides good quality office accommodation with a good level of allocated car parking.

"The property is ideally situated to the south of the city centre and close to all the major road networks surrounding Exeter, and accordingly would suit an occupier looking for a property that allows easy access further into the South West."

The suite is available on a new lease on terms to be agreed.

More information is available from Mr Walkerdine on 01392 423696 or joint marketing agent Hugo Tillotson of Maze Consulting on 01392 477433.



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