



Powering Good Times

How solar PV can control energy costs
and build business resilience within the
hospitality and leisure sector.



Who this guide is for

This guide is designed for those responsible for energy, estates and operational performance across hospitality and leisure venues, including operation and estates managers and sustainability professionals working in multi-site environments.

Contents

- 04 Hospitality & leisure: the sector picture
- 06 Why solar PV, why now?
- 08 How solar PV supports the hospitality and leisure sector
- 10 Site-specific benefits
- 12 Tailored solar solutions for your business profile
- 13 The business case for solar investment
- 14 Why partner with Geo Green Power
- 16 Whitwick & Coalville Leisure Centre Case Study
- 18 Moto Hospitality Case Study
- 20 Savoy Cinema Case Study
- 22 Mitchells Butlers Case Study

Hospitality and leisure is an industry that runs on energy – not just the power that keeps the lights on and the kitchens running, but the energy of people delivering great experiences day in, day out.

Before working in renewable energy, I spent 15 years in the hospitality and leisure sector, supporting some of the UK's biggest pub, retail and venue operators. I know first-hand how fast-paced and demanding this industry is, and how much work goes on behind the scenes to make everything feel seamless for guests. But it's also a sector under real pressure.

Food and drink costs are up. Labour costs and energy prices remain high and volatile – especially when your sites are running from breakfast through to last orders. At the same time, there's growing scrutiny from customers, regulators and boards to show real action on sustainability.

There's no quick fix for all of this, but the choices operators make around energy can have a significant impact. That includes not only how much is used, but also where it comes from, what it costs, and how it supports broader business goals.

This guide brings together insights, experience, and practical examples to help hospitality and leisure businesses explore how solar PV can support savings as well as guest experience and long-term operational resilience.

“Hospitality never stands still - and your energy strategy can't either.”

Kat Auckland, Communications and Projects Director, Geo Green Power



Hospitality & leisure: the sector picture

The hospitality and leisure sector is inherently energy-intensive. Whether it's a pub kitchen operating from morning until midnight, a leisure centre with high heating and ventilation demands or a 24-hour service station, most sites consume significant amounts of electricity across long operating hours.

Energy costs now account for an increasing share of operational overheads. At the same time, pressure is building to reduce emissions, improve efficiency and demonstrate visible progress on sustainability.

Sources of energy pressure



A diverse estate

There are over 683,000 hospitality and leisure buildings across the UK, ranging from pubs and restaurants to hotels, cinemas, sports venues and leisure centres. Most are in constant use, but few were designed with energy efficiency or future sustainability requirements in mind.

These sites span a wide range of layouts and conditions. Many are in high-traffic, high-footfall areas; others are listed or located in conservation zones. Some are owner-occupied, while others are leased, franchised or managed as part of larger retail or mixed-use properties.

Despite the variety, energy is a common challenge.



Sustainability expectations

Two-thirds of UK diners now consider a venue's ethical and environmental credentials when deciding where to eat,² and research by Booking.com found that sustainable travel is important to 83% of travellers. Public rankings, such as Which?'s recent naming of Wahaca as the UK's greenest restaurant chain, are further shaping perceptions and competitive advantage in the sector.



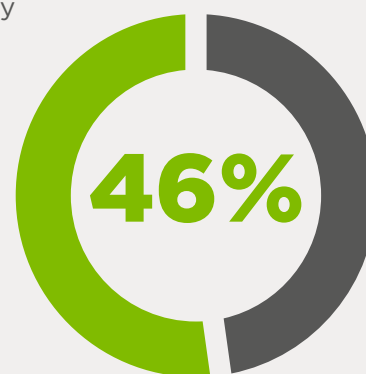
Green levies

Many hospitality businesses remain liable for green policy levies like Contracts for Difference (CfD), Feed-in Tariffs (FiT) charges and the Renewables Obligation, which adds an estimated 25% to electricity bills.¹ While the Government has announced exemptions that will come into force in 2027, these do not generally include hospitality and leisure businesses, meaning most venues will continue paying these costs.



Rising and volatile energy prices

The UK has some of the highest electricity prices in Europe, with prices 46% above the median of International Energy Agency member countries.³ What's more, costs are projected to remain high due to global market shifts and the electrification of heat and transportation, which will increase electricity demand even further. For businesses working to tight margins, these rising prices can quickly become unmanageable.



Intensive, rising costs

Hospitality and leisure venues consume large amounts of energy throughout the day. Restaurants, pubs and hotels rely heavily on refrigeration, ventilation, lighting and entertainment systems, with most of these systems operating during peak daylight hours when electricity is most expensive.

- In restaurants and takeaways, cooking accounts for 80% of electricity use
- In pubs, energy demand is dominated by kitchen equipment and cellar cooling
- In hotels, usage is split between heating and ventilation (33%), catering (19%) and lighting (12%)⁴

Many sites also operate continuously, with limited downtime, especially service stations and hotels. Likewise, cellar cooling, pool heating and extraction systems may run overnight, and many teams are on site from early in the morning until well after closing.

This intensive and extensive usage, combined with the fact that electricity prices for commercial users remain significantly higher than pre-crisis levels,⁵ means it's no surprise that 17% of hospitality businesses reported energy prices were their primary concern, compared to 6% of all other companies.⁶

At the same time, the sector also faces increased pressure from price rises across its other two main cost areas. Between December 2021 and December 2023, the price of food rose by over 26.2%⁷ and remain high. Labour has also climbed sharply following increases to the National Living Wage and National Insurance contributions.

"In hospitality and leisure, the energy meter never really stops. Kitchens run from breakfast to midnight, pools and cellars need temperature regulation through the night, and the lights are almost always on. That constant demand, alongside rising food and labour costs, means energy is now one of the biggest pressures on the sector."

Kat Auckland, Communications and Projects Director, Geo Green Power



Why solar PV, why now?

UK hospitality and leisure operators are running in an energy environment that looks radically different to just five years ago, with stability giving way to volatility. Energy prices have spiked, the grid is under strain, and scrutiny from investors, customers and regulators is intensifying. Meanwhile, operators are under pressure to protect their margins, meet sustainability expectations and maintain the highest standards of guest experience.

In this context, solar PV is no longer on the periphery; it's a core strategy for resilience, cost control and operational certainty.

Reasons hospitality and leisure businesses are investing in solar PV



1. Greater control over energy costs

With average UK commercial electricity prices still higher than pre-crisis levels, many hospitality and leisure operators are finding energy to be one of their largest and least predictable overheads. By generating a portion of their electricity through solar PV, businesses can gain greater control and lock in lower, stable energy costs for over 25 years. This protects margins and makes long-term planning more predictable.



2. Free up budget for other upgrades

By reducing reliance on grid-supplied energy, solar PV systems can deliver immediate operational savings, particularly when installed under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) that requires no upfront investment. For operators, these savings can be channelled into refurbishments, menu innovation, marketing campaigns or guest experience upgrades.



3. Meeting ESG and compliance expectations

Large UK businesses are now required to report in line with Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommendations. Solar provides a clear, reportable reduction in Scope 2 emissions - every kWh generated onsite is a kWh that doesn't come from the grid.



4. Reduce exposure to grid constraints

The National Grid projects that the electrification of transport and heat will increase both demand and strain on local infrastructure. In locations with a high energy demand, delays in securing additional grid capacity could disrupt expansion plans or new services like EV charging. Investing in local energy generation will mitigate this risk and future-proof operations.



5. Respond confidently to customer expectations

Sustainability is increasingly shaping guest choice, whether it's choosing a pub over another, booking a hotel or selecting a leisure centre. Visible solar installations and the ability to point to measurable carbon savings provide reassurance to climate-conscious customers and strengthen your competitive position.



6. Smarter, data-led energy strategies

Modern solar systems don't just generate energy; they help you manage it more effectively, too. Real-time reporting and intelligent monitoring can track generation and usage across one or multiple sites, supporting strategic decisions that improve efficiency and reduce waste.

These systems can track generation and consumption, as well as import/export, in real time and across one or multiple sites, giving you a complete view of system performance. This capability enables businesses to make data-led decisions that improve efficiency, reduce waste and support long-term energy planning.

Integrated systems also support:

- Battery storage management, allowing operators to store surplus energy and discharge it when grid prices are high
- Optimised EV fleet charging, help prioritise internal energy needs, eg for fleet charging, before exporting to the grid
- Proactive maintenance, with early issue detection to avoid downtime and performance loss
- Scalable planning, by highlighting future opportunities for expansion and investment



7. Solar PV systems are more advanced and more productive

Today's solar PV systems deliver more power per panel and more value per pound than ever before. In fact, panel efficiency has doubled in the last decade. Faster installations, improved inverters and smarter layouts also make projects viable for smaller, more complex roofs typical in hospitality estates.

Why now?

- ✓ Stabilise energy costs
- ✓ Free up budget for refurbishments and guest experience upgrades
- ✓ Reduce Scope 2 emissions
- ✓ Avoid future grid constraints
- ✓ Respond confidently to customer expectations
- ✓ Make intelligent, data-led energy decisions

How solar PV supports the hospitality and leisure sector

Operational needs, physical estate and the way the sector runs day-to-day make hospitality and leisure operators well-positioned to benefit from solar PV investment.



Continuous, high-volume energy demand

From pub kitchens firing up fryers first thing in the morning, to hotel laundries working flat out, to swimming pools and spas maintaining precise temperatures around the clock, most venues have energy demand that rarely dips. Even after guests leave, equipment like cellar cooling, extraction fans and refrigeration keeps running. This predictable, year-round usage makes it straightforward to size solar systems to suit and deliver maximum benefit.



Long-term property occupation or ownership

Many pubs, hotels and leisure operators either own their buildings or have decades-long leases. This stability means solar PV can deliver well within the site's lifespan, making the investment both financially and operationally sound.



Minimal disruption to operations

In the hospitality and leisure industries, continuity is everything. Whether it's a hotel welcoming guests 24 hours a day, a pub running back-to-back meal services, or a leisure centre hosting classes from early morning to late evening, downtime isn't an option.

Solar PV installations can be planned so that the customer experience is never interrupted. Work is scheduled around service peaks, with high-traffic areas completed first, and deliveries or crane lifts timed for early mornings before footfall builds. For multi-site operators, projects can be staggered so each venue stays fully operational, with installation teams moving seamlessly from one location to the next.

On-site, installers work quietly in the background, ensuring guests enjoy the same high-quality experience they expect. In some cases, visible rooftop or car park activity has even become a conversation starter with customers, providing staff with an opportunity to share the business's sustainability story in real-time.

Hospitality and leisure currently account for only a small share of the UK's non-domestic rooftop solar PV capacity - around 150-160MWp - but the growth potential is substantial.⁸ With more than 683,000 buildings across the sector, even partial adoption could deliver transformative results in energy savings and carbon reduction.

⁸ AMA Research, Non-Domestic Rooftop Solar PV Market Report UK 2023-2027, 2023

Site-specific benefits



Hotels

Hotels are significant energy consumers, with heating, cooling, lifts, catering, laundry and lighting all operating simultaneously. Installing solar PV provides immediate cost savings while creating visible, marketable sustainability benefits that appeal to guests.



Pubs and restaurants

Cooking and refrigeration dominate the bill. In busy kitchens, equipment is switched on hours before service and runs until after close. Solar PV helps reduce these daily operating costs.



Leisure centres and sports facilities

Pools, saunas, air handling systems and lighting consume energy from opening until closing, with little downtime. Solar PV can offset a large proportion of this load, supporting sustainability goals and public sector decarbonisation plans.



Multi-site operators

Chains and groups can trial solar on a handful of sites to refine installation processes, measure performance and build a business case before rolling out across the portfolio. This phased approach spreads investment, builds internal buy-in and captures quick wins early.



Tailored solar solutions for your business profile

Hospitality and leisure operators are well-positioned to benefit from solar PV energy, but no two sites are alike. A city-centre pub has a very different energy profile from a motorway service station, and a spa hotel operates differently from an out-of-town cinema. We take the time to understand each site's demand patterns, building type and business priorities, then design the most effective system to meet them.

Rooftop solar PV

For most operators, rooftop solar PV is the most straightforward solution. It uses otherwise underutilised space to deliver energy directly to the point of use, with minimal disruption to guests and staff. Our installations on venues like pub chains or motorway service stations have proven that even smaller, distributed arrays can make a meaningful dent in running costs across an estate.

Ground mount systems

Where roof space is limited or energy demand is high, ground mount systems provide scale and flexibility. Larger hotels with surrounding land, golf clubs with maintenance areas or leisure resorts can use these to generate significant amounts of onsite power.

Solar car ports and EV integration

Car parks are an often-overlooked asset. Solar car ports with integrated EV charging allow operators to meet the growing demand for guest and fleet charging while generating renewable electricity. For sites such as destination hotels, retail-leisure complexes or motorway service areas, this creates a visible sustainability statement alongside practical benefits.

Battery Storage

Battery systems store solar energy for use when it's most valuable, such as evenings or peak-price periods. For operators with high evening demand, such as restaurants or cinemas, batteries extend the benefit of solar and improve energy resilience.

Batteries can be:

- Charged using excess solar generation
- Set to charge from the grid at off-peak times
- Integrated into wider energy management systems



“From site surveys to future-proofing, we build systems that work for your business, not just the available roof space.”

Kat Auckland, Communications and Projects Director, Geo Green Power

The business case for solar investment

An at-a-glance overview of the strategic benefits of solar for manufacturing businesses.

Strategic benefit	Why solar
Financial return on investments	Projected payback in 3–7 years via CapEx. Long-term savings dependent on volume of solar PV installed – see case studies for examples. Reduce exposure to policy levies that can make up to 25% of energy bills.
Zero-CapEx options	Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) enable immediate benefits with no upfront cost and the ability to lock in low, predictable electricity costs for 15 years or more.
Minimal operational disruption	Installation timelines depend on how much solar PV is being installed, but it typically between one and four weeks. Disruption is minimal, with no downtime and limited impact on guests.
Maintenance & uptime	Minimal servicing required, but annual packages are available to protect yield and performance.
Carbon & ESG performance	Cuts Scope 2 emissions and enhances sustainability credentials. Supports TCFD-aligned reporting and investor engagement.
Grid resilience	Reduces reliance on the grid and mitigates future grid capacity constraints.
Scalability	Solar PV can be rolled out site-by-site, adapting to operational needs and building a portfolio-wide energy strategy.
Commercial advantage	Supports brand reputation, appeals to sustainability-conscious customers.

Funding options

Solar funding options for hospitality and leisure operators

One of the most significant shifts in solar PV adoption has been driven by the flexibility of funding models. Today, solar PV is no longer restricted to those with large capital reserves. With multiple finance options available, and many that require no upfront investment, hospitality and leisure operators can take control of their

CapEx

CapEx is the most direct route to solar ownership. The operator funds the system upfront and benefits fully from energy savings and any tax or depreciation benefits.

Best for: Businesses with healthy reserves or a planned refurbishment, estate or sustainability investment budget.

Advantages:

- Full system ownership
- Immediate savings on energy bills
- No interest or third-party involvement
- Carbon savings to report in ESG disclosure

Asset Finance

Spread the cost of the system over a fixed term, typically four to seven years. Ownership remains with the purchaser, and the system is treated as a balance sheet asset.

Best for: Operators wanting ownership but needing to preserve cash.

Advantages:

- Own the system
- Spread the cost over time
- Significant energy savings
- Carbon savings

Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)

With a PPA, a third party funds and owns the solar PV system, meaning there is no upfront cost or operating and maintenance overheads. The operator purchases the electricity the system generates via the PPA at a fixed rate per kWh. This rate is typically below market cost and is agreed upon for a period of between 10 and 15 years, but can be up to 25 years, providing long-term stability in energy costs.

Best for: Operators seeking savings without capital expenditure, or those with tight cash flow.

Advantages:

- No upfront or maintenance costs
- Long-term price stability
- Option to buy the system later
- Carbon savings to strengthen sustainability credentials and competitive advantage

Grants

Grants can cover up to 100% of the system cost, acting as a subsidy rather than a form of finance. These may be sector, location, or innovation-specific.

Best for: Businesses eligible under regional or government funding schemes.

Advantages:

- No repayment
- Same benefits as CapEx without the upfront cost
- Can be combined with other incentives
- Carbon savings

What's right for your business?

The right option depends on your cash flow, ownership preferences and long-term financial goals. The Geo Green Power team can help assess the best route based on your system size, operations and payback expectations.

	CapEx	PPA	Asset Finance	Grants
How much of the initial investment do I pay?	100%	0%	20%*	100%**
Do I own the system?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Will there be a reduction in energy costs?	Yes, significant	Yes, good	Yes, significant	Yes, significant
Do I pay maintenance costs?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
What is the typical term?	N/A	10 to 15 years, but can be up to 25 years	4 to 7 years, but can be between 2 and 10	N/A
Do I pay interest?	No	No	Yes	No
Will credit be required?	No	No	Yes	No
What is the set up time?	Quick	Moderate	Moderate	Slow
What happens at the end of the term?	N/A	Option to purchase system or end contract	Full ownership	N/A

* Typically the VAT value, which you can claim back in the next quarter

** This is the same as CapEx and whilst you pay for 100% of the system, a grant or subsidy goes towards that investment



Why partner with Geo Green Power?

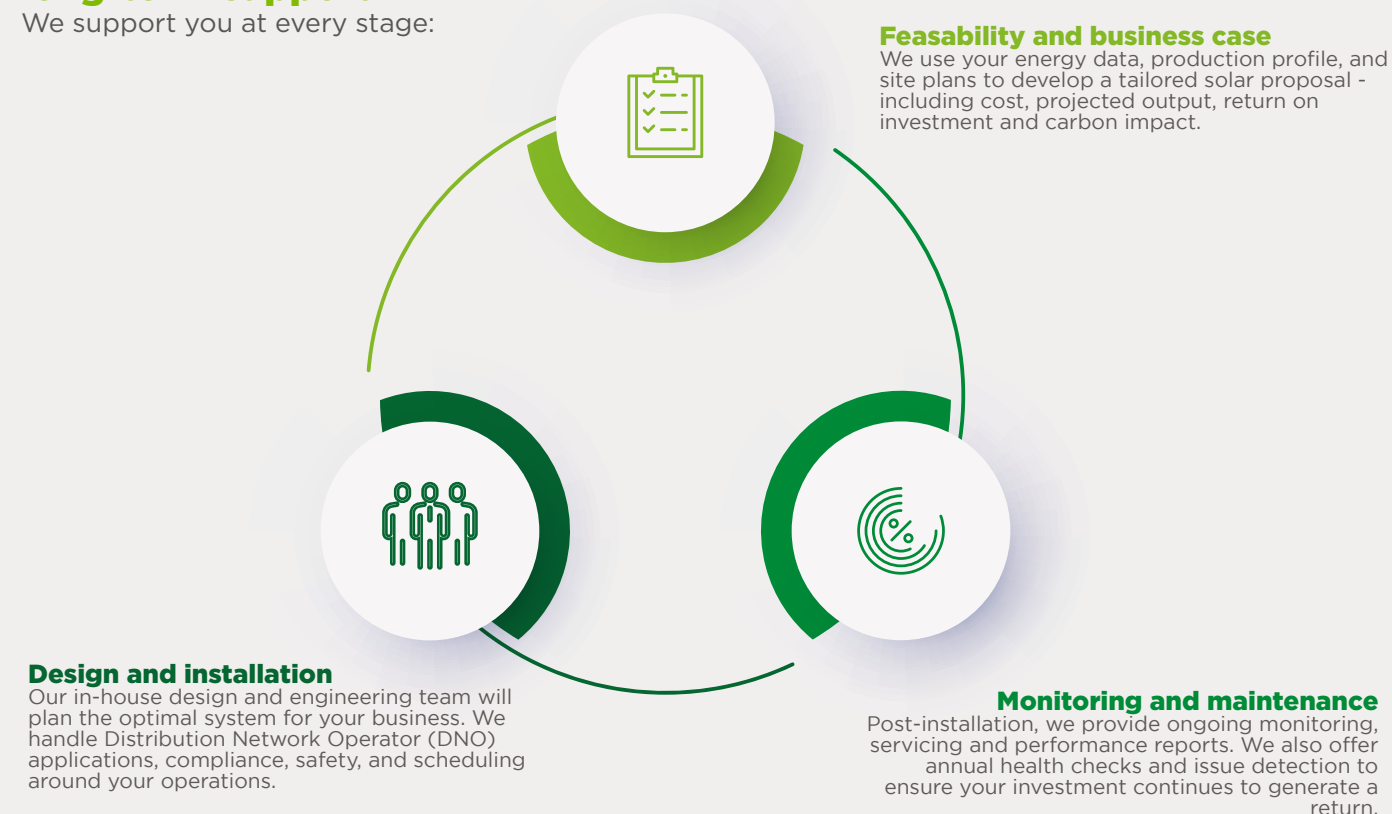
Your energy strategy deserves more than a one-size-fits-all solution.

Choosing solar is a strategic business decision, and the partner you select to deliver it can significantly impact the long-term success of your investment. At Geo Green Power, we don't just design and install systems. We build long-term relationships based on quality, transparency and performance.

We've delivered solar projects for UK hospitality and leisure businesses of all sizes for over 15 years. Our approach is pragmatic, data-led, and focused on outcomes that work for your business.

A partner from feasibility to long-term support

We support you at every stage:



We know hospitality and leisure

From tailored system design to working safely in busy, guest-facing environments, we understand the operational demands and compliance requirements of hospitality and leisure settings. We're experienced in delivering on tight schedules, minimising disruption to service and aligning with wider sustainability, brand and estate strategies, as well as health and safety standards.

Built on trust and transparency

Everything we do is grounded in honest advice, clear timelines and upfront pricing. We don't push what isn't needed, and we don't disappear after the install. Our reputation is built on long-term performance and personal accountability - values that matter just as much to us as they do to our clients.

We promise to:

- ✓ Take the time to understand your business, energy needs and priorities
- ✓ Provide straightforward, honest advice
- ✓ Communicate clearly and regularly throughout your project
- ✓ Deliver safely, on time and budget
- ✓ Support your system's performance long after installation

Our accreditations



"Every site is different. We start by understanding your energy use, operations and business priorities, then design a solution that fits."

Kat Auckland, Communications and Projects Director, Geo Green Power



Whitwick & Coalville Leisure Centre

About the business

Whitwick & Coalville Leisure Centre, operated by Everyone Active on behalf of North West Leicestershire District Council, is a busy public sports and leisure facility offering a gym, swimming pool, sports halls and fitness studios. The site is open from early morning until late at night, serving the community year-round.

Why solar PV

As part of the council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and energy costs, the leisure centre was identified for renewable energy upgrades, with funding secured through Sport England. Following a competitive tender process through the Fusion21 Framework, Geo Green Power was selected to complete the project.

The installation of a solar PV and battery storage system was delivered within a live, busy and public-facing environment.

The system

 **Solar System Size: 194kWp**

 **Battery Storage Size: 62kWh**

Designed to maximise daytime generation and store surplus energy for evening demand

The results

 **Annual Output: 157,100kWh**

 **Annual CO2 Saving: 40 Tonnes**

The leisure centre remained fully operational throughout the project, with disruption kept to a minimum

Delivered in tight timescales to meet Sport England funding deadline

A word from our client

“We all thought the Geo Green Power team were excellent to work with. Work was completed efficiently, and we’re very happy with the install.”

Jason Knight, Leisure Service Team Manager



Moto Hospitality

About the business

Moto Hospitality is the UK's largest motorway service station operator, providing food, retail, fuel and EV charging facilities across its nationwide network. Advocates for sustainable travel, Moto has made substantial investments in EV charging stations, most recently reaching a milestone of installing 1,000 charging sites across its service station network.

Why solar PV

To take the business even closer to its goal of carbon neutrality, Moto sought to generate renewable electricity onsite, reduce grid reliance and support its growing EV charging infrastructure. Solar PV was identified as a key solution to deliver these goals, improve cost stability and demonstrate visible environmental leadership.

Moto began seeking solar panels and installation companies via a competitive tendering process.

The system

-  **Solar System Sizes: 35kWp - 402kWp**
 -  **Total Solar System Size: 1,614kWp**
 - 15 rooftop solar PV installations across UK sites**
 - Five-year maintenance programme following installation**
- ## The results
-  **Annual Output: 1,371MWh**
 -  **Annual CO2 Saving: 342 Tonnes**
 - Supports EV charging network expansion**
 - Initial contract expanded by two additional sites**

A word from our client

“At Moto, we recognise the critical role we play in driving the UK towards a more environmentally friendly and net zero future. A key element of this is helping the motorway network embrace green energy and renewable solutions. That’s why we chose Geo Green Power - a knowledgeable and trusted expert in the field - to carry out this solar installation across 15 of our sites.”

Jess Lockwood, Property Director, Moto Hospitality



Savoy Cinema

About the business

Savoy Cinema is part of one of the oldest cinema chains in the UK, with eight locations across the Midlands and North East. The Worksop site operates continuously, providing power for screens, projectors, lights, and concessions – a setup that results in high energy consumption and operational costs.

Why solar PV

Rising energy costs and sustainability ambitions prompted the team to explore renewable options. After installing solar at their Boston and Nottingham sites, the Worksop venue followed suit. Solar PV was chosen to lower electricity bills, reduce grid reliance, and support long-term financial predictability.

The system

 **Solar System Size: 195kWp**

 **Battery Storage Size: 144kWh**

Designed to optimise daytime power generation and shift surplus electricity into evening operation

The results

 **Annual Output: 158,000kWh**

 **Annual CO2 Saving: 39 Tonnes**

 **Expected Payback Period: 4-5 years**

 **Estimated Savings Over 30 Years: £1,500,000**

A word from our client

“We thought the team at Geo Green Power were amazing. Once the installation was complete, they continued to show their fantastic customer service through their aftercare. They’ve perfected their aftercare skills just as they have the sales.”

**Rebecca Rees, Executive Assistant,
Savoy Cinema Worksop**



Mitchells & Butlers

About the business

Mitchells & Butlers PLC is one of the UK's leading restaurant and pub companies, operating over 1,700 businesses including well-known brands such as All Bar One, Miller & Carter and Toby Carvery. The company's sustainability strategy aims to achieve net zero by 2040, as well as eliminate operational waste sent to landfill and reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.

Why solar PV

As part of its sustainability strategy, Mitchells & Butlers aimed to ensure that all of its energy is generated from renewable sources; however, its previous setup did not protect the business from energy price increases. To achieve this, the company began a programme to install solar PV on a significant number of its freehold properties that have the potential for rooftop solar, with the objective of generating over 20% of all the energy it uses. Mitchells & Butlers has worked with Edge Property Services and Geo Green Power to coordinate the design and installation of solar PV across the estate.

The system

 **Solar System Size: 1,859kWp**

 **Battery Storage Size: 144kWh**

60 rooftop installations completed by the end of 2024

Designed to interate seamlessly with each site's operational needs

The results

 **Annual Output: 1,580MWh**

 **Annual CO2 Saving: 395 Tonnes**

Supports the company's net zero 2040 target and long-term cost control

A word from our client

“At M&B PLC, we ensure that all our energy is generated from renewable sources - this has made a significant impact on our emissions but did not protect us from recent price increases. During 2023 we began a programme to install solar to a significant number of our freehold properties which have the potential for a roof top solar installation. We're looking to generate over 20% of all the energy we use ourselves and reduce our overall energy costs.”

Ian Reeley, Head of Building Development City Division & Sustainability Solar PV Development at Mitchells & Butlers.



"Thank you for taking the time to read our Powering Good Times guide.

At Geo Green Power, we've delivered commercial solar PV systems for more than 15 years and, in that time, the conversation has completely changed.

What was once a future-focused sustainability discussion is now firmly a boardroom priority. The sector is facing persistent energy price volatility, rising food and labour costs, and growing expectations from guests, corporate clients, and regulators to cut emissions and operate more sustainably.

We understand that investing in solar PV isn't just about the technology. For hospitality and leisure operators, it's about protecting margins, keeping services running without interruption, and building confidence in your long-term energy planning. Our approach makes this process straightforward, tailored and commercially sound from day one.

We don't believe in one-size-fits-all solutions. We work closely with site operators, managers, finance leads, and sustainability teams to understand your energy profile, site constraints and commercial goals, and then design the right system for you. Whether you're ready to go to tender or want to explore the business case, we're here to support that conversation with real numbers and decades of experience."

**James Cunningham, Managing Director,
Geo Green Power**