

Farming, renewables and biodiversity – can it be win-win-win?

ORFC
January 2018



Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust (WeSET)

- * WeSET is a charity set up by members of the Westmill co-ops that developed the wind and solar farms at Westmill, near Swindon
- * We carry out a wide range of activities, including educational work, supporting local energy initiatives and arts projects. We encourage and facilitate visits to the site.
- * In 2017 we ran a seminar on 'Solar Power and Biodiversity – maximising the benefits'

How can we best manage land for:

- Generating renewable energy
- Being agriculturally productive
- Maintaining and maximising biodiversity?



- **There is plenty of evidence to show how renewable energy and biodiversity can flourish together on farmland.**
- **At Westmill organic farm we have solar and wind power - both community owned.**
- **The challenge is to go beyond activities such as sheep grazing on solar sites and integrate work on food, energy and biodiversity.**

The purpose

- Clean power systems are now a part of our countryside
- Just like any other enterprise or facility, they have a responsibility to the countryside in which they are based.
- That countryside is under huge pressure, with resultant biodiversity losses.
- Clean energy is starting to make a very significant impact on cutting carbon emissions – we should also look to our local impacts
- Just like any land manager we should accept the challenge and responsibility to maximise our positive impacts.

The aim of today is to:

Explore the new impacts and opportunities from renewable energy as a use of farmland

See what is working

Identify obstacles and solutions to making this common practice

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