

Innovative Lightweight Solar Panels Installed at East Sussex's Grade I Listed De La Warr Pavilion to Generate 20% of Annual Electricity Needs

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Commercial Solar Specialist, [Absolar](#) has installed 144 lightweight solar panels (specifically chosen for the site considering its structural features) across the Auditorium roof of Bexhill-on-Sea's Grade I listed De La Warr Pavilion on England's south coast as part of its major transformation project, *An Icon For Everyone* in partnership with Rother District Council. Creating a system capacity of 77.7kWp meeting approximately 20% of the De La Warr Pavilion's annual electricity demand.

This is the first installation of this specific lightweight panel in the UK. At just 7.2kg/m², these panels are among the lightest high-performance modules available commercially. This means the De La Warr Pavilion's original steel roof structure, designed by structural engineer Felix Samuely, can carry the full array while preserving load-bearing capacity for future auditorium equipment and upgrades. Critically, the lightweight specification does not come at the cost of performance. The panels carry industry-leading efficiency ratings, generation output, and manufacturer warranties.

The solar panels are paired with the latest solar GoodWe inverters, selected for seamless integration with the De La Warr Pavilion's existing electrical infrastructure and to provide compatibility for future battery storage, which would increase the building's energy self-reliance further.

The impact this will have includes:

71,570 kWh generated per year, meeting approximately 20% of the De La Warr Pavilion's annual electricity demand

18 tonnes of CO2 saved annually, equivalent to the stage lighting for around 715 productions (based on a 50kW/hour west end lighting rig)

Stewart Drew, CEO and Director, De La Warr Pavilion says: "As we celebrate the 90th year of the De La Warr Pavilion, I couldn't be prouder to see these solar panels being installed. It's a milestone moment, and one that reflects our ongoing dedication to environmental sustainability, strengthening the long-term resilience of the building and reducing its operational impact on the environment. These super-lightweight panels are the first of their kind to be installed in the UK and have been carefully chosen to be sympathetic to the existing roof, preserving the integrity of this Grade I listed modernist landmark."

Cllr Kathryn Field, portfolio holder for environment at Rother District Council says: "We are delighted that the solar panels are being installed at the De La Warr Pavilion. This funding has enabled a major investment in environmental sustainability which will greatly reduce the Pavilion's carbon footprint.

"We're currently promoting information on our website that provides advice on how we can all help in the face of a climate emergency. This solar panel installation is a great example of the commitment of all the partners to support protection of our local environment."

Dr Phil Wu, CEO of Absolar comments: "It's been a real honour to be part of this project as the De La Warr Pavilion is such a community asset, steeped in history and loved by the people of Bexhill. We were determined to find a solution that protects and preserves it for the next 90 years and beyond.

"As a listed building used daily by artists and the wider community, we approached this as much as an art project as an engineering one. Absolar chose modern solar panels, which are lightweight yet don't compromise on performance. This means we fully respect the building's original structure while securing its energy future. We're proud to be part of its journey helping make it both structurally sound and environmentally ready for the next century."

The solar panels funded by Rother District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Climate Emergency Bonus Fund and is part of De La Warr Pavilion's transformation project, *An Icon For Everyone* that will redevelop this pioneering centre for the arts, creating new learning and community spaces, refurbish the auditorium and galleries, improve accessibility, support environmental sustainability and secure the Pavilion's purpose as a creative and cultural home for all.