Best Practice Visit – Jones and Hampton

17th and 20th June

Local building business Jones & Hampton Ltd have added to their environmental credentials by installing a photovoltaic system on their factory roof in Halesfield.

Inspiration for this project occurred when the company directors Dave Jones and Steve Hampton visited the sustainable building centre in Leamington Spa where they learnt about the issues that will affect energy supply in the future. They are very positive about their PV system and were keen to promote it to other businesses.

There have been 2 best practice visits to Jones & Hampton one on 17th June with 4 BESST members and then 20th June from Ricoh. The events consisted of a presentation on the PV system, a viewing of the solar panels and a look at the electricity production. Works manager Tom Robinson-Jones explained that the installation was fairly simple. The roof had to be strengthened to take the weight of the panels. The 54 panels were then put on the roof. Tom explained how DC power is generated then fed through an inverter to become AC power. This electricity can then be fed into the building for use in daylight hours which is particularly good for businesses because most of their energy requirements will be in daylight hours.

Tom gave details of how the Feed in Tariffs work; offering 3 income streams from the generation of the electricity, the sale of unused electricity back to the grid and the costs savings on electricity bills. He explained how their PV system should pay for itself within 8-10 years and will continue to be a source of income for the following 15-17 years. Increasing energy prices could reduce this payback period.

The groups were then taken onto the roof to look at the panels. The system has been thoroughly tested to ensure that it can withstand wind loading. The panels are fixed on the supports rather than on the actual roof and calculations have been made to ensure that the weight of the system can always be supported.

The event finished with a look at the energy output from the PV system. Tom showed graphs of the electricity generation that had been produced since the system was installed. During sunny weather the system has been producing close to its full capacity. Even in poor weather the results have been reasonably good.