

Climate Newsletter

From Spelthorne Borough Council



September 2025



Surrey Group Buying Projects

Off the back of the recent success of the Solar Together Scheme – Surrey CC has launched two further group buying campaigns aimed at reducing your energy bills and giving you access to affordable heat pumps.

Big Community Switch

Want to lower your energy bills? The Big Community Switch makes it simple. Register your interest and approved suppliers will compete to offer you a better tariff. You'll receive a free, no-obligation quote — and if you accept, iChoosr handles the switch for you. Registration closes on **31 October 2025**.

Sign up here: [Collective Energy Switch | Big Community Switch](#)

[Sign up here](#)



Switch Together Heat Pump Scheme

Thinking about low-carbon heating? By registering for this scheme, you can join with other residents to access competitive prices on **Air-Source Heat Pumps**. iChoosr runs a reverse auction where trusted installers bid to offer the best deal. Registration is open now, and you'll have until **28 November 2025** to decide. Installations will take place by September 2026.

[Sign up here](#)



Summer Download

Hottest Year

The UK is on track for its hottest summer on record. From June to August, the average temperature across the country was 16.1°C, which is 1.5°C warmer than the long-term average. The previous record, set in 2018, was 15.8°C — with this year climbing to the top the infamous hot summer of 1976 is no longer in the top 5 warmest summers. With all 5 top warmest summers coming from the last 22 years.

July was particularly notable. It ranked as the fifth warmest July since records began in 1884, with England, Wales, and parts of Scotland consistently above average. The highest daily temperature recorded was 35.8°C in Faversham, Kent. What made the heat even harder to cope with was that nights stayed unusually warm, offering little relief.

The Met Office confirmed there were four separate heatwaves during the summer, which stretched emergency services, tested energy infrastructure, and put pressure on water supplies. While hot summers are not new, the frequency and intensity of these events show how quickly the UK climate is changing.

For many people, this summer will be remembered for long spells of uncomfortable heat. But it also underlined a bigger reality: extreme temperatures are no longer rare spikes, but part of a warming trend that is already reshaping our seasons.



Solar Energy

Summer 2025 was a landmark for solar power in the UK, and all the long days of sunshine and new installations meant solar panels generated more electricity than ever before. Between January and May alone, solar output reached 7.6 terawatt-hours (TWh), a huge 42% jump compared to the same period in 2024. By August, the UK had already produced more solar electricity than in the whole of last year — enough to power around 5 million homes.

At its peak, on 6 April, solar delivered around 13.2 gigawatts (GW) to the grid — covering about a third of national demand at that moment. With total installed solar capacity now above 20 GW, panels on rooftops and fields across the country are becoming a crucial part of our energy mix.

This matters most during extreme weather. As temperatures soared, solar helped meet record electricity demand from fans, fridges, and air conditioning. Closer to home, projects like *Solar Together* are bringing those benefits to our borough, showing how local rooftops can play a role in cutting bills and carbon. This summer has proved that when the sun shines, solar power really delivers.

Impacts of the heat on nature

While many solar panels and people enjoyed the sunshine, nature across the UK and Spelthorne struggled to cope with Summer 2025's extreme heat. Nationally, reservoirs and rivers dropped well below normal levels, leaving wildlife under

pressure. Atlantic salmon, natterjack toads, and other freshwater species faced reduced habitats, while wildfires destroyed over 3,000 hectares of protected land.

Closer to home, we saw signs of environmental stress in our own parks. Wildflower meadow areas began to wilt as early as late June, as heat and drought reduced rainfall. Too little water not only limited flower abundance but also cut seed production, leaving pollinators with fewer foraging opportunities.

Trees shed leaves early to conserve moisture, grasslands turned brown, and garden species such as hedgehogs and birds struggled to find food in the dry soil. While some species adapted by changing their behaviour, the overall picture was one of strain.

This summer was a reminder that climate change is already shaping the natural world on our doorstep. Protecting and enhancing habitats from wildflower meadows to shaded tree cover is essential in helping wildlife adapt to the hotter summers ahead.

Stressed Wildflower Meadow (Cedars Rec, September)



Early Summer (Cedars Rec, Early June)





Airconditioning installations increasing

One of the clearest lifestyles shifts this summer was the rise in air conditioning. With the UK sweltering through record heat — more homes and businesses are turning to cooling units to get through it.

The problem is what is happening to our electricity demand. Air conditioning units draw significant power during the hottest part of the day, just when everyone else is also using fans and fridges. This summer, peak demand rose sharply, putting extra pressure on the electricity grid. Research suggests that if even a third of UK homes adopt air conditioning by 2050, summer peak demand could jump by 7 gigawatts — more than the output of two Hinkley Point C nuclear reactors. Currently 5% of residential properties have air-conditioning units but that is sharply increasing.

Solar helped cover much of the daytime demand in 2025, but the trend highlights a big challenge: how to keep cool without making the problem worse.

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