



EMPOWERING HOLIDAY PARKS TO TAKE CONTROL OF ENERGY SUPPLIES

Billing Aquadrome, Northampton, UK

Control, monitor and manage energy better than ever.

With more than 2,000 pitches spread over 235 acres of Northamptonshire countryside, Billing Aquadrome is one of the UK's largest holiday parks.

The popular site bustles with visitors during the holiday season, with numbers swelling considerably during its many events, such as the Northampton Balloon Show.

Around 1,200 families own static caravans on the site, with the rest made up of touring pitches, a fleet of 50 caravans for hire and four luxury lodges.

All static caravans have a metered electricity supply, upon which customers rely for essentials such as heating and lighting, as well as modern conveniences, from televisions to laptops. However, the ageing legacy electricity metering system that the team inherited in 2006 proved anything but convenient, until they approached Energy Controls for a better solution.

"The way we manage electricity is vitally important to our business and the customer service we provide, but it can involve significant investment."

"With Energy Controls the entire process has been cost-neutral, from the supply of the equipment and infrastructure to the training, installation and maintenance. It's all covered by a small annual rental fee, which we can pass on to our customers through the meter."

Tony Fox, Finance Director, Billing Aquadrome

Key Facts

System benefits

- Accurate meter readings
- Remote disconnection
- Rapid remote tariff updates
- Prepayment of energy

Products and services

- GSM prepayment SMART meter
- Energy monitor
- Full service, from supply and installation to maintenance
- 24/7 access to web portal



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Legacy system

Tony Fox, Finance Director at Billing Aquadrome explains why it was time for a change,

"The old system had a number of shortfalls. The meters were only programmable at the unit, so changing tariffs involved visiting every caravan, which was extremely time-consuming."

There were problems with the prepayment cards, too, as Tony explains,

"Some cards didn't work and cards could go missing. In one case we discovered that a customer had hundreds of pounds of credit on their meter, which we couldn't verify either way. And if someone did tamper with their meter, the reality was that we would only find out by chance. The meters were also becoming difficult to calibrate in order to ensure they were compliant with Ofgem regulations."

Tony Fox, Finance Director, Billing Aquadrome

Energy Controls' solution

Installation of the new GSM prepayment meters and usage monitors in all 1,200 caravans took around four weeks, including all staff training, and was carried out during the 2013 off-season.

The new meters are managed and controlled centrally, allowing Tony and his team to see instantly which caravans are occupied and how much electricity is being used. Implementing central monitoring eliminated meter tampering virtually overnight.

Tariff updates that used to take two weeks can now be uploaded to all caravan meters within minutes, avoiding potentially thousands of pounds in additional electricity charges that the park would not be able to pass on to its customers.

The system is now much more convenient for customers, who now purchase electricity credits by phone using debit or credit cards. Other customer-friendly features include the option to maintain customers' electricity supply even when their credits expire and the ability to send messages to customers via their electricity monitors.

Return on Investment

Ofgem rules mean that holiday parks cannot mark up the electricity it supplies to customers, although they can pass on any administration costs.

Billing Aquadrome opted for Energy Controls' meter rental package in which all costs, from supply and installation to commissioning and ongoing maintenance, are covered by a fixed annual cost per meter that is passed directly on to residents.

As well as being cost-neutral, this approach also helps reduce potential costs by:

- Ensuring that the electricity they supply is accurately monitored and re-charged fully
- Minimising or eradicating lost income through meter tampering and fraud
- Ensuring that changes to energy suppliers' tariffs, which cannot be backdated to customers, can be implemented quickly to avoid incurring unnecessary cost
- Avoiding risks relating to failure to comply with Ofgem regulations

System benefits

According to Tony the installation went very well,

"Energy Controls installed and tested the equipment simultaneously while the park was closed in January. The whole process was very quick and very efficient – it just worked."

"We're very pleased with the way the system works and how easy it is to control and monitor everything to do with our electricity using the software provided. The backup and support has been excellent, too. It puts us ahead of many of our competitors in this area and we've already had lots of interest from other parks in what we're doing."

