

Larkfleet SW chooses Calor LPG for its first off-grid development



LarkfleetHomes
South West

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Shaune Hicks, Construction Director, Larkfleet SW Ltd

Housebuilder Larkfleet SW Ltd is part of the Larkfleet Group, an award-winning housebuilding and development company based in Bourne, Lincolnshire that places particular emphasis on sustainability.

Like most housebuilders, the company uses mains gas for the majority of its sites. However, this was not an option for its secluded rural development in the picturesque village of Churchinford, nine miles south of Taunton, Somerset. Determined to give its homebuyers the comfort and familiarity of gas, Larkfleet opted for LPG from Calor as the best off-grid energy supply. Shaune Hicks, Construction Director for Larkfleet, explains, “It’s convenient and controllable and there’s no impact on the homeowner whatsoever.”

Customer: Larkfleet SW Ltd
Applications: An LPG metered estate
Location: Churchinford Hills development in Churchinford, near Taunton, Somerset

Project highlights:

-  No modifications required to achieve government energy and environmental performance standards due to superior quality of materials used
-  Choosing LPG over other off-grid alternatives keeps running costs low for homebuyers
-  A stunning rural setting means aesthetics are of paramount importance, so tanks are hidden below ground to preserve the development’s ambience



Churchinford Hills was Larkfleet's first off-grid development and it appreciated the guidance and support it received from Calor throughout the process.

Aesthetics a prime consideration

Set within the heart of the Blackdown Hills, designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty, aesthetics were a prime consideration for Larkfleet when designing its exclusive Churchinford Hills development.

While interiors are sleek and contemporary, the houses are constructed of loose lay flint stone and a quarter are topped with traditional, hand laid thatched roofs. Larkfleet commissioned a local specialist approved by the Guild of Master Craftsmen to fashion the roofs from wheat reed that had been grown and harvested locally. In this way, the housebuilder is helping to keep a traditional craft alive.

To maintain the tranquil countryside feel of the development, Calor installed two 4000-litre underground LPG tanks, buried out of sight of the 20 three and four-bedroom detached and semi-detached homes.

Gas is distributed through a network of hidden pipes directly to each home, which each have individual meters that are read annually by Calor. This allows homeowners to be invoiced for their individual consumption, which means on completion of the development, Larkfleet

will not need to be involved with its energy supply on an ongoing basis.

Energy-efficient

In terms of SAP ratings, LPG scores better than electric heating solutions, meaning that typically fewer energy-saving measures need to be installed. In fact, by adopting a 'Fabric First' approach and specifying only high-quality materials, Larkfleet found no modifications were needed to its standard house designs to achieve Part L compliance with government Building Regulations.

Buyers have been delighted that their dream homes have the gas central heating they are accustomed to. "In my experience, homeowners much prefer gas to electric," says Shaune, "and they are reassured that LPG is an equally good alternative to mains gas."

Shaune admits, "I must confess to having initial reservations about tanks as the ambience of the development is vital to the finished product, but it has been tastefully done and the tanks are very discreet. The sales rate has been great and we are already 90% sold."

Churchinford Hills' quality was recently recognised when it was judged Best New Housing Development in the 2018 Somerset Building Excellence Awards. Shaune

Hicks comments, "We have given great consideration to modern living within this rural location by introducing large open interior space, modern bathrooms and kitchens with LPG heating, but with exteriors that retain village charm. We are giving our buyers the best of both worlds and it is gratifying to receive external endorsement of our approach."

Larkfleet did consider alternative suppliers but chose to work with Calor because "I'd contracted them in the past and was familiar with the high level of service we could expect to receive. I've not been disappointed – they've always done what they've said they'll do and when they said they'd do it. We've found them very helpful at every step of the way."



In fact, Larkfleet is so happy with its experience at Churchinford Hills, the firm is already working with Calor again on another rural development, this time in the village of Ilton in Somerset!

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