GREEN FORUM UPDATE 31 December 2022

HOME ENERGY is the Forum topic for this last quarter of 2022, Co-ordinated by Daniel Scharf.

Our headline is: REDUCE ENERGY BILLS, KEEP WARM, &REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS!

This is a small new subgroup of Carbon Cutters and CEC, comprising Daniel, Scharf and Anne Smart with help from Cheryl Briggs and Ros Woodhead (who had become an energy adviser with Oxford Low Carbon Hub).

2.We held stalls on 24th September, 1st October and 12th November and the Extravaganza on 26th November.

On 12th Nov, six volunteers helped, including Cllr Gabby Barody, Daniel from ACC and Kirsty a St Helen's yr 12 volunteering with the CEC. An estimated 30 people came to the stall for a conversation.

At the stall we had a model of a 1930s semi-detached house, made by Jason Oliver (materials paid for by the Town Council) to replace the dolls house used previously. The house was annotated to show where energy-saving measures could and should be taken, large and small. We are not allowed to give advice, but we share information and have a number of leaflets, ours showing a number of low cost tips on one side, and websites to seek information, on the other side.

One major purpose of the Forum is to gather views from Abingdon residents, and share these with the TC. At the stalls, people were invited to tick which measures they have done, which they are considering, and which they believe to have too many barriers. A compilation of the answers is included below. People were asked to elaborate on the barriers, eg cost and disruption: these are useful to know when considering what policies and incentives might be required to achieve all the retrofitting work that ideally needs doing to houses and flats in the town to meet carbon reduction budgets and targets.

Assistance was given to the energy information and advice stalls set up in the library (13 Dec) and the Climate Emergency Centre (16 Dec) by Ros for the Oxford Low Carbon Hub. The house model and most of the literature have continued to be displayed at the Climate Emergency Centre

An on-line survey is on the CEC website: https://oneplanetabingdon.org/green-forum/ (search One Planet Abingdon, click Green Forum then Home Energy and find Survey). That will be retained and analysed at the end of January. The survey is also on the ACC website, under Home Energy. https://abingdoncarboncutters.org.uk/

We had an article in the Herald on 21st September. (c) On 19th Nov Anne Smart completed a day's training with Oxford's Low Carbon Hub to become an Energy Champion.

There was a failure to hold the webinar planned to explore the impact that energy costs is having on the saleability and letability of residential property. None of the estate agents asked agreed to participate. Honourable mention to the manager of Natwest Bank who was keen to explain the impact on lending and the principle and practice of 'green mortgages'; where more favourable rates are offered to those buying energy efficient properties. This subject and the role of EPCs remains to be explored. As does the claim made on Money Box that and an EPC A can add £5000 to the value of a house.

We employed an Oxford University micro-intern for the week beginning 5th Dec investigated some of the costs practical difficulties involved in the installation of heat pumps. A leaflet has been produced as a summary of the findings and to be made available on line and at the Climate Emergency Centre.

There are plans to continue with the promotion of home energy and efficiency into 2030.

Green Forum 2023

FOOD will be the topic for the 1st Forum of 2023. Co-ordinator for the 3 months will be Daniel Scharf from OPACEC ; Gina Davies is organising Veganuary events in January.

Businesses and Energy will be the topic for the 2nd quarter of 2023. Help expected from the St H&K volunteers and from Economic development officers at VWHDC.

FEEDBACK

MARKET STALLS 24 September, 1 October and 12 November 2022

Questions were asked about what had been done and what was planned but the main focus was on the barriers to doing what would be necessary to meet carbon reduction budgets and targets.

1.Wall insulation

Cavity wall insulation: No cavity to fill, already filled but uncertain of condition, timber frame

Internal wall insulation: unacceptable loss of space

External wall insulation: cost, indecision (might sell up), household disagreement, appearance, conservation area/listed building

2. Windows

Marginal benefits of triple glazing, costs, disruption

3. Heating Controls

Household disagreement about thermostat settings, lack of understanding about control of 'flow' temperature on combi boilers

4. Roof/Loft

Disruption/junk, already boarded, indecision, uncertainty of marginal benefits

5. Floors

Existing nice wooden floors, insufficient gap for Qbot

6. Heating and power

Air source heat pump: Funding/cost, garden shape/size, information conflicting or lacking

Solar PV: Cost/Pay back period?, roof unsuitable, aspect, plan to move

Solar thermal: Uncertain pay back period?

Wooodfire: question of air quality

General

Lack of control: social or private tenant or residing in flats (inc designed for elderly with central controls).

Caravan/park home: very particular challenges for energy efficiency

Reflections

It is interesting to see how many barriers there are and, therefore, how many solutions have to be found.