

**ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSCIOUS BUILDING
SIXTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT
COVERING PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 2005**

Contents	Introduction
	Steering Committee
	Appointment of Executive Officer
	Work of Executive Officer
	Ecobuilding Conference 2005
	SussEd
	Lobbying Officer
	Promotion
	Limited Company status
	Financial summary
	Committee members, staff and professional advisors

INTRODUCTION

Although still a small organisation, the AECB is in a unique position in the UK to effectively influence all of our futures. Even the Government now accepts that human induced climate change is the most serious threat we face. The AECB has a unique message. We have well researched, peer reviewed, solutions in our Energy Standards which could, if implemented at national level, deliver major carbon reduction in the building sector. Not only this, but perhaps even more importantly, we have a membership with the expertise to lead the way in implementing the kind of sustainable construction the UK needs during this century.

Buildings and the construction industry present many more environmental challenges, from serious water shortages to the dangers to occupants from toxic emissions from modern building materials. None of this is new to our members. The AECB has been campaigning for and supporting its members' endeavours to deliver more sustainable buildings for many years.

The year covered by this report has seen major changes within the AECB, as the Association has grappled with external and internal demands. In many ways, this year has been perhaps a pivotal one for the Association. We have developed our internal structures as a maturing organisation should, we have appointed our first Executive Officer, the SussEd training initiative has prepared to deliver its first courses and we have seen a major new look for the Association.

Despite all of the changes taking place within and outside of the Association, we continue to maintain our complete independence, relying almost entirely on membership subscriptions to fund the work we do. Our policy, established some years ago, has been to accept external funding only where it is directly targeted to a particular project, and to rely solely on membership subscriptions for core functioning. Thus, we have received funding for the SEECS training module, and for the publication of our Factsheets, but our core functioning is

entirely reliant on our membership and the tremendous voluntary effort of both Steering Committee members and active supporters.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the work of the Association over the last year, and look forward with real excitement to the future and the contribution the AECB can make in these interesting times.

Chris Herring
AECB Chair

STEERING COMMITTEE

Andy Simmonds resigned as Chair in April, to take up his appointment as Executive Officer. Cath Hassell was elected as Acting Chair until the AGM on 16 July.

David Olivier, Tom Straker and Carole Townsend did not stand again for Committee in July. Penney Poyzer stood, together with other existing Members and all were duly elected. Penney Poyzer resigned in September for personal reasons.

The Committee met four times during the period. Meetings were well attended and between meetings business was dealt with by email and some e-votes that were recorded at subsequent meetings.

Increasing amounts of work on specific areas were undertaken during the period by Sub Groups, reporting back to the Committee. Sub Groups active during the period included:

- Ecobuilding Conference Coordination
- Executive Officer Appointment & Management
- Membership Structure
- Publicity/ promotional material
- Structure
- SussEd
- Website development

During the period, two meetings of the new AECB Board were held. Minutes were posted on the website alongside Committee minutes.

APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The decision was made in January to appoint a part time Executive Officer. This followed an analysis of the potential workload for the Chair, as constituted at the time, and the impossibility of achieving some of the AECB's ambitions without paid input.

A Sub Group was established, which developed an appropriate job description, organised advertising of the post and interviewed applicants. Andy Simmonds was appointed from an excellent range of applicants, and took up post on 8 April 2005, when he resigned as Chair.

The main responsibilities of the Executive Officer were established as being the facilitation of the following.

1. Management of the Association to include management of staff, strategic control of finances and helping to secure funding for long term security.
2. Campaigning, to include developing campaigning activities and increasing influence with Government, the Industry and public.
3. Developing the Association by developing the existing activities and the aims and aspirations of the Association as set out by the Committee.
4. Working closely with the Committee including preparing policy documents in line with its aims and objectives.

During the period from his appointment, to the end of the period the Executive Officer undertook the following work.

WORK OF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The EO work programme and the work related to the new post of executive officer was managed by the AECB personnel sub group, with monthly phone conferences between the EO and the subgroup, written quarterly EO reports to the subgroup, followed by EO attendance at the quarterly Board meetings. Whilst the EO does not have a vote at these meetings, the Board has encouraged full EO participation in the meetings rather than a limited 'slot'. This ensures integrated discussion and generation of ideas at a time when the AECB is taking up an ambitious work programme.

The activities of the EO were focussed on:

- A review of the structure and working practices of the AECB committee, sub committees, lobbying and various AECB contracts for services. An initial proposal for a new working structure was proposed. Along side this work the EO continued to work with subgroups, members and others to explore strategies for improving the financial future for the Association.
- A strategy and vision document was also prepared working with Liz Reason of R2BC.
- Development of the campaign for sustainable energy performance standards, which set out to work in a co-operative and integrated manner with other organisations and individuals to develop definitive standards for new buildings, with future relevance to refurbishment. This evolved into an attempt to harmonise the AECB standards with other leading contenders for national energy standards. This work incorporated elements of lobbying, research, fundraising, publicity and negotiation. Keeping abreast of developments and attempting to integrate (through facilitating discussion and open sharing of work), with organisations such as ODPM, EST, BRE, WWF, TCPA, GreenPeace, ZEDFactory and many others was a major theme of this period. The core AECB team in this work was Andy Simmonds, Liz Reason and David Olivier, acting as the Energy Sub group. Additional members advising through the sub group and informally were John Willoughby and Peter Warm. Input from expert members was encouraged and received and several contracts were let to take this initiative forward.
- The EO had a management role in this period for Karen Harris who was employed as AECB development Officer – mainly working on the SussEd initiative and the EEASOX funded SEECs project. The EO also worked with members of the SussEd sub group, members of the Board and Liz Reason to develop various ideas and funding bids for collaborative projects – aiming to develop AECB SussEd courses and joint training facilities. Other ideas and bids were developed for collaborative projects associated with the energy campaign.
- Naturally letter writing, article writing and commissioning, reading key reports, keeping up with research findings, facilitation of consultants discussions, board member and sub group activities, staff and contracted services issues accounted for a good deal of the workload.

ECOBUILDING CONFERENCE 2005

This year's event, incorporating the AGM, was held over 2 days, 15 and 16 July at the Genesis Project, Somerset College of Arts and Technology. The event was well attended and made a small profit.

The aim of visiting the Genesis Project was to see an innovative project under construction. The event included workshops, a talk and guided tours looking at some of the ground breaking ideas, design and technologies, and learning from the onsite realities of a project under construction.

The event included a range of stimulating workshops. The Big Debate covered the area of planning and sustainable building, and in particular explored the ways in which the planning system might be inhibiting the development of more sustainable building design.

This year's Keynote speech was given by Mayer Hillman, author of *How we can save the planet*. This was a provocative and impassioned plea for carbon reduction, resulting in wide ranging discussion which continued long after the speech was over.

The AGM included presentations on the developing work of the AECB. A key presentation was given by Andy Simmonds, recently appointed Executive Officer, laying out a new vision for the development of the Association. AECB Chair, Cath Hassell gave her report, and there was time for questions before the formal business of the AGM.

SUSSED

The AECB's SussEd Initiative was conceived in 2004. The AECB wanted to develop sustainable construction skills and knowledge within the construction industry, sharing its member's expertise and knowledge of the increasing environmental market within the construction industry.

Following an initial feasibility study, kindly sponsored by the Coop Bank and the Yorkshire Builders Federation it was agreed to develop a training organisation named SussEd (**S**ustainable **S**kills and **E**ducation). After an appeal to members a data base of interested individuals has been compiled of likely trainers and potential trainees wanting to increase their knowledge of sustainable construction skills and knowledge.

In parallel to the SussEd Initiative the AECB had begun developing the 'AECB's Silver and Gold Energy Standards' for new dwellings, in response to the UK Government's agreements to meet the Kyoto Treaty and the UK's Government's own target of reduced CO2 emissions by 12.5% by 2010 and 60% by 2050 respectively and relative to 1990 levels).

Seecs (SussEd Energy Efficient Construction Syllabus)

In the autumn of 2004 SussEd was approached by the 'Energy Efficiency Advisory Services for Oxfordshire' (EEASOX), who had heard of the new 'AECB Energy Standards' and EEASOX offered to fund SussEd to develop a specific project to write a two day course for construction trades and a one day CPD course for construction industry professionals, all based around the practical challenges of meeting the new and well acclaimed 'AECB's Silver and Gold Energy Standards'.

The Seecs project was born and headed by AECB Executive Officer Andy Simmonds, the following team of David Oliver, Peter Warm and John Willoughby wrote the courses and along with the then AECB's Development Officer Karen Harris, they would deliver the pilot courses, for future roll out around the UK. The first pilot, the 'Seecs Trade' course, is a two day course arranged to run at Taunton's Somerset College of Art & Technology (SCAT) on 10th & 11th October 2005 with NVQ level 2 & 3 students to attend the first day lectures and the second day practical, with workshop demonstrations using full scale building sections. The prefabricated build sections will be developed by Andy Simmonds, Peter Wilkinson and Geoff Stow in advance of the course dates to be erected by the students with practical tutoring from the Seecs team. All students will be presented with a 'Seecs course certificate of completion' and it is hoped valuable lessons will be learnt from the pilot course, which will be used to improve the Seecs course for the future.

The one day 'Seecs Profession CPD' course will developed following the two day course feed-back and will be arranged for spring 2006. The lectures will be delivered by Peter Warm & John Willoughby. Feed back from a questionnaire, completed by attendees, will again be used for future Seecs CPD events.

A number of courses are presently being developed for SussEd by AECB members for 2006. These courses will go through a peer review process before they can be delivered. It is intended to only use well considered and researched course material of a high standard that stands along side the AECB's strategies for sustainable construction.

Much of SussEd's focus in 2005 has been centered around the Seecs courses. Through the generous funding from EEASOX for Seecs, it has been possible to develop a very valuable training resource for the Association that reinforces the position of AECB's Energy Standards and provides a strong foundation for SussEd to build upon in future years.

LOBBYING OFFICER

The AECB has an official lobbying position which has been funded at a rate of £80 a month over the last year, with occasional one-off payments of £100 to prepare for and attend Building Regulation all day meetings. As much of the EO's role is concerned with lobbying, a lot more of the AECB's core funds (as well as much voluntary committee time) goes into lobbying.

Over the last year work has been continuing on the amendments to Part L (at Industry Advisory Group level) and at Building Regulations Advisory Committee level on part G. Cath Hassell is representing the AECB on both of these. For the first time Part G of the Building Regulations will address water conservation. There were high hopes amongst various members of the BRAC group that a coherent and robust strategy around water would result. That is not the case yet. The AECB will continue to work closely within the BRAC group and with various other bodies throughout the coming year to ensure that Part G will address water conservation in a strategic way with tangible results

The AECB has begun to work closely with the Sustainable Energy Partnership, a conglomerate of various environmental organisations. SEP supports private member's bills and lobbies Govt on all aspects of reducing fossil energy use within the UK, mostly concentrating on the built environment. This year SEP successfully supported Mark Lazorowicz's Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill which has now received a second reading on its way to hopefully becoming law.

The AECB was asked to comment on many strategic documents including BREAM for schools and the London Strategic Plan.

The structure of the post may be changed over the next year to reflect the importance the AECB puts into lobbying.

PROMOTION

1. Promotional material

The Promotion Sub Group developed a new graphical look for the Association, which was incorporated into a new letterhead, AECB business cards and was also intended to be incorporated into all AECB promotional material.

A new information sheet on the AECB was produced and printed, incorporating the new design.

2. Factsheet

A new Ecobuilding Factsheet was produced with the financial support of the Ecology Building Society. This was placed on the new AECB website, and also used by the Ecology Building Society. A Factcard based on the Factsheet was printed, using the new look design, in time for distribution at the Glastonbury Festival.

3. Website

The Website Sub Group took on the task of completely redesigning and rebuilding the website. A new webmaster, Tom Anderson, was appointed to rebuild the site as part of his final year studies for a BSc Computing at Leeds University. AECB member, Webster Wickham developed the new design for a nominal fee. The new website was launched during November 2004. Work was ongoing in further developing the site, and building an administrative database which could both give the website increased functionality and improve the general administration of the Association.

LIMITED COMPANY STATUS

The establishment of a new status for the AECB, as a Company limited by guarantee, had been approved at the 2003 AGM, with further procedural details approved at the 2004 AGM.

During the period, staff and Committee members continued to put in place the necessary procedures to change to the new status. After receiving advice from the new auditors for the Limited Company, the Committee decided to inaugurate the new status at the beginning of the new financial year 1 October 2005.

The new Limited Company was incorporated at Companies House. The founding Trustees (Directors) were Andy Simmonds, Chris Herring and Peter Wilkinson.

Peter Wilkinson was appointed as Company Secretary.

In preparation for the structural change, an inaugural meeting of the new Limited Company was held on 8 April 2005. A further meeting was held on 9 September 2005, when the following additional Trustees (Directors) were co-opted:

Chris Lord-Smith
Christine Armstrong
Nick Grant
Cath Hassell
Neill Lewis
Sally Starbuck

Andy Simmonds resigned as Trustee (Director).

The following Officers were appointed:

Chair	Chris Herring
Secretary to the Board	Chris Lord-Smith
Treasurer	Christine Armstrong

Keith Bridgford & Co were appointed as Auditors.

The new Board would take over the running of the Association from the 1 October 2005.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS, STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

1. Committee

The Committee appointed at AGM 2004 was sitting at the start of the year, and was followed by the Committee appointed at AGM 16 July 2005

Committee appointed 5 July 2004

Andy Simmonds	Chair
Chris Lord-Smith	Secretary
Chris Herring	Treasurer

Christine Armstrong
Nick Grant
Cath Hassell
Neill Lewis
David Olivier
Sally Starbuck
Tom Straker
Carole Townsend
Peter Wilkinson

Committee appointed 16 July 2005

Chris Herring	Chair
Chris Lord-Smith	Secretary
Christine Armstrong	Treasurer
Nick Grant	
Cath Hassell	
Neill Lewis	
Penney Poyzer	
Sally Starbuck	
Peter Wilkinson	

2. Officers / staff

Executive Officer	Andy Simmonds <i>appointed April 2005</i>
Administration	Sally Hall
Lobbying Officers	Cath Hassell
	Andy Simmonds <i>until April 2006-06-13</i>
Development /	Karen Harris
SussEd	
Emails /	Chris Lord-Smith
phones	
Network	Chris Lord-Smith

3. External advisors

Auditors	Ryn Sullinge	<i>Existing Association</i>
Auditors	Keith Bridgford & Co	<i>Limited Company</i>
Building Society	Ecology Building Society	
Bankers	The Co-operative Bank	