

## **AECB News**

**June 2011**

### **Book Now To Secure Your Place At This Year's AECB Annual Conference And AGM**

University of Nottingham Jubilee Campus – Friday 16 – Saturday 17 September

Things are really coming together for this year's programme with a great mix of workshops and presentations on a variety of themes.

Following on from the work of the Technology Strategy Board's Retrofit for the Future we will be running workshops on a range of retrofit issues and examples including:

- Retrofitting using natural products.
- Retrofitting up to Passivhaus Standard.
- Retrofitting on a more limited budget.
- Retrofitting a solid wall cottage: a builder's perspective.

More retrofit workshops are currently being confirmed.

Other confirmed workshops include:

- An update from REA (Renewable Energy Association) on the Renewable Heat Incentive and the Feed-in Tariff.
- Designing in energy efficiency.
- Embodied carbon and energy, and the ICE (Inventory of Carbon and Energy) database
- Presentation on a local code level 4 housing project

At the conference, the AECB will launch Less is More, a review of UK energy policy, especially concerning the undervalued, crucial role of energy efficiency in the built environment. The report is based on a first principles approach, informed by best practice experience from abroad, and challenges the emerging orthodoxy of large-scale electrification as the only way to achieve carbon emissions targets whilst ensuring energy security.

Plus! Nottingham University's Department of Architecture & Built Environment will be running guided tours of the eco show houses on the campus, and presenting on aspects of the research they are undertaking.

We are awaiting confirmation of other speakers and presentations and we will release details on the web site in the coming weeks, so keep an eye on the conference pages.

Remember for the last 2 years the conference has sold out, so book early.

We have kept the price the same for the last 3 years and have reserved very reasonably priced accommodation on campus – but book early as accommodation is limited.

Go to [www.aecb.net/conference2011.php](http://www.aecb.net/conference2011.php)

Calling all exhibitors...

We have secured a good sized exhibition space alongside the refreshment areas. Book early for the best spaces and a cost-effective way to bring your products or services to the attention of over 200 practitioners.

Contact [conference@aecb.net](mailto:conference@aecb.net) for details on how to book an exhibition space.

### **Local Group News.**

#### **New Group For Members In And Around Yorkshire – And Better Breakfasts Everywhere**

The group organiser, Matthew Thompson, is keen to produce some interesting meetings over the next few months and he is aiming for the first get together to happen in July – possibly at the site of a barn conversion. Anyone in the area who interested in highlighting one of their own projects or a particular topic of interest can contact Matthew via email [debbie@aecb.net](mailto:debbie@aecb.net) or reply to the post on the Forum. Do

get in touch if you're considering coming along to one of the Yorkshire meetings; the venues will be chosen to be convenient for as many members as possible from Yorkshire and the neighbouring counties.

Following the success of the second Better Building Breakfast meeting in Sussex last month, there are plans to take this type of event to various parts of the country – wherever Local Groups want to get active promoting better building to Local Authorities and other local organisations. The idea is that AECB members disseminate their knowledge to key policy and decision makers in the mainstream. Those interested in this important AECB activity should get involved when the Better Building Breakfast arrives in your part of the country to share what you know, and enjoy some networking at the same time.

Local Group meetings and events coming up in June include:

#### South East Group

1st June – visit to the Ashcombe Windmill; [www.aecb.net/forum/index.php/topic,3001.0.html](http://www.aecb.net/forum/index.php/topic,3001.0.html)

#### Lancashire Group

Manchester on 13th June; visit to the house being renovated by member Andrew Gill.

Go to <https://sites.google.com/site/lowerenergyterracedhouse/home>

#### Milton Keynes

20<sup>th</sup> June – date for diary; details to be announced.

#### London Group

24th June, visit to Disability Essex, a Passivhaus Community Centre;

#### Hampshire Group

28th June, Birthday BBQ at Bricks & Bread Sustainable Living Centre and Trudy Thompson talks about her Eco Building projects;

#### East Anglia Group

29th June, West Suffolk College Bury St Edmunds. Renewables - What's on offer and integration of systems. FITs & RHI.

Updated information on events can be found on the website forum at [www.aecb.net/forum/index.php/board,24.0.html](http://www.aecb.net/forum/index.php/board,24.0.html) – follow the blue link to 'Regional Groups' or email [debbie@aecb.net](mailto:debbie@aecb.net) to be put on a local group mailing list.

#### London group gets out into the countryside

AECB London group had great trip to Highwood Village Hall in Essex, where we were shown around by two enthusiasts from the village hall group who have done an amazing job getting this community project off the ground, funded and built. Their project has involved so many people, it has been a real focus for the community, and will tackle isolation. Completed so far is the hall, kitchen and multipurpose foyer, all of which will be used by numerous groups and clubs; the second phase includes a doctor's surgery.

The fabric is thin jointed masonry with timber cladding, Passivhaus certified windows, and a wire framework for a green climbing wall going in on the north side, which is quite overlooked. There is a green roof with lots of PV, which will provide an income. They have been aiming towards Passivhaus standard, and we all thought that the fabric was more influenced by this than the services.

Next visit is to Disability Essex, thanks to Carine for organising it all! From Fran Bradshaw - Anne Thorne Architects

Has your local group put on an interesting event? Share your appreciation, and send a brief report to [debbie@aecb.net](mailto:debbie@aecb.net).

#### **AECB Staff Members Hiking For Charity**

AECB staff member Becky Gillham has organised a mammoth 39 mile walk this summer in aid of McMillan Cancer Support, in memory of her brother Daniel, who sadly died of cancer recently at the age of just 39. The walk, on July 9th, starts at 6am and will not be level going, as it takes place in the Brecon Beacons. Becky, who sends out the AECB renewal invitations, will be joined by Sally Hall, joint

AECB founder and admin and finance officer. If you'd like to support them and McMillan, please visit [www.justgiving.com/teams/walkdaniel39](http://www.justgiving.com/teams/walkdaniel39).

### **AECB And The Passivhaus Trust Press For Recognition Of Passivhaus In 2013 Domestic Building Regulations**

AECB and the Passivhaus Trust are participating in the 2013 Part L1 Working Group, an all-sector industry group which is making technical recommendations to the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) and hence onwards to DCLG. They are recommending to the group that it pushes for Passivhaus certification to be formally recognised within the revised building regs.

AECB and the Trust together are recommending to the working group that :

1. DCLG grants Passivhaus-compliant dwellings a deemed-to-satisfy status for Part L1A 2013, and
2. DCLG considers the view that Part L1A 2013 should be set at a FEES Plus standard which is essentially FEES with greater attention to draught-free construction.

The reasoning is as follows:

- Passivhaus certified homes will be more than good enough (both in terms of energy/carbon performance, and assurances that you'll actually get that performance) to meet the improved objectives of whatever Part L1 DCLG is likely to set in the current round - so if a home is a certified Passivhaus it should automatically pass Building Regs.
- In the new Part L1 itself, airtightness is a more logical area to tighten up than the specification of individual components such as insulation or windows because airtightness is currently where the biggest gap - literally - exists between current practice and the 2016 Zero Carbon target.

For the full recommendations see the AECB New Releases pages go to [www.aecb.net/new\\_releases/detail/?nid=15](http://www.aecb.net/new_releases/detail/?nid=15)

Thanks to Dr Neil Cutland of Cutland Consulting Ltd, for representing AECB and the Passivhaus Trust.

### **AECB Carbonlite Designer Course - Pilot Off To Great Start**

The first week of the AECB CarbonLite Passivhaus Designer Pilot course was held in Plymouth last week.

Overall the first week was a success, and we would like to thank the development team for all of their input and review of the individual modules. We would also like to thank the delegates for their valuable feedback on the first week of the course. The second week of the Pilot course will be held in June.

We are delighted to announce that AECB CarbonLite have been offered sponsorship to develop the course from Isover and Rationel.

If you are interested in attending AECB CarbonLite Passivhaus Designer courses in the future, these will be running in London during September and Bristol in October 2011. Certified Passivhaus Designer examinations will be held in Bristol during October 2011. For further information please visit [www.carbonlite.org.uk/carbonlite/courses.php](http://www.carbonlite.org.uk/carbonlite/courses.php) or contact Helen Bennett on 01752 542546.

### **Join Us On Facebook**

The AECB has set up a trial Facebook group for members to use.

The aim is for members to use the group to share information about events, useful publications, projects, etc. in an informal way. Serious technical discussions should be kept to the AECB Forum.

Some basic rules:

- Please remain courteous
- Although you may use it to inform colleagues about events you are involved in, the group is not to be used for ongoing advertising of your products or services.
- If we feel that anyone is misusing the site we will remove them from the group.

The group is strictly for AECB Members. If you are a Facebook user, just search AECB and ask to join.

### **AECB And European Partners Complete Successful Collaboration**

The AECB was the UK lead partner in PASS-NET, a European initiative creating a co-operation network of low energy and Passivhaus promoters.

The project aimed to spread knowledge and expertise about low energy building within Europe. The target was to rapidly increase the number of new buildings to low energy standards, such as Passivhaus, and also use these standards to inform the renovation of existing buildings.

The project report concluded that PassNet had a positive effect on the energy efficiency standard of buildings in Europe. Among the achievements reported were:

- 15800 visitors to Passive House Days
- 24 seminars attended by 607 delegates
- 470 participants from social housing organisations
- 200 organisations downloading seminar materials
- 547 buildings added to the European wide Passive House database
- Reports and factsheets
- Good quality training serving as an introduction to more in-depth courses eg the CEPH project.

### **We Want Your Pictures!**

Have you been involved in an award winning project lately – as contractor, designer or owner? If so, and if you would like to submit a photo for our consideration to use on the AECB website, do contact [kate@aecb.net](mailto:kate@aecb.net) for more information.

Alternatively you may wish to promote your organisation's work through sharing images, and information on the performance of your building, in our Low Energy Buildings Database at [www.carbonlite.org.uk/carbonlite/lowenergybuildings.php](http://www.carbonlite.org.uk/carbonlite/lowenergybuildings.php)

### **Report Back From Homebuilding And Renovating Show And Grand Designs Live.**

The national exhibition season now seems to be at an end. The AECB was giving presentations and offering advice in the "Ask the experts" area at both the Homebuilding and Renovating Show and Grand Designs Live. A longer report on this activity will be available soon, but in brief there is clearly a huge demand for informed independent advice on a range of green building issues.

The main area concerns the challenge of affordably heating poorly insulated rural homes. People were desperate not to use oil due to cost, unreliability of supply and risk of theft. Miss-selling to this sector appears widespread and simply having a space to talk the issues through was very much welcomed by householders. Now that the Low Energy Buildings Database is up and running on the AECB website it might be interesting to explore ways to get good quality information on retrofit issues out to the public. As far as I can see the agencies charged with advising on these issues are not very good at the face-to-face support and that is desperately needed.

Geoff Stow, AECB Trustee

PS. The Technology Strategy Board has recently agreed to fund further development of the AECB database to enhance its functionality, searchability and ability to share lessons learnt from the 87 Retrofit for the Future projects, and a further 33 low energy projects. There will be more detail on this, and how the database will be linked to the new National Refurbishment Centre's database, in next month's Network.

## **Member News**

### **WISE Building Wins More Awards.**

The venue for last year's AECB very successful AECB Conference continues to win awards. It has just won an RIBA (RSAW) Regional Award [www.architecture.com/Awards/RIBAAwards/Winners2011/Wales/Waleswinners2011.aspx](http://www.architecture.com/Awards/RIBAAwards/Winners2011/Wales/Waleswinners2011.aspx).

And Terra-Incognita (a Europe earth architecture organisation) has just awarded WISE an 'Outstanding Building' award (joining a list that includes the Alhambra!). CAT as a whole is short listed for the Ashden Award [www.ashdenawards.org/files/press\\_releases/AAUKFinalists2011final.pdf](http://www.ashdenawards.org/files/press_releases/AAUKFinalists2011final.pdf).

Congratulation to AECB Members Pat Borer, David Lea and CAT.

### **Free – Magazines Needing New Home**

- Building For A Future

All copies from No1 (1990) to Vol 9 No4 (2000), 1 missing. 37 copies

- Eco Design Magazine

All copies from No1 (1990) to Vol 8 (2001), 1 missing. 25 copies

- Fine Homebuilding Magazine

Brilliant American mag on timber house building, superbly illustrated. 72 Bi-monthly copies from August 1990 to July 2001, 7 missing.

Pay post and packing only.

Contact Simon Clark 07737 762313 or [remembersimon@gmail.com](mailto:remembersimon@gmail.com)

## **News**

### **BRE Shares Regional Climate Datasets – For Free**

Varying weather conditions in the UK's maritime climate mean that the regional climate files used in PHPP are critical to the design and certification of Passivhaus Buildings, the climate data also defines the boundary conditions upon which all of the thermal modelling calculations are based. To this end the Building Research Establishment (BRE) have produced 22 regional UK climate data sets for use in Passivhaus design and certification within the UK.

These data sets have been checked and ratified by the Passivhaus Institut and are FREE to download from BREs Passivhaus website [www.passivhaus.org.uk](http://www.passivhaus.org.uk).

To download these data sets please go to [www.passivhaus.org.uk/regional-climate-data.jsp?id=38](http://www.passivhaus.org.uk/regional-climate-data.jsp?id=38)

### **Shapps Pledges To Open Up Self-Build Opportunities**

On Tuesday 3rd May at the Grand Designs Live show at the Excel Centre in London Grant Shapps presented his thinking on how self build could be encouraged both as a way of increasing the housing stock and improving social inclusion. He did this at a panel discussion with Ted Stevens from the National Self Build Association, Geoff Stow AECB Trustee and Kevin McCloud (you know where he is from).

From his presentation it is clear that Grants Shapps sympathies are with community based self-build although he didn't really go into details of structures and models. He clearly had an understanding of the problems facing self-build groups and was keen to look at how, with government help, the self-build movement can be moved on. One of things he liked about self-build was the individuality it encouraged and didn't condemn people to live in what he referred to "Lego Land Homes".

*"Self builders deliver affordable, greener and more innovatively-designed homes; and make a big contribution to the number of new homes built in this country, yet there is scope to significantly increase the number of self built homes in the UK - both for individual households and for community-driven projects".*

He had an understanding of the challenges facing potential Self- Build groups, and said he was keen to smooth the path where possible. The difficulties as he saw them were; -\_

Red tape, on every level from planning, building control, funding etc:

*"I want to turn around the fortunes of self-builders by cutting the red tape and bureaucracy they often face and make self-build a reality for many more people. I'm encouraged by the ongoing work of our self-build working group, which is making good progress in developing an action plan to reduce the barriers that aspiring self-builders often face. These efforts will help bring self-build into the mainstream, and not simply be the preserve of the privileged few".*

Raising money: to this end he is looking at how an enabling fund could be set up.

Access to land: it can be difficult to get reasonable plots suitable for groups before they get gobbled up by the developers. To this end he is looking at encouraging local authorities to sell off land to local community based self-build groups. He announced that the government will be releasing some sizable plots later this year. At this time no details of costings etc were given. He was also keen to encourage the sale of serviced plots to give a self-build a quick start.

*"I can confirm that the Government will lead the way to promote more self build housing with plots available exclusively for self-builders on public sector land. This will sit alongside the efforts we are already making to reduce the burden of regulation on the house building industry and through the Localism Bill to put power in the hands of communities up and down the country. We're enabling them to give the green light to new developments through the Community Right to Build, and simplifying the overly-bureaucratic planning system."*

A lot of this would also fit in with the Community Right to Build [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/pdf/1647749.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/pdf/1647749.pdf) and the Big Society.

As with all government statements we need to see what happens in practice and use any method we can to keep the pressure on, either by contacting the department or supporting National Self Build Association [www.nasba.org.uk/Content/Campaign.aspx](http://www.nasba.org.uk/Content/Campaign.aspx)

### **The Energy Performance Of Buildings Directive**

Buildings consume more than 40% of Europe's energy use and there are significant potential cost-effective energy savings and CO2 emissions reductions in both new and existing buildings. The Directive on Energy Performance in Buildings (EPBD) is the main legislative instrument affecting energy use and efficiency in the building sector in the EU. The Directive tackles both new build and the existing housing stock. Originally approved in 2002, this Directive is now being replaced by a recast Directive that was approved 19 May 2010.

Go to [www.eceee.org/buildings/](http://www.eceee.org/buildings/) to see more information and comments from The European Council for an Energy Efficient Economy.

### **Cameron Failing To Lead 'Greenest Government Ever', Says Environmental Group**

Friends of the Earth says that Prime Minister David Cameron is failing to deliver on most of his key green pledges and has delayed, watered down or abandoned others. The likelihood of the Coalition Government being the 'greenest government ever', as Cameron promised when he was elected, are "vanishingly remote", according to former Sustainable Development Commission chair Jonathon Porritt.

The accusation comes just ahead of the second reading of the Coalition Government's flagship Energy Bill in the House of Commons tomorrow, which promises to establish Green Deal Finance to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Porritt reviewed the Coalition's performance over the last year for the environmental group, looking at a total of 77 'green' policies. According to the report, little or no progress has been made on 58 of those policies. The report also criticises the Liberal Democrats for failing to promote their green agenda within the Coalition and for holding government ministers to account.

Friends of the Earth says that the 'growth at all costs' lobby has won out over advocates of sustainable economic development, and warns that the Treasury under Chancellor George Osborne may reject new carbon reduction targets recommended by the Committee on Climate Change. The Treasury's refusal to allow the proposed Green Investment Bank borrow funds until at least 2015 is a case in point, says the report, along with the Government's proposed watering down of the feed-in tariff and its failure to reform aviation duty.

The report concludes that it is impossible for the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to deliver on its plans to address climate change when the rest of government is at best disengaged or at worst outright hostile.

Go to [www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf)

### **UK Failing To Attract Low-Carbon Investment, Warns CBI**

The UK is failing to attract the necessary level of investment to build a low-carbon infrastructure, business lobby group the CBI has warned. The country's power sector alone will need around £150 billion over the next twenty years to replace the third of generating capacity due to close in the next decade, says the CBI.

According to a new report, Risky Business: Investing in the UK's low-carbon infrastructure, business leaders do not believe the UK can attract the necessary level of investment at the speed required. The report, carried out by consultants Accenture, interviewed CEOs from the energy, finance, manufacturing and property sectors.

The Government must develop a long-term low-carbon growth strategy and delivery plan, says the CBI, and avoid policy turnarounds like the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) efficiency scheme. The Government also needs to address the planning system to ensure that timely decisions are made and urges that bonds are issued by the Green Investment Bank as soon as possible. Key to that will be ensuring that the Departments of Energy and Climate Change, Business, Innovation and Skills and Environment, Food and Rural Affairs work together.

The report does concede that the Government has made some positive steps, including the forthcoming white paper on electricity market reform – which the CBI says will be a "crucial milestone" – but there is much more to do.

Go to [www.cbi.org.uk/](http://www.cbi.org.uk/)

### **Government Ends Carbon Trust And EST Core Funding**

Tucked away in the Department of Energy and Climate Change's (DECC) annual Delivery Review published yesterday, was the announcement of the ending of core funding for the Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust (EST). The two Government-backed organisations have coordinated efforts on low-carbon technologies and energy efficiency, from funding crucial research to providing public information for householders and businesses.

Now, however, core grant funding for the two organisations will end from 2012/2013 and they will instead have to compete for financial support. As well as having to bid for Government backing through a tendering process, the Carbon Trust and EST will also be expected to develop commercial opportunities. The change could be particularly worrisome for the EST, which has carved out a valuable niche as a provider of impartial and unbiased advice on energy efficiency measures and technologies.

The Delivery Review promises that the delivery of new programmes will be led by DECC itself, and only contracted out – to bodies like the Carbon Trust or EST – "where possible and appropriate to provide maximum value for money". Meanwhile, the DECC review also promised to establish a new Office for National Energy Efficiency to focus on the Department's efficiency strategy and ensure that programmes are managed effectively.

For more information go to [www.decc.gov.uk/publications/basket.aspx?filetype=4&filepath=About+us%2f1815-delivery-review.pdf&minwidth=true](http://www.decc.gov.uk/publications/basket.aspx?filetype=4&filepath=About+us%2f1815-delivery-review.pdf&minwidth=true)

### **Energy Saving Trust Is Becoming A Social Enterprise**

The Energy Saving Trust is to become a social enterprise, and will seek charitable status. The new charitable parent company, together with a trading subsidiary, will enable the Trust to expand its activities, while continuing to manage substantial government-funded activity.

Any profits made by business activities will be invested in our core aim of helping people to use less energy and reduce their carbon emissions.

The Energy Saving Trust is well placed to work with companies and providers along the supply chain, to deliver the government's Green Deal programme, with existing contracts and networks in all sectors. While in recent years we have received substantial public subsidy, our income has always come from a multitude of sources. The bottom line is that we will only take on projects that support our longstanding mission of cutting domestic carbon emissions and helping reduce householders' fuel bills.

For more information go to [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

### **Siemens-Carbon Trust Joint Investment Fund Opens For Business**

A new investment fund from the Carbon Trust and Siemens to help UK companies finance green equipment opened for business yesterday. The investment fund, which was first announced last month and will be worth up to £550 million over the next three years, is the first dedicated low-carbon finance scheme of its kind.

Backed and managed by Siemens Financial Services UK, the fund will help businesses invest in energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies like low-energy lighting and biomass heating. Carbon Trust Implementation Services, a subsidiary of the Carbon Trust, meanwhile will provide independent assessment of the carbon, energy and cost saving of any project.

The partners hope that any projects undertaken will pay for themselves through energy savings, so that there is no cost to the customer.

Go to [www.carbontrust.co.uk/financing](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/financing)

### **US Architects Select Top Ten Sustainable Green Buildings**

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) has named its top ten sustainable, green buildings for 2010. The shortlisted developments include the new Research Support Facility at the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), a school in Greensburg, Kansas rebuilt after a tornado and an addition to Frank Lloyd Wright's landmark Meeting House in Madison, Wisconsin.

The AIA judging panel said the NREL facility, which aims to be net zero-energy, is both a 'challenge to the building industry' and a 'blueprint' for future low-energy developments. Also making it onto the rankings is the world's first LEED Platinum convention centre in Vancouver, Canada, which boasts the country's largest green roof spanning 6 acres and comprising around 400,000 indigenous plants. The building also features a heating and cooling system supplied by sea water heat pumps, which are powered by hydroelectricity.

Other ranked projects include two housing projects and a school in California, a dilapidated warehouse in Austin, Texas transformed into office space, a waste water treatment plant in Olympia, Washington and an LEED Platinum house in Racine on the edge of Lake Michigan.

Go to [www.aia.org/](http://www.aia.org/)

### **E.ON And Barratt Homes To Build 1900 Low-Carbon Homes In London**

Energy company E.ON and builder Barratt Homes today announced plans to work together on the construction of 1900 new low-carbon homes in London. The two developments at the former St. Andrews Hospital in Newham, east London and New South Quarter in Croydon to the south of the city will have centralised combined heat and power (CHP) units and biomass boilers to supply heat and hot water to residents. The community energy schemes at the two developments will save an estimated 18,500 tonnes of carbon emission over the next ten years by avoiding the use of individual gas boilers.

The energy company will manage and maintain the community energy schemes at each of the developments through an Energy Services Company (ESCO) agreement. The two companies recently completed a housing development in Dalston Square in Hackney, east London, which reached the equivalent of a Level 3 in the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes, saving resident an average 23% on energy bills and reducing carbon emission by 29%.

The new developments could offer a reduction in CO2 emissions of up to 44%, compared to new homes built to minimum standards and heated by gas, claim the partners.

For more go to [www.eon-uk.com/](http://www.eon-uk.com/)

### **Government Reopens Warm Front Scheme To Help 90,000 Households**

The UK Coalition Government reopened the Warm Front scheme yesterday in a bid to help 90,000 of the country's poorest households move out of fuel poverty. Under the scheme, householders who struggle to afford to heat their home can apply for assistance to install energy efficiency measures up to a value of £3500 like more efficient heating systems, loft and cavity wall insulation and draught proofing.

According to the Government's most recent figures, there are 4.5 million households living in fuel poverty, which is defined as those spending more than 10% of their income on heating their home. But the Coalition closed the scheme in December last year after allocating all the available funds. The budget for the scheme was also cut in the Spending Review, with £110 million available this financial year and £100 million in 2012/13. The scheme is

now better focused on low income households, says the Government, following a consultation on the scheme launched last month.

Eligibility for assistance will be based on a combination of income-related benefits, echoing those used to allocate cold weather payments. But household thermal efficiency will also be taken into account to ensure that the most energy inefficient homes are targeted.

Go to [www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/warm\\_front/warm\\_front.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/consultations/warm_front/warm_front.aspx)

### **Building Industry Supports Wider Use Of Energy Certificates**

The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) and the UK Green Building Council called for a wider roll out of display energy certificates (DECs) to commercial buildings last week. Since 2008, large public buildings have had to have DECs on show displaying information about their energy consumption, rated from A, the most efficient, to G, the least.

The CIBSE looked at the first 45,000 DECs and the accuracy of the benchmarks used to calculate the ratings. The analysis indicates that the benchmarks are very accurate and would provide a good basis for extending the approach to commercial buildings. The CIBSE report recommends taking a 'soft start' to the roll out to make the administration of the scheme easier and double check the accuracy of benchmarks.

Multi-occupancy commercial buildings bigger than 1000 m<sup>2</sup> should also be required to have a Landlord Energy Statement (LES) detailing energy use and carbon emissions.

For further information go to [www.ukgbc.org/](http://www.ukgbc.org/)

### **Government's Green Deal Lays Down The Law On Rental Properties**

Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne announced that landlords will be forced to improve their most energy inefficient properties during the Second Reading of the Government's Green Deal bill. Under the proposals, which appear to bow to pressure from environmental and consumer lobby groups, landlords will face minimum energy efficiency standards.

From April 2016, landlords will not be able to refuse 'reasonable' requests – either from tenants or local authorities acting on their behalf – for energy efficiency improvements to properties. And from April 2018, landlords will no longer be allowed to rent out homes or business premises with less than an 'E' energy efficiency rating. According to the Government, this means that at least 682,000 properties will have to be improved under the auspices of the Green Deal.

Huhne's proposal has been welcomed by Friends of the Earth, which has been campaigning for a minimum standard for rental properties.

The Green Deal, which forms the centrepiece of the Government's Energy Bill, would allow households to install energy efficiency measures up a value of £10,000 and repay in instalments from the savings on their energy bills.

Go to [www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/energy\\_bill/energy\\_bill.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/legislation/energy_bill/energy_bill.aspx)

### **EU Energy Ministers Look To Carbon-Free Future**

EU energy ministers meeting informally earlier this week in Gödöllő, Hungary stressed the importance of identifying energy policy objectives beyond 2020. The region's Energy Roadmap 2050 has set a target of an 85-90% reduction in carbon emissions compared with 1990 levels but is extremely ambitious, said meeting chair and National Development Minister Tamás Fellegi.

He went on to say that improving the efficiency of energy consumption and exploiting new renewable energy sources will be key to reaching the target. Commissioner for Energy, Günther Oettinger agreed, adding that the efficiency of public and private buildings will need to be taken seriously to see an improvement. Oettinger went on to say that carbon capture and storage technologies also need to be treated as a priority.

The conclusions of the Gödöllő meeting will be followed up at the next formal Energy Council meeting in June, where 'concrete and constructive' proposals will be made.

Go to [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

### **Renewables Should Contribute To UK Decarbonisation, Says Committee**

Renewable energy should be able to make a major contribution to the decarbonisation of the UK economy over coming years according to the Committee on Climate Change (CCC). The influential Committee's Renewable Energy Review, which was commissioned by the Coalition Government last year, concludes that renewables could generate around 30% of the UK's energy – or up to 45% if costs fall – by 2030.

The review highlights wind and marine energy as among the most promising renewable technologies, as well as air and ground source heat pumps and the use of bioenergy for heat generation. In the meantime, however, the review concludes that nuclear power is likely to be the most cost-effective source of low-carbon energy, while gas with carbon capture and storage will be useful to provide flexible generation to balance the intermittency of renewable sources.

Unsurprisingly, environmental groups have criticised the Committee's backing of nuclear power, while welcoming its conclusions on renewables.

Go to [www.theccc.org.uk/reports/renewable-energy-review](http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/renewable-energy-review)

### **Renewables Could Meet 80% Of World's Energy Supply, Says IPCC**

Nearly 80% of the world's energy supply could be met by renewables by 2050, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC research carried out by over 120 researchers also calculates that increasing reliance on renewables, including bioenergy, photovoltaics and concentrating solar power, geothermal energy, hydro and marine power and wind energy, could save 220-560 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent between 2010 and 2050.

If greenhouse gas emissions can be cut by around a third compared with a business-as-usual scenario, global temperature rises could be kept to 2°C, says the IPCC. The findings were published in summary yesterday in the IPCC's Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN), ahead of a 1000-page comprehensive report later in the month.

The report also highlights the vital role of developing nations that, according to the report, hold over half of the world's renewable energy capacity.

Go to <http://srren.ipcc-wg3.de/report>

## **Events**

### **North London Eco-House Weekend June 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 10am To 5pm**

On the weekend of the 11th and 12 June, there is a great opportunity to see 15 Victorian and Edwardian homes in the North London boroughs of Camden, Islington, Haringey and Hackney which have undergone low carbon refurbishment. Their owners will be throwing open the doors to the public and sharing their wisdom and experience with people who are keen to cut the carbon emissions in their homes.

The properties on show demonstrate the latest in best practice refurbishment and show how the challenges which so many of London's homes present (solid walls, leaky sash windows, draughts etc) can be overcome in a way that maximises carbon savings, while remaining sympathetic to the aesthetics and particular demands of these homes – and there are some truly beautiful examples to be seen.

This event is ideally suited both to homeowners who are keen to reduce their energy consumption but who are unsure how to go about it and to community groups who are seeking to advise their communities as to how to go about it. With the Green Deal fast approaching, it will be important for these groups to gain an understanding of how these more advanced measures can best be applied.

Tickets for the whole weekend are £10 for homeowners and £20 for building professionals. In order to visit some of the homes you will need to reserve a slot, but most can be visited without a reservation, and tours will start on the hour during the home's opening times. More information about the homes, their opening times as well as ticket purchasing information can be found at [www.victori.co.uk/eco.html](http://www.victori.co.uk/eco.html)

### **Passivhaus Trust Events**

- 16th June: Site visit to Gentoo's Racecourse Passivhaus, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne & Wear. 13.30 – 16.30

The Passivhaus Trust is partnering with the Good Homes Alliance to visit a development of 28 bungalows built by Gentoo Construction. 25 of the terraced homes are being built to the Passivhaus standard, and some of the dwellings will be completed when we visit, with others still under construction.

Allan Thompson (MD of Gentoo) and Mark Siddall (Devereux Architects) will explain the rationale and future plans for the development, before the tour.

£25+VAT for PHT members, £50 +VAT for non-members

For more information or to book a place please contact the Good Homes Alliance – [info@goodhomes.org.uk](mailto:info@goodhomes.org.uk).

- 5th July: Passivhaus Trust 1st Anniversary event, Residence of the Austrian Ambassador, Belgrave Square, London. 14.45 – 20.00

We are pleased to confirm the venue for the Passivhaus Trust's 1st Anniversary event, which will be held at the Residence of the Austrian Ambassador in London. An afternoon seminar will explore the state of play for Passivhaus in the UK, including feedback from the International Passive House conference in Innsbruck and an update on the international Passivhaus situation by the International Passivhaus Association (iPHA).

This will be followed by evening drinks and networking session, including highlights of recent leading Passivhaus projects, starting at 17.30. This event is kindly hosted by Founder Members Advantage Austria and the Austrian Ambassador and is generously sponsored by Founder members Willmott Dixon.

Free to members, £120 + VAT for non-members

For more information or to book a place please contact the Trust – [info@passivhaustrust.org.uk](mailto:info@passivhaustrust.org.uk), quoting '1st Anniversary' in the subject line.

## **Publications**

### **New Publications from IHS BRE Press**

- Airtightness in commercial and public buildings (ref: FB 35)

ISBN: 978-1-84806-174-3

This guide is aimed at designers, project managers and specialist contractors involved in the construction of commercial and public buildings. It sets out the principles of providing effective airtightness within new buildings, through the design process and identifies common areas where particular attention is needed during construction. The design section includes generic examples of airtightness critical detailing and provides advice on avoiding leakage paths. The guidance also covers managing the airtightness process from design through construction and airtightness compliance testing to handover. This third edition has been revised to include experience gained since the introduction of the requirements for airtightness testing within Building Regulations (England and Wales) Approved Document L2A 2006 and 2010.

- Carbon footprinting and labelling of construction products (ref: IP 5/11)

ISBN: 978-1-84806-190-3

The terms 'carbon footprinting' and 'carbon labelling' are in common use in the construction industry, but can be confused and misinterpreted. This Information Paper defines the terms in the context of construction products, and outlines the life-cycle assessment principles that underpin them. This is followed by a review of associated standards, codes, other schemes and resources. The use of carbon footprinting and labelling in the construction industry is then considered, along with relevant organisations, products and construction specifications, and 'whole building' assessment.

This Information Paper is intended to be a resource for architects, specifiers, constructors, manufacturers, suppliers, academics and regulators so that better-informed decisions can be made about construction products.

- Timber cladding (ref: DG 521)

ISBN: 978-1-84806-186-6

Timber cladding is an attractive and sustainable method of providing weather resistance to a building, but has weathering characteristics and a vulnerability to deterioration that need to be anticipated to obtain best performance. Correct fixing and appropriate architectural detailing help to ensure long service life. In addition to naturally durable or preservative-treated timber, chemically or thermally modified wood can also be used for cladding. This Digest provides information on the design and performance of timber cladding, including material selection and detailing.

- Wind microclimate around buildings (ref: DG 520)

ISBN: 978-1-84806-185-9

Tall buildings can deflect high-level wind down towards the ground, producing unpleasant and sometimes dangerous wind conditions in adjoining pedestrian areas. Architects, developers and planners must aim to provide a safe and comfortable wind microclimate in open-air pedestrian areas around buildings.

This BRE Digest brings together the latest information on wind environment around buildings to help building designers, planners, developers and building control officers. The general principles of wind flow around buildings and techniques for mitigating unacceptable wind speeds are discussed and advice is given on the methods and criteria for assessing pedestrian wind comfort. Guidance on the advantages and disadvantages of the different measurement techniques is also provided.

This Digest replaces Digest 390, which is now withdrawn.

*If you have any news, events or courses you would like to publicise in Network then please email details to [network@aecb.net](mailto:network@aecb.net)*