



June 2015

AECB News

AECB Water Blog no. 6

After a slight hiatus the AECB water blog is back with its usual eclectic mix.

This blog considers whether the time has come for fuel cells, some important numbers to consider about water use for showers, Cath's pet hate – the humble electric shower, and the Propelair toilet revolutionising WC flushing.

<http://www.aecb.net/category/water-blog-2/>

Welcome

A warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the AECB recently;

Ecospheric	Greater Manchester
Georgia Laganakou	London
NIBE ENERGY SYSTEMS LIMITED	DERBYSHIRE
Hutcheson Irvine Partnership	Down
Mark Hayward Higgins	London
Martyn DE Vere	Bristol
Base Build (Sussex) Ltd	East Sussex
Forest Hill Design Limited	West Yorkshre
Powered Living Ltd	Hampshire
AT Architecture Ltd	Cornwall
Nigel Banks	South Yorkshire
PS9:Architects	Greater Manchester
etc Design Ltd	West Midlands
Scott Adams	Gloucestershire

To ensure you are making the most of your membership, please visit <http://www.aecb.net/membership-benefits>. In order to have full access to our website, you will need to log in with your username and password. If you need a reminder of these, please email emma@aecb.net. If you have joined as a company, you can then enhance your member profile listing on the popular Member Directory at <http://www.aecb.net/services-directory/search/>. Both members and non-members are able to browse or search this directory of products and services provided by our membership.

We are also keen to hear from AECB members wishing to share a news item about themselves or their company to include on the AECB News Platform/Member News at <http://www.aecb.net/category/aecb-member-news/>. This could be an award you have recently won for a project, a product or your service. This is strictly an area for promoting AECB member news only and we will therefore not be able to publish any items which AECB considers to be purely advertising of products or services. AECB retain the right to reject straightforward advertising items. Please send your short item (max 200 words) plus a link to your website and one picture, to AECB Business Operations Manager, Gill Rivers – gill@aecb.net.

AECB Annual Conference and AGM – 19-20 June 2015 – The Edge, University of Sheffield



2015 Annual Conference | 19-20 June 2015 | Sheffield

The final programme for this year's conference '**Usable Buildings and Neighbourhoods**' is now available for download on the AECB website at <http://www.aecb.net/featured/aecb-conference-2015/>. The conference starts at 11.00 on Friday 19 June with registration from 10.00 and will finish at 17.00 on Saturday 20 June.

If you have not yet registered, online registration for one and two-day conference passes and onsite accommodation is available on the website. Please note all reserved rooms have now been booked and accommodation is now subject to availability at the venue so early booking is recommended.

As well as the conference itself there is a lot to see in and around Sheffield so you may want to take the opportunity to see the renovation work undertaken by Urban Splash on the huge Park Hill Estate. If you haven't already seen it, the Winter Garden in the City Centre is wonderful. If you don't get up north very often why not take the chance to visit the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the award winning Hepworth Wakefield. Or you could go to Manchester to see the new extension to the Whitworth Art Gallery and the new HOME centre and if you want to get out of town then there is easy access to the Peak District.

Back in town the Architecture Students degree show will be on in the famous Arts Tower which has just been completely renovated and looks stunning. Finally you can take home a bottle of Sheffield's famous Henderson's Relish. So, not only a fascinating conference but sightseeing trip as well.

We hope you can join us.

Fran Bradshaw, Julia Bennett and Geoff Stow

PS: We can still squeeze in two additional exhibition tables. If interested please contact conference@aecb.net for details.



Winter Gardens



Henderson's Relish

Important Notice For All AECB Members

The AECB's 2015 Conference and AGM is being held on 19th and 20th June 2015. The AGM business will be dealt with at 9.00am on 20th June 2015 and AECB members are invited to attend. The Agenda is set out below and will also be posted on the AECB website with the Annual Report (including the report of the Chairman) and accounts for the period (www.aecb.net).

For full details of this exciting and stimulating conference please visit the home page www.aecb.net. If you wish to attend you are encouraged to book as soon as possible as numbers are limited. This year, subject to available places, non-members are welcome to attend. Please note that any AECB member can attend the AGM business session only free of charge.

If you have been or you represent a member company that has been an AECB member for more than 12 months, are you willing to serve as a Trustee of the Association and subsequently sit as a Trustee of the AECB Board? If you are interested please telephone the existing Chairman, Peter Wilkinson, on 01282 844487. He will be able to explain what is involved and the input the AECB needs.

It would also be useful to visit the members' area at www.aecb.net where minutes, reports, trustee and company information is posted. If you have any item you wish to include on the agenda for the meeting under 'any other business' please let Sally (email: sally@aecb.net or tel: 0845 456 9773) have full details by the 29 May 2015. The agenda, annual report, accounts, minutes of the last AGM and other relevant information can be viewed at www.aecb.net.

AGENDA

Annual General Meeting of the Association for Environment Conscious Building (Ltd)(AECB)

Meeting at 9.00am on 20th June 2015

1. Apologies
2. To receive the minutes of the AGM held on 12th July 2014 (Note: these are available on-line at www.aecb.net)
3. To receive the accounts for the financial year ending 30th September 2014. Please note that these are available on-line at www.aecb.net)
4. To receive the Trustees' annual report of the AECB's activities to year ending 30th September 2014 (Note: this is available on-line at www.aecb.net)
5. In accordance with article 12.5 of the Articles of Association (reproduced below for information), the following will retire from their current positions as Trustees: Paul Bourgeois, Nidhi Shah and Gary Wilburn

"12.5.1 The term of office for Trustees is 3 years;

12.5.2 Excepting Trustees appointed under 12.5.3 all Trustees must retire at the end of their term of office but may offer themselves for re-election. There is no limit to the number of terms of office a Trustee may serve.

12.5.3 The Trustees may co-opt up to three Trustees whose term of office is 3 years. The Trustees may co-opt a Trustee for 2 terms of office only."

6. To elect/re-elect a maximum of 3 trustees to the board (the board consists of a maximum of 12 trustees in total, each standing for a maximum term of office of 3 years). Nominations for Trustees must be sent to the Company Secretary: Peter Wilkinson at the companies registered office: 30 Linden Road, Earby, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, BB18 6XR, no later than 28 days before the AGM.
 1. For information about each candidate please visit www.aecb.net
 7. To appoint Keith Bridgford and Co as auditors.
 8. In accordance with paragraph 5.2.1, clauses 4.16, 5.1 and 5.3 of the AECB's articles relating to the maximum to be agreed annually by the AGM, that the limit of earnings that any trustee can claim for work carried out on behalf of the AECB should remain at £5,000.00 in any financial year.
 9. To discuss and determine any issues of policy or deal with any other business.

The AECB is a company limited by guarantee. Company No 5336768

Company Secretary: Peter Wilkinson. Registered Office: 30 Linden Road, Earby, Barnoldswick, Lancashire BB18 6XR

PedalHaus Tour: 21st June 2015

If you are thinking of staying on after the conference to see some of the sights you may also want to take part in the Pedalhaus tour Sunday 21st June. The plan is to visit the following:

Itinerary (approximate timings)

10.30am Meet attendees at Denby Dale Train Station

[AECB delegates might be able to catch 09.39 Train from Sheffield, arriving at Denby Dale at 10.38]

10.45am Cyclists set off for Cumberworth via a quick stop off at [Denby Dale Passivhaus](#)

11.30am Visit [Cumberworth radical retrofit project](#)

12.30pm Leave Cumberworth

1-2pm Pub lunch at [The Woodman](#), Thunder Bridge

2.30-3pm Visit Cre8 Barn, [Stirley Community Farm EnerPHit](#) project

4pm Arrive [Golcar Passivhaus](#) project

5pm [Golcar Lily pub](#) for drinks and refreshments

[View rough outline of route here.](#)

If you won't have your bike but still want to visit some of the sites you could drive. More details are available from Chayley at Green Building Store chayley.collis@greenbuildingstore.co.uk

UK Passivhaus Conference 2015: 20th October 20th 2015 Business Design Centre, London



The 2015 UK Passivhaus Conference, organised in partnership with the Passivhaus Trust and BRE, will offer an exciting and concentrated update of what has happened in the UK Passivhaus movement over the past year. Delegates will have a chance to learn about the development of large-scale UK housing projects and the challenges this provides. This one day conference will be held on October 20th 2015 at the Business Design Centre, London

For the first time, there will be a mini trade show in the exhibition area, which will also include demonstration sessions on special feature product models. The trade show will also be open to non-conference attendees - we will promote free tickets in advance through our media partners, exhibitors and selected media or tickets can also be purchased on the door.

Tickets are now available for the 2015 UK Passivhaus Conference. Book now to receive 10% early bird discount! As an AECB member you will also receive the partner discount.

To find out more and book your ticket please visit <http://www.ukpassivhausconference.org.uk/home>

Membership Testimonial

"AECB membership has benefitted me greatly over the past year or so as I embarked on renovating and extending our family home.

I learnt so much about things I'd heard of but didn't understand, like Passive House! AECB introduced me to the principles, I read more and wanted to know more about the specifics of thermal bridging, how to avoid it, air tightness and why it can be so beneficial (but difficult to attain) in retrofit and it's even gave me the confidence to buy and install an MVHR system in our home!

It gave me the confidence to have conversations with EWI providers and discuss materials and finishing details to my home. I'm more discerning now about U-values and how to source efficient windows and (importantly) their effective installation and I've even sourced a thermally efficient front door with my new found knowledge and confidence."

Mark Huntley

Would you be able to provide a short testimonial as to why you are a member of the AECB and how your membership has been of benefit to you? We would love to hear from you and share your testimonial with others who are considering joining – please email gill@aecb.net

Local Groups

Have you got a building project or retrofit which is currently 'work in progress' or has just been completed? Have you won an award for a building which you have designed or built? Would you be interested in showcasing your work/project to other interested AECB members?

If so, then please email me gill@aecb.net and I will put you in touch with the Local Group Leader in your area to arrange a visit of local AECB members. If you are not ready for a visit at the moment, why not let us have a picture and up to 200 words so we can share your work with others via Member News.

Green Open Homes grants, Autumn 2015

To stimulate new Green Open Homes events and boost the ambition of existing ones, the Department of Energy and Climate Change has a grant fund to help cover the costs of organising events which Green Open Homes are administering.

Organisers of open homes events can now apply for grants of up to £7,500 for events taking place in September and October of this year.

The deadline for applications is **15 June 2015**.

Supported events will be expected to feature a minimum of eight homes.

Get the application form at http://www.greenopenhomes.net/downloads/file/GreenOpenHomes_grant_app_AUTUMN_2015.doc.

The new, simpler, application form has more focus on project plans and budgets to help organisers demonstrate clearly what they want to achieve with the grant.

A mentor group of experienced organisers will be established to offer help and support to newer groups. And look out for our summer networking event for organisers, home openers and volunteers; time and place TBC. Sign up the Centre for Sustainable Energy's communities update newsletter (http://www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1262#Newsletter_Community_Energy_Update) or follow [@CSE_communities](https://twitter.com/CSE_communities) to stay in touch.

And if you want to speak to someone about setting up a Green Open Homes event, email us at communities@cse.org.uk or give us a call on 0117 934 1400 (this is the switchboard at the Centre for Sustainable Energy, so you'll need to ask to speak to someone about Green Open Homes).

AECB CarbonLite Passivhaus Designer course in Hereford, 7th September 2015

Get Early Bird Rate Now!

Our next course is coming up on the 7th September. Architype, an inspiring architectural Practice, will host our September course at their restored and sustainable office in Hereford.

Secure your place now with 10% deposit & get the early bird rate! The full course for £2000+VAT*. Contact Ingrid Bravo on 01752452546 or email training@peterwarm.co.uk

Passivhaus and Low Energy Building Design is rapidly becoming an essential skill for Architects, Consultants and Self-builders. Our course will give you the confidence to tackle UK low energy projects along with more specific guidance on achieving the standard of air tightness and thermal bridge free construction required by the Passivhaus standard. Our course is delivered by highly experienced UK professionals and leads to international accreditation as a Certified Passivhaus Designer or Consultant.

Why AECB Carbonlite? www.aecb.net/carbonlite/carbonlite-programme/training-courses/

- Obtain an international accreditation as a **Certified Passivhaus Designer or Consultant**.
- Our Course is the only one developed specifically for the UK and uses **UK building examples**, rather than the European CEPH material taught by others.
- This course is written and taught by leaders in UK Passivhaus development, They are the experts who are actually successfully designing/ building Passivhaus in UK: amongst others, **Bill Butcher, Alan Clarke, Sally Godber, Nick Grant, Eric Parks, Marine Sanchez, Mark Siddall, Will South, Peter Warm** and the WARM staff who have supported over 200 buildings in low energy design as well as being Passivhaus certifiers.

CarbonLite 2015 upcoming Passivhaus Training courses:

	HEREFORD	LONDON B
Week 1	7 th – 11 th Sept	2 nd – 6 th Nov
Week 2	21 st -25 th Sept	16 th -20 th Nov
PHI Exam	10 th Oct	4 th Dec

*Additional modules are not included in the full CEPH course price.

Find out more at <http://www.aecb.net/carbonlite/carbonlite-programme/training-courses/>

Online Therm Course

How bad are your thermal bridges? Thermal bridges are one of the key ways that buildings lose much more heat than expected. Understanding them is critical to designing low energy buildings. Learn how to use the (free) software “THERM” with the experts from the AECB CarbonLite team. The new online Therm course allows people to learn at their own speed and in their own time.

Watch our 2 min promotional video here: www.carbonlitetraining.co.uk

To sample the course you can log in as a guest and use the set up instructions “Setting up THERM for Use in Thermal Bridge Calculations” that will guide you step by step to install Therm on your computer. The initial set up of Therm can be a bit tricky and as part of the course we offer assistance if you get stuck.

The on-line course cost is £200+VAT for one year’s access to the Moodle course and a nominal 2 hours support by email. Contact training@peterwarm.co.uk for more details.

Passive House Planning Package (PHPP) 2013 Version and SketchUp Design plugin: design PH

The English version of the 2013 issue of PHPP (PHPP8) has been released and is available to purchase at £125 plus VAT online from: www.aecb.net/carbonlite/carbonlite-programme/phpp-software.

If you already have a copy of an earlier version of PHPP (eg PHPP7) you can upgrade to PHPP8 at the reduced price of £105 plus VAT. This can now be done online at www.aecb.net/carbonlite/carbonlite-programme/phpp-software

The AECB has entered into a contract with the Passivhaus Institute (PHI) to sell the new SketchUp plugin designPH (English version). You can buy it now at the AECB member rate discounted prices online via the AECB website at: www.aecb.net/carbonlite/carbonlite-programme/phpp-software

Prices are listed below. Please note these exclude VAT and depend on the version of PHPP you have. For full details of the new designPH please visit: www.designph.org/

- | | |
|---|------|
| • Upgrade from PHPP7 to PHPP8.5 PLUS designPH plugin: | £210 |
| • NEW PHPP8 PLUS designPH plugin (includes latest upgrade for PHPP8 to PHPP8.5): | £280 |
| • If you have a copy of PHPP8 you can have the designPH plugin only : | £170 |
| (including upgrade to PHPP8.5) | |

*Please note that if you do not have a copy of PHPP you cannot purchase DesignPH on its own. **The above prices are for AECB members only.***

Omnisense Remote Monitoring System

The AECB has negotiated an ongoing rate of benefit to members and can offer the Omnisense remote monitoring system at significantly preferential terms to AECB members for projects that would benefit from environmental condition monitoring. The Omnisense system is a web-based remote monitoring system for buildings that measures relative humidity, temperature and moisture level. Currently members who have taken up this offer are monitoring various internal wall insulation constructions, insulated suspended timber floors, conditions within brickwork that has been externally insulated, etc

To obtain a quotation for the Omnisense Remote Monitoring System please contact gill@aecb.net. A forum board has been set up for discussion – go to <http://www.aecb.net/forum/index.php/topic,3713.0.html> to read more.

AECB Member Offers

Centre of Refurbishment Excellence (CoRE) – Masterclasses on domestic retrofit

CoRE is the not for profit, national centre of excellence for green building retrofit. Our mission is to transfer practical retrofit knowledge to support excellence in retrofit projects across the domestic and non-domestic sectors. CoRE’s network of Fellows is the UK’s largest bank of retrofit expertise, drawing together leading practitioners from construction, design and academia. They not only shape the CoRE agenda, but also share their knowledge with the growing number of active

retrofitters through events, bespoke training and information sharing. Based in Stoke-on-Trent, CoRE is itself an example of refurbishment excellence, an international standard conference and training venue.

We have pioneered dozens of new courses on domestic retrofit, all designed and delivered by leading experts (our CoRE Fellows). We offer these as CoRE Diploma Programmes, currently available for Retrofit Coordinators and Retrofit Asset Management. For more information please see www.core-skills.com/training/

CoRE Masterclasses usually cost £200+VAT but AECB members will only be charged £100+VAT subject to the completion of appropriate paperwork to obtain Government subsidy.

If for any reason AECB members are not eligible for the subsidised funding CoRE will be happy to honour a discounted price of £125+VAT. Please contact Gill Rivers by email gill@aecb.net to obtain the promotion code.

Need phone and broadband at home? Make it greener



By choosing The Co-operative Phone and Broadband, you are supporting an organisation that is committed to minimising its impact on the environment while still offering the best possible service to its customers.

The Co-operative Phone and Broadband is provided by The Phone Co-op, an independent consumer co-operative which:

- Invests in solar photovoltaic installations – over the last 18 months, it's put £622k into solar energy generation, saving 140 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year
- Supports community energy – in 2013, it put £45k into renewable energy projects
- Offsets its carbon footprint by paying a levy on the CO2 emissions resulting from its activity
- Promotes the use of more sustainable transport modes – 91% of business miles travelled in 2013 were by train, bus, bike or on foot
- Uses electricity from renewable sources
- Recycles 100% of its waste

The Co-operative Phone and Broadband offers everything you need to stay connected; including mobile services.

Members of AECB get a £10 credit on their first bill; 6% of their spend goes back to supporting AECB's work - just quote unique code AF0130 when switching. Find out more on <http://www.thephone.coop/aecb>.

To switch today (or to register your interest if you are stuck in a contract with a different provider), call 01608 434 040 or click here: <http://www.thephone.coop/home/schedule-reminder/>

Building with Straw Bales

Revised and updated full-colour edition of bestselling practical book

Published 29th May 2015, but available for pre-order from the 16th May.

With the first straw bale houses to be offered on the open market having gone on sale recently, straw bale building is an eco-friendly building technique that is finally entering the mainstream, enabling people to design and build their own home in a low-cost and environmentally friendly way.

Building with Straw Bales: A practical manual for self-builders and architects is the revised and extended 3rd edition of Barbara Jones', in full-colour for the first time, with stunning photos that provide inspiration as well as practical details.

Barbara Jones is recognised as one of the world's experts on building with straw bales, with her hands-on training courses proving popular to people from all walks of life. Throughout her career she has been a strong advocate for women in the construction industry and she was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Women in Construction in 2011 and received a Woman of Outstanding Achievement Award from UK Resource Centre (UKRC) in 2009. In 2014 she founded the School of Natural Building (SNaB), whose aim is not only to promote natural building as a sustainable and affordable method, but also to encourage more women to become involved in construction. The previous two editions of *Building with Straw Bales* have sold over 13,000 copies since 2002.

Price: £29.99 paperback, £39.99 hardcover

Discount to AECB members 30% (hardback and paperback editions)

Dates valid: 16th May 2015 to 30st June 2015

Go to www.greenbooks.co.uk/bwsb

To redeem this discount: simply enter your voucher code AECBMAY15 at checkout.

Local Group News

For full details of the events listed below and forthcoming events please visit www.aecb.net/events/ for up to date information on all of these events including dates, times and venues or email debbie@aecb.net to request that your name be added to a Local Group mailing list.

Forthcoming Local Group Events in June and July 2015:

- **Pedalhaus: Le Tour de Huddersfield**

June 21 @ 10:30 am - 6:00 pm

Chris Herring, Green Building Store Director, will be leading this cycling tour for AECB members of our four recent Passivhaus and retrofit projects ([Denby Dale Passivhaus](#), [Cumberworth retrofit](#), [Stirley Farm EnerPHit](#) and [Golcar Passivhaus](#)). This forms one of the legendary [AECB Pedalhaus tours](#) 'for cyclists with a passion for eco architecture'.

The tour comes the date after the [AECB conference](#) in Sheffield, allowing AECB visitors to stay on and include the tour in their conference plans.

[Sign up to join Pedalhaus : Le Tour de Huddersfield here.](#)

Itinerary (approximate timings)

10.30am Meet attendees at Denby Dale Train Station

[AECB delegates might be able to catch 09.39 Train from Sheffield, arriving at Denby Dale at 10.38]

10.45am Cyclists set off for Cumberworth via a quick stop off at [Denby Dale Passivhaus](#)

11.30am Visit [Cumberworth radical retrofit project](#)

12.30pm Leave Cumberworth

1-2pm Pub lunch at [The Woodman](#), Thunder Bridge

2.30-3pm Visit Cre8 Barn, [Stirley Community Farm EnerPHit](#) project

4pm Arrive [Golcar Passivhaus](#) project

5pm [Golcar Lily pub](#) for drinks and refreshments

[View rough outline of route here](#)

Please note:

Pedalhaus participants can join at various points throughout the day and can join us for all or part of the day. For example visitors can join us for the visit to Cumberworth retrofit only and then return to Denby Dale train station.

Participants with 4 wheels would also be welcome to join the various stages of the tour. We are hoping for a lot of cyclists on what should be a very scenic and beautiful route, interspersed with a selection of interesting and pioneering Passivhaus and retrofit projects.

Trains from nearby Slaithwaite station run to Huddersfield at:

16.49/ 17.50/ 18.50

It is possible to get a train back to Denby Dale via Huddersfield. There are also good connections from Huddersfield to Leeds & Manchester.

NB Train companies have [varying policies](#) regarding taking bikes on trains.

Please let us know if you are having logistical problems as we may be able to help with lifts in the Pedalhaus support vehicle!

Do you have questions about Pedalhaus : Le Tour de Huddersfield? Contact [Green Building Store](#)

- **Cornwall Group**

Mud Brick Making and Designing Building Envelopes with Unfired Earth as an Internal Component – Penmount Crematorium, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9AA

Friday 17th July 2015 @ 5:00 pm

Mud Brick making and a discussion on designing building envelopes with unfired Earth as an internal component.

Cornwall earth construction expert and AECB member Mat Robinson will be hosting this AECB event as part of the Dor Kemmyn Interfaith Centre Project at Penmount Crematorium, Truro, TR4 9AA. Mat will introduce the project and discuss the role of the earth brick walls in regulating moisture and providing thermal mass. We'll then spend an hour or 2 preparing earth from the site, mixing earth and straw and making bricks for use in the building. Gear farm pasty and drink £5. Attendees are also kindly asked to make a donation to the [Dor Kemmyn](#) project.

If you'd like to attend please email [Nick Donaldson](#) (non-members welcome) nickdonaldson@arco2.co.uk.

Bring old clothes, wellies, and a coarse sieve if you have one. The brick making is inside a polytunnel so it's an all-weather event.

"The Dor Kemmyn interfaith centre is a heroic project to create a Sacred Space for One and All to be built at the County's crematorium at Penmount just outside Truro. Its a Religious Space for the 21st. Century to be used by different Faiths (Jews, Muslims, Baha'i, Buddhists, Pagans, Hindus) as well as those of no Faith. The building is elliptical in shape with an emphasis on radial geometry realised in local low impact materials and using Cornish craftspeople. For more info. about the project, go to www.dorkemmyn.org.uk and look at the building page."

- **Brighton Local Group**

Jim Miller and Tim Small of the Brighton Group hold regular meetings that provide an informal opportunity for individuals to discuss sustainable building practices and techniques – concentrating on the technical issues. It also provides a forum for commercial networking and socialising.

Time and Date: **Every second Tuesday** of the month, from 7.00 pm until about 10.30

Venue: **The Battle of Trafalgar**, 34 Guildford Road, Brighton BN1 3LW (just up the hill from Brighton Station)

The evening is likely to be useful for architects, building contractors, and associated trades, people looking to have sustainable building works carried out (new build or renovation). However, all are welcome, including skilled self-builders and DIYers.

Full details of all Local Group events can be found at www.aecb.net/events/

News

Queen's Speech 2015: Energy security and climate change on the agenda

Collaborating with other nations to combat climate change and the release of a new Energy Bill to increase energy security in the UK were among the key announcements in the first all-Conservative Queen's Speech since 1996. In the presence of MPs, peers and other dignitaries in the House of Lords, Queen Elizabeth II today (27 May) set out the government's legislative plans for the year ahead, marking the official State Opening of Parliament.

The Queen gave just two mentions of energy and the environment in her 10-minute speech, to the disappointment of green groups and sustainability professionals alike. First, she said "measures will be introduced to increase energy security," and later she stated that the [new Tory Government](#) "will seek effective global collaboration to sustain economic recovery and to combat climate change - including at the climate change conference in Paris later this year."

On energy security, the Conservatives have issued a [new Energy Bill](#) which aims to "ensure there will be affordable and reliable energy for businesses and families." The Energy Bill - just one of a 28-Bill package announced today - proposes to formally establish the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) - an independent regulator "charged with the asset stewardship and regulation of domestic oil and gas recovery".

The new Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, [Amber Rudd](#), would see her existing regulatory powers transferred to this new OGA, but her regulatory functions in relation to the environment would not be transferred.

On renewable energy, the Energy Bill also contains a clause handing local authorities "consenting power" for all onshore wind applications. However, the impact of such a change may be negligible, given that local authorities already have these

powers for wind farms below 50MW - there are just two operational wind farms in England with more than 50MW capacity, and the changes are expected to affect only one planning application.

The full Energy Bill document goes on to state that the commitment to end new subsidy for onshore wind farms - as reiterated by Rudd earlier this month - will be delivered separately, and DECC will be announcing measures to deliver this soon.

The [background notes](#) to the Queen's speech elaborated: "A global deal is the only way we can deliver the scale of action required. The most cost effective and competitive way to achieve this is an international, legally binding, rules based agreement covering every country. The Government document argued that a global deal is strongly in the UK's interest because it will "create new opportunities for our low carbon industries."

It also claimed that the UK needed to avert the direct threats of climate change - such as floods and heatwaves - as well as the indirect threats such as "rising costs and regional instability".

The document continued: "There is widespread support from business, NGOs and the wider public both in the UK here and internationally."

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Queens-Speech-2015-energy-security-climate-change/>

UK consumers 'in the dark' over timber provenance

British consumers are being 'kept in the dark' about the sourcing practices of some of the UK's largest timber users, according to a new report from WWF. The research - [Do timber products in the UK stack up?](#) - analysed 26 products from 17 different companies and found that none could provide evidence that they had carried out 'sufficient due diligence' in ensuring a sustainable timber supply. Only one company (Cargo) was able to provide any documentation about its product, although the information was in Chinese.

Seven of the inspected companies were selling products made from what WWF considers 'high-risk species' of wood, while eight of the products tested were not actually made from the wood type or species claimed by the company.

WWF singled out two companies - guitar-maker Fender and retailer Oak Furniture Land - as manufacturers who responded to a request for more information, but only to "confirm that they would not give us the information we asked for."

Fender's chief legal officer Mark van Vleet said that all wood sourced and manufactured directly by Fender was certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or an equivalent body. He said: "Fender takes its regulatory responsibilities very seriously and takes exhaustive measures to ensure such compliance. Any statement to the contrary is unfounded."

Meanwhile, a legal representative for Oak Furniture Land refused to comment on the WWF test that claimed the company uses high risk wood. When asked if Oak Furniture Land had plans to go beyond legal timber and start sourcing sustainable timber, the spokesperson said: "We are constantly reviewing our product portfolio and believe we offer the consumer a fantastic product at very affordable prices."

The WWF report calls for reforms to the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), which requires companies to make sure that the wood their products are made from comes from a legal source. WWF estimates that 59% of the wood products coming into Europe are not covered by the EUTR.

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/5/UK-consumers-in-the-dark-over-timber-provenance/28302/>

Natural gas 'very risky' to clean up energy supply

Natural gas does should not be considered an 'easy bridge' between coal power and renewable energy, the New Climate Economy (NCE) has warned. In a report the research group examined whether the shale gas boom would help the transition to a low-carbon energy system, using the US as an example,

Gas power plants produce around 500kg of emissions per MWh of electricity – compared to 750kg/MWh for coal power plants. But the NCE found that while gas power stations may help avoid "lock-in" of new coal power plants, it could also "lock-out" other, lower-emission alternatives like solar and wind.

The take up of natural gas also increases the amount of harmful methane leaking into the air, while cheaper energy could potentially increase demand "Without carefully designed policy guardrails, using a natural gas as a bridge could be very risky", warned the report authors.

Aside from 'locking out' renewables, the main risk of increasing natural gas use is leakage – currently around 1%. Methane – the main ingredient of natural gas - has a global warming potential 34 times higher than carbon dioxide. The paper concludes that if policy-makers want to use gas as a "bridge", they need to manage and reduce methane leakage, restrict the extent of lower-carbon technology lock-out and add "guardrails" to limit energy demand growth

In a separate report the [World Coal Association](#) (WCA) has argued that the best way to reduce emissions from energy production was to embrace clean coal technology. The WCA pointed to the Boundary Dam CCS project in Canada, which is

reportedly saving 1 million tonnes of CO2 a year. The association also claimed that coal power was a vital tool in balancing the variable power output of renewables.

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Natural-gas-very-risky-to-clean-up-energy-supply/28330/>

Oil and gas giants ask UN for global carbon price

Six of Europe's largest oil and gas companies have written to the UN asking for the establishment of an international carbon price. In an open letter to Christina Figueres, the executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the six companies asked for "open direct dialogue with the UN and willing Governments". Specifically the fossil fuel giants – including Shell, and BP – want to create and implement a "workable approach to carbon pricing", adding that their global reach and century-plus of experience would help inform such a policy.

In the letter, [published in Monday's Financial Times](#), the coalition said: "We want to be part of the solution".

"Low carbon business models and solutions are fragile until they reach critical size, but linked with carbon pricing systems worldwide, uncertainty would be reduced and such solutions will start to create value for businesses more rapidly."

"Pricing carbon obviously adds a cost to our production and products - but carbon pricing policy frameworks will continue to provide our businesses and their many stakeholders with a clear roadmap for future investment, a level playing field across all geographies and a clear role in securing a more sustainable future

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Oil-and-gas-giants-ask-UN-for-global-carbon-price/28328/7>

UK landfill sites could each contain £90m of valuable metals

Each UK landfill site could contain up to £90m of valuable metals, according to a recent study from Cranfield University. A [team of scientists](#) analysed samples from four different UK landfill sites, finding metals which could be worth a total of £360m. Between the four sites, there was estimated to be £260m of copper and aluminium, £92m of palladium (used in cars' catalytic converters), and £5m of Neodymium, which can be used to create super-powerful magnets. The UK has around 4,000 landfill sites, potentially containing up to £360bn of unharvested valuable metals.

Significant quantities of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) were disposed in landfill, especially prior to the implementation of the 2002 European Union WEEE Directive. The Government has shown in the recent past that it is committed to extracting valuable resources from waste. In March it allocated [£600,000 funding](#) to help develop Britain's first 'plasma facility' which will recover gold, silver and platinum from electronic waste.

In related news, the EU yesterday launched a [public consultation](#) to help inform its upcoming circular economy action plan, to be presented by the end of 2015. Any ideas generated by the consultation will feed into a new strategy which aims to transform Europe into a "competitive resource-efficient economy".

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/5/UK-landfill-sites-could-each-contain--90m-of-valuable-metals/>

New water benchmarking scheme targets 'forgotten utility'

Britain's first national water benchmarking scheme has been launched, allowing businesses to reduce water usage by an average of 30% and regain up to £500m in lost annual revenue. Aquamark, managed by Buckinghamshire-based water and energy efficiency consultancy [ADSM](#), is a multi-million-pound, three-year project which aims to develop 500 different building benchmark classifications for water usage across the country.

Using a combination of big data sources and water billing data provided by participants, ADSM will identify areas where water efficiency improvements could be made and provide consumption targets for each individual property. Once the research project is completed, each sector will be provided with free benchmarks to assist them to manage water more effectively.

For businesses taking part in the Aquamark project, ADSM will securely make use of their water bills to analyse consumption data and identify how, where and why water is being used. ADSM will then use publically available online data - such as the Ofsted website for schools and TripAdvisor for hotels - to build a better picture of each individual building's water use.

This benchmarking initiative is essentially an updated and enhanced version of the Watermark benchmarking scheme, which ADSM set up on behalf of the Government in 2002. That scheme created typical usage and best practice benchmarks for the public sector, which eventually formed the basis of water efficiency targets.

To kick-start Aquamark, ADSM has obtained private equity funding to provide a range of free services for the duration of the three-year scheme. These include bill validation services, monthly consumption reports and access to all of the benchmarks at the end of the project. The Aquamark launch took place at ADSM's media offices in Pinewood Studios last week. The project has already received strong backing from the water industry, regulators OFWAT, The Environment Agency, and leading research experts BRE, BSRIA and the University of Oxford.

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/4/Aquamark-water-benchmarking-for-UK-businesses/>

Events

Low Energy Masterclass Event: 16th June 2015 - 9.30am to 4.30pm

Your Homes Newcastle

Unit 5 Greenfinch Way, Gateway West, Newburn Riverside,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 8NX

Zero Carbon Hub's second regional low carbon event has now been organised for Tuesday 16 June.

The Zero Carbon Hub will update you on their work and the practical implementation of low carbon building, as well as updating on the policy, so you'll get key political insight now that the election is over. We have a talk from a large housebuilder that is moving to low carbon construction in advance of the regulatory requirement to do so. We look at how our example in practice, Space Hus, is performing and the lessons learnt. And we start to consider the area where the bulk of carbon savings are always going to be made – our existing housing stock, with the Centre of Refurbishment Excellence and Sustainable Homes talking about the scale of the challenge and how this might be tackled.

Booking

Spaces at this event are limited. To reserve your place please email info@zerocarbonhub.org using the subject line 'Low Energy Newcastle'.

More information on the presentations and workshops throughout the event can be found online at www.zerocarbonhub.org

Courses

Certified Passivhaus Tradesperson Training

Venue: Norwich NR6
Next dates: 8 June/6 July 2015
Cost: £800 plus VAT (exam fee £175 plus VAT)

10% discount for Passivhaus Trust and AECB members

Why get the Qualification:

With UK Building Regulations moving towards zero carbon 2016 the Passivhaus Standard is increasingly viewed as a viable and practical solution to achieve Carbon Compliance. Throughout Europe from 2021 all new buildings must meet the provisions laid out within the 'Nearly Zero Energy Building' in accordance with the EU Buildings Directive, for which the Passivhaus Standard is the basis. The Passivhaus standard is the fastest growing energy standard in the world with in excess of 30,000 buildings constructed to date.

Passivhaus is a rigorous energy standard that benefits building occupants with huge reductions in energy consumption in addition to an extremely high level of indoor comfort. To achieve it however requires nothing more than very good detailed design and thorough good-practice through the construction process. This entails awareness of interdependencies of different components and also an ability to assess deviations from the planned work that might arise on site that could adversely affect the building performance.

Whilst predominantly a course aimed at trades people, a wider audience could benefit attendance, as there is a need for contextual knowledge and understanding throughout the industry. This qualification demonstrates competence and commitment to improving building standards by both individuals and organisations.

Course Overview

The course has been designed to provide the Passivhaus Institute training requirements. In addition to this, it includes practical sessions such as airtightness detailing, windows and ventilation examples, together with hands-on sessions and demonstrations.

The basis of the course comprises of six interdisciplinary modules with two specific trades modules (thermal insulation/window installation and heat supply/ventilation). Each module will take approximately 2-2.5 hours. It is this core content that you will be examined upon.

Who Should Attend:

- Building Tradespeople, Site Operatives, Site Managers, Project Managers, Clerk of Works, Clients Agents/Surveyors;
- Also suitable for Quantity Surveyors and Estimators, Building & Facilities Managers, Maintenance Operatives.

Learning Objectives:

- Delivered in modules the course covers Definition and Basic Principles of Passivhaus design;
- Airtightness and vapour barrier in typical construction types;
- Good practice with all types of insulation;
- Airtightness testing requirements and regimes;
- Importance of thermal bridging detail;
- Glazing choices and installation requirements;
- Understanding and interpreting of PHPP (the Passivhaus Planning Package);
- Good practice with MVHR (mechanical ventilation and heat recovery) design, installation and maintenance;
- Supplementary heat supply, source and emitter.

Entry Requirements:

- Provision of full CV demonstrating suitable experience and/or qualification.

For more information email training@wholehouseenergy.com or ring 01603 957104

Publications

Building with Straw Bales

Revised and updated full-colour edition of bestselling practical book

Published 29th May 2015, but available for pre-order from the 16th May.

With the first straw bale houses to be offered on the open market having gone on sale recently, straw bale building is an eco-friendly building technique that is finally entering the mainstream, enabling people to design and build their own home in a low-cost and environmentally friendly way.

Building with Straw Bales: A practical manual for self-builders and architects is the revised and extended 3rd edition of Barbara Jones', in full-colour for the first time, with stunning photos that provide inspiration as well as practical details.

Barbara Jones is recognised as one of the world's experts on building with straw bales, with her hands-on training courses proving popular to people from all walks of life. Throughout her career she has been a strong advocate for women in the construction industry and she was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from Women in Construction in 2011 and received a Woman of Outstanding Achievement Award from UK Resource Centre (UKRC) in 2009. In 2014 she founded the School of Natural Building (SNaB), whose aim is not only to promote natural building as a sustainable and affordable method, but also to encourage more women to become involved in construction. The previous two editions of *Building with Straw Bales* have sold over 13,000 copies since 2002.

Price: £29.99 paperback, £39.99 hardcover

Discount to AECB members 30% (hardback and paperback editions)

Dates valid: 16th May 2015 to 30st June 2015

Go to www.greenbooks.co.uk/bwsb

To redeem this discount: simply enter your voucher code AECBMAY15 at checkout.

New From IHS BRE Press

- **Tiled floors with underfloor heating: A guide to minimising and repairing cracking (IP 6/15)**

Rupert Pool and Tony Yates

ISBN 978-1-84806-422-5

A common cause of problems in rigid tiled flooring is cracking, associated with underfloor heating. Over the years, BRE has investigated numerous cases where stone or ceramic tiles have been laid onto a screed only for cracks to appear in the tiles and along grouted joints within a few weeks of operation of the heating system.

The tile cracks and open joints are almost always caused by movement of the screed at a pre-existing crack or, in some instances, a 'day' joint in the screed. This movement, although only a fraction of a millimetre, is sufficient to crack even thick granite slabs. The cracks in the screed are normally the result of a poorly designed floor screed (i.e. badly coordinated movement joints) or failure to properly commission the heating system before the tiles are laid.

This Information Paper sets out BRE's experience of screeds that contain warm-water underfloor heating systems and describes how the risk of cracking can be minimised and how repairs can be undertaken. Electric 'undertile' heating and proprietary 'thin-screed' underfloor heating systems are not dealt with in this publication. This Information Paper is aimed at architects and specifiers.

Go to <http://www.brebookshop.com/details.jsp?id=327534>

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Vacancies

Seeking Architectural Freelancer – Jim Miller Design (Hove)

Jim Miller Design (JMD) is a sustainable architectural practice based in Hove and is looking for a freelancer to assist with the preparing of drawings and visualisations for mainly residential retrofits and new builds. AutoCAD essential, SketchUP useful, but other software may be considered such as Revit.

Knowledge of (or at least a keenness to learn) low energy/Passivhaus design is fundamental. Ideally local to Sussex, but possible to work remotely with occasional visits to Brighton to discuss projects. Hoping to form a long term freelance relationship.

Please contact Jim at <http://www.jimmillerdesign.co.uk/>

If you have any news, events or courses you would like to publicise in Network then please email details to network@aecb.net.