



August 2015

## AECB News

### Leading environmental building organisation slams Government Zero Carbon Homes U-turn

The AECB, the Association for Environment Conscious Building, has added its voice to widespread criticism within the construction sector following the government's announcement on Friday 10 July that it is scrapping the 2016 Zero Carbon Homes target - despite the subsequent 'clarification' by the UK energy secretary that "the decision has actually just been to 'postpone' the policy, rather than scrap it altogether".

Andy Simmonds CEO of the AECB said:

*"We have always supported the Zero Carbon Homes target as providing a driver to improved energy efficiency standards. The target represents an important stepping stone towards best-practice fabric energy efficiency standards as practised by those currently building to AECB Silver & Passivhaus levels. It is also a vital step for the construction industry as it works towards the forthcoming EU's near zero energy buildings target coming into effect in 2021.*

*"We have therefore been extremely disappointed to see this unexpected U-turn on the UK's Zero Carbon Homes ambition. Scrapping planned improvements in building fabric energy efficiency standards is an entirely retrograde step. The current UK building standards are relatively poor in comparison with most other north European countries. Furthermore they are clearly not adequate to meet the levels of carbon emissions reductions necessary to begin to address climate change and meet the requirements of the Climate Change Act. Every building constructed now to these standards will continue to use more energy than it needs to and consequently emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than it needs to for the rest of its lifetime. Moreover, the people using and living in those buildings will be locked into unnecessarily high energy bills, poor levels of comfort and wellbeing - and in many cases poor health - for decades to come.*

*"We are also concerned about the effect on our members' business. The moving of this goalpost at such short notice will inevitably have negative consequences for our members as well as for the wider construction industry. We are committed to promoting low energy best practice in the construction industry, but this sudden change in legislative framework will inevitably impact our members negatively. House builders, construction companies, housing associations and manufacturers, large and small, have been working towards this target for nearly 10 years and have invested many millions of pounds in putting advanced plans in place."*

The AECB is also concerned about the impact of this decision on the implementation of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive and requirement for all new buildings to be constructed at nearly zero-energy levels from January 2019 (public buildings) and 2021 (all buildings). The association is investigating the consequences - including economic risks - for the UK should it fail to transpose this directive as a result of the policy U-turn.

Andy Simmonds added: *"The abandonment at any attempt to improve standards in 2016 will inevitably lead to a legislative and industry scramble closer to the 2019/21 dates with the corresponding uncertainty and negative effect on businesses in the construction sector."*

The AECB is calling on its members to contact and meet up with their local constituency MPs to urge the UK government to reconsider this decision and to lobby for radical and urgent action on energy efficiency and low energy building.

Find your local MP here: <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

#### **The AECB - Who we are**

The **AECB** (the Association for Environment Conscious Building) with 1,200 members and its sister organisation the **Passivhaus Trust** with 250 member companies focus on building performance, health, comfort and energy efficiency.

Our current focus is how to economically deliver both zero-carbon new build and large scale energy efficiency measures to existing homes, at the lowest cost to UK plc:

We promote *affordable* decarbonisation and argue that: extensive *Energy Efficiency* or 'Negawatts' are a compellingly attractive investment for the UK and; reducing the energy we use for heat and power give the nation far superior returns compared to those from investing in carbon capture and storage, or subsidy for nuclear generation.

AECB and Passivhaus Trust members are drawn from across the sector including manufactures, suppliers, housing developers, general and specialist contractors, tradespeople, architects, engineers, consultants, assessors, academics, students, designers, housing associations, LA Officers, property professionals, self-builders and property owners.

### **Pointers for lobbying MPs on Zero Carbon Homes U-turn & energy efficient building fabric specifically**

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July the government announced that the Zero Carbon 2016 target is to be abandoned (Fixing the Foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation). The government does not intend to proceed with either the Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme or the proposed increase in on-site energy efficiency measures.

Whilst we applaud Amber Rudd's related statement that "energy efficiency is the most effective way to reduce carbon and reduce bills - it is the win-win," the AECB remains concerned that her use of the term may not in reality cover improving the energy efficiency of buildings' fabric – walls, roofs, floors, windows – in order to reduce GHG emissions, air pollution, fuel poverty and the resulting impact on occupants' health. Such improvements - properly carried out - will reduce homeowners' heating bills whilst *improving* winter/summer comfort levels *and* occupants' health and wellbeing.

Too often the term 'energy efficiency' is used to describe heat and power *demand reduction and generation* measures. This unrelentingly confuses an important debate and prevents sufficient clarity in media coverage or when announcing policy decisions. The AECB would welcome more informed, intelligent and nuanced use of the term to aid public and private understanding of this crucial national issue.

### **Action**

The AECB is calling on its members to write to and meet up with their local constituency MPs to urge the UK government to reconsider this decision – specifically the energy efficiency measures - and to lobby for radical and urgent action on energy efficiency and low energy building.

- **Ask your MP to write to the Treasury on your behalf calling upon them to reconsider the U-turn on the Zero Carbon Homes target.**

### **Suggested points to raise with your MP:**

- As an AECB member you are supportive of the fabric efficiency element of the Zero Carbon Homes target as a driver to improved energy efficiency standards, believing that a step further would need to be taken in due course to the best practice of the AECB Silver and Passivhaus standards. It is important to differentiate between measures which improve energy efficiency (the Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard), requirement for onsite renewables, and offsite carbon offsetting (Allowable Solutions) which many in the AECB may not support.
- Emphasise the effect of the decision on your business. The moving of this goalpost at such short notice will inevitably have negative consequences. UK companies have been working with this legislative framework for nearly 10 years, and have invested many millions of pounds in putting advanced plans in place.
- The energy efficiency requirements of the current UK building standards are relatively poor in comparison with most other north European countries, and furthermore they are clearly not adequate to meet the levels of carbon emission reductions necessary to begin to address climate change and meet the requirements of the Climate Change Act. The AECB Silver and Passivhaus route may offer a robust, complimentary and cost effective package for achieving future proofed energy efficient homes.
- Every building constructed now to these current standards will continue to use more energy than it needs to, and consequently emit more CO<sub>2</sub> than it needs to for rest of its lifetime. It also means that decarbonising the heat supply becomes very expensive (more heat demand = more expensive decarbonisation and distribution investment) AECB believes a minimum of 50% reduction in space heating energy across the domestic buildings stock is a sensible target, leaving 50% of UK heat supply to be decarbonised. For more on this particularly in relation to existing buildings see <https://www.aecb.net/the-cost-effective-energy-measures-bill/>
- If the Zero Carbon Homes energy efficiency targets are dropped, how will the UK be able to meet its emission reduction targets required by Climate Change Act?
- If the Zero Carbon Homes energy efficiency targets are dropped how will the UK now be able to comply with EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, and requirement for all new buildings to be constructed at nearly zero-energy from January 2019 (public buildings) and 2021 (all buildings)?
- What does the Government mean by the statement (in the 'Fixing the Foundations' report) that it "*will keep energy efficiency standards under review, recognising that existing measures to increase energy efficiency of new buildings should be allowed time to become established*".
- *Seek clarification as to what the term 'energy efficiency' actually means to your MP.*

The AECB and sister organisation, the Passivhaus Trust, are experts in this field and its members are leading thinkers and practitioners – members tend to be pragmatic, yet knowledgeable and ambitious. The government should make far more use of the unique AECB/PHT expertise and network.

### **For Local Authorities**

Neil Cutland raises 2 additional important questions (from his blog:<http://www.cutlandconsulting.co.uk/Article.aspx?aID=43> accessed 22 July 2015):

*“One week ago today the Government cancelled the UK’s ten-year journey towards introducing zero-carbon homes by 2016. At the same time it announced that there will be no uplift in Part L of the Building Regulations for the foreseeable future. A few months before this, the Planning and Energy Act was amended so that Local Authorities could no longer set local energy efficiency standards higher than Building Regs. The amendment was due to take effect when the national zero-carbon standard kicked in in 2016. So the two questions which Local Authorities need answers to are:*

**Q1.** Now that zero-carbon 2016 will not happen at all, can LAs in fact continue to specify higher local standards indefinitely? (That would be nice - but we suspect that it wasn’t Government’s intent.)

**Q2.** Either way, can LAs carry on using the surviving clauses of the Planning and Energy Act to specify that a certain proportion of a development’s energy be supplied from renewable or low-carbon sources? Without this ability there would be very little left to drive innovation at the local planning level.

**For more information please contact:**

[ceo@aecb.net](mailto:ceo@aecb.net)

[www.aecb.net](http://www.aecb.net)

[www.passivhaustrust.org.uk](http://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk)

To read more and for further information visit: [www.aecb.net/news/](http://www.aecb.net/news/)

## Welcome

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

Richard Brooks	Derby
<a href="#">Co-Create Consulting</a>	London
Richard Pender	Northumberland
Carbon Co-op	Greater Manchester
Paul Coster	Norfolk
Leeds Beckett University	West Yorkshire
Fahimeh Tatarestaghi	Iran
David Firth	West Yorkshire
Dobulous Lifestyles LTD	Somerset
Martin Montgomery	West Midlands
Sustainable Homes	Surrey
Scott Weddell	East Lothian

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](mailto:emma@aecb.net). If you have joined as a company, you can then enhance your member profile listing on the popular [Member Directory](#). 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](#). 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](mailto:gill@aecb.net).

**UK Passivhaus Conference 2015: 20<sup>th</sup> 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>

## AECB Annual Conference and AGM



building knowledge



2015 Annual Conference | 19-20 June 2015 | Sheffield

An article on the 2015 AECB Conference by AECB Trustee, Mark Siddall, is available to read [here](#).

## Homes of the future coming onto the UK housing market now

### Passive House New Builds – Raising Awareness

With an ever increasing number of Passive House new builds and a small number of EnerPHit / close to EnerPHit refurb coming onto the UK housing market now, it seems like a good time for a bit more awareness raising in the mainstream media.

Tina Holt is looking to sell a near-Enerphit home in Nottingham and Peter Land is trying to reach Passivhaus with his house in London, and we would like to find out if there are other AECB / PHT members doing the same now or in the near future.

We are aiming to get an article about the benefits of living in a recently completed PH / EnerPHit home into the Telegraph Property section, or the Guardian, or similar. The second half of the article would include details of PH/EnerPHit homes currently / soon to be for sale.

Proposed title along the lines of....:

*“Homes of the future coming onto the UK housing market now”*

**So question 1** - Would you or a client of yours want to have their home included in the homes for sale list if we can get an article into the media?

**Question 2** - Does anyone have a contact in the national press, ideally the property editor of the Telegraph or similar?

**And question 3** - Do you have any material that you would like to contribute to the first, descriptive section? Our current idea is to focus on the comfort and health benefits (and building health) rather than the technical aspects.

If so, we'd be very pleased to hear from you - email [tinaholt@ecohousenet.co.uk](mailto:tinaholt@ecohousenet.co.uk). (We'd like to have a list of all homes to include by 15<sup>th</sup> August at the latest.)

Alternatively, please complete Tina's short survey which can be found on Survey Monkey through the link below:

[Selling EnerPHit refurb and Passive House new build Survey](#)

Thank you in advance to all who respond.

## New Leaf Solar: Herefordshire

New Leaf Solar is a joint project that is being developed with Sharenergy and Herefordshire Council to install the UK's first community-owned solar PV array on a closed landfill site. It is a pioneering project and will in fact be one of small handful of similar projects and indeed the only community-owned solar project on landfill. The project is not without challenges and obstacles – but it is all good learning fun!

The installation will be located at the former landfill site at Stretton Sugwas, near Hereford, where there is scope to install up to 1MW of solar PV: this is sufficient to power 250 homes (based on average usage of 4kW / home).

Initial feasibility work has taken place (supported by [WRAP's Rural Community Energy Fund](#)). Further development work, including a full Environmental Impact Assessment, has been completed using investment from a pioneer share offer. If the planning application, which has already been submitted to Herefordshire Council, is successful, the main share offer will be issued later this year in order to fund the installation costs. All being well, the site will be producing clean energy in spring 2016.

Installation of renewable energy generation at the site provides all-round benefits. It enables a disused site to provide a productive function; it will help reduce the county's carbon footprint; it provides a fair return to investors; and the surplus will help support New Leaf's work in the county such as the annual h.Energy event. The intention is also to supply the village hall in Stretton Sugwas with free solar power.

Letters of support for the planning application would be welcomed. To make things quick and easy there is a draft letter which can be downloaded from the New Leaf website below

<http://www.herefordshirenewleaf.org.uk/node/1765>

There is also a Facebook page which you may want to 'Like'

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcherefordandworcester/videos/846601365412273/>

## **AECB CarbonLite Passivhaus Designer course at Architype's Office in Hereford, September**

**Book Now & get the Early Bird price: full course and exam for only £2000+VAT\*.**

*(This offer finishes on the 7th August - normal cost £2.4K)*

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/](http://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.

### **Our course programme:**

#### **Week 1:**

- 7th Sept - Fundamentals of Passivhaus with Eric Parks (£300)
- 8th -9th Sept - Science of Passivhaus with Nick Grant (£600) + Site visit to Cae Duff Passivhaus and optional meal out.
- 10th Sept - Construction of Passivhaus with Bill Butcher (£300)

Additional to the CEPH course on 11th Sept (£300):

- Morning session - Introduction to Psi values with Nick Grant.
- Afternoon session - Introduction to designPH with Dave Edwards\*\*

#### **Week 2:**

- 21st-22nd Sept - Building Services of Passivhaus with Alan Clarke (£600) + Visit to Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre and optional meal out.
- 23rd-24th Sept - PHPP with Marine Sanchez and Nick Grant - (£600)\*\*
- Revision Session with Peter Warm - 25th Sept (£300)
- International Passivhaus Institute examination - 10am-1pm on 10th October

All prices are for AECB members and exc VAT.

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

\*\*Need suitable laptop for this module.

Contact Ingrid Bravo on 01752452546 or email [training@peterwarm.co.uk](mailto:training@peterwarm.co.uk)

Another Passivhaus course this year: **LONDON B**

Week 1

2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Nov

Week 2	16 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> Nov
PHI Exam	4 <sup>th</sup> Dec

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](http://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 costs 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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/](http://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](mailto:gill@aecb.net). A forum board has been set up for discussion – click [here](#) to read more.

## AECB Member News

### UK Passivhaus Awards 2015: WINNERS!

The UK Passivhaus Awards winners were decided at the Trust's fifth birthday celebrations on the 7th of July at the Residence of the Austrian Ambassador. Eight projects were shortlisted after catching the judges' eye; each of these were then presented for voting by Passivhaus Trust members online and almost 100 members and guests at the awards ceremony. The winners that beat off the tough competition were:

Small Projects - [Steel Farm, LEAP](#)



Large Projects - [Wilkinson Primary School, Architype](#)



Retrofit - [Cre8 Barn, Green Building Store](#)



For more details on these AECB members' projects click [here](#).

## 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/](http://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](mailto: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/>

## Local Group News

For full details of the events listed below and forthcoming events please visit [www.aecb.net/events/](http://www.aecb.net/events/) .

### Forthcoming Local Group Events in August 2015:

- **3 Shires Group: Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at 6.30pm**

The next activity for the 3 Shires Group will be a visit to **Living Green**, Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire GL54 2AP (For more information visit: [www.living-green.co.uk](http://www.living-green.co.uk))

This is an eco show house and show garden. Features include grass roof, underfloor heating, solar thermal and solar pv, rainwater harvesting, organically managed garden full of wildlife, climate change awareness measures, flood control such as paving to absorb rainwater, natural paints and wood treatments to minimise toxic load in the house, clever re-using of all kinds of things (with humour), water saving measures, energy efficiency – sheep's wool insulation etc. etc. Cut-aways in the house show the detailing- e.g. dry lining, straw boards, lime render etc.

Diana has kindly offered to provide nibbles and soft drinks.

Date and time: Thursday 6th August, starting at 6.30pm.

Address: High Street, Bourton-on-the-Water Gloucestershire GL54 2AP

<http://www.living-green.co.uk/find-us>

Please RSVP to [neill.lewis@aecb.net](mailto:neill.lewis@aecb.net)

- **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/](http://www.aecb.net/events/)

## News

### Green groups urge Cameron to address 'woeful' environmental record

Leading environmental groups have written to Prime Minister David Cameron to criticise the scrapping of 10 green policies in the first few months of the new Conservative Government. The 10 signatories, which together represent millions of members, include The National Trust, the RSPB, The Wildlife Trust, Greenpeace, the WWF and the Campaign to Protect Rural England. (Scroll down to read the full letter). The letter cites changes to support for renewable energy technology, such as the end of the Renewables Obligation for Solar energy and Onshore Wind, changes to the Climate Change Levy, the planned selloff of the Green Investment Bank and the cancellation of two zero-carbon building initiatives as some of the major failings in green policy. The signatories also reject the policy U-turn to allow exploration for Shale gas in protected areas and the end of the Green Deal finance scheme.

The letter states: "We welcomed the Conservative manifesto commitment to 'being the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than that in which we found it'. Unfortunately, ten green policies which could have helped you to achieve these goals have been cancelled or weakened in the past three months."

The signatories add: "We have, as yet, seen no positive new measures introduced to restore the health of our environment or grow the low carbon economy."

The letter claims the Conservative policy moves were "running counter to the strong intentions" in the pre-election manifesto. Shaun Spiers, chief executive of the Campaign to Protect Rural England said, although the Prime Minister clearly cared about the environment, the Government record was "woeful".

WWF UK chief executive David Nussbaum called the changes to environmental commitments "short-sighted and short-termist", and Mike Clarke, chief executive of the RSPB, said the Conservatives risked leaving "a legacy of empty rhetoric."

The signatories also opposed Chancellor George Osborne's changes to Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) in the Summer Budget earlier this month. The Budget made plans to change the tax, charging a flat rate of £140 for all cars and removing the sliding scale for new cars based on emissions. Under new scheme, zero-emissions cars would still pay nothing, but many low emission cars would pay the same rate as inefficient gas-guzzlers.

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport and signatory of the letter, said: "The changes announced by the Chancellor to vehicle excise duty have largely removed the financial incentive to buy a more efficient and less polluting car and fly in the face of the government's environmental commitments."

Criticism of the changes to VED was not limited to the environmental groups; their calls were echoed by the president of the Automobile Association (AA) Edmund King, who told BBC News: "If the government is serious about trying to get motorists to drive cleaner greener cars, this is really counter-productive.

"Drivers will not be given the same incentive to go for cleaner (petrol or hybrid) cars so there won't be the same pressure on manufacturers to produce those cleaner models. We seem to be getting rid of an incentive that worked very well."

According to a survey by the AA, 59% of drivers thought the VED changes penalised drivers of low-emission cars.

Following recent changes, Energy Secretary Amber Rudd said the ends to energy subsidies were part of a strategy to keep costs down for consumers: "My priorities are clear - we need to keep bills as low as possible for hardworking families and businesses while reducing our emissions in the most cost-effective way."

Rudd has also recently reaffirmed the Government's commitment to the upcoming climate change talks in Paris in December.

However, Greenpeace UK executive director John Sauven said the outlook for the UK's position in the talks was looking increasingly difficult: "It will be a hard sell to the international community at the climate talks in Paris at the end of the year. Without any real domestic action to tackle climate change this government will lose any credibility to influence others."

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Green-groups-urge-David-Cameron-to-change-woeful-Government-environmental-record/>

## Government pulls plug on Green Deal 'to protect taxpayers'

The Government's Green Deal energy efficiency loans scheme is to close in light of "low take-up and concerns about industry standards." The Green Deal Finance Company - the organisation which provides the loans that underpin the scheme - is to receive no further funding, DECC has confirmed. Energy Secretary Amber Rudd has also announced that the Government will top any future funding of the Green Deal Home Improvement Fund, which gave households cash back on energy efficiency improvements.

Rudd said: "We are on the side of hardworking families and businesses – which is why we cannot continue to fund the Green Deal. It's now time for the building industry and consumer groups to work with us to make new policy and build a system that works.

"Together, we can achieve this Government's ambition to make homes warmer and drive down bills for one million more homes by 2020 – and to do so at the best value for money for taxpayers."

The Government's other energy efficiency policies including the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme will continue to operate, and DECC says it will work in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government to improve the UK's existing housing stock.

"The longer-term future of the Energy Company Obligation scheme will be part of these discussions around a new, better-integrated policy," DECC said.

The Department has commissioned an independent review led by Peter Bonfield, chief executive of the BRE Group, to look at standards, consumer protection and enforcement of energy efficiency schemes and ensure that the system properly supports and protects consumers.

Responding to today's announcement, Julie Hirigoyen, chief executive of the UK Green Building Council, said: "With each passing day, this Government puts an end to another green policy. Government's strategy on dealing with high energy bills through home energy efficiency is now dead in the water.

"While the Green Deal was by no means perfect, the principle of enabling households to install energy saving measures without paying upfront costs was sound. The irony is that the scheme was finally becoming established and the number of plans was growing.

"This is yet another announcement with no forewarning that will leave the energy efficiency industry battered and bruised."

The much-criticised Green Deal scheme, which launched in 2013, fell well short of its initial target of signing up 10,000 households in its first year of operation. But the market did begin to pick up, and by the end of June 2015, measures had been installed in around 10,000 properties using Green Deal finance, with an additional 5,600 Green Deal finance plans currently in progress.

The Green Deal scheme was expected to play an integral part in the new Government's energy efficiency strategy, after the Tories pledged to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to one million households over the course of the Parliament.

Speaking in her first Select Committee hearing earlier this week, Rudd said energy efficiency was a "win-win" as the most effective way to reduce carbon and reduce bills.

"I'm particularly ambitious in this area and I want to put together a long-term framework for homes and fuel poverty," Rudd said. "I'm looking at the various initiatives that have been in place under the last Government to find out which ones are working best and which ones have not worked well, so that we can work with industry to design a system that will deliver most cost effectively.

"I'm hoping to come forward with some new announcements in this area in the autumn."

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Green-Deal-loan-finance-company-scheme-closed-by-Government/>

## Summer Budget 2015: Osborne provides further uncertainty for green business

Chancellor George Osborne has brought further uncertainty to green leaders, with an emergency Budget that confirmed more taxes for renewables along with tax-breaks for oil and gas. Delivering his second Budget in four months on Wednesday - the first all-Conservative budget in nearly 20 years - Osborne failed to offer much good news for the low-carbon economy; instead bringing further uncertainty to the sector. Osborne announced that the Government would be changing the Climate Change Levy, which businesses pay on their energy use. The Levy is "outdated", according to the Chancellor, who said an exemption for renewables in the CCL will be removed.

There will be a transitional period for suppliers - from 1 August 2015 - to claim the CCL exemption on any renewable electricity that was generated before that date. According to the Budget document, the Government will discuss the details of this transitional period with stakeholders over the summer and autumn, to determine an appropriate length for it.

On green taxes, the Budget document also states: "The Government will review the business energy efficiency tax landscape and consider approaches to simplify and improve the effectiveness of the regime. The review will consider the Climate Change Levy (CCL), Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) energy efficiency scheme and their interaction with other business energy efficiency policies and regulations. A consultation will be launched in the autumn."

Meanwhile, Osborne said that planned tax breaks for North Sea oil and gas will still be going ahead as planned.

Osborne did not mention a review of the £7.6bn Levy Control Framework (LCF) - which is meant to provide clean energy subsidies through to 2020/21 - despite numerous reports suggesting he would beforehand. The Government's own analysis suggested that the money pot had already been used up and is at risk of exceeding its budget.

Just last month, Labour MP Alan Whitehead said the LCF was "effectively completely bust" and that the mechanism hasn't worked in the way it should have, thanks to "the dead hand of the Treasury". Similar concerns were voiced by former Climate Minister Greg Barker, who told edie that managing an ever-tightening LCF budget would be "the big challenge" for DECC this year.

In just two months since the election, the Tories have overseen a subsidy cut for onshore wind, a budget cut for DECC and the sale of the Green Investment Bank. Today's Summer Budget will likely bring further uncertainty to the sector.

Full story at <http://www.edie.net/news/6/Summer-Budget-2015-George-Osborne-renewable-energy-climate-change/>

## Certified Passivhaus Tradesperson Training



WHOLE HOUSE ENERGY

**Venue:** CTS Unit A Frenbury Business Park, Hellesdon Park Road, Norwich NR6 5DP

**Next Dates:** September 7-9<sup>th</sup> (8.30am-5.00pm)

**Cost:** £800 plus VAT (Exam fee £175 plus VAT)

### 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.

**Course Duration:**

- Full course - 3 full days plus exam ½ day
- Optional 1 Day Site tours (subject to location and availability)

**Format:**

- Three days with a combination of classroom based learning and practical demonstrations both in and out of classroom.

**Learning and Outcomes:**

- Certified Passivhaus Tradesperson Qualification (Passivhaus Institute endorsed) and Certificate
- The course qualifies for a 3 day Construction Certification CPD
- Listed on the Passivhaus Institute website
- For full list see the Catalogue of Learning Objectives pdf available online at [www.wholehouseenergy.com/passivhaus](http://www.wholehouseenergy.com/passivhaus)

**Examination:**

- 90-minute open book 'Certified Passivhaus Tradesperson' exam.
- Next Examination date: November 2015

**Entry Requirements:**

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

For more information and downloads go to [www.wholehouseenergy.com](http://www.wholehouseenergy.com)

Email [jackie@wholehouseenergy.com](mailto:jackie@wholehouseenergy.com), tel 01603 957104

## Events

### SuperHome Open Days – September 2015

**Visit the old houses transformed into homes of the future**

You can get the inside story on some exceptional home improvement projects this September as SuperHome Open Days return. SuperHomes are older homes refurbished by their owners for greater comfort, lower bills and far fewer carbon emissions - at least 60% less! These are some of the UK homes most improved for energy use. They are fit for the future.

SuperHomes have superior insulation; many have alternative heating sources and some produce their own energy. In every SuperHome you can learn about a range of installed technologies. Tours and Q&A sessions will let you quiz the owners, so you can discover what worked and get frank feedback on anything that didn't. Refurbished Victorian, Edwardian and post-war properties are amongst those open to the public. Entry is free. To find out more or to pre-book a place on a free tour, visit [www.superhomes.org.uk](http://www.superhomes.org.uk)

### Decarbonising Buildings 8 Day Innovator Catalyst

**Birmingham 18th- 15th November**

*Organised by Climate-KiC*

This is an interactive 8 day workshop looking at problems and barriers around decarbonising buildings with an emphasis on the participant's case studies and particular problems and linkage to transition thinking. Participants will bring their experiences from all over Europe and international speakers have been invited.

The first edition of this catalyst held last year was very successful, see <http://www.innovationbham.com/2015/02/04/climate-kics-innovator-catalyst-a-reflection/>

For more details of the course see <http://www.climate-kic.org/programmes/innovator-catalyst/> or contact Dave Green (AECB member and lead coach on the catalyst), [dave.green@climate-kic.org](mailto:dave.green@climate-kic.org).

There is a fee of 2,000 euros for the workshop but an early bird of 1,000 euros applies and discounts for SMEs.

**The AECB have been a host on the Climate KiC Pioneers programme and Tim Martel who was a Pioneer in 2013 now works with Andy Simmonds.**

*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).*