

**[THE] ASSOCIATION FOR ENVIRONMENT CONSCIOUS BUILDING
COMPANY NO 5336768**

ANNUAL REPORT

COVERING THE PERIOD OCTOBER 2015 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2016

Note: this report is for a fifteen month period as the financial year has been changed to December 31st

INTRODUCTION

AECB Chair (Peter Wilkinson)

It has been a turbulent time for the UK and the world since this time last year. When I look back at the reflections of the 2015 major events affecting the AECB, they seem to pale into insignificance compared with the dramatic events which unfolded in 2016.

The political landscape has become increasingly challenging for the AECB to navigate. Whilst the UK still has its legal responsibilities pinned to international legislation and its commitment to the 2050 target for CO2 emissions, UK domestic policy appears to be in disarray - lost, with no clear direction, even though the challenging issues that face us all have not changed.

After over a quarter of a century since the AECB was established, members have rallied together as a progressive organisation and the events of the past 12 months clearly show that the work of the AECB is more relevant now, than it ever was before. The UK Government's policies may be stranded in a vacuum of uncertainty, but AECB members know where the future lies for meaningful and measurable change in the UK's fight against global warming within the built environment.

The AECB continues to forge ahead with pioneering initiatives. The CarbonLite Retrofit (CLR) on-line training course for building refurbishment was rolled out in 2016. Over 40 participants took part in the first cohort, with an additional 30 currently engaged on the CLR course. Feedback from participants has been very positive and the AECB is now engaging with a number of partners to spread the CLR course wider than the AECB membership - see the AECB's website for further details on how to sign up and be part of the 'Building Knowledge' revolution.

The Passivhaus Trust, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the AECB, continues to strengthen the rationale for a measurable and achievable benchmark building standard for the UK. The Passivhaus Trust's increasing influence within the UK is being noticed around the world, as the Passivhaus Trust becomes a role model for other passivhaus organisations.

2017 will see the AECB strengthen its ties with others in Europe. Our colleagues in Ireland should soon be an integral part of the AECB, allowing links with our European partners to be maintained (more on this in the New Year).

The AECB is delighted to announce a new partnership with the organisation 'Osmosis', which will be helping the AECB to deliver an expanding programme of events. Osmosis is headed by David Pierpoint, known to many AECB members from his days at the former Staffordshire based Centre of Refurbishment Excellence (CoRE). We are looking forward to working with David and his team in the future - watch out for future bulletins in Network.

AECB PROGRESS AND ACTIVITIES

CarbonLite retrofit training course (CLR)

This new training course has taken around 5 years to complete and brings together a wealth of knowledge on low energy building retrofit including drawing on Passivhaus Enerphit experience. It provides the tools to understand how buildings interact with moisture and energy and what makes for a comfortable and healthy environment. Studied online with experienced tutors, it is the first advanced retrofit course of this type in the UK.

We were delighted to officially launch the training course in April 2016, having been tested by pilot volunteers in October 2015. Following their feedback, the course was improved further ready for the first cohort of 42 students in April 2016 who worked their way through eight online modules, each concluding with questions to test their knowledge and a homework project task. A webinar is then set up where students can discuss homework projects all together with a tutor. Some students took 6 months to complete the course but others took longer to fit in with their own circumstances. Feedback was requested from students throughout and used to continually improve the training experience. We have been thrilled with the student's reviews, which have been very positive, and they are already recommending the course to others. Read more about the course and the reviews [here](#).

The next cohort of students commenced the course in October 2016 with 26 delegates and 6 re-takers. Feedback continues to be excellent.

Silver Standard and Moisture Monitoring Equipment

Two building projects were certified to the AECB's Silver standard during this period. Members can download the standards free of charge and certificates are awarded for those projects that meet the standards when the details have been uploaded on to the Low Energy Buildings Database (<http://lowenergybuildings.org.uk/>). Members can purchase moisture-monitoring equipment at a reduced price as part of a deal the AECB has with Omnisense and Dri-eaze. The AECB has been monitoring 10 sites for the CLR course and this service was extended for AECB members in June.

CarbonLite Courses

These popular, well attended courses are run on behalf of the AECB by Warm (<http://www.aecb.net/carbonlite>) The Certified Passivhaus Designer training course guides delegates through various modules to achieve certified Passivhaus Designer or Consultant status, thereby giving delegates the confidence to tackle UK Passivhaus Projects. The online Thermal Bridging Course is also available. The AECB receives a flat rate percentage of course income received. Five successful CarbonLite Passivhaus Designer courses were held during the period plus ad hoc courses.

Green Building Magazine

The editor decided to cease publishing the magazine in summer 2015 and it was offered to the AECB but the Board did not feel they could take it over for various reasons. Green Building Magazine had been an important member benefit for over 25 years, almost since the AECB's inception and was published by Keith Hall, a joint founder of the AECB. In a statement AECB chief executive Andy Simmonds, chair Peter Wilkinson and vice-chair Fran Bradshaw said: "Green Building Magazine, and formerly Building for a Future, have for over 25 years inspired and informed a wide range of construction professionals and others interested in promoting the sustainability of buildings and the construction sector. There can be no doubt that the magazine has had a real influence on many people over the years of its publication.

Passive House + Magazine

AECB members continue to receive this magazine as part of their membership. Initially this was provided by the publisher to the AECB free of charge but in 2015 it became the official partner magazine of the AECB. This resulted in a more formal deal with a contract to supply future copies at a set price per member. It was also agreed to use this magazine as the main marketing tool with adverts and text. Also included is free access to the digital edition, which includes an online package of additional content and resources. Published bi-monthly, two pages are allocated to the AECB where we continue to spread the word about what we do and the benefits of being a member. Articles have included subjects such as Local Groups, the CarbonLite Retrofit Course and the Conference.

AECB Website Redevelopment

We were pleased to launch our new home page, which aims to improve awareness of member benefits depending on the user's intention. Each category of member now has its own membership benefit page, which includes testimonials for the same category. Members are in the process of being surveyed in order to help prioritise benefits for each category and to obtain valuable feedback for consideration.

Our Members Directory has been improved to contain 'contact us' boxes rather than having emails displayed – this should help protect our members from spam emails.

Evidence to House of Commons select committees

Evidence was submitted on:

Science and Technology – Smart meters

Energy and Climate Change – What could change the energy sector?

Home energy efficiency

Energy and Climate Change

Leaving the EU; Implications for UK climate policy inquiry

The Economics of UK Energy Policy

To see these in full go to <http://www.aecb.net/publications/publication-categories/consultation-responses/>

Social media

The AECB has a good presence on Twitter with 4,874 followers. The Facebook page is also becoming more active with 263 followers.

AECB BOARD

The Board of Directors of the AECB met to conduct routine business four times during the period. The minutes of each meeting are published on the website [here](#).

STAFFING

The Business Development manager resigned in December 2015. Her work has been distributed between Sally Hall (Finance and Legal Manager) and Emma Furniss (Membership/Website Sub Editor) and discussions are on going for an additional role which is likely to be filled in 2017.

FINANCE

The deficit for this financial year was less than anticipated as there was some underspending in some areas, mainly marketing. The unrestricted reserves was increased by the Board from £20,000 to 25,000 in September 2015.

Membership income continued to be the main source of AECB income. Membership levels continued to decline. However, most members renewed and continued their support. New membership levels were lower than previous periods and the membership averaged 1100.

The AECB makes a surplus from the sale of the Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) and Design software and sales were good. The AECB is contracted to sell both PHPP and the Design software by the Passivhaus Institute and is now the sole supplier of these products in the UK. There are discounts available for existing users, bulk supplies and educational institutions.

The accounts are published separately and are in the members' area of the website at www.aecb.net.

CONFERENCE AND AGM

Members and non-members enjoyed a lively and informative conference at The Enterprise Centre, University of East Anglia on 15th and 16th July with many participants visiting offsite builds and getting a first-hand look at the venue - Britain's greenest building. As always there was much discussion and debate throughout the conference.

Eddy Walker Award

Eddy Walker, one of our first members left a legacy to the AECB when he sadly died at age 59. Students and young professionals were invited to apply for the Eddy Walker Award in April in order to win a free place on the CarbonLite Retrofit Training Course. They were asked to submit an essay on 'How would undertaking the CLR training help you to develop your career or business?' Winners were announced at the Conference and were Adam Harper and Helen Richards. Read more [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP & LOCAL GROUPS

The AECB has a network of Local Groups, mainly in the south of the country, providing members and non-members with an opportunity to meet up. Members have had opportunities to visit low energy builds, retrofits and have also benefitted from training, hands- on practical sessions and discussion through these. These events can be viewed here - <http://www.aecb.net/events/>

BOARD MEMBERS, STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

Trustees (Directors)

Julia Bennett
Paul Bourgeois
Frances Bradshaw
Chris Herring
Mischa Hewitt
Paul Jennings
Phil Newbold
Nidhi Shah
Mark Siddall
Gary Wilburn
Peter Wilkinson
Peter Wilshaw

Positions

Chair: Peter Wilkinson
Vice-Chair: Frances Bradshaw
Secretary to the Trustees: Mark Siddall
Treasurer: Paul Jennings
Company Secretary: Peter Wilkinson



Staff

Chief Executive Officer: Andy Simmonds

Finance and Legal Manager: Sally Hall

Membership Administrator and Website Sub Editor : Emma Furniss

Webmaster: Simon Kember

Auditors: Keith Bridgford & Co Limited

Building Society: Ecology Building Society

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank