

Sustainable Thornbury Chair's report 2014

My thanks are due to everyone who has been involved in ST this year, especially the officers, Brett, Paula and Felicity, and everyone involved in planning, organising and carrying out our activities this year.

The Energy Smart Homes Trail

Our biggest activity this year was the Energy Smart Homes Trail on the weekend of October 19 to 20th. We had 89 visits to the 14 properties open, plus 43 visits to the hub at The Swan. As a proportion of the population in the area, this was a better turn out than Bristol Green Doors get. The 14 properties demonstrated a range of energy saving and other features, including an air-source heat pump, a heat exchanging extractor, solid wall insulation, wood burning stoves, hotboxes and quadruple glazing.

Many thanks are due to all the hosts and stewards and everyone else who put in a huge effort to ensure the event was a success. Many thanks are also due to the Energy Saving Trust for their grant, to South Gloucestershire Council for designing and printing the publicity materials at no cost to us, and to Bristol Green Doors for the training and support they gave us.

Not everything went quite smoothly, and we apologise to those hosts who had few or no visitors. The publicity suffered from the materials arriving somewhat later than we needed.

We produced a full report on the event, which I can email on request.

The Hotbox Workshop

We first ran the hotbox workshop as part of the skills workshops in February 2011, and we decided to rerun this workshop on March 15th as a follow-up to the Energy Smart Homes Trail. As before, it was a great success, with lots of enthusiasm for hotboxes and the participants having a great time making them.

Energy 'Shop'

An ambitious proposal was made to have some sort of Energy 'Shop'. We had a successful stall for three days in the Volunteer Bureau pop-up shop at the beginning of June, with examples of LED light bulbs, a survey, a 'graffiti wall', and energy saving leaflets. We want to pursue this further.

Energy Project

The ambitious Energy Project, started some years ago, included the Energy Smart Homes Trail, the hotbox workshop and the Energy 'Shop' above. There have been several other threads, and more are planned:-

- We have supported the M48 wind farm proposal, but it has still not been put before the planning committee.
- A team has been working with the Chantry to improve its energy performance. The project has not made much progress this year, and we are not looking to pursue it further for the

time being, due to a lack of enthusiasm from the Chantry Council. We are now looking for other community organisations with buildings who might work with us.

- Felicity completed a survey of solar panels in Thornbury;

Grow Your Own Food and Community Orchard

The Grow Your Own Food Group has quietly continued with what it does, promoting the skills needed for food growing. There have been monthly meetings and there is a significant active membership.

Marian Stephens says:-

'GYOF continues to meet; 2013 this was monthly. For 2014 we have integrated GYOF with work parties at the Orchard which are often on a Saturday. This means there are less Thursday meetings, now held on the **third** Thursday of the month. Details are on the ST website. We have up to 11 regulars at the GYOF meetings and only 6 people are involved in maintaining the Orchard at present so we would welcome some more members. To join the yahoo list (for meeting reminders) please give your email address to Diane. Subjects for 2013 covered seed and potato day visit, discussions on growing veg in new and small gardens, video evening, seed swap, wild life gardening, root crops on the allotment and a social event with quiz. 2014 subjects have been composting and weeding. We look forward to apple juicing in October and Harvest supper in Dec.'

In addition, the Community Orchard group has been pruning, planting, generally caring for the site, and persuading the Council to provide a new gate and signage.

Thornbury Environment Committee

Felicity represents us on the Thornbury Town Council Environment Committee. This is an important role, keeping contact with what they are doing and telling them what we are doing.

Meetings, bulletins and the website

Meetings, bulletins and the website are important elements of what we do, supporting each other, co-ordinating and sharing information and ideas. We have had monthly meetings and a workshop in February on the energy project. The website and two bulletins this year keep our wider membership in touch.

The coming year

We are in a strong position, with money in the bank, a group of about fifteen committed people and significant skills and experience. We intend to pursue the Energy 'Shop' idea, and there are other big energy ideas we might pursue.

Alan Pinder

June 2014