

Open Eco Homes 2023 Report



Open Eco Homes aims to inform and inspire homeowners to substantially reduce the carbon footprint of their homes. It's an annual project of Cambridge Carbon Footprint, running since 2010. This year we were able to secure funding and employ a dedicated permanent member of staff to run this project in the form of myself, Fran Sutton as Home Energy Officer.

In 2023, we ran a total of 21 tours and online talks, with a mix of in-person and online tours. This included 10 homes open on 12 days (some were open for both online and in-person tours) and 6 very popular online talks. One of these talks: "Cool Homes in a Heatwave" took place in early summer.

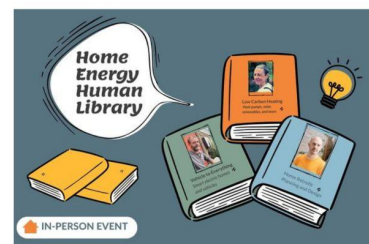
In addition we held an in-person Home Energy Human Library offering the opportunity for people to speak with an expert one-to-one for 15 mins about their own home energy query, where a total of 21 people were seen by 7 volunteer experts, and many others dropped in for information and quick advice. We have also been extremely successful in our outreach attending multiple community events across Cambridge City and South Cambs, providing expert speakers and advice in the matters of home energy and retrofit.

Summary of Success

- Overall, there were 474 participants across our events. All participants were contacted to respond with feedback. We had a total of 26 feedback responses on our survey, plus some face to face.
- 61% of participants who gave feedback said they were new to OEH
- 91% of respondents to our feedback said that they found the events useful or extremely useful for their own home improvements.

Talks

This year our two most popular online talks were the Cambridge Retrofit Guide and Low Carbon Heating Options. Both brought together experts into panels, to present on their specialism, and enabled some lively discussions. The former talk saw both Cambridge City Council, who commissioned the Guide, and its main authors, give useful advice on how it can be used most effectively by Cambridge residents.

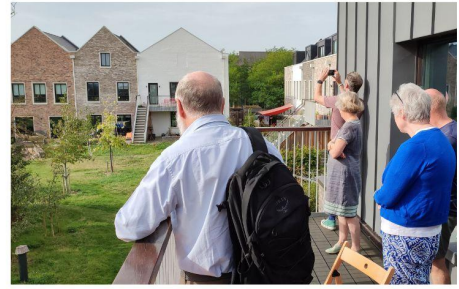


*Participants asked what they found most useful: **"Range of information provided. Ability to ask questions and get useful answers."** **"It was a very helpful re-entry to the world of retrofit"***

Tours

We have had some very inspiring homes opening their doors this year, some of which on Cromwell Road and Garlic Row, were even featured in a Sunday Times article about [Getting off Gas on 10th September](#). Our homes have also been spread across Cambridgeshire further than ever before, with homes in Heydon, Guilden Morden and St Ives, bringing in new audiences from Peterborough, Hitchin, Bishop Stortford and even Colchester.

In another first for OEH we have also been pleased to showcase the wonderfully eco SoloHaus modular homes for the homeless. Our hosts, The Hill Group, gave open and honest tours of these homes, and participants were able to also hear testimony from tenants and the CEO of Jimmy's Cambridge. Excitingly we were able to help Jimmy's raise over £100 in donations from these events.



Participants asked what they found most useful: ***“Detailed info about what materials had been used, & some of the compromises that had to be made” “Being reassured by other people having the same thoughts and challenges but surviving and benefiting from it all.” “Interesting to talk to people who are actually living an eco lifestyle.”***

Summary

9 Open Homes Tours

- [Eco-renovating for Retirement, Arbury Road](#)
- [Self-Building our Dream Home, Caxton](#)
- [Architect's Passivhaus-inspired Haven, Garlic Row](#)
- [A Tale of Two Homes, Heydon](#)
- [Family Focused Design, Cromwell Road](#)
- [1950's Bungalow Retrofit for Sustainable Family Living, Guilden Morden](#)
- [Marmalade Lane 5 Years on](#)

- [Addressing Homelessness: small, sustainable, modular homes, SoloHaus](#)
- [Dedicated to DIY Passivhaus, St Ives](#)

6 expert talks:

- [Cool Homes in a Heatwave](#)
- [Cambridge Retrofit Guide](#)
- [Low Cost Home Energy Savings](#)
- [Low Carbon Heating Options](#)
- [OEH Retrospective](#)
- [Home Energy Human Library](#)

What's next?

2024 will be our 15th year of OEH and I am excited to be taking on the management of the project at this time with Tom Bragg continuing to lend his wisdom, experience and passion for our greater success. We will be working to design and deliver services to meet the dynamic needs of our communities now and in the future. Please keep an eye out for further information, communication and events on this.

Thank you

Many thanks to our funders, staff, host householders, speakers and to all the other volunteers organising and helping run Open Eco Homes. Best wishes to participants inspired by OEH to create their own eco-home!

from: **Fran Sutton and the OEH team**

Enabled by [funding and sponsorship](#) from:



[Open Eco Homes](#) is an annual project since 2010 of the charity [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#)

