

Open Eco Homes 2024 Report



Introduction



Open Eco Homes (OEH) aims to inform and inspire homeowners to substantially reduce the carbon footprint of their homes. An annual project of Cambridge Carbon Footprint running since 2010, OEH has built a strong local brand for providing impactful advice around home energy improvements through the trusted voices of volunteers.

In 2024 we achieved:

- 23 tours of 9 properties, whose owners opened their doors to in-person and online tours, with a focus on natural materials and the 'all electric home'.
- 7 expert-led talks run from July to October
- An estimated total attendance of 384 people
- OEH YouTube videos with 39,900 views
- A feedback response rate increase of 22% from 2023
- 60% of participants who gave feedback said they were new to OEH
- Overall, participants gave positive and constructive feedback and rated their OEH experience as 'Good'.



Scope and Aims



Our aims have always been to engage with residents across our region on home energy improvements and lower carbon homes through the trusted voices of peer and expert volunteers offering free and accessible home tours and topic specific events. In 2024, we submitted applications for funding to deliver on our goal of increasing our impact through greater collaboration with sector partners.

Specifically, we aimed to:

- 1) Deliver an OEH programme featuring 8-10 homes and 5 expert led talks, to reach over 40,000 people through in person events and online content to include a theme of the “all electric home”.
- 2) Enable greater access to online services, advice on planning & financing, and increasing the capacity to recommend trades by improving our [website](#).
- 3) Ensure the continuation and development of an advanced [eco directory](#) of local services.
- 4) Host a Retrofit Conference aiming to bring together stakeholders from across the sector to support greater collaboration and partnership building.
- 5) Run an information campaign for South Cambs around OEH using for example infographics, videos, and articles that explain the benefits of retrofitting, share success stories from local residents, and provide practical advice on **how to get**
- 6) Continue to develop our outreach to engage with people at community events across the region on home energy.

Tours



Our 9 OEH homes featured were:

- [From Curiosity to Sustainability](#), Histon
- [Nature-Centred Design at 1920's BuStop House](#), Willingham
- [Exploring Carbon Reduction in our 1990's Home](#), Chesterton
- [Allotment, Community and Low Carbon Living](#), Trumpington
- [Forward Thinking Forever Home](#), Great Paxton
- [Cherished 1960's Family Home Retrofit with Vehicle to Grid](#), Oakington
- [Home Improvements for Carbon Reduction](#), Stapleford
- [Retrofitting Towards our Dream Home](#), Hills Road
- [Passivhaus Plus at Duckend Barn](#), Dry Drayton



"Most interesting to hear a practical talk on a home owners experience of retrofitting," OEH tour attendee

"Really useful real world experience" OEH tour attendee

Talks



Our 7 OEH talks featured were:

- [Beat the Heat - keeping homes cool in a heatwave](#)
- [How We Use Water](#)
- [Climate Change Gardening](#)
- [Is a Heat Pump Right for You?](#)
- [How to Use a Heat Pump - maximum efficiency and savings](#)
- [Low Cost Home Energy Efficiency Improvements](#)
- [Retrofitting Historic Homes](#)



“Lovely talk and a great atmosphere.”

“Well paced, really clear explanations and helpful visuals.”

“Went well beyond other information I've found on the internet” talk attendee.



“Great talk about sensitively insulating a historic building,” talk attendee

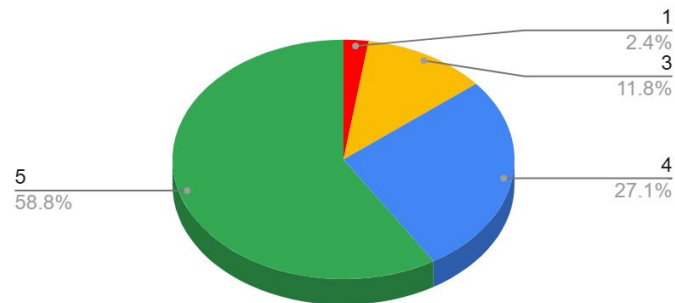


What our audience said



- We received feedback from 87 of 292 people polled, a response rate increase of 22% from 2023
- Participants were asked to rate their event experience between 1 (poor) – 5 (excellent), with the average response being 4.6.
- When asked to rate (from 1-5) how helpful people found the event when considering their own home energy improvements, the average rating dropped to 3.2
- 189 people viewed Case Studies online between 1 Sept- 31 Dec
- When asked for suggestions for improvements these broadly fell into 4 main categories:
 - Improving the navigation of the website and events listings
 - Increasing publicity and awareness through new and different media
 - Charging for booking to avoid 'no shows' and enabling card donations at in-person tours
 - Running events earlier and later in the year.

Event Rating



“Real experiences, real learnings.”

“More publicity to a wider audience.”

“Add a remote charge machine permitting donations by credit card at in-person tour locations.”

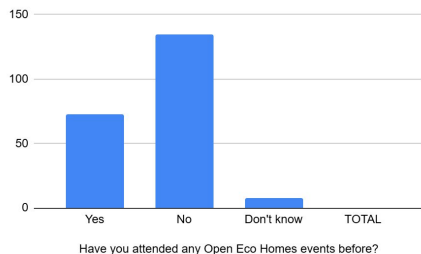
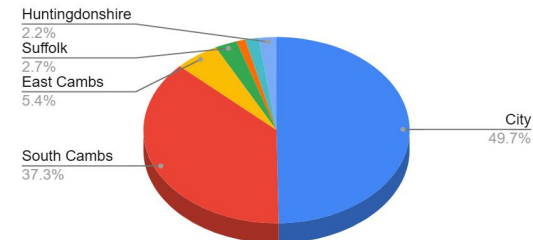
Audience demographic



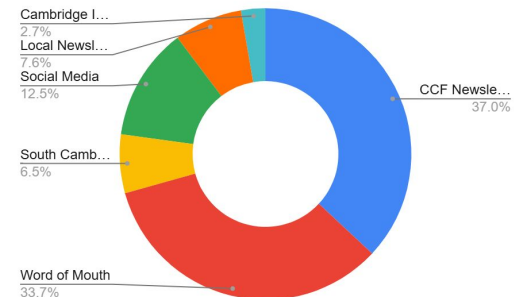
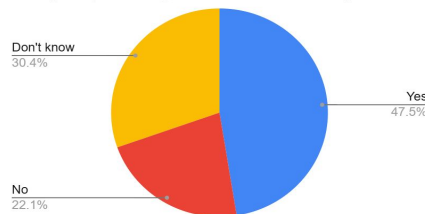
When booking tickets bookers were asked to complete a short form:

- As with previous years our most impactful communications are via the CCF Newsletter and Word of Mouth
- Cambridge City residents continue make up the largest proportion of participants at our events
- 60% of participants who gave feedback said they were new to OEH
- Most participants are actively planning their own energy efficiency retrofit or new build, or considering doing so.

Audience by Postcode



Are you planning to build or retrofit your o...



Funding OEH 2025



- We received a total income of £27,305 during 2024 with a projected total expense of £27,649.
- Grants applied for totalled £21,500 of which we received a total £17,595 split with Thermal Imaging.
- A total of £6,860 was raised via the Big Give in the Green Match campaign during April 2024, out of a potential £10,000.
- Two of the donations made through this campaign were from individual OEH sponsors whose donation was matched by the Big Give totalling £800, enabling us to achieve more than the £2,500 projected.
- One sponsor gave his time in lieu of financial support, being the official photographer for OEH events and case studies.
- We lost 4 2023 sponsors worth £1500 and secured 6 new sponsors worth £1300.

	2022	2023	2024
Sponsorship	1,750	2750	2,550
Cambridge City -Sus Cities [#]	3,500	3,000	3,000
SCDC - ZCC[#]		11,095	11,095
CFCI Trust	2,000	2,000	2,000
Cobb Charity	1,500	1,500	1,500
Big Give		**5,000	6,860
Donations - tickets	*1,015	273.67	300
Donations - other			
Total Income	9,765	25,618	27,305

* £5 charge pp for all OEH event tickets

** Assumed split with Repair Cafe project of the total £10k

Split with Thermal Imaging project

The **sponsorship levels** this year were: **Gold £1,000, Silver £500 or Bronze £250**

For each sponsor we offered to:

- Feature their logo on all OEH web pages, with more detail and links on a special.
- Post Thanks via our social media channels.
- Include their details in OEH and CCF newsletters and communications, reaching over 2,000 people keen on sustainable homes.
- Include their logo on our online talks available via YouTube and reaching tens of thousands of people a year.
- Work with them to give them the opportunity to talk about what they offer and share their expertise at a relevant OEH talk or event.
- Work with higher level sponsors to create mutually beneficial publicity and to find ways in which we can partner further to ensure more people are empowered to make the transition to the most sustainable homes.

Sponsors were offered a sponsorship package



Mole



INCLUME



New sponsors for 2024 include Cambridge Retrofit Hub, Keystone Architecture and Design, Inclume with Lambertain Photography, Wright Choice Property Services and The Cambridge Building Society.

Key Lessons



- Whilst there was a reduction in the number of attendees compared to 2023, overall attendance was broadly in line with that of 2022, and may also reflect the fact that we held a greater number of events in 2024
- There was a significant increase in the number of people booked onto events who did not attend ('no shows'). This may be partly due to the functionality of our events booking system i.e. the cancellation function.
- For at least the second year running, the production of case studies has involved a significant amount of resource and time from staff and volunteers; this does not necessarily match the frequency with which case studies are engaged once online.
- This year's sponsors wished to be significantly more engaged with partnering with us on events and communications.

Areas of improvement:

- Review KPIs and measures for improved reporting
- Wider, better and earlier publicity
- Consider timing of events for increased engagement

- Improve access and navigation on OEH website
- Redesign case studies for ease of use and to reduce effort in creation
- Improve events booking process for easier navigation

- Review sponsorship model with funders' feedback central to targeted improvements for partnership working and communications
- Make available card donation option at in-person OEH tours
- Review and improve reporting on donations
- Look at implementing ticket costs

Conclusion



Throughout 2024 our Open Eco Homes project once again delivered impactful and insightful events and opportunities for residents across our region to engage with important and relevant topics on retrofit, home energy and sustainable living. Whilst our funding enabled us to meet many of our aims, we continue to work to improve our programme and to listen to those who attend our events and engage with us.

Our successes in this season demonstrate that our events are of good quality and continue to have a positive impact on those who are considering how they can meet the challenges of climate change through their own home improvements.

Finally, a special thanks:

Open Eco Homes continues to deliver events and knowledge to engage residents across the region thanks to the dedication of our truly fabulous volunteers, and the generous support from our funders & sponsors. Thank you all!

