

Actions from Energy Evening 1 November 2006

From the survey of Calbourne Road it was noticeable that people are concerned about climate and energy but do not know what actions are the most effective.

There are some easy, effective actions that can be taken straight away. These will reduce our carbon dioxide, save money, and, importantly, give a signal to businesses and the government. There will be a cut in bills, and the gas and electricity companies will notice.

These are:

1. Efficiency

Every house can save 20% by using the government backed home energy questionnaire – visit <http://www.est.org.uk/myhome/whatcan> or ring 0800 512 012. Victorian houses with solid walls can do this. Our loft extension makes it more difficult but it is still possible – watch this space! Effective and cheap actions pay for themselves in two years or less, and some people on benefits can get grants.

2. Supply

Change to an independent renewable electricity supplier – it takes five minutes via a website, on a form or by phone. It's an easy way to make a difference. No complicated information is needed – you don't need to know your accurate consumption or other details from your bill. In some cases it is more expensive (around 10%) but you are supporting renewable energy and can save for example with energy saving light bulbs. Lighting is about 15% of electricity use, so if you have a bill of £300 annually, 15% is £45, which could be cut to £9 with low energy lights, a saving of £36, more than 10% of £300.

The following are all independent companies, good in their different ways.

Good Energy: <http://www.good-energy.co.uk> 0845 456 1640

Ecotricity: <http://www.ecotricity.co.uk> 0800 326 100

Green Energy <http://www.greenenergy.uk.com>

For more information visit <http://www.electricityinfo.org>

3. Micro-generation

Once the house uses less energy, consider installing renewable energy. We have just sent off the deposit for 500 watts of solar electric panels to fit around the attic window. It's simpler if you haven't got a loft conversion. We hope to get a grant for £1,500. We will be able to sell about 400 kWh to Good Energy every year.

4. Awareness

Getting in touch with how much electricity you use can help you to cut down. The Electrisave meter measures the whole house electricity consumption. Other meters are available for individual items so you can measure how much something uses over a day or a week as well as the power being taken while it is being used.

Electriscave £60-£70 from <http://www.electriscave.co.uk>
Plug-in meter around £25 – B&Q do one. We used ours to work out how much the freezer uses.

For more simple practical action with links to suppliers visit:
<http://www.whatyoucando.co.uk/>

If you save electricity, you also save the energy wasted at the power station and in the pylons: about twice as much again.

If even 10% of people do this in the whole country it will make an impact, and also reward companies selling insulation and low energy bulbs, etc. When Thames Water asked people to use less over the summer, there was a cut in demand of 8%, so people do respond when asked. Awareness is rising, and many people are becoming more active – the response is likely to be much more than 10% over the next year or two, so join in now!