



Clevedon Green Open Homes

Case Study for 8 Glebe Road home of Ruth Gofton



1920s Semi-detached house, 3 bedrooms, 1 occupant.

Built in 1922 of rendered brick construction, mortared using coal dust from South Wales, with a 70 ft south facing back garden with clay soil. The garden is in transition from a fairly traditional layout to one based more on permaculture principles for improved sustainability and enjoyment.

Key features – PV panels, radiator reflector panels, cavity wall and roof insulation, chickens, compost bins, fruit and vegetable growing, natural bee keeping and wild-life friendly garden.

Annual Energy Costs: £588

Electricity £180 (12 x £15)

Gas £408 (12 x £34)

Feed in Tariff: £350 2013/4 (NB wet winter)

Net fuel bill: £238



The Story

Ruth moved to Glebe Road eight years ago, and since then has improved the roof insulation, replaced a draughty back door, and put in a combi boiler, radiator reflector panels and PV panels.

Having formed Transition Clevedon with neighbours Sally and Will, she became increasingly interested in living a more sustainable lifestyle and in reducing her carbon footprint by making small changes to her lifestyle, but when added together these can make a big difference both in saving money and energy.

Examples of these small steps include: only lighting and heating the rooms in use; closing doors to keep heat in; hanging a door curtain on the front door during winter months; cooking in a slow cooker rather than an oven; eating local food and reducing meat consumption; wearing appropriate clothing in the winter; producing food and renewable energy; buying additional energy from a renewable energy company; investing ethically including in renewables; using public transport or walking whenever possible; and having plants and spaces that are multi-purpose (beauty, food, wildlife, fuel, fertiliser, chicken friendly...).

Energy Saving Measures

The largest project was the photovoltaic panels installed by Sunray Solar in February 2011. There are six panels giving a maximum output of 1.11kW, and they cost £4570. At the time North Somerset Council were giving grants of £1000. The forecast from Sunray Solar was that it would bring an income of £420pa, but dependent on weather conditions.

As Ruth paid £3570, even with poor weather, the combined feed-in tariff and reduced electricity bills mean that the cost of the PV should be covered in approx. 8 years.

The radiator panels cost about £35.

Perhaps one of the biggest energy saving measures is through making lifestyle changes: during the winter the thermostat is normally set at 15 ° - although increased when guests are present. It may seem cold but if you start with that temperature in the autumn, you get used to it. 16-18 ° should be more easily achievable!

Future Plans

- Underfloor insulation
- Immersun hot water heater
- Growing more perennial vegetables
- Improving food production throughout the year
- More water butts
- Reducing the size of the patio for more gardening space
- Adding a door to the porch

And the big dream would be either not to have a car at all, or to have an electrical one



Although the chickens are primarily kept for their eggs, they're also great company in the garden; provide useful compost; and eat weed seeds, caterpillars, insects and slug and snail eggs. However, they can be a real pain as they also eat fruit, plants and beneficial insects; poo indiscriminately all over the garden and make dust baths wherever suits them.

Natural beekeeping involves homing the bees in hives that allow bees to live more naturally and sustainably, with the emphasis on the bees' welfare rather than taking honey.

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Transition Clevedon strives to reduce fossil fuel use and the impact on climate change through encouraging more sustainable and fulfilling lifestyles.

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