



THE 'HAYFIELD HUNDRED'

An evaluation of a scheme offering advice to a parish community on energy efficiency improvements and installation of low-level measures

JULY 2023



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1. THIS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report is a summary evaluation of the 'Home Energy MOT' project, designed to offer advice and low level insulation help to the residents of Hayfield parish, High Peak, Derbyshire, September 2022-April 2023.

1.2 This project was conceived by Sustainable Hayfield and Marches Energy Agency (MEA). Sustainable Hayfield is a local charity promoting more responsible use of resources, including energy resources. MEA is a regional charity mitigating fuel poverty and inspiring the shift to a low carbon economy.

It offered, perhaps uniquely in the UK, to all parish residents, at no cost and in one home visit:

- Fitting of draught-proofing tape/strips fitted for draughty windows and doors;
- Fitting of draught excluders to external doors and where appropriate, internal doors;
- Fitting of letter box covers, where none existed or where existing ones fitted were inefficient;
- Replacement of inefficient incandescent lights with equivalent long-life LED bulbs;
- Fitting of electric socket timers, to ensure electricity is only used when required;
- Fitting of 'radiator reflector' foil behind radiators, to reflect radiator heat back into the room;
- Supply/installation of carbon monoxide detectors, thermostatic cards and other smaller assists.

The scheme also offered:

- Boiler control and radiator valve checks, to ensure these systems are working most effectively;
- Checks on levels of loft insulation and advice about any upgrade that may be needed;
- Wider billing support, sign-posting and referral to other organisations, and energy funding schemes where a need is identified, but only with the householder's consent.

Between them, these areas account for 20-30% of all heat lost from the average home.

1.3 The UK's notoriously inefficient housing stock accounts for about 20% of all UK carbon equivalent emissions. To reach net zero by 2050, emissions from residential buildings need to fall at a rate of 3.4% per year based on current emissions levels. This reinforces the need to promote citizen awareness about the, often simple, actions and behaviours they can take to manage down their own energy use and related emissions. This scheme sought to achieve this, at a local level.

1.4 We deem this project to have been a substantial success, in its own terms, offering support to over 100 households. The report describes what we did, how we did it, and householders' responses. We draw out some key findings and conclusions. We also identify scope to replicate this sort of intervention elsewhere. We hope this evaluation assists other communities wanting to have impact in this field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND KEY CONTACTS

The project was a partnership between Sustainable Hayfield (Energy Group Chair: Richard Noakes (shayfieldenergygroup@gmail.com) and Marches Energy Agency (MEA) (lead person Peter Burgess-Allen, peter@mea.org.uk).

Sustainable Hayfield wishes to acknowledge the contributions made to the project by:

- Marches Energy Agency, whose willingness to test the 'proof of concept' in the project made it viable;
- High Peak Borough Council, Hayfield Country Show and Sheepdog Trials Committee, and County Councillor Anne Clarke for funding support, and;
- perhaps most of all, Graham Hirst, who conducted the vast majority of home visits arranged by the project, delivering a consistently positive, helpful service to participants with admirable efficiency.

The report authors are Laurie James, for Sustainable Hayfield, and Peter Burgess-Allen, for MEA, who between them take responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies which may arise.

2. KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

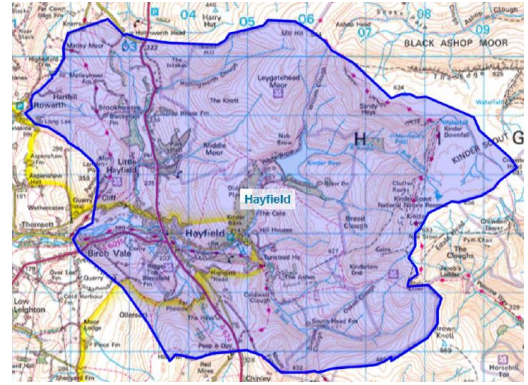
The key findings of the project are:

- the project showed there is a hunger for easily accessible, free, independent advice and low level assistance to help make people's homes warmer and cut wasteful energy use. 13% (135) of parish households initially requested an 'energy MOT' visit and 103 were concluded. (paras 3.27-29)
- key to this success was local branding (Sustainable Hayfield) delivered by people known to many households, face to face to contact and a series of linked promotional activities. (paras 3.11, 3.12, 3.16, 3.18). Positive, locality-specific, scheme leaflets delivered house-to-house got a surprisingly good response.
- even so, people take time to take the step to invite a 'stranger' into their home. (para 3.19). Time-limited campaigns often have limited take-up. There is a need for continuing access to a reliable local service.
- people's knowledge of available options is often limited. Radiator reflector foil, and chimney draught excluders, were a revelation to many. Ownership of boiler settings, effective use of thermostatic controls and ways of mitigating risk of mould and damp was uneven. Even where households had well-ventilated, eco-friendly, warm homes, the reassurance offered by a visit from an unbiased expert was very affirming. (Section 4)
- undertaking the project at a time of national 'fuel crisis' helped secure householders' attention and commitment. It meant that, as with LED light bulbs, free access to a well-known eco- and cost-effective product overcame previous decades of inertia. There was a recognition that 'we are all facing the same challenges', which helped secure a warm welcome for the visiting service. Reactions to the service offered were universally positive (Section 4)
- assessing household energy efficiency, providing advice and information, installing agreed low level insulation aides, and exploring options for the future, all in one visit of 1.5-2.5 hours was a big 'selling point'. There were no complications with further appointments or involvement of other parties.
- structuring the service as we did meant it was very cost-effective. The unit cost of a visit, with an average (mean) installation of 6 items, was just over £90. That represents seriously good value, especially when installations made will save about 0.7 tonnes' carbon emissions per annum, recurrently. (paras 3.15, 3.35-6)
- fundamental to the project's success was the division of role between local community activists (Sustainable Hayfield) and the experience and procurement activities of a specialist agency (MEA). A per household payment by Sustainable Hayfield helped secure the partnership and, with other fundraising, resulted in an eventual funding split of 1:2 between the parties. (paras 3.9-10, 3.15, 3.21)
- the deployment of an experienced 'energy assessor', resident in Hayfield, to undertake almost all visits was a happy development, and crucial to the project's success (paras 3.21-4). It is key for any other communities considering a similar initiative. Graham Hirst's experience and qualifications are cited in Section 6. This highlights the need to invest in the development of local skills in energy efficiency, from a householder perspective as much as from a housing fabric viewpoint.
- outreach was strongest with people aged over 55. There is a need to consider how best to engage with younger residents. Using schools as a promotional outlet is an obvious route to consider.
- the project worker arranged all visits. This was unexpectedly time-consuming. Locating such administrative work elsewhere would have freed him to focus wholly on the visits themselves. (para 3.25)
- the nature of much local housing (stone, solid walled) limits options for affordable insulation. There was almost no interest, even if fully-funded, in internal wall insulation (para 4.38). Given the proportion of local housing of this type, this disinclination to contemplate the cost and disruption of such innovations places obvious limits on communities' ability to achieve 'net zero' housing and requires public agencies to frame responses as a matter of urgency.
- the project has a dual local legacy. First, many households' awareness and ability to cut their energy bills/emissions has increased: examples are evident in Section 4). Second, and perhaps most impressive of all, a good proportion of those visited have, as a result of the visit, committed or already delivered a range of 'home improvements' themselves which will have lasting significance. Some of these are of some scale (see Section 5). All of this goes, locally, to deliver the 3.4% annual reduction in domestic emissions the UK needs to achieve (cited in para 1.3).

3. WHAT WE DID AND HOW WE DID IT

STARTING POINTS

3.1 Hayfield is an upland parish in the High Peak area of Derbyshire, with about 1,050 households. Dominant housing stock is gritstone, without cavity walls. The climate is cool and open to westerly winds and rain. Although a relatively affluent community, Hayfield's two electoral wards have had historically above average levels of fuel poverty, due to housing stock typology, climate and fixed incomes. Further, the Peak District National Park, within which most of the parish lies, imposes limits, in its guardianship of landscape and community aesthetics, on what can be done to improve buildings' insulation.



3.2 This means that, whilst many local houses may fairly be called 'cold houses', they offer challenges to conventional notions of comprehensive insulation. We wanted to help residents in meaningful, accessible ways, increase levels of household comfort, reduce energy use and emissions, at no cost to them.

3.3 We chose to do this summer 2022 when domestic fuel prices were rapidly increasing. They were a focus for informal discussion in ways not seen for 50 years. We judged this might assist wider public engagement.

3.4 To build the project, Sustainable Hayfield's Energy Group (five people) did three things:

- Got our parent body, Sustainable Hayfield, to vote a good part of its funds to support such work;
- Began discussion with Marches Energy Agency (MEA) about how households might best be helped. We knew of MEA's work and, especially, the range of its Warmer Derby and Derbyshire Scheme, which offers the sort of help we had prioritised;
- Agreed to produce, and deliver house-to-house, public information on 'ten top energy saving tips', drawn largely from the Energy Saving Trust, and to incorporate material on any local scheme we could offer.

3.5 These steps helped develop a scheme with 'reach'.

3.6 We recognised that trust and accessibility issues were key to the success of any scheme. Because of MEA's experience in this field, it was recognised the project would need to be delivered by MEA.

3.7 MEA had some concerns about its capacity to support what was being proposed - a scheme prospectively open to all households. But MEA realised that the scheme offered a test of households' willingness and need for help, irrespective of income or ability to meet fuel bills, and addressed both its fuel poverty and carbon reduction objectives. We both took the view that the scheme's expansive nature would prompt learning, which might inform practice elsewhere.

3.8 Sustainable Hayfield agreed to make a discretionary, £15, payment for every visit made. It also sought funding support to offset some of the costs of kit to improve households' energy efficiency.

3.9 Both parties further agreed that:

- access to the project should be as simple as possible, requiring identification of contact details only;
- all work/installations done would be done in one visit, reducing costs and adding to its appeal;
- Sustainable Hayfield would design/deliver scheme-specific leaflets to the parish's 1,000 plus homes;
- Sustainable Hayfield would take other local opportunities to publicise the scheme.

3.10 Sustainable Hayfield and MEA agreed a Memorandum of Understanding, setting out respective roles, and a Data Sharing Agreement, governing use, and flows, of personal information between the agencies.

3.11 We set up simple systems to capture resident interest:



- households wanting to access the scheme could do so via Sustainable Hayfield Energy Group's email address, or via return of tear-off slips to 'collection boxes' we set up in local retail/information outlets;
- interested households had access to an email address for any queries they might have at the outset;
- we developed a spreadsheet to record requests received, and confirm support provided. Sustainable Hayfield Energy Group inserted household information and MEA oversaw the spreadsheet's operation.

3.12 This meant that interested householders could be advised that:

- If you'd like to have an expert assessment of your situation, contact Sustainable Hayfield's Energy Group at shayfieldenergygroup@gmail.com, supplying your basic contact details (name, postal address, telephone number, email address if you have one). Or complete the tear-off slip left with you, and return it, completed, at the library, Hayfield News or The General Store. If you can, but only if you can, identify what you'd like assistance with;
- Sustainable Hayfield will – but only with your agreement – share your basic details with MEA, who have staff qualified in this field, covered by their agency's insurance, and police-checked;
- MEA staff will make contact with you, to arrange a convenient time to visit. Staff, who will carry MEA identity tags, will assess what scope there is to help, and install what's needed, in that one visit;
- If, on the day of the visit, it's considered you may be eligible for more help, MEA staff will discuss with you the possibility of making referral to other agencies for that help – but only if you agree. Nothing will be done you have not agreed to.

3.13 This is the basis of the scheme which evolved.

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE SCHEME

3.14 We set no ceiling on the number of referrals we would accept and had no experience to inform us on possible numbers. It was therefore key that we communicated promptly with each other, in 'real time'.

3.15 MEA was always going to be the project's prime funder, paying project staff and supplying kit items to be installed. But Sustainable Hayfield succeeded in attracting more funding for the project. Between the per completed visit payments made, and these sources, Sustainable Hayfield contributed just under £3,000, or about 31% of overall project costs of around £9,500. This helped secure the project as a real partnership.

3.16 The scheme was launched in a number of, closely associated, ways:

- Delivery of the leaflets referred to;
- Articles in local magazines/newsletters, detailing its provisions;
- Presentation of information at a meeting of Hayfield Parish Council;
- Inclusion of information in 'Hayfield Community Diary', an active local social media page, and on Sustainable Hayfield's own Facebook page;
- Formal 'launch' at Sustainable Hayfield's AGM, attended by MEA;
- Staffing of a stall at Sustainable Hayfield's annual 'Apple Day', a significant community event.

3.17 These all took place September-October 2022. They ensured a cumulative profile for the project. Further articles reinforced this and a 'street stall' February 2023 attracted more requests for visits.

3.18 The effectiveness of these outlets for attracting requests for visits varied. Notably:

- the leaflet drop resulted in about 50 requests for visits, more than we had anticipated. These arrived both via email requests and return of tear-off slip requests to local collecting points;

- face to face engagement with residents was important. They drew another 45 requests from people who had already had the project leaflet and done nothing with it. That we were recognised as Hayfield residents ourselves at these events had clear impact and encouraged local ownership of the project;
- later, targeted, initiatives – to a councillor’s ‘surgery’ and to a luncheon club – both elicited a few requests;
- word of mouth from participating households clearly influenced others to request visits for themselves (‘I’ve heard how helpful the visit was so I’d like one, please’)

3.19 After an initial rash of requests, numbers subsequently arrived more evenly, most via tear-off slips from older residents. Some requests were still being received in March 2023, after promotional work had ceased. This suggests that interest in such schemes can be a little time ‘brewing’. People need confidence before they make an approach. Having identified local people – familiar faces – associated with such a scheme helps build credibility and trust.

DEALING WITH DEMAND

3.20 Within days of leaflets being delivered house-to-house, it was clear that the universal nature of the ‘offer’ was attracting more attention than we had thought likely. Issue of meeting demand arose quickly.

3.21 MEA realised quickly that it did not have sufficient staff to support the scheme, especially as it was experiencing greater weight of demand for its services due to the ‘energy crisis’ more broadly. This meant there would be some delay in managing initial responses. MEA decided to advertise for additional staff, in part prompted by the Hayfield scheme’s emerging profile. Two developments flowed from this:

- there was some assurance that Hayfield demand would be able to be met, albeit not quickly, and;
- a member of Sustainable Hayfield’s Energy Group, Graham Hirst, with experience as an Energy Assessor and in buildings management, indicated his interest in working for MEA in delivering much of the scheme in Hayfield. After interview, Graham was appointed on a contractual basis of two days a week, with a presumption he would be able to organise eight visits weekly.

3.22 This ensured local knowledge was embedded in the scheme’s delivery. MEA supplemented Graham’s own indemnity cover and offered its own quality assurance functions. After an initial handful of visits made by established MEA staff, Graham undertook all subsequent visits.

3.23 This meant the scheme’s operation was inextricably influenced by Graham’s contribution. Sustainable Hayfield and MEA have been very fortunate to have someone as knowledgeable, flexible, assiduous and well-known as Graham working for us.

3.24 Graham:

- elicited information from the combined spreadsheet listing contact details of those requesting visits;
- contacted interested households to arrange visits;
- visited as agreed with householders, addressing householders’ needs, installing agreed low level insulation aides, making checks and altering heating system controls as required, and discussing longer term options for further improvements householders might arrange for themselves;
- completed formal details of assistance offered, which were sent to MEA, and;
- invited participant householders to complete a ‘feedback form’ for return to the local Parish Council office, from where it was sent to MEA. Representative feedback on the scheme is reflected in Section 4.

3.25 Making contact with interested householders proved more difficult than anticipated. Some did not reply to emails or messages, others had gone on holiday, been taken ill, put their home up for sale or, in a few cases, changed their minds about involvement (no reasons given). This meant that time taken to arrange and confirm visits was an appreciable extra task. Some sheltered housing scheme residents who had expressed interest were deemed ineligible because all their relevant services were provided communally.

WHO WE HELPED AND HOW

3.26 First phase promotional activity elicited around 90 requests for visits. For reasons set out in para 3.21, Sustainable Hayfield wrote to these households December 2022, confirming that we were working our way through the list, but that there would be several weeks' delay before all requests registered could be delivered. This might have caused some people to withdraw from the scheme. Soon after, with visits proceeding well, second phase promotional activity elicited further numbers.

3.27 The scheme 'topped out' with 135 requests received, i.e. around 13% of all parish households. For the reasons cited above, we had some loss in actual numbers of visits made. They 'topped out' at 103, or 10% of all parish households – our 'Hayfield Hundred' identified in this report's title.

3.28 We regard those numbers as a substantial achievement. Requests came from all sectors of the community, and all housing types. They ranged from early Victorian – and earlier -terraced stone cottages, through larger detached stone properties, post war council housing and newer homes on small, upmarket, 'estates'. There was a small under-representation of local authority social housing tenants but those properties had had a large programme of works upgrading their insulation levels a few years earlier. The majority of households involved featured people aged over 55.

3.29 Our experience suggests to us 'proof of concept' – that where a scheme can be promoted well, and service is free of charge – many householders will want to get involved in improving their properties and comfort levels and reducing their energy use and associated emissions. This was immensely satisfying.



3.30 Even so, around one quarter of all initial requests received did not progress to completed visits. That reminds us of the variety – and change – in people's lives/circumstances. That should cause us to consider the limitations of time-limited schemes such as this and argues for standing, easily accessible, schemes of assistance not dependent upon provider availability, 'closing dates' etc. This is an important message for those charged with developing 'retrofit resources' (low level or deeper retrofit) to offer advice and service to our wider communities. A more permanent presence, well-known, trusted and accessible, is what is required if householders' attention is to be consistently captured, and knowledge about options shared.

WHAT WORK WAS DONE?

Low Cost Measures installed

Measure installed	Total number installed	Nearest %age total installations
Draught seal (door/window)	32	5%
Letterbox cover	8	1%
Radiator reflector foil	208	35%
Underdoor foam draught excluder	4	1%
Door brush	2	-%
LED light	321	54%
Carbon monoxide detector	14	2%
Room thermometer card	4	1%
Totals	593	99%

3.31 It can be seen that:

Installations of a wide range were made;



- LED lights were the single most common installation made. It is striking that, after many years' presence on the market, and proven value in lowering bills, many households had none/few in place;
- draughtproofing, via seals, brushes, letter box covers totalled just over 7% of all installations made, reflecting householders' historic improvement of their properties which left most of them with reasonably sound draught-eliminating measures in place;
- Radiator reflect foils, backing radiators on external walls, accounted for 35% of all installations made. Many householders were unaware of them and their potential to redirect heat inwards. They proved a popular and necessary addition to householders' insulation preparedness. They have more significance in homes without cavity walls, which is a large proportion of local housing stock .

Balance of Household Assistance Provided

Number of Installations supplied	Percentage of households
0-2	19%
3-5	29%
6-8	21%
9 +over	31%
Total	100%

3.32 It is clear that:

- a small proportion of households visited needed - or wanted – none of the aides we offered;
- a substantial proportions of households visited happily accepted a range of installations, very largely comprising LED lights and radiator reflector foils;
- almost one-third of all households were supplied with nine or more aides to reduce energy bills/carbon emissions and/or improved insulation.

3.33 The average (mean) number of installations made was almost six per household visited. These will secure improved energy efficiency, and reduced emissions, year-on-year. At an overall cost of just over £90 per visit, we consider that the project delivered, just in those terms, markedly good value for money.

3.34 Despite a decade or more of public information campaigns stressing scope to improve one's domestic energy efficiency, this data confirms there is still need for basic assistance to do so. It suggests the continuing value of local, accessible and trusted advice to help householders manage, often the simplest, challenges in how they most effectively power their homes. This is a stark conclusion from our activity.

CARBON SAVINGS FROM INSTALLATIONS MADE

3.35 Industry calculations are available about the carbon emission savings arising from representative use and adoption of the measures installed within this project. Using these, we can estimate the annual overall carbon savings arising from the installation made in Hayfield.

3.36 In total, installations made will save around 700 kilogrammes of carbon emissions annually, i.e. just under three quarters of a tonne. And this is recurrent. This is a powerful, and very satisfying, outcome. It helps, locally, deliver the 3.4% annual reductions in domestic emissions required, set out in para 1.3.

3.37 Wider advice offered, detailed below, may well prompt households to take further actions, by way of altering their behaviours or by initiating their own further household 'insulation' improvements. Evidence that is happening

in a significant proportion of households involved in the project is set out in Section 5. We estimate that behavioural and technical initiatives taken by participating households now mean that in excess of one tonne of annual carbon savings will have been generated by this project.

INSULATION ADVICE OFFERED

3.38 Beyond immediate measures to render homes more energy efficient, the visits allowed discussion of wider steps possible to improve properties' insulation. In 17% of cases, no such discussion was necessary. But in the remaining 83% of visits, a wide range of options were considered, reflecting householder interest and property type. Often, several options were considered simultaneously. Most common focus areas were:



- cavity wall insulation (21%), reflecting the relatively low proportion of modern homes locally;
- internal wall insulation (53%), reflecting local housing typology and, and National Park proscriptions on external wall insulation. There was almost no interest in this, given the disruption and cost associated with such work – even if such work could be done for free;
- external wall insulation (11%);
- loft insulation, and consideration of insulating 'rooms in the roof' (39%);
- insulation grants (18%), where there appeared clear opportunity to remedy basic deficiencies.

3.39 These discussions reflected householders' interest in further improving household insulation and/or the relevance of larger works to render homes 'fit for the future'. In respect of internal wall insulation, they also highlighted the scale of the challenge in an area such as this in persuading households to contemplate significant works, if such work involves both large cost and substantial disruption.

GENERAL HEATING ADVICE

3.40 Advice on current heating systems, use of system controls and access to further assistance, including financial help, featured in many visits made. The most common areas for discussion, and mentoring, were:



- the nature of the heating system(s) in place and effective operation and understanding of system controls (58% of households visited);
- options/necessity for servicing of heating systems in place (45% of households visited);
- repair and replacement options for outmoded/inefficient systems (10% of households visited);
- access to 'heating grants', for those in particular circumstances (44% of households visited).

3.41 Our evidence is that advice given was well-received, particularly information about heating controls and how they could be adjusted to get optimum performance. In a minority of households visited, scope for accessing further assistance, financial or otherwise, was identified, and signposting undertaken.

More Specific Heating and Hot Water Advice

3.42 Opportunity was taken to review householders' current behaviours in use of their existing heating and 'hot water' systems (e.g. laundry practices, control of thermostats). Areas of particular prominence were:



- scope to review washing and drying routines (considered in 89% of households visited);
- scope to turn down thermostats or reduce use of hot water (in 44% of households visited);
- consideration of incidence/risk of mould (in 25% of households visited);
- effective use of 'standby' measures linked to systems (43% of households visited).

3.43 These discussion points suggested there is real scope to improve householders' understanding of efficient use of heating and hot water systems, beneficial drying routines, ventilation, management of mould risk and treatment of mould infections arising. The varied nature of these areas means that relevant advice would normally have to be sought from a range of tradespersons, at potentially considerable cost. A local service providing support of the kind delivered by this project would, we judge, be very cost effective.

ENERGY SUPPLY ADVICE

3.44 In visits made, there was opportunity to check out householders' understanding of basic technologies used, and services provided, by retail energy companies supplying householders. In 5% of visits, there was no felt need to cover such ground. In the remainder, discussion was focused predominantly on:

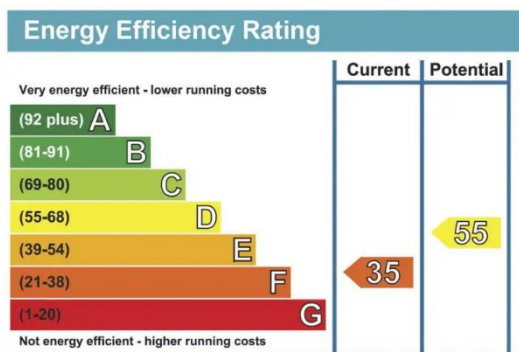
- smart meter technologies (53% of households visited);
- the detail and significance of submitting meter readings (9% of households visited);
- availability/eligibility for Warm Homes Discount funding support (5% of households visited);
- energy companies' Priority Service Registers, which offer support to eligible households at times of power outages/interruptions, and how to sign up for inclusion on them (37% of households visited).



This reflects a focus, in households visited, on numbers of elderly person households and also some younger families. A small minority clearly needed basic support in relation to their links with their energy supplier.

WIDER HOME BASED ENVIRONMENTAL ADVICE

3.45 The visits provided opportunity to share with householders aspects of their wider household environmental 'status', particularly the significance of EPCs (Energy Performance Certificates, a proxy for homes' energy efficiency). A few households required no such information. Of the remainder:



- 7% of households benefitted from sharing of basic details about EPCs;
- In 93% of households, discussion proceeded to consider not only the significance of EPCs, but wider environmental steps/measures/options bearing on energy use which might be considered to further reduce households' 'carbon footprints' (such as prospects for solar PV or battery storage);
- In 90% of households, mention was made of heat pumps as a provisional alternative to gas boilers.

4. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON HOME VISITS MADE

4.1 At the end of each visit, householders were given a 'feedback form' which they were invited to return, summarizing their reaction to the visit made. Around half of all participating households did so, and we are grateful to all who did. We consider that the local nature of the service offered, and the trust that engendered, accounted for such a good response.

4.2 Responses were unanimously positive about the service received. Householders valued the assessment made and practical advice given, as well as low level installations delivered. Together, they are a powerful endorsement of the approach we took, and Graham Hirst's knowledge and skills.

4.3 For some, visits were a welcome and useful endorsement of steps they had already taken to secure their comfort and improve their energy efficiency. But, invariably, there was scope to do more:

"Graham was very thorough and we were reassured to find we are already practicing most of his recommendations. We are grateful to have had adjustments to our settings where necessary. We now have a more efficient boiler setting. We also had advice on carbon monoxide monitoring, and heating settings when we are not at home."

"Reminds you of things you should do and will assist for the future."

"Very well conducted visit with time to ask questions."

"Beneficial and worthwhile review, enabling positive changes to be made and providing a range of helpful information."



"Gave us peace of mind we were doing the right things. We have felt more heat in rooms with the reflective material behind the radiators. We have bought an energy saving shower head too. Thank you."

"I had no idea the 'curly wurly' type bulbs were no longer considered eco-friendly."

"This has been an incredibly useful exercise – very informative, extremely helpful well-presented information. Foil behind radiators on external walls has been a revelation!"

"I was advised to change my boiler setting. I learned about changing my shower head and 'electric garments'. I found out about the apps I can use such as Hive and Nest and EPCRegister.com. I am considering a smart meter and solar panels."

"Technical and practical advice and support was excellent. Particularly helpful was i advice re boiler flow, ii advice about internal wall insulation iii replacing halogen with LED bulbs and iv fitting of draught excluders on rear doors."

"I am fairly confident in this area but still learned more. Very useful."

4.4 For some, the visit had wider repercussions re people's health and wellbeing, and addressed areas of, possibly misplaced, concern:



"Graham was very helpful. Good to have this by an independent person not trying to sell you something. A very useful service and helped me re anxiety re bills."

"A sense of wellbeing knowing we have optimized our savings re use of energy and reduced waste."

"Helpful to have someone with good knowledge/expertise to give their opinions and advice to ensure expensive mistakes causing more problems are not made. Also good that it is independent advice, not a contractor."

"Graham's thorough checks were reassuring, particularly the loft insulation as I can no longer get up there."

4.5 The impact of measures undertaken during the visits was quickly felt by some households:

"Supply of draught strip has definitely reduced draughts."

"I live alone and was very impressed by the help and advice given by Graham. Even the fitting of a letter box cover made an immediate difference. The advice re saving energy – superb."

"With your support, the house feels warmer, draughts have been reduced (they were a cause for concern) and my landlord has agreed to have loft insulation fitted this week!! Thank you!"

"The visit was an eye-opener in the sense that small adjustments can make a difference e.g. foil behind radiators. The LED lights have brightened the rooms and are considerably cheaper than the ones we had."

"The foil backing to the radiators has been effective. We talked about the boiler flow settings and adjusted them. These changes have made a difference."

4.6 Some householders were especially appreciative of the practical and informed advice provided relevant to their own housing type:

"The excellent and realistic advice enhanced our understanding of measures that could be taken to improve energy efficiency in a very old cottage. Overall, an excellent worthwhile input."

"Advice on everyday behaviour was very interesting and helpful. We have turned thermostats down by 1 degree, shortened our shower time and generally are more aware of energy saving issues. We think we are as efficient as we can be – in a stone cottage!"

"Good advice and very helpful. I can't have a combi boiler as water pressure is too poor (lead pipe leading from back of house – communal supply). Double lagging the water tank will help, plus fitting a controllable thermostat will give more control over room temperature. I appreciated the reassurance provided and info on wall insulation and heat pumps"

4.7 For some households, the visits are prompting initiatives to secure further improvements in efficiency:



"Since the visit, we have purchased a 'Hive' and have changed our electricity tariff, to enable cheap electricity between 12.30 – 4.30p.m. for charging the car."

"The advice about checking the cavity walls will be something to look into. Thank you for that. I will also look into the Nest/Hive systems as they are a lot cheaper than I thought."

"We have just moved into a 3 bed semi in need of renovation. The info we received helped us to understand what we need to do whilst renovating to increase the energy efficiency of our home."

4.8 Such positive feedback has been striking. It is clear that the visits prompted not only specific 'fixes' for energy-related issues identified but also enabled many householders to 'own' their own domestic energy efficiency issues with more confidence and understanding. We hope this may be a continuing journey for many. In Section 5, we explore further what householders have done, or intend to do, themselves since the visits to improve their energy efficiency.

5. WHAT HAVE CUSTOMERS DONE SINCE THEIR VISIT?

5.1 At the end of the project, we wanted to know what additional steps, if any, householders had taken or were thinking of taking themselves to improve their homes' energy efficiency further. Despite the fact that a good proportion of those who had had a visit had done so only a few weeks previously, we were pleased that one-third of all participants responded.

5.2 These responses indicated that:

- a) many of those replying had taken small steps/behavioural changes to improve their energy efficiency – and were feeling positive about doing so;
- b) a few households had recognised scope to make larger savings in energy use/carbon emissions and had already embarked on significant improvements;
- c) a good number of respondents identified obstacles associated with the cost of desired substantial improvements, particularly around older, stone houses and planning restrictions linked to their location. This is an issue which militates against the prospect of making our homes in areas such as this 'fit for the future' and requires public agencies to address such concerns as a priority.

5.3 Below is an edited selection of responses we received. We are grateful to all who responded.

"Many thanks for the practical measures we were advised to take. We are pursuing loft insulation."

"We are not allowed to have double glazing (Peak Park), we have applied and were refused. However we will fit insulated plasterboard to the inside of the external walls hopefully this summer."

"I have turned down the central heating thermostat and will switch off the gas boiler when it doesn't need to be in use."

"I have lowered my thermostat by 2C and made sure that radiators in unused rooms are mostly set at frost level. I am using my dishwasher on its eco setting, in spite of the fact it takes 3 hours rather than the 30 minutes setting! I was assured it was more efficient even though counter intuitive. I am using my microwave more and my slow cooker to batch cook more: I've also invested in an air fryer - wonderful. I only use my washing machine on a 30 min/30C setting."

"Following the visit, the only areas for further improvement would be:

- a) Wall cavity or internal wall insulation: the former is unsuitable for a stone built property with a cavity which cannot be guaranteed to be clear and the property is in an exposed rural location subject to heavy driving rain. Internal wall insulation is economically unsuitable.*
- b) Floor insulation; we have solid floors and this would be economically unsuitable.*
- c) Heat pump; heat pumps are only suitable for well insulated property and ref above we are not. Heat pumps are not an economic alternative for us, in addition to the heat pump installation we would need to increase our radiator sizes, adding to the installation cost, the electricity consumption of a heat pump would be substantially greater than our gas fired boiler and a heat pump is unlikely to adequately heat our property in the coldest of weather. We will replace our gas boiler at the latest date that fitment is feasible/allowed and that will last our life out."*

"It seems that I had almost done everything in my house that was necessary to improve energy efficiency, but having you check over what I had already done was very helpful. The most important point I would like to make is that until the energy efficiency solutions become more affordable, I do not think the majority of people will be able to implement them. I really believe that Government should make legislation that all new homes built in UK should now be built with solar panels and energy saving materials and solutions."

"Action we have taken since the visit. 1: Our Electric meter has not been working for 2 years - we have chased our supplier about this regularly and continue to do so. We expect a visit from an engineer shortly but we remain sceptical it will happen. We currently can't record our electric use and thus see any benefit from savings. 2: Replacement patio doors: our 40 year old doors are being replaced with new modern (argon filled) double glazed doors in the next 6 weeks."



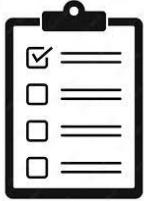
"Since my MOT I have:

- a) Used silicone to seal the draught between the floor and skirting board in one room.*
- b) looked into, and intend to insulate underneath the lounge floor before Autumn.*
- c) More importantly, I have not incorrectly insulated my loft which with the method I was considering would have caused additional damp problems."*

*"I have turned down and reduced the water temperature and flow of the boiler.
I bought an electric fleecy blanket/cover so am not increasing the temperature of the heating on colder days.
I have turned down the thermostat more frequently.
I had my MOT 12.12.22. It is clear to me that I have made savings on the kWh used compared with the previous year."*



"Since completing and delivering your Evaluation Questionnaire in early March we have done the following:



- 1. Our bedroom radiators have been switched off.*
- 2. We have fitted further insulation to our outside walls, which form the back wall of our wardrobes.*
- 3. We make greater use of our 100% efficient gas fire, rather than using the central heating system.*
- 4. We have shared the advice you gave us with our family and encouraged them to follow the energy saving ideas.*
- 5. Our room thermostat has been set at a lower temperature.*
- 6. We make greater use of the dehumidifier, rather than the tumble drier."*

"We have fitted insulation to the ceiling of the passage under our upstairs lounge and we also have fitted the LED bulbs you kindly supplied. These have made a small but significant reduction in our electricity use."

"We have turned off radiators in rooms we don't use. We are closing our curtains. Only boiling the water we need. Trying to cook lots of things at once in the oven. Washing at 30°C. Trying not to use our tumble dryer and turning our thermostat down a degree."

"As a result of the survey we got a chimney draft excluder as recommended."

"Here's a summary of my direction of travel following the MOT



- replacement of our remaining single glazed unit with double glazing*
- purchased a couple of infra-red heaters so central heating on time is reduced*
- continued experiments with boiler flow temperatures*
- insulation installed in cellar ceiling"*

"Following the visit when a few small improvements were made I have been enjoying their benefits and I have also doubled the capacity of my Solar batteries which means my daily electricity consumption has dropped dramatically."

"The recommendation made was that I should insulate the garage ceiling, which forms the floor of the living room above it. I did so and immediately noticed the difference it made in living room temperature. Well done Team!"

"We had an interesting visit and discussed energy saving ideas. We concluded I had done everything practical towards savings. All remaining ideas such as solar power, underfloor heating and heat pumps, are impractical or too expensive."

"Helpful advice on thermostatic controls. Though I have not yet made the improvement, I intend to do so over coming months."

5.4 Such responses indicate many householders' clear desire and commitment to 'do the right thing'. That many are now doing what – probably - they could have done previously, had they known what to do, suggests a real 'public information deficit' in this field. There is a clear and continuing need to make available advice to all-comers, in ways they can readily access, on simple steps they can take to cut energy use, and associated emissions, whilst retaining comfort levels.

5.5 It is encouraging to see reflected here some commitments, and achievements, to make greater improvements in insulation via such measures as installing internal insulation boards, addressing 'cold bridges' and the like. It is likely some of these would probably not have been initiated without this project.

6. COULD OTHER COMMUNITIES UNDERTAKE SIMILAR INITIATIVES?

6.1 The Hayfield 'Home Energy MOT' project was conceived as a partial, local, response to a national challenge. But there is nothing unique to Hayfield which means that this model, or something similar, could not be replicated, and extended, elsewhere.

6.2 The need for this is self-evident. We need, now, to develop ways of decarbonizing our homes. This will involve large (deep retrofit) and small (low-level energy efficiency) schemes.

6.3 Our experience suggests there is a large amount of goodwill towards the latter, but it has its limits. The environmental think tank, E3G, has stated "Combatting climate change is all about making it cheap and easy to do the right thing: if it's painful, it's going to meet resistance."

6.4 Our scheme was cheap (free to end users) and easy to access, via a simple request and a one-off visit. That was key to its approach. Fundamental to achieving similar objectives elsewhere are:

- the need for energetic local activists, with good community 'presence', to stimulate interest, build trust, and raise some funds;
- recognition that some people want primarily cut their energy costs, whilst others primarily want to cut their emissions. Delivery schemes need to involve organisations which have this dual focus;
- commitment to a standing local advice service (a 'one stop shop') delivering easily accessible advice and low level installation support. Had we been able to extend our project, we are sure we would have attracted even more participating households, across income levels;
- community groups working with public agencies, notably Parish, Town and Borough/District councils to build a shared commitment to such a service, and support its promotion. Local authorities are well-placed to develop such services, in partnership;
- Specific to the High Peak and similar areas, detailed inter-agency work, led by local authorities, to consider how to deliver schemes which make 'hard to treat' properties 'fit for a net zero future'.
- Development of a pool of authoritative assessors/experts such as we had in Graham Hirst, able to be deployed responsibly, without whom no scheme can run. Graham brought to the project his experience as a qualified Domestic Energy Assessor (DEA) and Green Deal Advisor, with a diploma in building construction and membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing. He has produced EPCs for many clients and is experienced in boiler installations of a range of kinds. A similar set of qualifications/experience would be necessary to inspire confidence.

OPEN QUESTION

Hayfield lies in the High Peak area of Derbyshire. In the area, there are 17 Town and Parish Councils providing services to local residents, as well as the borough and surrounding County Council and the Peak District National Park Authority. There are similar arrangements in other jurisdictions. Most, if not all, such agencies would be well-disposed to assist local residents secure improvements in their domestic energy efficiency. Might it be possible, led by borough councils, that a co-ordinated approach be developed, ensuring local people have ready access to sources of support such as those detailed in this evaluation report?

If there were interest in neighbouring communities in considering provision of such assistance, we – Sustainable Hayfield and Marches Energy Agency – would be happy to be involved in any initial discussions.