

Questions and Answers Low Carbon Energy Event 13th October 2022.

Answers provided by expert speakers: Liz Atherton (SMBC), Stephen Dootson (KAST), Mel Godfrey (Consultant), Philip Marples 9musicMagpie) Phil Korbel Carbon Co-op)

Q I've had my house assessed with some good advice as an output, but how do I find someone who will be able to do the work recommended and how do I have confidence they'll do it well without ripping me off?

A Mel: There are no easy answers yet but it is not a developed market. The Federation of Master Builders have been pushing for a level playing field for a new generation of advisors, but there hasn't been government interest to date.

Mel Godfrey available to help - email for advice

A Liz: Greater Manchester has just launched YourHomeBetter. This is a programme aimed at helping those who can pay for the retrofit to get advice on what to do and direction in finding suppliers and fitters to do the work.

A Phil K: Carbon Co-op looks at co-op approaches to retrofitting so a good resource to use. Key tip is do the research and don't necessarily go for quickest or cheapest to get good quality services!

Q In conservation areas, the planning rules stop me putting solar panels on the roof. Why and what can I do?

A Liz: I think there are national planning regulations that are tying the hands of the council. Some greener regs are coming through and there is support from the team on this - watch this space.

Q Is it true to leave your heating on low all the time than to switch it off and on?

A Stephen: This is a matter of thermal storage and efficiency. Some radiators and clever heat pumps can really be an asset on this. However, for most kit and set ups in the home it is not more efficient to keep it on full time.

A Mel: if you have a draughty house then that makes the temperature differentials even bigger which will impact this.

A Phil K: top tip is to do the obvious and quick stuff first!

A Stephen: triple glazing windows is a 45 year ROI. Sealing around the windows is a much better approach!

Q I had double glazing fitted recently but suspect there are gaps (mould and condensation). Is this a problem with the cavity wall insulation or windows?

A Mel: sounds like a leaky house where sealing around windows wasn't done properly and air is filtering in. It will need careful assessment and expertise to give a view.

Q I've heard that methane isn't something to be concerned about and isn't a big issue in the greenhouse effect. Is that right?

A Phil K: Methane is a very potent greenhouse gas. Produced by many processes but vast quantities
It only lasts in the in the atmosphere for 12 years but it more effective (damaging) than CO₂.

Q My nervousness around recycling of e-waste is with data security - is it safe?

A Phil: There is a government standard that we should be adhering to on security and data destruction. Check with the company you drop the item off with that they have these standards and there is no need to worry!

Q Heat pumps is there a registrations/installation similar to that for gas installation?

A MCS certifications are available to show that installers are qualified and equipped to do the job properly - look out for this before paying for services!

Q A lot of us take small electricals to councils for recycling - how much of that is used and broken down?

A Phil: It all depends on the item. Polymers can be reused for plastic goods, metals and minerals can be extracted and applied elsewhere, the remainder will be incinerated for energy.

Q Hydrogen as an alternative fuel - is this something we will see coming into the homes? How does this work for our buses?

A Stephen: Hydrogen is the most abundant resource in the universe but the costs of generating it for fuel is too expensive, that's why Blue Hydrogen is in.

There are companies in the North West investing in developing for a wider range of use but it all depends on the size of the technology in question and the anode and cathode set up. For a bus, for example, this is a set up that works. However, for smaller infrastructure it's not quite possible. We will see hydrogen trains, buses, lorries but it is a good few years away for at home. That said, we're expecting to see a hydrogen mix in the gas suppliers and blends will be more common in the home as a route to this.