



EVALUATION – July 26th

Introduction

Bristol Green Doors' Solar Saturday was held on 11th June 2011. It was one of four events taking place as part of Good Living Week. It featured 12 homes, 11 in Bristol and one in Thornbury.

The public could visit homes by arrangement through an online booking system on the BGD website which detailed the homes and time slots that were available. All visits were free though visitors were encouraged to make a donation.

Four homes were identified as “exemplars” of solar installation companies sponsoring the event. As well as gaining additional profile through the solar technology page of the website, the sponsors were also able to be present in the homes on the day. This invitation was taken up by three of the sponsors, though one was a householder running her business from home.

Bristol Green Doors (BGD) publicised the event through their email list and website, press coverage in the Evening Post and about 50 posters sited in shops, community notice boards and offices around the city. Additionally the event featured strongly in the Good Living Weekend leaflets distributed around the city.

The event cost £1850 to put on which includes £1000 for PR and photography with the two project managers unpaid for their work on the event.

Outcomes

115 people registered for the event and booked about 175 visits out of a potential 382 slots amounting to 46% capacity). On the day, some drop out was noted and also some additional visitors just turned up. Attendance was about 85% so we estimate around 150 visits were made.

In the period May 21st – July 2nd (that is three weeks either side of the event) the BGD website received 2,100 visits from 1,500 visitors with an average time on the site of nearly 4 minutes.

All visitors were invited to complete an online evaluation form to which 39 (33%) people responded.

Visitor Feedback

Demographics.

- The visitors were predominantly homeowners (33/39), aged between 45-65 ((62% and described themselves as white British (90%)
- The split between male and female was 50:50

Awareness

- Visitors found out about the event through a whole range of sources with newsletter type emails from either BGD or sustainability groups being the most common though not significantly. Only one respondent heard about it through Good Living Week publicity

Homes and interests

- The most popular homes to visit were in Westbury on Trym and Montpelier
- One home (in Filton) received no bookings
- Respondents stated that they were more interested in PV than in Solar Thermal by a 3:2 ratio
- Around 50% stated they would download case studies of the homes for future reference from the Bristol Green Doors website

Thoughts on the event

- The event was well received by all visitors
- Respondents almost unanimously thought the presentations by the householders were very good or excellent
- Suggestions on improvements were minimal. Those that were made identified ways that the website could be improved though these were along the lines already being considered by BGD.

Visitors post event action

- 65% of respondents stated they were now clear how to tackle improvements on their homes
- 88% of respondents were clear on the cost of installing solar systems
- 19 respondents stated they would install a PV system in the next 12 months; 7 people stated they would install a solar thermal system

Thoughts on involvement of sponsors

- An small percentage of visitors (7%) opted specifically to visit a house because a sponsor was present
- 66% felt positive about sponsors being in the homes
- 70% of respondents thought the sponsors help and advice was useful

Conclusion

- The event was well received by those who attended though interest across different areas of the city was variable
- The event was undersubscribed though not worryingly and this could have been overcome by more effective and extensive marketing.
- The event helped over 66% respondents to install solar more confidently over the next 12 months. It is not clear whether these people would not have done so without attending.
- Visitors were more interested in PV than solar thermal possible due to the feed in tariff. This interest could change with the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive.
- The involvement of sponsors does not appear to be detrimental to BGD events and so this exemplar home opportunity should be considered for future events
- The role of the BGD website in providing case studies and a booking system is clearly valued and has potential to be developed further.