

## **Closing Doors on Green Open Homes Events? Executive Summary of Report – Dec' 2016**



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## Executive Summary

Bristol Green Doors is a Community Interest Company (CIC) with the aim of 'normalising domestic retrofit for sustainability', necessary to support cutting the 27% of CO<sub>2</sub> which comes from UK homes. Since 2010 its activity has been carried out through peer-to-peer learning at green open homes events and its website.

At green open homes events, householders who have carried out green retrofits, show visitors improvements they have made describe what they have learnt and visitors see how they can change their own homes.

Bristol Green Doors has run seven successful citywide events and has been described as "UK leaders in green open homes activity". Over forty green open homes events have been supported by Bristol Green Doors through replication, guidance and provision of resources. Lack of funding saw no citywide event run in 2016.

Founded against a background of positive government aims and industry confidence, Bristol Green Doors has found stop-start government policy around energy efficiency and retrofit extremely challenging. With no secure income and a lack of retrofit activity locally and nationally, it recently gave notice that green open home events in Bristol will need to be delivered very differently in future.

Bristol Green Doors is facing dormancy - its aims cannot be realised in a sustainable manner and its core objectives cannot meet local funding streams' criteria. Nationally, many other organisers are struggling too.

Despite working with over twenty retrofit trades that have provided nearly £35,000 of income, sponsorship is increasingly hard to secure. Over 50,000 users have accessed the [www.bristolgreendoors.org](http://www.bristolgreendoors.org) website and therefore opportunities should exist to both enable retrofit and generate income through advertising yet analysis of the last twelve months digital activity has shown interest in retrofit to be worryingly low.

Locally, Bristol Green Doors has contributed in numerous ways to the city's reputation and developing energy scene. However, projects need to be knitted together more effectively and more strategically. Nationally it has achieved profile in the retrofit world through successful projects and case studies but green open homes and events need stable drivers that do not focus on fuel poverty.

The retrofit issue is of national even global significance and yet struggling for traction in the UK. As far as 'normalising retrofit' for energy efficiency is concerned, the UK has barely moved out of the *Innovators* stage. Green open homes events are necessary before the 'adoption' tipping point occurs but this will not happen whilst changes in policy, stop-start energy efficiency schemes, the virtual axing of feed in tariffs etc continue to slow down the transition from early adopters to the 'early majority'.

Bristol Green Doors has achieved a lot both locally and nationally but the systematic dismantling of any policy framework to support retrofit for energy efficiency in UK homes is of real concern to us. More efforts of local and national politicians, policy makers and industry leaders are needed to support the development of the retrofit industry to meet the UK's carbon reduction targets.

This report summarises Bristol Green Doors' position and identifies these key learning points to support more sustainable community oriented learning about retrofit:

- Green open homes activity must be recognised as an essential part of building a retrofit market
- An effective national voice for events is needed to enable UK delivery of more events more effectively
- The involvement of third parties is required to support and integrate strategy locally
- Our community is our principal asset but it is changing and consequently its effectiveness may too
- More green retrofit activity should be celebrated and shared digitally
- Policy makers must embrace green open homes events' value and role to sustain retrofit demand
- Secure funding streams are needed to support green open homes activity else burn out will occur

**A full copy of this report is available on [www.bristolgreendoors.org](http://www.bristolgreendoors.org)**