

79 Downlands Avenue, Worthing BN14 9HE

Overview

Owner: Heather Brayshaw

Type: Terrace

Age: About 1930

Beds: Three

Walls: Brick cavity

Area: approx.. 900 square feet in total

Residents: One

Key features

Solar Panels

Rainwater Harvesting

Low energy lighting & appliances

Food cultivation & planting for wildlife

Double glazing & lined curtains

Introduction and approach

Heather has invested in the proven measures which deliver good carbon savings. This is not simply an economic exercise but is driven by her Quaker principles to support sustainability, as well as Transition Town principles.

Content with what she has, Heather is always considering her impact on the environment in her choices, avoiding unnecessary waste of precious resources and energy.

Energy efficiency measures

Lined curtains, energy efficient lighting, re-using grey water from shower and harvesting rain water in 5 water butts.

Solar gain

Heather chose an east/west facing house in order to benefit from the sun coming directly into the house both morning and evening.

Heating and hot water

Hot water is heated by the solar panels, so she



didn't need to put on the immersion heater for 5 months this summer, despite having visitors. Heating is by a gas boiler (as it's not very old) but it's only used in the coldest weather twice daily, otherwise she wears her warm jumpers and wraps up in a rug when sitting.

Insulation

Heather has thick lined curtains, which she pulls as it gets dark, to contain the heat. She has laid carpets in the bedrooms and sitting room to help to keep cosy.

Walls - She only has front and back walls to keep warm, so is kept warmer by being in a terrace of 6 houses.

Windows - Double Glazed throughout with lined curtains to keep rooms extra cosy as needed.

Roof - Insulated with Thermafleece - Cosywool Sheep's wool at 300mm deep.

Renewables and low carbon technology

8 Solar panels on the east facing roof (front of house).

Washing machine, and fridge-freezer are AAA energy rated.

Electricity

Solar panels heat water in immersion heater and produce electricity mostly in the mornings, so to take advantage of “free” energy, Heather uses the washing machine, vacuum cleaner, iron, cooker and other electrical goods in the morning one after the other, when needed.

Carbon emissions

Heather has a small car, which she uses as little as possible, mostly getting about by bicycle, walking or using the bus around town to do her shopping, attending classes and for visiting friends. For long distances she always travels by train.

Other sustainable measures/ lifestyle decisions

Water conservation - Heather has a shower over the bath and collects shower water to flush the toilet.

She has 5 water butts to catch rainwater to use for watering her vegetables, soft fruit bushes, young fruit trees and flowers.

Garden - Heather’s garden is stocked with wild-life friendly plants and features, e.g. wood pile, compost, bee house. She grows her own vegetables, soft fruit and has fruit trees, which she planted when she moved in.

Lifestyle - Heather is very much of a "make do and mend" mindset. When she moved from a larger house, she adapted the curtains to fit her new windows, adding another layer of insulation to the double glazing, making the rooms warmer and cosier.

She (re)makes clothes or buys them from charity shops. Any small electrical goods that are not working she will only dispose of after first getting them checked out at the Repair Café. Anything that does need replacing she will always try to buy from charity shops.



Heather is a classic example of being content with what you have and not buying into consumerism. She has had most of the same furniture for 45 years. Some furniture she’s had since she married 57 years ago and still has a desk from her childhood given to her by her dad. She repurposed a wardrobe from her old home turning it into shelving and still has bunk beds that belonged to her husband as a child, making all of this work for her in her new home, rather than buying new. As soon as she moved in, she got the loft properly insulated and had solar panels installed as she is committed to a low carbon lifestyle.

As a valuable member of the team of volunteers at Worthing Repair Cafe since it began in 2018, Heather helps to set up the space, provides cake, support with refreshments and also mends soft toys and deals with sewing and darning repairs.

Heather is a founder member of Transition Town Worthing, and she volunteers at Cortis Avenue Wildlife Garden and with Turning Tides, the homeless charity.

Lessons learned

“Live simply, that others may simply live.”

Professionals/materials

Solar panels installed by Polar Planet, Goring Trading Estate - sadly this company has now ceased trading.