

North Cumbria Area Meeting  
**Carlisle Local Quaker Meeting**

Results from the Sustainability Survey  
A Summary by Ian Watson

0. Introduction

This survey was carried out in November-December 2012, with responses through to March 2013. The objective was to share experiences and difficulties of becoming more sustainable. Thus this report is to enable that sharing of experience, and those receiving it are free to contact others to get more information. It is part of Carlisle Meeting's response to Minute 36 from YM 2011 about becoming a low-carbon sustainable community.

The survey form is shown as Appendix 2. From Carlisle Meeting, ten households responded (see Appendix 1), and thus this report is being distributed to those 10 households (For key, see Appendix 1). The response of 10 households represents a response rate of about 34%, considered to be fairly typical or even good in general market and opinion surveys; but in a Quaker community I find this rather disappointing. Does this mean that there a significant number of people in our community are not bothered about the response to YM 2011 minute 36?

This report is narrative in format, and is structured along the lines of the original survey form. A number felt that they didn't understand question 6 (Inspiration), and there was little response.

1. Energy Efficiency

- Surveys. Two households did surveys. In one case (9), a professional survey was done, but no significant improvements were able to be recommended; in the other (4) an infra-red scanning camera was borrowed (from Sustainable Carlisle), and places of poor insulation/heat loss were identified, and then remedial action taken. The same household (4) also did a survey for draughts using smoke candles.
- Insulation. Everyone has insulated lofts, and filled cavity walls. In one case (4) a wall without cavity was insulated on the outside with polystyrene sheeting and then rendered. One (7) reports additional insulation e.g. under the bath! The draught survey referred to above led to greater attention to curtains, door seals etc.
- Fuel. Two report good experience with wood/ wood chips (4, 5) and the latter who lives in a rural area is learning how to manage their own woodland to provide enough wood as fuel. One (7) has changed to a "green" electricity supplier.
- Boiler – one (4) reported that their boiler was very old, and turned out to be inefficient. It was replaced with a modern one.
- Temperature Control – one (7) said that they switched the boiler off completely and relied on wearing warmer clothes. Another (4) said that they had tried this but had problems with condensation. Another (1) said that the radiators were turned off in about half the house; also thermostats were set at 18C in the rooms that are heated. One (9) has turned down the thermostat by 2C. Another (10) only heats the living room with portable heaters when at home as they are normally out at work: the central heating is left off. One (8) is keeping a personal tally of kWh.

- Solar hot water. Two (1, 3) have done this. Experience is that in winter time it preheats water by up to 10C, while in about 3-4 summer months, all hot water can be provided. However the system was expensive, and is judged (1) not to be as effectual as solar electricity.
- Solar electricity. Three have done this (1, 2 & 6). A 4kW installation cost about £10k in 2012, but generated 3.5MWh over the year. In this case (1) the house and roof layout is ideal. The company used – ‘Solarlec’ was very professional, and can be recommended. The system also came with a Bluetooth link, so data can be downloaded to a PC. Others reported that their houses did not have south facing roofs. One (9) said that they did not agree with it since the pricing structure was such that (poor) people who could not install such a system were subsidising those who could.
- Heat Pumps. One (2) has installed an air-side heat pump which not only heats the house, but also provides hot water.
- Lighting. Most have changed to high-efficiency bulbs. One (3) had a watt meter (‘owl’ meter) and had discovered that halogen bulbs are very inefficient, and so had replaced them. Also they were changing to LED lighting which is very efficient: data is still being collected. One (4) reports that they had installed a ‘sun-tube’ in the hall which improved lighting there dramatically, and uses no power when the sun is up. The ‘light-catcher’ is on the roof and the sun sets there long after the street is in shadow.
- Windows. Most report having double-glazed windows. One (4) reports changing the double-glazed window panes to a more efficient type: internally coated with microns-thickness of metal, and filled with an inert gas rather than air. This completely cured condensation and misting.

## 2. Consumption

- Food. Simple, home-made meals (2); Carlisle Fair Food Group, Farmers market, own vegetable garden or allotment (3, 4); avoid food produced in southern hemisphere. Some regretted that financial constraints meant that they still had use supermarkets a lot.
- Clothing: buy only when worn out; use charity shops; make your own clothes, only 20% actually bought (3)
- Possessions – thin out regularly (4)
- Recycling. All are careful to recycle; green waste goes to garden or allotment

## 3. Transport

- Several (4, 5, & 7) have no car, including one who lives in a rural area with buses only 2 days a week. Another (3) living in a rural area who has children feels that a car is essential. For those working a car is essential, but they (6, 9, 10) have bought models with low fuel consumption. Another (1) uses the car sparingly, on average driving 3000 mi per year.
- One (1) has signed the pledge not to fly except in an emergency. Another (4) only flies to visit family.
- Three (1, 4, 8) use bicycle as a principle means of transport.
- The majority use bus or train in preference to car; one uses train and folding bike to get to work (3). Several also use train for journeys within Continental Europe (1, 3, 4).
- Concern was expressed about the lack of cycle ways in Carlisle and lack of buses in rural areas.

## 4. Information

- Several mention the organisation Sustainable Carlisle; also Friends of the Earth
- Specific books – e.g. How Bad are Bananas?
- Films such as An Inconvenient Truth.
- The Internet

### 5. 'Low Carbon Happiness

- Reading; two (8, 10) said sitting in a café reading.
- Talking to friends
- Playing games, e.g., chess
- Making music together
- Walking, cycling

### 6. Inspiration

- Simplicity and Efficiency are core values.
- Elegant ideas inspire; ugly ones don't
- Sharing with others who have experience
- You can be demotivated by having to explain to others who may be cynical why you think sustainability is important.

### 7. Carlisle Meeting House

- More car sharing
- Use 'green' electricity
- Improve thermal insulation
- Solar panels on an adjoining building

**North Cumbria Area Quaker Meeting.  
Carlisle Local Quaker Meeting.**

**'Becoming a Low-Carbon Sustainable Community'**

**A Survey and an Exchange of Knowledge and Experience.**

Introduction

Britain Yearly Meeting in 2011 decided that Quakers in Britain should strive to become a 'Low Carbon Sustainable Community'. During 2012 Carlisle Local Meeting has been considering what this should mean both for us as a Meeting, and for us as individuals. At the Local Business Meeting on 14 October, a number of actions were agreed (see minute 7). One of these actions was to compile a list of 'expertise' within the Meeting via a survey or questionnaire.

The Survey

Firstly, it should be explained that the remarks that follow and the attached survey form are there for guidance. Please feel free to provide information in the way that suits you best. You do not have to use the form. Also, the information that you provide will remain confidential, and will only be shared with others within Carlisle Local Meeting who have taken part in this survey. You can therefore include comments on companies stating whether they have done a good job or not, and whether their prices were reasonable.

There are two main parts to this exercise:

- A. What knowledge and experience do you have which could be useful to others?
- B. What knowledge or experience are you lacking, and would benefit from hearing from others? Also, what inhibits you from living in a more sustainable lifestyle?

and in three areas:

1. What knowledge and experience do you have in making your home more **energy** efficient and/or more sustainable? *Examples: thermal insulation, double glazing, solar hot water and electricity, change to an electricity supplier based on renewable energy, wearing more clothes with a lower thermostat setting, etc.*
2. What has been your experience in changing your lifestyle to become more sustainable in terms of **consumption**? *Examples: The types of food and clothing that you buy and use; more discrimination on purchases to limit inherent energy costs – buying locally produced products, more care with recycling, etc*
3. What has been your experience in changing your lifestyle to become more sustainable in terms of the use of **transport**? *Examples: Limiting car use by using more public transport or walking/bike, holidays not involving air travel, etc*

As well as good experience, it is also important to cover bad experience, and the difficulties, e.g. in living a more sustainable lifestyle.

In addition to the main focus of the survey you may wish to give information on the following:

4. Information: what books, web-sites, organisations have you found helpful?
5. "Low Carbon Happiness" – What activities increase your happiness, *without* increasing your carbon footprint?
6. Inspiration – Any ideas or thoughts that you have that motivate you, or demotivate you.
7. The Meeting House: Any further thoughts on ways in which we could make the MH or its use more low carbon.

	A - EXPERIENCE and/or KNOWLEDGE
<b>1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY</b> Heating Lighting Electrical	
<b>2. CONSUMPTION</b> Food Clothing Possessions Dealing with waste	
<b>3. TRANSPORT</b> Modes of transport Change of mode Sharing Reducing	
<b>4. INFORMATION</b> Good Books Websites Organisations	
<b>5. LOW CARBON HAPPINESS</b> What activities increase your happiness without increasing your carbon footprint	
<b>6. INSPIRATION</b> Thoughts and ideas that motivate you, or thoughts that demotivate you.	
<b>7. MEETING HOUSE</b> What ways could the meeting House and the meetings in the MH be more low carbon?	

Your name \_\_\_\_\_