



HAM & PETERSHAM STREET CHAMPIONS

an evaluation of the project



What are we up to now?

HAMHYDRO
A ground-breaking community renewable energy project
Ham Hydro Community Interest Company was set up by members of HUG



early in 2010 to make a bid to install hydro power turbines on Toddington Weir. That bid was successful and we are now moving towards gaining planning permission to build the scheme in 2012.



HOW MUCH ELECTRICITY WILL THE SCHEME GENERATE?

The equivalent of powering 6 of the borough's secondary schools.

For more info go to <http://www.hamhydro.org.uk/> or hamhydro@group.hamhydro.org.uk

LOW CARBON ZONE & STREET CHAMPIONS

The Ham & Petersham Low Carbon Zone is a scheme to make homes in the area more energy and water-efficient. HUG is a key partner in the scheme on the ground—we have recruited a core group of Street Champions, who are encouraging residents to take advantage of the free measures on offer (home energy monitor, radiator panels, etc.). We are also holding draught-proofing and thermal imaging sessions—other ideas related to keeping our homes warm for less expense are most welcome. Contact the Street Champion Coordinator chas.warlow@hamhydrocommunityci.com



CARE ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE & GET INVOLVED?



COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

The allotment is at Grey Court School—for more info on how to get involved or how to get hold of some produce, go to <http://www.hamhydro.org.uk/hamhydrogroup/allotment/>

Report by Chas Warlow, Project Coordinator



Introduction

Between 2009-2012 Ham United Group partnered with Richmond Council to deliver the Ham and Petersham Low Carbon Zone (LCZ). Our LCZ was one of 10 to receive funding from the Greater London Authority to create a neighbourhood where energy efficiency and positive energy behaviours are the norm.

Richmond Council's Ham and Petersham Low Carbon Zone evaluation report¹ details the Low Carbon Zone project as a whole and how the project aims and targets were met. In summary, the Ham and Petersham Low Carbon Zone (LCZ) was very successful. Energy assessments were provided to 796 homes and 11,758 energy and water savings measures were installed, saving participants £122,000 a year on fuel bills and bringing the community together to reduce our emissions and help address climate change.

The Street Champion component was one of the most successful elements of the project. Street Champions were volunteers from the community and gave neighbours and friends a peer perspective on energy and water efficiency in the home. They helped to explain what it was about, showed by example the sort of measures and savings opportunities available and helped to generate interest and participation in the project.

This report acknowledges the vital contribution the Street Champions made to the success of the Low Carbon Zone. It identifies ways in which similar projects could be improved as a guide to other communities wishing to embark on similar projects in the future.

¹ Available at http://www.richmond.gov.uk/ham_petersham_evaluation_report_final.pdf



Summary

From the start, this was a grass-roots project: the Street Champions Coordinator was a local resident and active members of Ham United Group (HUG) made up the bulk of the Street Champion network. This is not to say that the network was not inclusive – on the contrary, all were welcome to join. As the project unfolded it became apparent that flexibility around volunteers was key: the Coordinator did not lay down any ground rules or expect a minimum time commitment.

The Champions initially debated how we should deliver the project – the general conclusions were that since the project sat under the umbrella of the Low Carbon Zone (LCZ), we would focus on promoting the LCZ offer² to our immediate neighbours and acquaintances. The Coordinator also contacted various representatives of the local voluntary groups and residents' associations with the same view in mind.

There were two distinct phases of the project. First, the Street Champions encouraged residents to apply for the LCZ offer. Secondly, they encouraged those residents who had applied to take up the offer. Therefore, over the course of the project, the main activity engaged in by Street Champions was to visit the residents in their street (and other streets nearby, if they wished) and talk to them individually in order to encourage them to take up and act on the LCZ offer. The workshops and other services (e.g. thermal imaging, draughtproofing) provided at a later stage of the project served to reinforce this work.

STREET CHAMPION PROJECT 2010/2011

1. Activities

2010

4 February	Reception Evening, Grey Court School
27 April	Solar Workshop, Grey Court School, Ham Street
27 May	The Street Champion Get-together, Ham Children's Centre Street Champions met and formulated a plan of action – thereafter they met on a monthly basis for most of the project. Subsequent meetings included role-play exercises to bolster confidence for door-knocking; mapping out our connections in the area; general discussion around energy and water efficiency.
June	Stall at Richmond Housing Partnership event RHP is the main social landlord in the area and this event enabled their residents to become acquainted with the project and the LCZ scheme.
12 June	Ham Fair, Ham Common Ham Fair is the main opportunity for all local organizations to show a public face and do some fundraising: it is quite a large event (about 300

² This process occurred once the Street Champions were fully involved in the scheme, e.g. through seeing that their feedback on the initial LCZ application form was taken into account in re-designing it.



stalls). Street Champions were present in force at the HUG stall, promoting the LCZ and providing energy efficiency advice.

4 August

Thermal Imaging training, Ham Children's Centre

A group of Street Champions received training in how to use the thermal imaging cameras supplied to us by Richmond Council.

23 September

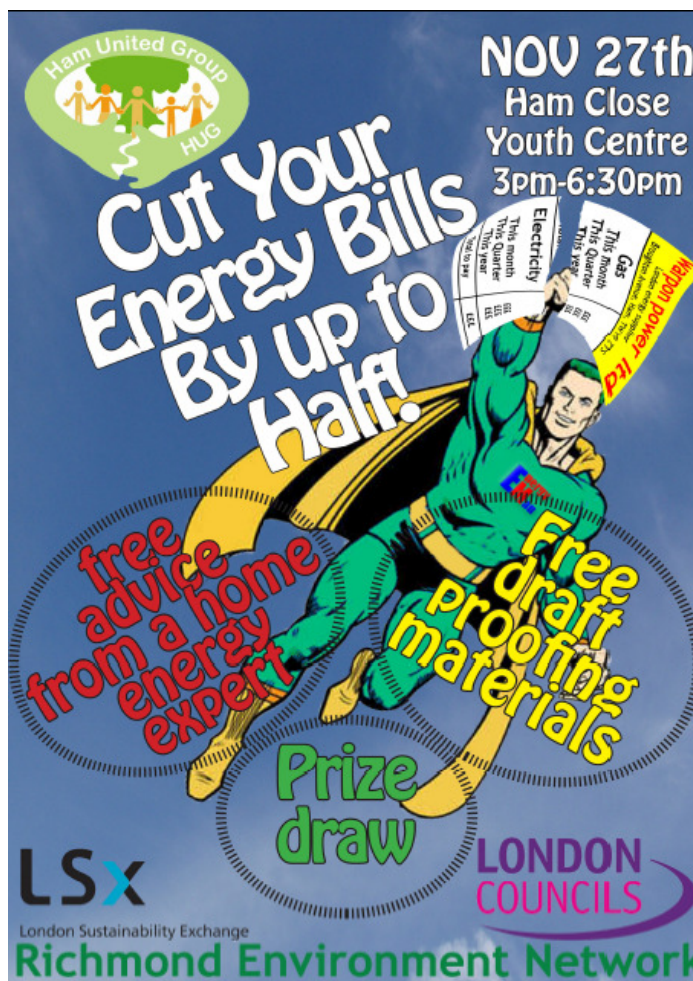
Draught busting workshop, Mowbray Road

One of the Street Champions allowed her house to be the location for a draughtbusting workshop: door strips, a letter box draught excluder and chimney balloon were installed.

27 November

'Cut Your Energy Bills in Half' event: over 50 attendees

The event was organized by the Coordinator and run with the help of the Street Champions. Two guest speakers provided tips on insulation and renewable energy installation, while Street Champions gave out free draughtproofing equipment.





2011

6 January

Thermal Imaging (TI) session

The first of several workshops, where a Street Champion used thermal imaging to give the resident a general overview of their property's thermal performance and suggest possible improvements.

24 January

Thermal Imaging (TI) session

27 January

New application forms sent out

February

Winter issue of *Ham & Petersham* magazine distributed

The magazine is produced by a local resident, also a Street Champion, to keep local residents informed about events and provide information on key projects in the area. The Street Champions and LCZ received a double-page spread in each issue throughout the duration of the project.

7 - 9 February

Schools visits and stalls to promote LCZ

9 February

Draught proofing workshop

12 Feb – 23 March

Stalls in local shopping areas

Street Champions manned stalls in the local shopping areas, handing out LCZ application forms and promoting the message of energy efficiency.

March

Draught proofing workshop

March

Thermal imaging sessions run by Street Champions

April

Spring issue of H&P magazine distributed

June

Summer issue of H&P magazine distributed

June

Stall at Ham Fair

July – August

137 households visited by Street Champions to encourage LCZ applicants to book energy assessments

27 August

A talk on solar power, Ham Library

Three Street Champions presented their experiences of having solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems installed; the event attracted over 60 residents.

31 October

“Hammoween”

A group of Street Champions dressed up in Halloween costume and visited residents to give them a “spooky” thermal imaging session.



24 November

Low Carbon Zone celebration evening

Around 100 residents attended this event, organized to celebrate the success of the LCZ.



2. Publicity

The Street Champions developed a webpage (<http://www.hamunitedgroup.org.uk/low-carbon-zone/street-champions/>) which publicised the project and featured a range of resources for residents' reference, such as short films on how to fit draughtproofing measures.

A film about the LCZ as a whole was also produced by Street Champions and made available on the project website. Pages on related websites (e.g. Facebook, Project Dirt) were also created.

Throughout the project, the Coordinator attended LCZ Steering Group meetings to plan the joint delivery of the LCZ and Street Champions projects. Following the official end of the LCZ scheme, Street Champions have continued to be active and have run a session at Ham Library to distribute free items such as electricity monitors, draughtproofing equipment, standby savers, etc.

3. Methodology behind the project

The Project Coordinator attended a workshop led by Doug McKenzie-Mohr, an expert in community based social marketing, to learn about proven techniques in effecting behaviour change. As a result, the project strategy encompassed the use of some of these tools, namely:

Social diffusion: Street Champions (SCs) spread the message of energy and water efficiency by visiting residents and discussing the issues involved face-to-face, encouraging them to sign up to the LCZ and passing on printed information where applicable.

Rewards and incentives: the Project Coordinator rewarded SCs' efforts with useful eco-items such as grow-bags, green bike oil and solar chargers. These items were also used as incentives for recruitment of new SCs and as prizes for the local secondary school's internal carbon-reduction competition.

Prompts: a batch of branded corn starch pens was distributed to be used as prompts and/or as indicators of adherence to the project – they proved to be extremely popular.

Website: A dedicated webpage was set up for the project and kept regularly updated with information on events and downloads of useful material.

4. Other activities by Street Champions

A number of Street Champions continue to monitor their energy consumption via ***imeasure*** and/or the **Smart Communities website**.

Street Champions have also installed other measures, such as solar PV and solar thermal systems. Street Champions organised and ran a talk on solar energy.



Street Champions are continuing to be involved in running the local community allotment, while guides on how to enhance the energy-efficiency of specific housing types in the Zone were also produced as part of the project.

One Street Champion carried out a survey of five lofts to analyse how best to overcome the barriers to installing loft insulation.

A bike repair project is now being run on the initiative of one of the Street Champions; in addition, a draught proofing service was run from February to September 2012 and eleven properties successfully d-proofed, including two properties which had secondary double glazing fitted on windows which were single-glazed in a conservation area. The d-proofing service also helped to repair faulty seals in existing double glazing.

5. Feedback from members of the community

Feedback from participants was sought throughout the project, through individual interviews and a focus group. A combination of activities helped drive uptake, including being motivated by Street Champions, the free items on offer, the information and knowledge provided. All participants in the residents' focus group were of the opinion that behaviour change in terms of energy and water efficiency is best driven by pointing out potential financial savings.

"Why did you sign up for the LCZ?" - residents' perspectives

"The freebies on offer, especially the insulation" (*from interview with resident*).

"The home energy monitor and the thermal image have been very useful"

"Contact with Street Champions has been very useful in promoting the LCZ"

"A Street Champion lives in my street."

"Very useful info on solar PV and very good in general to have contact with local people who are informed on the subjects involved."

"The Street Champions project has helped to make the Low Carbon Zone a talking point in the area".

"It's nice to save money, especially with gas and electricity prices going up. Even though it was colder last winter, bills hadn't gone up, despite price increases."

Participants in the focus group were very complimentary about the Ham & Petersham magazine and thought it was doing a good job in helping to promote the LCZ and the SC project.



6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Details of evaluation results and analysis:

- One interview held with local resident who had signed up to the LCZ and participated in a Street Champion event.
- One focus group held with residents.
- One focus group held with Street Champions.

Analysis of LCZ applications over time show that Street Champion activities (street stalls, magazine, etc.) had a noticeable effect on the numbers of applications received and assessments booked. For instance, four days after a stall was run outside the local supermarket, the number of applications received showed a spike of 21 applications and there was another spike of 65 applications after a stall was run on Ham Parade. In addition, the Project Coordinator provided content on the LCZ and the Street Champions Project in the local “Ham & Petersham” magazine, which Street Champions distributed. Applications received suggest that there may well have been a positive impact on uptake from the distribution of the magazine to all households in the Zone.

Street Champions also played a major role in re-designing the original LCZ application form to make it much more user-friendly. 430 LCZ applications were received in the **two weeks** following the mail-out of the revised application form (January/February 2011). This compares favourably with the 130 applications received in the first **two months** of the scheme (December 2009 – February 2010). Although not entirely conclusive, it seems highly likely that this increased uptake was due to the re-design of the application form to make it more user-friendly and less bureaucratic.

Unfortunately, British Gas did not keep a record of when bookings of assessments were received: this makes it impossible to gauge the impact of the “Big Nudge” (Street Champions’ door-knocking campaign to remind householders already registered for the scheme to book an assessment). However, according to anecdotal evidence from the British Gas assessor, over 20 households booked assessments as a result of one round of door-knocking to 95 households.

7. Issues which had cost, funding, programme and/or quality implications for the project.

Initial time-lag between the start of the LCZ scheme and the appointment of the Street Champion Coordinator meant that a large degree of momentum was lost.

Delays in finalising the agreement between Richmond Council and British Gas delayed the implementation of the project and led to confusion regarding Street Champions’ remit.

Street Champions’ wariness of British Gas’ involvement in the scheme was reinforced by British Gas reluctance to meet with them to discuss its approach.



Street Champions lacked confidence in the quality of assessments by British Gas. They were frustrated that its home energy reports were not individually tailored to each property but simply a reflection of data from similar house types. Most of them understood the issues involved and with such a community-focused initiative, expected something much more personalised.

7. Unexpected outcomes achieved

Noticeable improvement in community cohesion – one Street Champion reports seeing less litter in the area.

“I’m now more confident about smiling and saying hello to people” (*from Street Champions focus group*).

The project has helped SCs get out and meet people, giving an excuse to chat with neighbours.

8. The organisation’s skills and experience

Did taking part in the project help the organisation to gain any new skills or experiences?

Street Champions report increased confidence as a result of the project’s activities. They have enjoyed the conviviality of the network. They have certainly increased their awareness and knowledge around water and energy efficiency.

9. Lessons for the future: recommendations for support or how the project could have been improved

The Street Champion component of the project would have been more effective if local residents had had the chance to design it and include it as part of the LCZ from the outset. It was useful having a link to the LCZ and the support of the Council Officer and we worked together very well (*quote: “your feedback makes my job really easy”*).

The scheme would have worked much better and been delivered more efficiently if local people had been trained and paid to be energy assessors. The positive Street Champions influence with their neighbours indicate even deeper local roots, such as local energy assessors drawn from the community, would enhance the project further. Providing training to people in the community who were keen to learn would help support the local economy, embed energy efficiency skills and knowledge within the community and ensure legacy benefits continued for the longer term.

A further drawback was that funding ended for the project in early 2012, both for the dedicated (in both senses of the word) Council LCZ Coordinator and the Street Champions Coordinator: this meant that any further activity has had to be organised and continued on a purely voluntary basis, with all the difficulties this entails.



In the final analysis there were too many foci – energy and water; insulation and behaviour change – too many different aspects in one offer. Future projects would do better to focus on one aspect, such as energy efficiency, before moving onto other aspects of environmental sustainability.

Notwithstanding these critical comments, the project proved to be a great success in promoting the LCZ and in building local residents' abilities and knowledge in the field of energy efficiency. Ham United Group provided an existing structure for recruitment of the Street Champions and the project bolstered existing pro-environmental behaviour and encouraged more residents to become engaged in pro-environmental behaviour in general.