

St James's Eco Church group and friends visit BedZED! Friday 12 July 2019



BedZED (Beddington Zero Energy Development) housing community at Hackbridge in the borough of Sutton is the UK's first large-scale eco-village. 20 of us from St James's, Kensington Unitarians, Greenspirit and Sustainable Haringey were given a tour of the site, by Katherine Lund-Yates of <https://www.bioregional.com/> which champions One Planet living.



We were impressed!

Thank you so much for organising the BedZED visit. I was very pleased to visit this iconic zero carbon housing community because it is often cited as an exemplar site. It was interesting to hear about the things that have not worked so well, in addition to things that have been a success. In particular, it is heartening that a sense of community has been fostered on the site and that people are keen to stay. It looks like a well-loved space and is bursting with greenness! PH

Seeing BedZED was an encouraging insight into a cohesive community where eco-living solutions are made straightforward and accessible. It was very insightful being able to see inside a home; I was able to get a real sense of the quality of living and 'comfortability' that the residents experience - and that living in a sustainable way, with a vastly reduced ecological footprint, needn't be without creature comforts. For that reason, BedZED seems to appeal to a broad demographic. OH

There was much to impress us at BedZED. A sustainable community that people clearly enjoy living in; innovative technology; small gardens for every property, even the studio flats; well insulated properties and very low fuel bills. But the bit that impressed us most was the meadow, shared by all the residents. We visited on a warm, sunny day and it was filled with bees and other insects enjoying the meadow flowers - a special open space available to everyone. ST

It was wonderful to visit a living, breathing sustainable community. I came away encouraged and enthused with the knowledge that sustainability is not only possible but brings with it happy and healthier lives. A big thank you to St James's Eco Church for organising the event.

Whilst there was a lot of inspiration and food for thought in Katherine Lund-Yates's guided tour and Q+A sessions, the highlight of the day for me was the close encounter, by the river Wandle during the walk around Beddington Park, of either a beautiful or banded demoiselle: <https://british-dragonflies.org.uk/species/beautiful-demoiselle/> or <https://british-dragonflies.org.uk/species/banded-demoiselle/>. There's a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dt81Rk7-a0>. I really mean a close encounter: it landed briefly on Ceinwen's hat! DC

A great visit. The buildings were not only inspiring, they were also beautiful. And even somehow humorous, with the wind cowls constantly turning with the breeze, like neighbours gossiping. JH

The wooden cladding made from trees pruned in the neighbouring borough of Croydon was a great example of imaginative sourcing of materials. The alleyways through the development and the bridges over them, connecting the flats, created a sense of both privacy and community. Underneath the ragwort and yarrow - Hackbridge's little piece of prairie land - insects buzzed and clicked and sang.

So inspiring to see the simplicity of sustainable housing solutions! We have the technology, and BedZED has been putting it to admirable use for 20 years. There really is no need for fossil fuel-driven heating and lighting when buildings are arranged to capture and distribute sunlight directly. Local sourcing of materials and a built-in focus on community sustainability were other highlights for me. I loved our wander by the Wandle, London's very own chalk stream with its associated wildlife, so tied to the geology and soils of the area. The demoiselle (banded or beautiful or possibly both!) seemed so exotic. DC

I found it inspirational, if disappointing that the BedZED example hasn't become the norm by now. CT



Bioregional are developing new schemes using the One Planet Living sustainability framework. Go to <https://www.bioregional.com/one-planet-living/get-involved-with-one-planet-living>

For two short videos about the work of BedZED and Bioregional, see <https://www.bioregional.com/projects-and-services/case-studies/bedzed-the-uks-first-large-scale-eco-village> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60es4dTm8Q4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFrqRJBcmIQ>

Huge thanks to David Carter for organising the visit as well as lunch places and a walk by the river Wandle and around Beddington Park, where we were delighted to see several demoiselle.

Thank you also to Katherine Lund-Yates of Bioregional for such an informative tour of the scheme and for answering so many questions.

