



"We did look into oil briefly but there's uncertainty over it being phased out. Plus, we didn't want to go down the fossil fuel route, we'd rather do our bit to be environmentally friendly."

Mr and Mrs Wilkins Fully funded air source heat pump

A couple has praised Essex County Council for fully funding the first step on their journey to becoming an energy efficient household.

Terry and Gillian Wilkins recently had an air source heat pump installed at their property in Wethersfield, Braintree, through the council led Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme.

The scheme, which offers up to £10,000 of funding for eligible homeowners to upgrade heating systems and install insulation, closes later this month. Green home improvement projects will continue to be funded for Essex residents over the coming months via similar Essex County Council schemes.

Heat pumps like Terry and Gill's are an incredibly efficient and environmentally friendly heating option and can also lower a household's fuel bills significantly, particularly for off-grid remote properties or areas without access to mains gas.

He added: "Previously we just relied on a log burner and old storage heaters, which wasn't a very efficient setup. Initially we were looking to replace them with newer, more economical storage heaters but air source heat pumps were suggested to us. We were surprised to learn that the heat pump could be fully funded by the council's scheme!"

With funding available and further information provided by Aran Insulation and contractors at Warmer Homes UK who installed the pump, it was clear to Mr. and Mrs. Wilkins that their home would be far more sustainably run once the heat pump was in place.

Terry and Gill are looking forward to not only lower fuel bills each month, but also a significant reduction in their carbon footprint. Mrs. Wilkins added: "We're even looking into solar panels as well now for our home. That's the next step we're researching in terms of future cost savings and reducing our carbon footprint."

Councillor Peter Schwier, Climate Czar at Essex County Council, said: "It's fantastic to see Essex residents taking steps to help tackle climate change. We know that larger-scale changes such as home improvements can be harder to incorporate into our lives than recycling and using public transport more. It is very promising to see so many homeowners benefiting from our free schemes to upgrade homes in an energy-efficient way."



Mr. Wilkins said: "They worked very hard. You wouldn't know the contractors had been in. They needed to lift carpets and move furniture to do the install, but they put everything back, hoovered up and they were excellent, we couldn't fault them at all."

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