

Eminent community behaviour change advocate at ‘Thriving’

Pooran Desai, is the co-founder of BioRegional, the social enterprise behind the creation of Britain’s best-known sustainable community, Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED).

BedZED, which opened in 2002, is a mixed-use sustainable community, comprising 100 homes, some community facilities and work spaces for 100 people. It is a carbon-neutral community, using only energy from renewable sources generated on site.



Pooran believes that energy efficiency in buildings will not deliver true sustainability unless we can make it easy for people and communities who live in the buildings change their behavior and lifestyles. Choices that people make about transport, food and waste all contribute to an individual’s environmental footprint. These choices are influenced by the design, infrastructure and services we provide to those

communities.

Lessons from the design, construction and monitoring of BedZED had led to the concept of *One Planet Living*, which is BioRegional’s approach to community development that takes account of the planet’s productive capacity through ecological footprinting. The One Planet Living approach is guided by 10 principles including zero carbon, zero waste, sustainable transport, local and sustainable food, and health and happiness.

Pooran studied at Oxford and Cambridge Universities before co-founding BioRegional in 1995. Initially he worked in sustainable forestry, helping develop the concept of ‘bioregional network production’ (linking local suppliers to national retailers) and founding BioRegional Charcoal Company Ltd of which he remains managing director.

He is working on a vast number of other sustainability projects and in 2004 he was awarded an Order of the British empire (OBE) for his contribution to Sustainable Development. He enjoys a zero carbon sports car that runs on waste cooking oil.