



Passivhaus – an efficient choice for self-builders?

The number of UK buildings achieving certification under the Passivhaus standard is on the rise – and a growing number of our borrowers are part of this trend.

Earlier this year, the Passivhaus Trust launched 'Passivhaus Goes Personal' to spread the word about Passivhaus. The campaign, which Ecology is supporting, aims to raise awareness of the benefits of building and living in a property built to a Passivhaus standard.

At Ecology, we recognise Passivhaus as the leading proven methodology to deliver energy efficient, low carbon homes. That's why the Passivhaus standard for new

build homes and its EnerPHit equivalent for renovation projects both receive our maximum discount of 1.25% off our standard variable mortgage rate under the Society's C-Change mortgage discounts for residential properties.

There are now more than 1,000 buildings under construction in the UK that have been designed to a Passivhaus standard. That means that there will be more builders, architects and related professionals to choose from, which have hands-on experience of Passivhaus, so creating your own Passivhaus home is no longer an ambition reserved for the few.



What is Passivhaus Goes Personal?

The campaign highlights the benefits of Passivhaus including:

- comfortable year round temperatures by using high quality windows and walls, shading and passive solar gain
- no draughts, cold spots, mould or condensation
- constant clean fresh air creating a healthy environment
- sound proofing delivering peaceful and quiet living spaces
- low energy bills and property maintenance costs
- a variety of designs to fit any budget
- proven performance backed up by over 30 years of independent testing

For more information visit www.PassivhausGoesPersonal.org.uk

We were especially proud that two completed projects by Ecology borrowers were commended in the best rural and best urban project categories respectively. Inside, on page five, we feature details of these two shortlisted projects.

UK Passivhaus Trust Awards 2016



Sponsors, winners and shortlisted projects celebrating the sixth annual UK Passivhaus Awards

In 2016 we were delighted to once again support the UK Passivhaus Trust Awards by sponsoring the 'Urban' category. We joined the winners, shortlisted projects and other sponsors at the awards ceremony in London earlier this year.

The UK Passivhaus Awards is now an annual event to celebrate the achievements of the

UK's leading Passivhaus pioneers. This year's focus was on projects that will inspire a new generation of self-builders.

The standard was, as always, very high and showcased the wide range of designs and locations that Passivhaus principles can be applied to.



Your new improved Ecology website

Following feedback from our members and other stakeholders we've been busy working on refreshing and updating our website.

You will notice a number of changes to improve the member experience. These include accessibility for tablets and mobile

devices as well as better navigation and layout, which will make it easier for you to find what you are looking for.

We also hope that you like the new 'look and feel' with a cleaner and simpler design.

You will still be able to find all the information you need about your savings or mortgage products, as well as information on how we embed our ethical principles into practice throughout our operations.

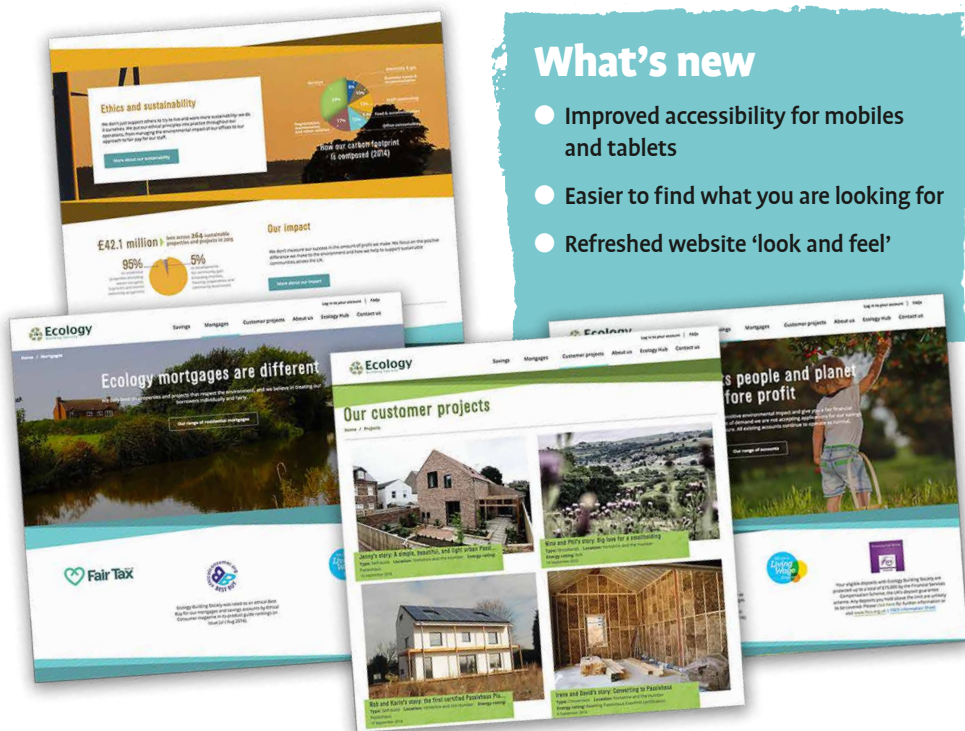
We've also updated the case studies of some of our customers' projects, which now include short films of borrowers talking about their projects for the first time.

Our website address remains **www.ecology.co.uk**. Ecology Interactive continues to operate as before and is now available from the link on the top right of any page on our website 'Log in to your account' - there's no change to your existing login details.

If you have any queries on the changes or would like to give us feedback on the new website please email us at **info@ecology.co.uk** or call 01535 650 770.

What's new

- Improved accessibility for mobiles and tablets
- Easier to find what you are looking for
- Refreshed website 'look and feel'



Savings accounts

At the time of going to press we are not accepting applications for savings accounts from both new and existing members. This follows a period where we have had very high levels of demand for our range of savings accounts.

Existing members can continue to make additional deposits up to the maximum investment limit applicable for each account.

If you would like to be notified when we start to accept applications please contact the Savings Team on **savings@ecology.co.uk** or call 01535 650 770.

Changes to our savings terms and conditions

With effect from 1 December 2016 we made some changes to our leaflet *Saving with Ecology – General terms and conditions*. If you have a savings account with us it is important that you read these terms and conditions which can be accessed at **www.ecology.co.uk/savings/brochures**.

Top tips to tackle fraud

In 2015, £755 million was lost to financial fraud, but we can all help to lower this figure by remembering one simple action – to stop and think.

That's why the 'Take Five' campaign – led by Financial Fraud Action UK – is encouraging us to do just that; to take time to stop, step back and think before we act.

Even if they say they're your bank, building society, the police or another trusted organisation, you still need to take the time to stop and think about what might be really going on.

Financial Fraud Action UK has pulled together the following basic rules on how to beat financial fraud. If you think about it,

these probably already make sense, but it's important you take the time to remember them.

IT PAYS TO STOP AND THINK

1. **Never disclose security details, such as your PIN or full banking password**
2. **Don't assume an email or phone call is authentic**
3. **Don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision**
4. **Listen to your instincts**
5. **Stay in control**

For more information and advice on how you can protect yourself against fraud, go to **https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/**

What to do if you think you're a victim

If you think there has been fraud on your card or account – or if you suspect someone has attempted to compromise your financial details – report it immediately to your bank or other financial services provider and then contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at **actionfraud.police.uk**.



Our Ethics – walking the talk



Fair Tax

We don't just support others to try to live and work more sustainably, we do it ourselves. At Ecology we put our ethical principles into practice throughout our operations, from managing the environmental impact of our offices to our approach to fair pay.

In this new regular feature, we provide an update on some of the ways we embed sustainability and ethics into how we do business.

Fair Tax

Earlier this year we were very proud to be the first building society in the UK to be awarded the Fair Tax Mark, the world's first independent accreditation to address the issue of responsible tax. In recent years the payment of tax has become one of the biggest issues of our time and, too often, it makes the headlines for all the wrong reasons. We've all read about scandals and heard about aggressive tax avoidance which

distorts the economy. At Ecology we believe that the fair payment of tax is an important part of our contribution to society and helps reduce inequalities which have an environmental cost.

At the time of Ecology's accreditation **Richard Livings**, Project Manager of the Fair Tax Mark said,

"We are delighted that the Ecology Building Society is the latest company to join the growing list of accredited businesses to be awarded the Fair Tax Mark. Being proud of the contribution that they make through taxation reflects their pioneering approach to finance."

As a business with the Fair Tax Mark, we are effectively certified as paying the right

amount of tax in the right place at the right time and that we are applying the gold standard of tax transparency. Our Fair Tax Mark accreditation is the latest demonstration of our commitment to openness and honesty and also ensures that we're playing our part to lead the way on responsible tax.

It won't be a surprise to hear that we've always taken a straight forward approach to our tax affairs so it really wasn't difficult for Ecology to meet the standards required. As part of this we had to adopt a fair tax policy and our Tax Compliance Policy Statement is available to download on our website at www.ecology.co.uk/about/corporate

LED lights deliver big savings for Ecology



As part of our continued commitment to reduce our carbon emissions we have now completed replacing all of our lighting with modern energy efficient LED lighting in our Silsden office.

When the building was constructed in 2004, the lighting installed was the most efficient available at the time and included fluorescent and halogen lights.

Since then LED lighting has become widely available with improved reliability so,

following a review of our energy usage and an assessment of the energy and cost savings, the decision was taken to invest in replacing our lighting. The time taken for this investment to pay back is expected to be just over five years without even accounting for the further savings which are expected by not replacing the bulbs

as often – our LED lighting should last for between 20,000 and 50,000 hours, whereas the best fluorescent light bulbs will only last up to 10,000 hours.

Our conversion to LED lighting is already delivering a reduction of more than 4000 watts of energy every hour and this probably represents the biggest single reduction of our energy consumption we have made to date.

Top environmental award for Ecology

We've maintained our 'Green' accreditation for the second year running under the Investors in the Environment scheme – the highest level of accreditation possible. This reflects both our current environmental performance and our commitment to ongoing improvement.

Our key achievements, in 2015, included reducing our gas use by 24% and our electricity use by 6%. We also overhauled our rainwater harvesting system in order to improve the efficiency of our water management, which helped reduce our water consumption by 17.5%.



Green Award
2016

Setting the standard for
the environment

We're also focusing on increasing the level of staff awareness and understanding of our environmental and ecological approach by providing appropriate training. As part of this, in June, all of our staff received training on carbon footprinting.

2016 Annual General Meeting and Members' Meet Up

In 2016, our AGM and Members' Meet up was held at Ecology's offices in Silsden, West Yorkshire.

Throughout the day members had opportunities to explore our permaculture gardens and find out more about our eco-built office.



Members enjoying our AGM and Members' Meet-up

who discussed how their campaign on the responsible payment of tax is helping to create a fairer society. Later on, during the 'Sustainable lending in practice' session, Chris Coates and Jan Maskell, from Lancaster Cohousing, shared their experience of helping to set-up and develop a cohousing project and how it works day to day.

The final afternoon session, *Your Society - Meet the Directors*, gave members the opportunity to grill our Directors on our 10 year plan in more intimate smaller breakout groups.



Chris Coates and Jan Maskell, Lancaster Cohousing

Some comments from our members on the day:

'...so glad to be a customer of a genuinely ethical company! Thank you for being here for me!'

'[I liked] meeting people with similar values'

'Enjoyed seeing the gardens and learning about the eco-construction of the building.'

During our AGM business, our Directors were questioned by members about the way the Society operates and the services we offer.

Overall voting turnout was 15.92%, which was a slight decrease from last year, and 39% used our online voting service. We'd always like more members to vote. If you're a voting member, please use your democratic power in 2017!



Paul Ellis, Chief Executive, showing members around our permaculture gardens

In the afternoon, members heard from Richard Livings of the Fair Tax Mark, following Ecology's recent Fair Tax Mark accreditation,

Good Money Talks and Ecology Members' Meet-up

Members' votes raise money for charity

PRACTICAL ACTION

Technology challenging poverty



Once again our members' voting helped us support international development charity, Practical Action. We donated 50p for every member who voted online, 20p for each returned proxy form and £1 for each member who opted to receive future AGM packs by email, which helps us reduce our paper use. As a result the Society donated £750 to international development charity, Practical Action.

Paul Smith Lomas, CEO, Practical Action, thanked Ecology and our members for continuing to support their work,

"With your help, we're able to continue using technology to challenge poverty across the world."



During Good Money Week 2016, on 4 November, Ecology brought together some of the UK's leading ethical finance organisations to host Good Money Talks in the north of England at BALTIC in Gateshead, followed by Ecology's first ever regional Members' Meet-up.

In the morning Good Money Talks was chaired by Rebecca O'Connor, Co-founder and Director of Good With Money. As well as hearing how Good Money Week is inspiring

a new generation to use their finances for positive change, Chair of Ethex Jamie Hartzell, shared the latest insight from ground breaking research into understanding the positive investor. The session finished with a panel debate on practical ways of making good money reach further and included other speakers representing Shared Interest, Castlefield Advisory Partners Ltd., UKSIF (UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association) as well as Paul Ellis, Chief Executive of Ecology.

After lunch, Alison Vipond, Deputy Chair of Ecology welcomed members to the first ever regional Members' Meet-up before updating on our progress. Members then had the opportunity to share their views on our work in the Meet the Directors question and answer session.

Following the success of the first regional Members' Meet-up in Gateshead, we are planning to hold similar events during 2017.

Ecology borrowers recognised in the UK Passivhaus Trust Awards 2016

This year we were especially proud that two completed projects by Ecology borrowers were commended in the best rural and best urban project categories respectively at the UK Passivhaus Trust Awards.

Urban project category

Credit: Photography by Paul Samuel White



Jenny's certified Passivhaus build, in York, took nine months and was completed in autumn 2015. It was built on a compact site tucked away between old and new houses, bounded by a 19th century Quaker meeting house and a well-used ginnel.

She wanted a simple low energy and beautiful self-build home, built with sustainable materials wherever affordable, with high ceilings and flooded with light from every direction. Since moving in, Jenny is still delighted by how well the spaces work, how she can feel the sun circling the house, how the garden and the sky feel part of the house, by the solid thickness of the walls and roof, and the detailing of the simple wooden staircase.

The comment most often made by visiting friends is how evenly comfortable and un-stuffy the house feels, even though the actual temperature is lower than they would usually look for. The second most common



is disbelief that this can be achieved without a full central heating system, even when it's freezing outside. Jenny admits she was sceptical too, but this house has convinced her, not just that Passivhaus design can reduce energy use but that it can contribute to a simple, low tech, well designed house that is a delight for her to live in.

Architect: Anne Thorne Architects

Contractor: Croft Farm Construction

Consultants: PH consultant: Junko Suetake, Services: Alan Clarke, Certifier: WARM low energy building practice

Rural project category



Named after a derelict water tower in South East England, which was demolished to make way for the construction, The Old Water Tower, was shortlisted in the Rural Project Category. It was built as a commercial proposition by Gresford Architects to show that a Passivhaus can be a crisply designed modern piece of architecture demonstrating comfortable sustainable living.

With its large windows and generous living spaces, the four bedroom family house is a comfortable, contemporary interpretation of the locally found historic timber framed

buildings it draws inspiration from. Unusually for a Passivhaus it is orientated to the west to take advantage of beautiful views over open countryside, and its warm and characterful interior shows how bright and joyful life in a Passivhaus can be.



The layout of the building is fairly typical, with living spaces on the ground floor, and bedrooms and bathrooms upstairs. The staircase forms the centre of the plan, separating the living room from the kitchen and dining area, and framing a utility room and study nook.

Architect: Gresford Architects

Contractor: MBC Timber Frame

Consultant: WARM low energy building practice



News from the Ecology team

Ecology staff get on their bikes!

Earlier this year Ecology signed up to the Government's Cycle to Work scheme, which is designed to encourage staff to cycle to work and helps them save up to 42% off the cost of buying a bike. We now have three staff members cycling to work on a regular basis. This is helping us to reduce our carbon emissions by reducing the amount of car commuting.



Ecology staff having fun at the launch of the Cycle to Work scheme

Karen's cycle to work diary – Tuesday 12 July 2016

Last summer, Karen Knowles, Board Governance Officer, started cycling the fifteen mile round trip to our Silsden office from her Skipton home.

"It's 6 am and I peep through the curtains – for the first time in days, I see blue sky – ideal conditions for cycling along the Leeds and Liverpool canal towpath.

I've been cycling to work for a few weeks now and I'm chuffed that I've knocked around



15 minutes off my cycling time. I feel fitter, although the skinny legs I've always dreamt of are getting bigger as muscle builds!

I decide to cycle one mile on the road and then join the canal because I know the towpath will

be very muddy following recent torrential rain. I've come off the bike a couple of times lately, but luckily, I fell into the hedge rather than the canal!

I haven't seen the heron today. He usually sits on the canal bank and races ahead of me. However, I do see a swan keeping a watchful eye over her cygnets. They look strong and healthy and are already developing their beautiful long, graceful necks.

On the final stretch, the path is very muddy and I have to have my wits about me to avoid taking a dive. From here it's all downhill to the office! I arrive feeling exhilarated and pleased that I made the effort to get out of bed early. I'm already looking forward to my cycle home."

Celebrating 30 years at Ecology



Steve Round, Chair of Ecology, presenting Pam with flowers at the AGM

Earlier this year Pam Waring, Finance Director and Secretary, celebrated 30 years at Ecology.

"Throughout the years my responsibilities have increased as the Society has grown.

"While I am immensely proud of my 30 years at Ecology and particularly, what we have achieved during that time, there are still plenty of new initiatives to explore and challenges to meet."

Farewell to Hilary and John

We said farewell to two long-standing members of staff who retired this year.

Hilary Smith, Receptionist and Administrator retired after 17 years of working at Ecology. Since then Hilary has been sending us pictures of her beautiful flowers and garden produce.

"I was very sad to say goodbye to Ecology. Since then I've been keeping busy enjoying my garden and spending time tracing my ancestors in Cartmel, Cumbria."



Hilary outside the house near Cartmel where her grandfather was born.



John and Caroline with their three grandchildren (Isla (4), Thomas (18 months) and Jack (6 months))

John Ainley, Compliance & Risk Manager, retired after nine years at Ecology. John recently popped into the Ecology office with his wife, Caroline, to say hello and bring some of her famous home baking for our staff.

"It's been great to be able to enjoy more time at home, in our garden and allotment. We also look after our young grandchildren for a couple of days a week (not to mention my elderly Mum!) and that keeps us both busy and hopefully youthful. I now also volunteer at our local Food Bank."

Ecology Charitable Foundation awards £10k for sustainable community buildings

The Ecology Building Society Charitable Foundation has awarded £10,000 to support sustainable community building projects, in line with its objective to support regeneration and environment conscious building practices.

The Trustees of the Charitable Foundation recently met to consider all the applications received as part of the Foundation's 2016 call for applications. As a result the Trustees awarded grants of £5,000 each to Church Eaton Village Institute, in Staffordshire, and Halton Mill, which forms part of the Lancaster Cohousing development in Lancashire.



Church Eaton Village Institute is used extensively by a wide range of groups from the local community for meetings and events. The £5,000 grant award will contribute towards the refurbishment of the existing kitchen roof including installing insulation to improve the energy efficiency of the building and reduce heating costs.

Justin O'Doherty, a Committee Member of Church Eaton Village Institute, explained how the grant would make a difference to the local community,

"The award will enable us to refurbish and insulate the Institute's kitchen roof to help create a warmer and more welcoming environment for our users from the local community."



Halton Mill is a not-for-profit low-carbon mixed use community resource which includes individual and co-working workspaces, artists' and yoga studios as well as a social enterprise café. The £5,000 grant award will contribute towards the refurbishment of the existing lift shaft, which forms a crucial part of the project to install a lift and widen the accessibility of the Mill to more people with disabilities.

Fiona Frank is a resident of Lancaster Cohousing and Director and Operations Manager of Green Elephant Cooperative (which runs Halton Mill). She told us,

"The renovation of the lift shaft will be a key milestone in our continued eco-renovation of Halton Mill and enable a wider range of people to benefit from using, working and training in this low-carbon sustainable community resource."

Alison Vipond, Chair of the Ecology Building Society Charitable Foundation explained the Trustees' thinking in making these grants,

"We received more applications than ever before and it was no easy job for the Trustees to select the successful projects. We felt that the awards would have the greatest impact by supporting the projects at Church Eaton Village Institute and Halton Mill, bringing lasting benefits to both the environment and their communities."

Keep an eye on our website for news of future grant making rounds!

Alison Vipond – Member Advocate



As a member owned organisation, we put our members' interests at the heart of everything we do. While the ultimate responsibility for upholding a culture that reflects this principle of mutuality rests with all of Ecology's Board Directors, Alison Vipond, Deputy Chair has been appointed as 'Member Advocate' with specific responsibility for ensuring that good member outcomes are always considered by the Board.

In her role as Member Advocate, Alison aims to bring the 'voice of the member' into the Board room. This is a varied role which touches on all aspects of Ecology, including ensuring our long term strategy reflects our members' ethical concerns as well as delivering good customer outcomes.

If you'd like to tell Alison how you think we're doing or if you have a concern about Ecology, you can contact her at member.advocate@ecology.co.uk. You can share anything you like with Alison but please note that this does not replace our normal complaints procedure.

Join our Ethics Panel

Would you like to share your views on our policies, practice and products? We'd like to invite more members to join our Ethics Panel, which provides us with an important forum for gathering our members' views and ensures that the decisions we take are informed by members' values and opinions.

Ethics Panel members take part in quick surveys, usually online, about aspects of our products, our service and our communications. All Ecology members are welcome to join our Ethics Panel.

If you would like to find out more information about joining the Ethics Panel please contact us at info@ecology.co.uk

Notice Board

Ecology retains ethical 'Best Buy' status

We've again been selected as an ethical 'Best Buy' for our mortgages and savings accounts by Ethical Consumer magazine in its latest ethical product guide ranking.



As reported in the July/August 2016 issue of Ethical Consumer, the magazine undertook a survey that rated lenders on a range of environmental and ethical criteria. We received a clean bill of health on all counts and, as well as receiving the 'best buy', we also ranked top in a range of ethical criteria for our mortgages and our savings accounts compared to other banks and building societies.

The Ethical Consumer buyers guides can be found at:

<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/money/mortgages.aspx>

<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/money/banksavingsaccounts.aspx>

Help us reduce our 2017 AGM paper use and we'll donate £1 to Practical Action

We'll donate £1 to Practical Action for each member who chooses to receive future AGM packs by email. To opt-in either send us a secure message through Ecology Interactive, send us an email if we already hold an email address for you, or call us on 01535 650 770.

Sign up to Ecology Interactive and view your account(s) online

Don't forget you can view your account(s) online by registering for the Ecology Interactive service at www.ecology.co.uk.

Once registered, you will be able to view your account transactions, interest rate and balance at any time. You will also be able to advise us of change of addresses via a secure message facility and request withdrawals via the Withdrawals and Transfers feature (special Terms and Conditions apply).

Other ways to keep in touch

- Check out www.ecology.co.uk/hub for our latest news and views from Ecology
- Sign up to receive our email newsletter – also at www.ecology.co.uk/hub
- Visit our Facebook page on a regular basis www.facebook.com/EcologyBS
- We're also on Twitter @EcologyBS
- Tell us what you think – if you want to tell us how we're doing or simply have an idea to share, send an email to info@ecology.co.uk. Any comments or questions are welcome.

Opening hours during the holidays

We will be closed for the following days over the Christmas and New Year period.

Dates to note:

- Monday 26 December
- Tuesday 27 December
- Monday 2 January

The cut off time for Ecology Interactive requests will be 3.00 pm on Friday 23 December and Friday 30 December.



Date for your diary:

our next AGM will take place on SATURDAY 29 APRIL 2017 at The Station in Bristol.

Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Financial Services Register No. 162090.

The Society does not necessarily endorse any third party service or product mentioned herein.

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.

Published by: Ecology Building Society
7 Belton Road, Silsden
Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 0EE

T 01535 650 770

W www.ecology.co.uk

E info@ecology.co.uk