



# People-powered housing

As part of our commitment to affordable and community-led housing, Ecology sponsored the first-ever National Community-led Housing Conference in November.

Here we share just some of the reasons we're encouraging communities to come together and shape the future of housing:

## Affordable homes

*Community-led housing creates genuinely affordable, quality housing for local people.*

Rather than basing house prices on open market value, community-led schemes can take a more innovative approach, like linking prices to average local wages.

Ecology has supported the London Community Land Trust which is providing 23 permanently affordable homes as part of the St Clements development. The homes are being sold at prices pegged to local incomes and Ecology has pioneered an award-winning innovative mortgage solution which takes account of the homes' permanent affordability.

## Stronger communities

*Community-led housing projects unite people.*

They are often designed around spaces that encourage people to connect while enabling privacy. This nurtures original ideas, which, through collective energy, can be translated into meaningful action.



*Pedestrianised street at Lancaster Cohousing*

## Healthy environment

*Community-led housing is sustainable.*

The focus on long-term affordability and community well-being is realised through energy-efficient housing, the provision of green spaces and the sharing of material resources. The Ecology-backed Lancaster Cohousing is an excellent example of this. Containing 35 Passivhaus houses, the development includes renewable energy technologies, communal facilities, and ample green space.

## Long-termism

*Community-led housing is designed with the future in mind.*

From investing in high build quality and energy-saving technologies to ensuring permanent affordability of properties, the

groups behind community-led housing schemes prioritise the long-term well-being of residents and the environment.

## Empowerment

*Community-led housing is all about taking back control.*

Many communities feel excluded from decisions regarding local housing provision.

Community-led schemes demonstrate the power of grassroots action when it comes to re-imagining housing. Ecology

is currently working with the Housing Association's Charitable Trust to develop a toolkit that will help local authorities and housing associations to implement community-led solutions, enabling local people to regain control.

At Ecology we're enthusiastic about supporting communities that want to stand up and do things differently.



*Jessie and George, Ecology borrowers and London CLT residents*



**Take part in our latest Member Survey.**

**Find out more about how you can have your say on page 3.**

We're dedicated to improving the environment by supporting and promoting ecological building practices and sustainable communities

> energy efficient housing > ecological renovation > derelict and dilapidated property  
> small scale and ecological enterprise > low impact lifestyles



# News round-up

## We've launched our first ever animated film



We've launched our first ever animated film to help explain how we support sustainable lending.

The short film takes the viewer on a journey through the wide range of properties and projects which our lending supports.

It shows how Ecology is bringing individuals and communities together, by helping to renovate homes, supporting sustainable ways of living by lending for things like houseboat moorings and energy efficient building projects, as well as community led-housing projects which help more people afford their own place.



The animation also showcases some of our ethical credentials including our long-standing commitment to fair pay, fair tax and carbon footprinting.

WATCH ON

## Double award success for Ecology



Jon Lee, Business Development Manager and Paul Ellis show off the awards

We've been recognised twice in the Mortgage Finance Gazette (MFG) Awards. The awards celebrate innovation and achievement within the mortgage sector.

Ecology won the Mortgage Product Innovation – Smaller Lenders award category for our pioneering work to provide mortgages for permanently affordable homes in London.

We were the first mortgage lender that was prepared to support the London Community Land Trust's (CLT) affordable homes.

In addition, Paul Ellis, the longest standing CEO in the UK building society sector, was the winner of MFG's Leadership award. This year Paul celebrates a quarter of a century at Ecology Building Society, with 22 years as Chief Executive.

Following Paul's award recognition, Steve Round, Chair of Ecology Building Society, said,

*"I am immensely proud that Paul's outstanding contribution to sustainable finance over the last 25 years has been recognised. Through his leadership at Ecology he has proven that values-based*

*and purpose-driven finance can work, with continued success throughout that time."*



## Our response to the base rate change

Our mission is to build a greener society and our savers' money supports ecological building practices and sustainable communities.

We believe that maintaining our current rates for as long as possible, following November's increase in the Bank of England base rate to 0.5%, will enable us to provide lending for more projects that have a positive environmental and social impact.

So, we currently have no plans to change our savings or standard variable mortgage rates.



We also have no plans to change our C-Change discounts scheme, which recognises the energy efficiency of the property when the project is completed.

# Take part in our Member Survey



Ecology is powered by its members. Since we began in 1981, we have sought to offer an inspiring alternative for people who believe in the positive potential of a fair and transparent financial system. Our members have enabled us to achieve this by sharing their ideas and feedback, pushing us to be innovative and to make real change.

It's important that we continue to challenge and develop our values and mission, so that they remain aligned with what matters most to you. That's why we are inviting you to take part in our **Member Survey**. The results from our last survey, in 2012, have helped to define Ecology's vision over the last five years. This 2017 survey is a chance for us to learn more about your experience of Ecology's services and your current thoughts about the Society's mission and values.

Ecology's mission is to build a greener society through the provision of mortgages for sustainable properties and projects, which are funded by our savings accounts. So what does this mean in real terms? In 2016, it meant that our savers enabled £30.7 million to be lent for projects like Passivhaus new builds, organic farm businesses, sustainably managed woodlands, community-led housing, and improving the energy efficiency of the existing housing stock by supporting renovations and retrofits.

We want to remain focussed on maximising positive impact through our lending while ensuring that we're tuned-in to our members' priorities and what's happening in the wider world. This survey will enable us to do this by asking you a series of questions about Ecology, as well as exploring more far-reaching topics. What do you think about the Ecology accounts



that you hold? Which environmental and social issues do you consider most urgent? And where do you think Ecology should be concentrating its efforts?

Available online, by post and over the phone, the survey is easy to complete and, by taking part, you will be making a valuable contribution to Ecology's future.

You will need the Survey Code '**Ecology2017**' and your unique '**AccessID**' which you will find in either the covering letter or email which was sent with this newsletter or the link to the newsletter.

Help us to make this Ecology's biggest ever member survey and have your say in shaping the Society's future.



For every completed survey, we will donate **25p** to international development charity, **Practical Action**. This will be matched by Finline Market Research, who are managing the survey on our behalf, up to the value of **£500**.

## How to access and complete the survey

The easiest way to take part is online.

### Online

Enter the web address in the covering letter or click on the link in the email to go to our survey.

You will need the Survey Code 'Ecology 2017' and your unique 'AccessID' which you will find on either the covering letter or email with this newsletter.

### Phone

Simply telephone our dedicated survey line on **01636 653 060** and one of the team from Finline will be able to talk you through the survey.

### Post

We would like to reduce the amount of paper we use but if you would prefer to receive the survey by post and complete and return a paper copy, please contact Finline on **01636 653 060**.

The dedicated survey phone line will be available from 9am to 7.30 pm Monday to Friday (Finline will be closed from 23 December 2017 to 1 January 2018) until **5pm on Friday 5 January 2018**.

## Who are 'Finline'?

The 2017 survey is being managed by Finline Market Research – a dedicated UK-based team of market researchers.

If you hold an Ecology savings account, you may have previously spoken with somebody from Finline as we have been working with them to gain a better understanding of our savers' experiences so that we can improve our service.

As well as managing the 2017 survey, Finline will continue to periodically contact Ecology members to ask them about their experiences with us. If you have any questions about this, or wish to opt out of future surveys, please call us on **01535 650 770**. Finline adheres to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.



## Cybercrime is on the rise

In 2016, an estimated 3.6 million cases of fraud and 2 million cases of computer misuse were reported to police (Source: Metropolitan Police)



**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

The following good online habits from the UK Government's Cyberaware campaign could reduce the chances of becoming a victim of cybercrime.

### ● Install the latest software and app updates (including anti-virus)

They contain vital security updates which help protect your device from hackers and viruses.

### ● Use a strong, separate password for your email

Hackers can access many of your personal accounts via your email, which can lead to identity theft. A good way to create a strong and memorable password is to use three random words, which are memorable to you, but not easy for other people to guess.

### ● Secure your mobile device with a screen lock

This gives you an extra layer of security. Most smartphones or tablets have a screen lock such as a PIN, pattern, or password. On some devices, you can unlock with your fingerprint or automatically unlock in trusted conditions. Make sure it's not a number sequence or L-shape, which are easy to guess.

### ● Back up your important data

Save photos and key documents on an external hard drive or use cloud storage.

### ● Don't use public Wi-Fi for sensitive data

This leaves you open to hackers using fake Wi-Fi hotspots to intercept data such as card details.

## What to do if you think you're a victim of cybercrime

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 [action.fraud.police.uk](http://action.fraud.police.uk)

# Mortgage round-up

## Changes to our renovation and retrofit mortgages

Earlier this year we increased our maximum loan-to-value for renovations of existing properties to 90%. Previously the maximum was 80% and we've made this change to help more borrowers renovate their homes to a high environmental standard.

We offer mortgages for renovation and retrofit projects where the energy efficiency of the property is being extensively improved.

With the increased maximum loan-to-value, we can now lend up to 90% of the purchase price or current value of the property (whichever is the lower) subject to status. If funds are required for the renovation, payments of up to 90% of the value can be stage released as the works to the property progress.

Once the works have been completed borrowers may qualify for one of Ecology's innovative C-Change discounts which are based on the Energy Standard rating achieved.



*Hannah and Daryl who are renovating and extending a 1950s bungalow*



*Fireside Housing Co-operative, Sheffield*

## Ecology launches 40-year mortgages for community-led housing

We're now offering mortgages with a term of up to 40 years for community-led housing providers as we help support the sector's growth. Previously the maximum term was 30 years.

Some community-led housing bodies such as housing co-ops provide affordable rents for their members. As property prices have continued to rise, it has become increasingly difficult to create new housing co-ops as the level of their borrowing often makes it impossible to maintain rents at affordable levels.

By extending the term to 40 years we're helping the co-ops to lower their monthly mortgage repayments so they can keep rents affordable.

A spokesperson from Radical Routes, a national network of co-ops working for positive social change with over 20 years' experience in supporting housing co-ops, commented on the change,

*"Radical Routes is extremely pleased that a 40-year mortgage can now be considered by Ecology. Firstly, it greatly helps make housing co-op cash-flows more viable at affordable rent levels – in fact, it will make some projects possible that otherwise wouldn't go ahead. Secondly, it spreads the cost more fairly between members who joined the co-op early and those who join later."*

**An early repayment charge may be payable if all or part of the mortgage is repaid within the first two years.**

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

# Our Ethics – walking the talk

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 regular feature we explore some of the ways we embed sustainability and ethics into how we do business, such as our choice of Society mobile phone, where Fairphone was the only real contender.

## Fairphone - making mobiles fairer

Most smartphones are built using unsustainable raw materials, in far from ideal working conditions. They are often difficult to repair, and tend to be upgraded for a newer model within just two years. At Ecology, we wanted to find a more ethically produced smartphone, which is why we have chosen Fairphone. This Dutch social enterprise is working to improve conditions across the whole of its supply chain. That includes sourcing conflict-free minerals and Fairtrade gold, and ensuring workers are treated fairly.

Fairphone works with a variety of partners, including labour rights experts, NGOs and researchers, on programmes designed to improve worker satisfaction and representation. The company is also a member of the Clean Electronics Production Network (CEPN), which is working within the electronics industry towards a goal of zero exposure of workers to toxic chemicals during manufacturing.

In choosing Ecology's mobile phone provider, we also wanted to ensure a responsible approach to managing and reducing electronic waste. Worldwide, 40 million tonnes of electronic waste is disposed of every year<sup>[1]</sup>, much of which stems from the difficulty and financial cost of repairing electronic products.

The Fairphone, however, is a modular smartphone that can be easily repaired by the user. It is also designed to be durable: whereas most smartphones are replaced within two years, Fairphone aims for its phones to last for five.

Ecology IT Manager, Matt Wilson, says, "We're proud to support Fairphone – a business whose goals align so closely with our own. We also have our contract through the UK's only co-operative telecoms provider – The Phone Co-op."

More information about The Phone Co-op and Fairphone can be found at [www.thephone.coop/fairphone](http://www.thephone.coop/fairphone)

<sup>[1]</sup> <http://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/Electronic-Waste-Facts>



Photos from Fairphone's visits to New Bugarama Mining Company conflict-free tungsten mine in Rwanda. (Credit: Fairphone)



Fairphone2 (Credit: Fairphone)

## Supporting ethical consumerism

We were proud to sponsor this year's Ethical Consumer conference which took place in October at the Amnesty International Resource Centre in London.



Paul Ellis joining in the panel discussion at the conference

The theme of the conference was 'challenging corporate power' and Paul Ellis, Chief Executive, made a key note speech on the challenge of providing financial services that serve people and planet rather than corporate interests. He also joined a panel discussion alongside representatives from the Fair Tax Mark, The Co-operative Party, Corporate Europe Observatory and Global Justice NOW to explore the role of consumer action in challenging corporate power.



Rob Harrison, Ethical Consumer's Editor

Ethical Consumer has been at the heart of the ethical consumer movement since 1989 and publishes the UK's leading alternative consumer magazine.

## Fair Tax Update

In 2016 we became the first building society to be awarded the Fair Tax Mark, the world's first independent accreditation to address the issue of responsible tax. We've now been recredited for this year, too.

# 2017 Annual General Meeting and Members' Meet-up



## Members' votes raise money for charity

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 £900 to Practical Action.

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

*"We greatly appreciate the support of a company whose values we share so closely".*



The main hall at The Station

In 2017, our AGM and Members' Meet-up was held at The Station in Bristol.

The Station is a former fire station, which is operated as a social enterprise and hosts a number of community youth projects.

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



Directors responding to members' questions



Members at our AGM and Members' Meet-up

Overall voting turnout was 16.17% – a slight increase from last year, and 54% 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 2018!

In the afternoon, members heard from Anna Kear of UK Cohousing Network, who explained how Ecology is helping community-led housing scale-up and Chris Sunderland of Real Economy Ltd shared his experience of helping to set-up the Bristol Pound, as well as establishing a community food centre to help make Bristol an earth friendly city.

Andy Simmonds, Ecology borrower and CEO of the Association for Environment Conscious Building, discussed the challenge of retrofitting an old railway cottage in Hereford to Passivhaus EnerPhit standard to create a comfortable energy efficient family home.

There was also plenty of time for members to discuss their ideas, in smaller groups, for how Ecology can grow its role in building a greener society. We're now exploring how we can take these ideas forward.

Some comments from members on the day:

*'As usual, very informative and inspirational.'*

*'It means a lot to me that there are companies... who hold similar ethical values to myself.'*

Our next AGM will take place on **Saturday 28 April 2018 at The Priory Rooms** in Birmingham.

## Ecology takes to the road again

This year we've also held two smaller regional Members' Meet-ups providing more opportunities for members to meet some of the Ecology team and share their views on our work.

In July we visited London and, in November, Manchester.



Holyoake House, the home of Co-operatives UK

In London, members heard more about how Ecology is supporting community-led housing with Catherine Harrington from the National Community Land Trust (CLT) Network and Humayra Hassan, an Ecology borrower who had recently moved into one of the permanently affordable homes provided by the London CLT in Tower Hamlets.

The focus in Manchester was on renovation. Fiona and Kevin Williams, Ecology borrowers, shared the story of their deep retrofit of their Grade 2 listed former estate cottage in Cheshire. The house was uninhabitable and Ecology was the only lender prepared to help them transform a property in such poor condition.

At each meeting Paul Ellis also explained how we are beginning a process of



A member asking a question at the London Meet-up

reviewing and refreshing our governing statutes to ensure they continue to capture fully our commitments to sustainability and represent our members' expectations regarding how our lending supports those commitments. We want our members to be fully engaged in this review, and so we'll be asking you to join the conversation soon, in the run up to our next AGM in April 2018.

# News from the Ecology team

## Paul Ellis celebrates 25 years at Ecology

This year Paul Ellis, the longest standing CEO in the UK building society sector, is celebrating a quarter of a century at Ecology, with 22 years as Chief Executive.

Under Paul's leadership, Ecology has widened its remit from residential-only mortgages, to lending for a wide range of commercial and community-led housing projects. Paul has overseen an increase in assets of more than £150m (more than 900%) since his appointment.

Paul originally worked on Ecology's early computer systems as a hobby, which first



turned into a non-executive director role and then a full-time job. In just three years he went to the top position of CEO.



## New addition to the Ecology Board

**Vince Smith** (pictured left) joined the Society's Board in November and has 28 years' corporate treasury experience gained in the building materials, construction and services industries. He has an environmental degree and has been a volunteer with a number of nature conservation organisations for many years. Vince will stand for election at the AGM in 2018.

## Bumper harvest from the Ecology garden

The gardens around our Silsden office are designed to be edible and productive whilst being low maintenance, ecological and attractive.



Mary Hegarty, Mortgage Advisor, with some of the produce from the garden



We have an enthusiastic team of green fingered colleagues who have been growing vegetables and fruit in our raised beds and plots in our gardens.

This year's warm and wet summer helped result in a bumper crop of vegetables from the garden which were shared amongst the Ecology team.

## Ecology gets baking for Macmillan

WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT



In September a number of colleagues showed off their baking skills as we joined in Macmillan Cancer Support's World's Biggest Coffee Morning. We raised £333 for Macmillan, which helps make sure no one has to face cancer alone.



Ecology staff bake for Macmillan

## New Chief Operating Officer

Earlier this year we welcomed **Martin Sims** to the team at Ecology as Chief Operating Officer following the retirement of George Haslem. Martin is leading our sustainable mortgages and savings operations, as well as developing our support for community-led housing.

Martin brings more than 30 years' experience of retail banking and the building society sector.



# Notice Board



**Date for your diary:**

Our next AGM will take place on Saturday 28 April 2018 at The Priory Rooms in Birmingham



## Opening hours during the holidays

After a busy year, the Ecology office will be closed for the following days over the Christmas and New Year period:

- Monday 25 December
- Tuesday 26 December
- Monday 1 January

## 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](http://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 changes of address via a secure message facility and request withdrawals via the Withdrawals and Transfers features (special Terms and Conditions apply).

Other ways to keep in touch:

- Check out [www.ecology.co.uk/hub](http://www.ecology.co.uk/hub) for our latest news and views
- Sign up to receive our email newsletter – also at [www.ecology.co.uk/hub](http://www.ecology.co.uk/hub)
- Visit our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/EcologyBS](http://www.facebook.com/EcologyBS)
- We're also on Twitter @EcologyBS

## Help us reduce our 2018 AGM paper use and we'll donate £1 to Practical Action

We'll donate £1 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.

- 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](mailto:info@ecology.co.uk). Any comments or questions are welcome.

The table below shows historic savings interest rate information which was previously included within the Annual Review. In the future this will be included with your Annual Savings Statement.

## Savings interest rates during 2016 and 2017

	% gross* p.a./Annual Equivalent Rate				% gross* p.a./Annual Equivalent Rate		
	As at 1.1.16	As at 6.9.16	From 10.3.17		As at 1.1.16	As at 6.9.16	From 10.3.17
<b>Easy Access</b>	1.00	0.75	0.75	<b>Eco-Instant</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00
<b>Regular Savings</b>	1.75	1.75	1.50	<b>Eco-60</b>			
<b>Treasurers' Deposit</b>	1.00	0.75	0.75	£500 - £2,499	1.00	1.00	1.00
<b>90-Day Notice</b>				£2,500 - £4,999	1.00	1.00	1.00
£500 - £4,999	1.15	0.90	0.90	£5,000 - £9,999	1.00	1.00	1.00
£5,000 - £9,999	1.30	1.05	1.05	£10,000 - £24,999	1.25	1.00	1.00
£10,000 - £24,999	1.50	1.25	1.25	<b>£25,000 and over</b>	1.55	1.30	1.30
£25,000 - £75,000	1.60	1.35	1.35	<b>Earthwise Cash ISA</b>	1.50	1.25	1.00
<b>Ordinary Share</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	<b>Foundations Cash ISA</b>	1.50	1.25	1.00
<b>Ordinary Deposit</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	<b>Foundations Share</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00
<b>Charity Deposit</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	<b>Foundations Deposit</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00
<b>SIPP Deposit**</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00	<b>Foundation Supporters</b>	2.00	2.00	2.00
<b>Corporate Deposit</b>	1.00	1.00	1.00				

Please note; the new Personal Savings Allowance took effect from 6 April 2016

Annual Equivalent Rate provides a means of comparing interest rates by showing what the rate would be if interest was paid and added once a year.

\*All ISA interest is paid tax-free, which means it's exempt from income tax. We pay all non ISA savings interest gross, which means no tax is deducted. It's your responsibility to pay any tax due based on your individual circumstances. Tax rules may change in the future.

\*\* Please refer to the SIPP leaflet for further information regarding interest rates.

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.

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