

We declare a climate emergency

Last year the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a special report which said that we must reduce global emissions by 45% by 2030 to avoid the catastrophic consequences of global heating.

Ecology recently took part in the launch event of Business Declares, a network of businesses joining the hundreds of local authorities publicly declaring the existence of what is now a Climate Emergency. We have now made our own Declaration.

Our Declaration:

Since 1981 Ecology Building Society has had a total focus on combatting climate change via our lending and activism. However, despite our efforts and those of other sustainable businesses, nowhere near enough progress has been made. In consequence, and with the UK having lost 40 years in which to take effective measures, we formally acknowledge that we now all face a Climate and Ecological Emergency, and declare our commitment to work even harder in accelerating a just and fair transition to a net-zero emissions future.



Business Declares

By declaring we are committing to:

- Developing a 'Climate Emergency Plan'
- Publishing a board resolution and reporting our Climate Emergency Plan annually
- Ensuring that our Climate Emergency Plan accelerates our current trajectory to ensure that we keep the planet within 1.5°C warming
- Continuing to share best practice and advocate for change in banking

Global strike for climate



Global Strike for Climate

On Friday 20 September, millions of people from across the globe united to call for climate justice. Inspired by the youth-led school strike for climate, marches took place around the world in response to escalating environmental crises. And we're proud to say that Ecology was there. A team from Ecology joined strikers in Bradford and our CEO attended the Westminster event.

Recent reports suggest the next 18 months are going to be crucial if the planet is to avoid catastrophic levels of global warming. Three days after the Global Strike, the UN hosted a Climate Action Summit in

New York. UN Secretary-General António Guterres called on leaders to attend the summit with "concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions... to net-zero emissions by 2050".

Action is needed

Alongside the members of Business Declares showing Climate Leadership, government needs to step up, and quickly. The pressure is on, particularly given recent news that the UK is not on track to hit its carbon reduction targets. The House of Commons' Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee has highlighted the UK's building stock as "one of the most inefficient in Europe" and states that there has been a 95% drop in the rate of insulation being installed in houses.

The most recent reports from the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), which advises the Government, are also far from positive.



Joining other strikers on the train to Bradford

The authors state, "UK action to curb greenhouse gas emissions is lagging behind what is needed to meet legally-binding emissions targets." According to the reports, the UK Government has delivered just 1 of the 25 policies needed to get back on track.

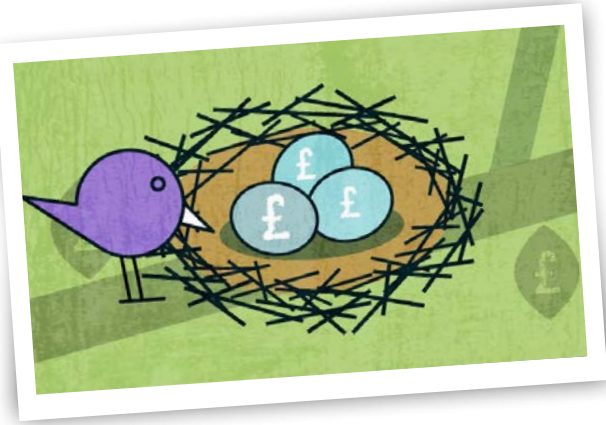
It's too late to stop climate change having an impact – the effects are already being felt across the globe and here at home, with the UK's hottest ever day (38.7°C) being recorded this summer. But there's still time to ensure those effects don't further intensify. **In being an Ecology member, you have already taken a positive step to back efforts to tackle the climate crisis through your support of our lending programme.**

News round-up

90-Day Notice account

Earlier in the year we started accepting applications again for our **90-Day Notice savings account**.

In addition to the **90-Day Notice account** we're accepting applications for our **Easy Access, Foundations Cash ISA** and **Regular Savings** accounts.



We've also increased the maximum balance on our **Easy Access, 90-Day Notice** and **Treasurers' Deposit*** accounts to £125,000 (previously £75,000).

Members' savings fund Ecology's sustainable lending and these changes will enable us to support more projects and properties with a positive environmental or social impact, helping us build a greener future.

To find out more about our savings accounts please visit ecology.co.uk/savings.

*Our Treasurers' Deposit account for small groups and charities is not currently available for new applications.

Other savings news

Do you still use a passbook?

If so, do you know you no longer need to use it to operate your savings account?

In the coming months we're planning to stop updating passbooks. Instead, in any month you make a deposit by cheque or withdrawal by cheque or bank transfer, we'll send you a statement which includes any transactions you have made during that month and your latest balance. This is in addition to your annual statement.



Savings transaction notices

We currently send out, by post, transaction notices every time you deposit a cheque or make a withdrawal on your savings account. We know that many members would prefer to receive less paper so we're planning to replace the individual transaction notices in the coming months.

As with passbooks, in any month you make a cheque deposit or withdrawal by cheque or bank transfer, we'll send you a statement which includes any transactions you have made during that month and your latest balance.

We're always working to improve our environmental impact and these changes will help us reduce the amount of paper we use as well as our postage costs.

We'll let you know more about the changes closer to the time and you don't need to do anything now.

It's official – we're a Good Egg

Ecology has been awarded the Good Egg mark by responsible finance site Good with Money. The site launched the Good Egg mark to make it easier for people to find financial providers that benefit people and planet. Ecology is the first building society to be accredited with a Good Egg.

The award of the Good Egg mark shows that our approach to providing ethical savings and sustainable mortgages is embedded into the way we do business and demonstrates how we are delivering on our mission to build a greener society.



The assessment process is thorough and includes a rating by Good with Money's research partner, Ethical Screening, to determine how well a provider measures up against a range of different environmental, social and industry impact factors as well as an advisory panel of ethical finance experts.

Good Egg panellist, Fionn Travers-Smith, said,

'Ecology is a brilliant example of what the Good Egg institution should be all about.'

With Rebecca O'Connor, co-founder of Good With Money, adding:

"A Good Egg is a mark that can only be used by companies like Ecology that are able to prove they make a positive impact."

As well as receiving the Good Egg award, Ecology is also rated as an ethical Best Buy* for our mortgages, ISAs and savings accounts by Ethical Consumer magazine.

*Ecology was rated as an ethical Best Buy for our mortgages, ISAs and savings accounts by Ethical Consumer magazine in its product guide rankings (May/June 2018 issue).

Mortgage round-up

Open House Project: a budding community

Space for parties and meals, a productive garden, and mutual support for childcare and older age; it was a desire to make room for the good things in life that ignited the idea behind the Open House Project – a self-supportive co-housing community based on the outskirts of Sheffield.

After a long hunt for a potential site, the group landed on Barnes Hall Farm – a 400-year-old farm property. The buildings were in relatively good condition and the group's request for additional land was met with the offer of an adjoining field.

The first pair of dwellings is now complete with work underway on the next two. Gradually, the character of the site has begun to establish itself: the fruit orchard has been planted, the polytunnel erected, bat boxes installed, and a Silver Birch grove graces the site entrance. All of the homes are insulated to a high standard and have solar panels. The site also has its own ground source heating system and water supply – a cornerstone to the whole project.

Commenting on Ecology's role in the project, founder Greg Care, says, "Ecology has not only made finance available to



Roofing underway



The interior of one of the new homes



A community meal at Barnes Hall

us but has shown support throughout the process. They've given us time and understanding and have made us feel like partners committed to the same

sustainable objectives rather than ordinary folk taking on a huge project with little experience."

Throughout the works, the mantra has been 'recycle and reuse', and in the six years of the redevelopment there's only been one skip of materials taken off site, mainly comprised of old asbestos roof sheets. In recognition of the imaginative and sensitive approach to the renovation, the project was awarded first place in the Conservation category at the 2018 Sheffield Design Awards.

Read the full story and browse our case study library at ecology.co.uk/projects

Granby CLT: new life for Liverpool's forgotten streets

Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust was formed in 2011 when local residents in Liverpool's Toxteth area decided it was time to make a stand. The area was blighted by neglect, with boarded-up properties and relentless fly-tipping.

Empty properties far outweighed the number of inhabited homes on Cairns Street and its three neighbouring roads. But, in the mid-2000s, the seeds of renewal began to sprout; a small group of local women joined forces – they undertook some guerrilla gardening, painted murals on abandoned properties and established a street market, which rapidly grew in popularity.

A significant step came when the group, inspired by their desire to take ownership



over their future, decided to form their own community land trust (CLT). Granby Four Streets CLT put in their own regeneration proposal, with the result being the transfer of 10 council-owned homes into the ownership of the CLT.

Today, the community is a hopeful and bustling place to live, with new residents now occupying the renovated CLT properties and others available to rent. The prices of

the homes – both sale and rental – are pegged to local wages to ensure that they remain affordable in perpetuity, with priority given to those considered to have greatest housing need. Ecology has provided residential

mortgages for several of the properties, tailoring the loans to accommodate the CLT's progressive pricing model.

With a host of awards under its belt – including the 2015 Turner Prize and Northwest in Bloom – Granby has come a long way in the last few years and doesn't look set to slow down.

Read more about Granby at granby4streetsclt.co.uk

AGM and Members' Meet-up 2019

The climate crisis, community-led housing, and the triple bottom line were the main focus of our 2019 AGM and Members' Meet-up.



More than 140 members and guests packed into a marquee decorated with climate placards at Ecology's offices in West Yorkshire. The event provides an opportunity for members to meet the Ecology team and

share their views on our work as well as having a direct input into our policies and practices.



Following the formal AGM

business, members heard from a fantastic line-up of speakers exploring the triple bottom line approach to support positive outcomes from the perspectives of people, planet and prosperity. Ecology borrower, Sumuyya Khader (pictured speaking, above right), and fellow resident, Michael Pierce, shared their experience of living in homes provided by award-winning Granby 4

We have received lots of positive feedback from members about the day:

'...delightful to see Ecology's HQ and to learn more about its build.'

'All the diversity of topics year-on-year make each AGM an amazingly interesting experience.'

'...the event reinforced my positive view of Ecology and the work it does.'



If you're a voting member, please use your democratic power in 2020!

During the 'Ask the Directors' session, directors responded to questions from the floor as well as pre-submitted questions from members. The results of the AGM voting are available on our website at ecology.co.uk/hub/agm2019.

Thank you to everyone who gave feedback on the AGM. We read every form and your suggestions will be used to help us deliver better events in the future.

See back page for details of next year's AGM, which is taking place in London on **Saturday 25 April**.

£1450 donated

to Trees for Cities. This includes £600 for members' AGM voting and £850 for members who opted to receive their AGM packs by email.

Our new charity partner

At the end of last year we invited members to help select our new charity partner in an online poll. More than 600 of our members and supporters took part and tree planting and protection charity, Trees for Cities, received the most votes. Trees for Cities is the only charity working on an international scale to plant urban trees and create greener cities.

Every year we make a charitable donation when members vote in our AGM. We donate 50p for every AGM vote cast online and 20p for every vote cast on paper.

Ecology colleagues and directors nominated the shortlist of six environmental and housing (or homelessness) charities.



Members then chose their preferred charity from this list in our charity poll. Each of the shortlisted charities was aligned to our mission to build a greener society – supporting positive environmental and social outcomes.

Our partnership with Trees for Cities isn't limited to our AGM. In March a team from Ecology took part in one of the charity's tree planting events to help re-establish an area of local woodland.



Members of the Ecology team tree planting with Trees for Cities. From left to right: Martin Sims, Lorraine Little, Charlotte Richardson, Vince Davies, Jon Lee, Matt Wilson

Our ethics – changing finance

Double award success!

Ecology has been recognised twice in the prestigious Finance for the Future awards, founded by the Institute for Chartered Accountants of England and Wales (ICAEW) and the Prince's Accounting for Sustainability Project (A4S). These awards aim to highlight the role of finance in helping to embed sustainability issues in business decision making.



Pam, Andrea, Helen and Paul at the awards

We were the winners of the Building Sustainable Financial Products award, which recognises organisations that have developed financial products or services that are aimed at driving sustainable outcomes and is open to any organisation in the world that provides lending insurance or investment products. We were also proud to receive special recognition for our outstanding climate leadership.

Jessica Fries, Executive Chair at A4S, commented, "With finalists from around the world, the Finance for the Future awards show examples of leadership and innovation from all sections of the finance and accounting community, urgently needed to transition to a sustainable economy."

The judges said that they were impressed with the overall goal of Ecology in funding the improvement of the existing UK housing stock and highlighted our C-Change mortgages which incentivise energy efficiency through mortgage



WINNER

pricing. They also recognised the role that you, our members, play in driving our principles as well as our wider influence 'in a much greater way than [our] balance sheet size would suggest'.

Paul Ellis, our Chief Executive, explained, "I am proud and honoured that our longstanding commitment to sustainability and ecological lending has been recognised by the Finance for the Future awards' judges. Against the backdrop of the climate crisis, our success shows that the time is now for a financial system that benefits people and planet."

First building society to sign the United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking

Ecology has become a Founding Signatory of the United Nations Principles for Responsible Banking, a global initiative to make climate action and sustainability central to banking. Ecology is the first building society to sign-up.

Ecology joins a coalition of 130 banking providers worldwide in committing to taking on a crucial role in helping to achieve a sustainable future.

The Principles were launched at the start of the UN General Assembly's Climate Action Summit in New York in September.

A coalition of civil society organisations, led by BankTrack, a banking sector watchdog, have expressed reservations about what the Principles will concretely deliver. We share their concerns but think that the framework they provide is an important first step for banks to plan for the risks associated with



United Nations in New York

climate change and move money to support projects that have a positive environmental impact. If we are to meet our Paris targets, we need the wider financial sector to make tangible progress supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Paul Ellis, our Chief Executive, explained, "Given the scale of the climate and

ecological crisis, we need finance that serves people and planet. The Principles have the potential to drive systemic change, ensuring that the purpose of banking extends beyond profit to creating positive social and environmental impacts. Signing up to the Principles wasn't a difficult decision for Ecology as we've been acting as pioneers of environmental finance since we were established. We're proud to support these concerted efforts to build a sustainable future."

Founding Signatory of:



PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE BANKING

Staying safe from fraud

Keeping your account safe

Many banks and building societies are now asking for further security information when managing your everyday accounts. This is often by way of one-time security codes each time you log on. These security checks are designed to reduce the level of online fraud and to increase the protection on customers' accounts.

Over the next few months, we will be making similar changes to our online service, ensuring that your details are kept safe and secure. Once in place, you will need to provide additional information when logging in to your account, changing personal details and transacting.

We'll be providing more information in the coming months. In the meantime, please ensure you keep us updated with any changes to your personal details such as



your email address and mobile and landline numbers. You can update these details via the online service or write to us with the changes.

are safe. The additional question, which asks for the reason for the withdrawal, is to help identify and support members who could be fraudulently enticed into withdrawing their savings.

“ *Your security is a top priority. We're constantly working to ensure your data is kept safe. One of the simple ways you can help to maintain a high standard of security is to make sure your details are kept up to date.* **”**
*Joanne Maurizi,
Compliance Manager*

Making a withdrawal?

When making a withdrawal from your savings account, you will notice that our Savings team are now asking for a bit more information.

We've always taken the security of our members' accounts seriously and are continually looking to improve our processes to help make sure your savings

Our Savings team receives regular training in identifying and dealing with fraud and is here to help any member who may be affected. Should a member fall victim to a scam, our team will take all necessary action and handle the case with complete confidentiality.

Our new withdrawal/notification form (with the additional question) can be found on our website at ecology.co.uk/savings/forms. You can also request a withdrawal using Ecology's online service.

Withdrawals by bank transfer



Earlier this year we wrote to members to specify that withdrawals by bank transfer from Ecology savings accounts can now only be sent to a bank account in their own name.

These changes were the result of updates to the Payment Services Regulations which aim to make payments safer and more secure. In order to comply with these regulations we need to ensure that Ecology's savings accounts are not

classified as 'payment accounts', which includes making sure that accounts are not being used to make multiple payments to third parties.

This measure also means that our members' accounts are further safeguarded against potential financial fraud. If you are using our online service you may already have nominated a bank account in your name. Members can also continue to request withdrawals by cheque, which may be payable to a third party if a signed request is received in the post.

What to do if you think you're a victim of fraud

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

News from the Ecology team

Nurturing new talent

In March Ecology welcomed two new apprentices.

Our recruits Beth Riding and Megan Barker are currently working towards qualifications in Customer Service and Business Administration respectively, as well as being put through their paces with on-the-job training within our Savings team.



Beth (left) and Megan (right)

“
We're developing and extending our skills learning new processes, getting involved in charitable activities and understanding more about our personal environmental impact.
”

As part of the programme, Beth and Megan are both studying with nearby Craven College, in Skipton.

Apprenticeships are not only an invaluable first step onto a career ladder for young people but, equally, an excellent opportunity for Ecology to grow its own talent pool.

Bumper harvest from our gardens

Summer was welcomed in the gardens. The fruits of our labours in spring showed in an abundance of beetroot, lettuce, beans,



Mary Blackburn, Mortgage Advisor, harvesting some of the summer crop

peas, sprouts, cabbages, kale and many varieties of berry. The only hiccup was the decimation of some cabbages due to our resident wood pigeons, pheasants and guinea fowl – all of which seemed unruffled by our scarecrow methods.

Our gardeners 'Those Plant People' continue to manage the plot in line with permaculture principles and have provided stewardship over our flourishing grass and wildflower areas. They've also equipped our borders with some hand-made willow obelisks which have been overwhelmed with sweet peas. Edible flowers, an additional raised vegetable patch and a bug hotel are all ideas for the future.

A recent audit of our woodland found that we now have over 180 trees established within our boundaries. Species range from lime and ash to silver birch and hazel.

Great Ecology bake off



In a twist on the popular television programme, some of the Ecology team have been showing off their baking skills! Colleagues were asked to create a sweet or savoury bake that included fruit or vegetable ingredients, some of which had been harvested from our permaculture gardens.

The award for best presentation went to Helen Carter for her ginger and rhubarb cake. Pam Waring's courgette and tomato bake was recognised in the 'best taste' category, while Karen Knowles was judged to be our 'star baker' for her almond and apricot flan. The event raised £140 for the Canal and River Trust and Mind charities.

Ecology team on the run

A valiant effort was again made by members of the Ecology team at the annual 'Solstice Saunter' charity run. This gruelling five-mile run starts and finishes on the scenic Bolton Abbey Estate in North Yorkshire. The steep hills and narrow uneven paths along the River Wharfe are not for the faint hearted but worth all the effort given it's for a good cause.

With over 750 runners, the event raised vital funds for the Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice, Keighley. Alongside our team, Ecology's Compliance Manager, Joanne Maurizi, helped support the runners at the event.



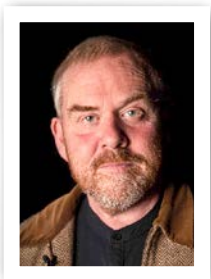
Ecology runners at the Solstice Saunter

Notice Board

Save the date for AGM 2020



Our next AGM and Members' Meet-up will take place on **Saturday 25 April** at The Building Centre, Store Street, London WC1E 7BT. At next year's AGM we will be exploring how Ecology's sustainable



Paul Allen, Centre for Alternative Technology

lending can contribute to a net-zero future against the backdrop of the climate and ecological emergency.

We're still finalising the details but we're delighted to confirm that

Paul Allen of the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT), will be discussing his groundbreaking Zero-Carbon Britain research, showing that a modern, zero-emissions society is possible using technology available today.

The 2020 AGM is being held on the same weekend as the London Marathon so we recommend booking accommodation and travel as soon as possible.

You can pre-register to attend the event at ecologyAGM2020.eventbrite.co.uk



The Building Centre, Store Street, London

Did you know you can help us save paper?

While we will always make key communications, such as annual statements, available by paper if preferred, we can email many of these rather than sending them by post. This helps us reduce our carbon footprint, our use of paper and our costs. We'll even donate £1 to Trees for Cities, our charity partner, for each member who chooses to receive their AGM packs by email.

To opt-in, either send us a secure message through the online service or call us on 01535 650 770.

Please note that we are currently required to send some communications, such as statements, by post.

Where members have not opted-in, if we hold an email address we may use this to send you some communications, including those which wouldn't be sent by post, such as additional information about AGM voting.

Take part in the Centrepoint SleepOut



Last year members of the Ecology team participated in the Centrepoint SleepOut in Bradford, raising £2500 to support Centrepoint, the UK's leading homelessness charity. SleepOut is a fundraising challenge that replicates part of what it's like to sleep rough, in support

of the young people who face it as a reality, and we'll be taking part again this year.

We've arranged for Ecology members to have the opportunity to take part in the Centrepoint SleepOut in selected locations at a reduced rate of £15. Quote code **EBS15** when you book your place at centrepoint.org.uk/sleepout

SleepOut dates and locations

- **Barnsley** (14 November)
- **Bradford** (21 November)
- **London** (19 November)
- **Manchester** (28 November)
- **Sunderland** (14 November)

Opening hours during the holidays



The Ecology office will be closed for the following days over the Christmas and New Year period:

- Wednesday 25 December
- Thursday 26 December
- Wednesday 1 January

The cut-off time for online service requests will be **2.00 pm on Tuesday 24 December and Tuesday 31 December.**

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

T 01535 650 770
W ecology.co.uk
E info@ecology.co.uk