



Why choose  
**Ecology**  
for your savings?



**Building a greener society**



# What makes us different?

**Ecology Building Society is a mutual organisation with a mission: to provide mortgages for properties that give an environmental and social return, as well as a financial return. We were set up in 1981 by a group of people concerned at the lack of funding for sustainable housing projects and today we still lead the way in supporting energy efficiency and low-impact lifestyles.**

**Saving with Ecology means joining a community of people who are committed to building a greener future. Together, our savers are creating a fund to support more and more properties and projects – increasing our positive impact on the environment, locally and globally.**

## Our ethics: people before profit

Our ethical approach isn't a gimmick – it's the reason we exist. We're owned by our members and we put their interests first. We value all of our members equally, whether you have a large or small balance with us, and we will treat you as a partner in creating a better future – not as a source of profit:

- We keep our accounts simple and easy to understand
- We've never used introductory rates because they exploit existing members to attract new members
- Our commitment to equality is reflected in our salary structures: no member of staff can be paid more than five times the lowest full-time salary paid
- We keep our liquidity (the money that isn't currently lent out as mortgages) in financial institutions that have the best fit with our values and we avoid banks that lend irresponsibly
- We'll invite you to our Annual General Meeting and Members' Meet Up, where you can meet our staff and Board, share your opinions on our work, connect with other members and learn from expert speakers
- We keep you updated on how we use your money through our member magazine, Ecology News, and online at [www.ecology.co.uk](http://www.ecology.co.uk).

## Our service: the personal touch

Every member matters to us. You deal directly with our dedicated Savings Team at our eco-HQ in Yorkshire. We don't use voice recognition, scripted conversations or cold calling and we don't pressure you into making additional investments. You can manage your account:

- By First Class Business Reply Post (free of charge)
- Online via Interactive, our 24/7 service, which allows you to view your accounts and request withdrawals and transfers (subject to restrictions)
- By phone on 01535 650 770, from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday (you can leave a message outside of these hours)
- By email on [savings@ecology.co.uk](mailto:savings@ecology.co.uk).



## “I wanted to invest my money somewhere I trust”

Caroline is an accountant living in Montgomery, Mid Wales, but is originally from London. She joined Ecology in 2012, after looking for ethical financial options online.

Caroline chose Ecology because she wanted to put her money to work for things she believes in: “I wanted to know that my savings would not be used unethically, such as supporting arms deals”. She has an interest in green economics and one day hopes to build her own eco-home or join a housing co-operative, so it made sense to support a building society that lends in these areas.

“Now I know that the money I save is helping other people – it means so much to me. I'm very happy... Thank you!”

# Why Pam and Peter save with Ecology Building Society

“We originally invested in Ecology Building Society because it was the only ecological investment around that we could find in the 1980s. We wanted our money to help the earth and the people on it. We also wanted to ensure none of our money was supporting nasty regimes – guns or exploiting the native peoples of the world – like some companies do.

In the 1990s we were aware that in the future, money that wasn't invested ecologically wouldn't be safe. Then it became fashionable to invest ecologically and hundreds of little companies and investment projects jumped on the bandwagon, but we couldn't be sure that they were truly what they said they were or that any of our money would be safe with them. So we kept our money with Ecology Building Society.”



**“We wanted to save with Ecology Building Society because it gives us great pleasure knowing our money is invested for the good of the planet”**

*Pam and Peter, Ecology members*



Ecology Building Society was rated as a Best Buy in the Ethical Consumer Buyers' Guide to Cash ISAs and Ethical Savings Accounts (issue 147 March/April 2014). Ethical Consumer ranks companies and their products against a range of ethical issues and then recommends the best performing as sector Best Buys.

## Treating customers fairly

Our mutual structure allows us to put the needs of our savers and borrowers at the centre of our business practice. We are keen to ensure that we meet the Financial Conduct Authority's *Treating Customers Fairly* (TCF) initiative in all our day-to-day dealings and interactions with our members. We demonstrate our commitment to providing our members with fair treatment and value in a number of ways:

- we don't charge for the ordinary operation of a savings account
- we pay interest on all balances, however low
- we pay interest on all funds from the day of receipt
- we ensure that all our TCF values are central to the way our staff deal with members
- we treat you as an individual
- we provide you with clear, jargon-free information
- we deal with any complaints promptly – and fairly.

## “I joined a community of like-minded people”

Andrew recently studied for an MSc in Architecture, Advanced Environment and Energy Studies and is currently undertaking a low-energy renovation of a terraced house in Manchester.

Andrew had heard good things about Ecology through friends and contacts in the green building community, so Ecology was a natural choice for his savings. He also wanted to build a relationship with a lender who could potentially fund future low-energy retrofit projects. It was important to him that this was a mutual organisation and he wanted to find a partner with the flexibility to fund interesting work outside the mainstream of property lending.

Andrew and his daughter joined us for our 30th Anniversary Conference at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth, Wales. His daughter came along and took part in our children's woodland activities, which aimed to build appreciation of nature in the next generation of Ecology savers.

On the second day of the event, the children joined us to report back on their adventures – their presentations were the highlight of the weekend!

**“I've never doubted my decision to invest with Ecology. I've found a good fit with like-minded folk and made new friends along the way”**

*Andrew, Ecology member*



All the photographs and testimonials in this leaflet are of actual Ecology members.

## “We're helping to support other people's environmental housing projects”

Rob and Liz met while working in financial services but both changed careers as they became more aware of the impacts of climate change. In order to live more sustainably, they moved to Hockerton Housing Project, a self-sufficient cohousing development near Newark.

Rob and Liz first joined Ecology Building Society when taking up a mortgage. They received a good rate of interest for the mortgage due to the environmental credentials of the house they were buying at Hockerton. A passive solar design means that their home does not require central heating, while on-site wind turbines and solar photovoltaic panels generate equivalent energy to their usage over the year.


At the time of taking out the mortgage, Rob and Liz had money invested in Icesave, the Icelandic investment company. It collapsed the week that they were due to exchange contracts on their new home but they had planned to use the savings as a deposit for their new house.


“Ecology Building Society were very understanding and supportive – they provided a bridging loan to see us through until our savings were recovered.”

Rob and Liz subsequently moved their savings across to the Ecology Building Society, too.



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

Printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper