



Homes for a net-zero future

Progress is lagging well behind ambition in the UK’s journey to net zero. This was the take-home message of the latest progress report to Parliament from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) – the Government’s independent advisor on climate. Hot on the heels of the report came July’s record-breaking temperatures, exceeding 40C on 19 July, the same day that the High Court delivered its damning ruling against the Government’s inadequate net-zero strategy, concluding that it breaches the Climate Change Act and must be strengthened.

These events form a small but significant part of the current global picture – one that is defined by increasingly widespread and severe climate events. While it recognises that the UK now has a solid net-zero strategy in place, the CCC report found that “likelihood of under-delivery is high” when it comes to achieving it and that big policy gaps remain. Some of the most significant shortfalls are in the built environment sector, which accounts for 20% of the UK’s total emissions and, despite the publication of the Heat and Buildings Strategy in October 2021, there remains a lack of detail to explain how individual policies around grants for heating and retrofit will work.

A national retrofit strategy – the time is now

Here at Ecology, we have long advocated a national retrofit strategy. Our vision – shared by others – is of a nation-wide programme that will take an integrated approach to transforming the energy needs of our homes. We want to see the Government deliver, at pace, on a wide-ranging package to support green building, including workable grants for low-carbon



Sustainable loft insulation being installed. Credit: Andrew Aitchison/Alamy Stock Photo

home improvements, stamp duty reform to incentivise energy efficient homes, tightening building regulations, strengthening the retrofit supply chain and driving the market for green finance.

This approach will give inclusive access to more comfortable, healthier homes, while delivering many additional social, economic and environmental benefits. Improving the efficiency of our leaky housing stock will also help householders to minimise their energy use in the face of the rapid and unpredictable rises in energy bills that lie at the heart of the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Leading by example

We are proud to be taking a proactive role in the journey to net zero. With over 40 years of experience in supporting our members to make their homes more sustainable, there has never been a more urgent need for us to share our expertise while continuing to innovate and we see it as our responsibility to do so.

With this in mind, we have recently expanded and enhanced our award-winning range of C-Change mortgages, creating finance that supports the creation of the

most sustainable homes possible through mortgage pricing that is linked to a home’s energy performance (see page 4 for more details). These developments are intended to encourage and accelerate the construction and renovation of exceptionally energy-efficient buildings to help meet the UK’s net-zero ambitions as well as enabling our members to build quality, low-carbon homes that are more affordable in the long term.

Looking ahead

Later this year, we will be sharing our net-zero plan with members which will detail how we are ensuring our operations achieve net zero by 2030. On the international stage, COP27, in November, represents the next major opportunity for nations to meet and move swiftly from promises into action. We hope to see international cooperation spurring robust progress across all sectors and, in the run up, will be doing all we can to amplify our call for a retrofit strategy that will secure better homes for all and see the UK deliver on its promise to be a world leader in achieving net zero.



Ecology’s new Chair, Louise Pryor, advocating for net zero in Parliament with Michael Gove, former Secretary of State for Housing

AGM 2022

In April, we were delighted to open the doors to members for our AGM and Members' Meet-up. Following two years of virtual-only meetings, this year's event was held at the iconic Mildmay Club – a social club in the heart of Stoke Newington, London, which was founded in 1888 and is being refurbished with the support of an Ecology mortgage (see below).



From left to right: Mike Berners-Lee, Jo Hand, Paul Allen and event host, Peg Alexander

We welcomed an eclectic mix of expert speakers, including carbon footprint expert and author of *There is No Planet B*, Mike Berners-Lee, as well as Paul Allen from the Centre for Alternative Technology and Jo Hand, founder of carbon footprint app, Giki Zero. Hosted by journalist and community-led housing advocate, Peg Alexander, speakers and audience explored our theme for this year's event: supporting the UK's efforts to reach net zero.

Alongside the formal AGM business, 'Ask the Directors' session, and speaker

presentations, the event was an opportunity to say goodbye to our CEO of 27 years, Paul Ellis, and to Steve Round who has served as Chair of the Board for seven years. We also welcomed our new CEO, Gareth Griffiths, who joined us on the day to meet with Ecology members and staff.

We were pleased to again be able to offer members the chance to participate in the AGM element of the day via our online dedicated meeting and voting platform. All resolutions were approved, with voting turnout at just under 15%, slightly lower than 2021 (16.9%) but remaining one of the highest in the building society sector. For details of the voting results and the responses to the 'Ask the Directors' questions, head to ecology.co.uk/hub/AGM-2022.



“*Fantastic range of talks and presentations which inspired and informed*
– Ecology member”



Directors taking questions from members

Spotlight on... The Mildmay Club

The Mildmay Radical Club was established in London in 1888 with the aim of “social intercourse, rational recreation and the advancement of progress in political opinions”. In 1900, a clubhouse was built on Matthias Road, Newington Green – now a Grade II listed building and one of London's few surviving working men's clubs.

In its early days, the club grew to become a wellspring of social connection, arts, music and entertainment, boasting over 3,000 members at its peak and becoming non-political from 1930 onwards.

In later years, the building fell into disrepair and membership numbers began to diminish, prompting a campaign to reinvigorate the club as a central social hub for the local community. An Ecology loan supported a complete renovation of the building's roof and the creation of two rental flats on the top floor, giving the Club additional revenue to support its work and boost membership. The Club is now enjoying a fresh lease of life as a leading entertainment venue for the area, hosting snooker games, dances, markets and weekly live music.



Leadership changes

Our new CEO



Gareth Griffiths

In June we welcomed Ecology's new CEO, Gareth Griffiths. Gareth has joined us from his previous role as Head of Retail Banking at Triodos Bank. The appointment comes after our previous CEO, Paul Ellis, stepped down from his role in April after more than 40 years with Ecology.

Gareth joins us at an exciting time. Our record-breaking results for 2021 saw the Society's assets increase by 14%, passing £250m for the first time, as well as an increase of 77% in new mortgage lending, reflecting our unwavering commitment to our ecological mission.

Commenting on Gareth's appointment, Ecology Chair, Louise Pryor, said, "The Board is delighted that Gareth has joined Ecology. He emerged as the outstanding candidate to lead the Society, demonstrating a deep commitment to ethical finance combined with significant banking experience."

Gareth shares, "It is an honour to join Ecology when its mission has never been more relevant. My aim is to ensure Ecology plays an even greater part in creating a better future over this critical decade while supporting its excellent team to continue delivering award-winning service."

We extend the warmest welcome to Gareth who took the opportunity to meet with colleagues and members at the AGM. In the autumn, Gareth is planning to host a series of member events and is looking forward to sharing more on his vision for Ecology's future. We'll be writing to members soon with details of how you can get involved or keep updated at ecology.co.uk.

New Chair of Ecology



Louise Pryor at the AGM

At the AGM we also said goodbye to Steve Round after seven years of him chairing the Society's Board. The Board elected Louise Pryor, who joined in early 2020, to succeed Steve. Louise brings over 30 years of risk and actuarial experience to the role and also serves as Chair of the London Climate Change Partnership.

New Chief Risk Officer

Greig Moran joined us earlier this year to lead our Risk and Compliance team and, following regulatory approval, has taken on the role of Chief Risk Officer. Prior to joining the Ecology Executive team, Greig held senior operational risk roles at Royal Bank of Scotland, The Co-operative Bank, BNY Mellon as well as fellow mutual, Skipton Building Society.



Greig Moran



Directors answering members' questions



Steve Round recognising Paul's service at the AGM

“Excellent AGM – very well thought through, planned and executed – Ecology member”



Speaker, Mike Berners-Lee, presenting his talk 'No Planet B'



£675 raised for charity Trees for Cities as a result of members' voting at this year's AGM.

News round-up

Pushing the envelope on green finance

Our unique C-Change mortgage discounts are designed to encourage our borrowers to build their homes to the highest energy efficiency and environmental standards.

We've recently enhanced our range of C-Change discounts in line with our longstanding support for sustainable and energy efficient construction, an essential part of the UK's net-zero ambitions. As well as increasing the discount for homes accredited to the Passivhaus standard, we've also created special discounts for homes built to either a SAP rating of 100 to 109 or more than 110 of 1.00 per cent and 1.25 per cent respectively, which we're calling A+ and A++. These additional categories reflect the environmental performance of homes built to a high



C-Change Sustainable Homes Discount

For projects such as self-builds, new builds and conversions, which achieve high energy-efficiency standards

standard that generate more energy than they consume.

We have been leading the way on sustainable mortgages for over 40 years, and we hope that the updates to the C-Change discounts will encourage our borrowers to build even more energy efficient homes, a critical step in the fight against climate change.

For more information on our C-Change mortgages visit ecology.co.uk/mortgages/c-change-discounts

Lending update

Our savers' money enables us to support an incredible array of environmentally and socially oriented properties and projects. Here, we give a snapshot of some of the latest, including projects focussed on sustainable rural repopulation, affordable homes and the cutting edge of low-carbon technology.



Renovation works on Mull

In 2018, **North West Mull Community Woodland Company** purchased the Isle of Ulva – near Mull – in a bid to encourage repopulation of the island where numbers had fallen to an all-time low of just five residents.

An Ecology mortgage has enabled the renovation of six homes. The homes, which are available on affordable long-term lets, each feature new insulation, double glazing and an air source heat pump. Ulva has now welcomed its first new residents since the community takeover including the new leaseholders of the island café and a livestock manager who is overseeing a sustainable grazing programme to support improved wildflower and birdlife diversity.



Newly retrofitted homes on Ulva

Just across the water on Mull, the **Mull and Iona Community Trust** was selected as a winner at the Scotland Housing Awards 2022. Scooping top place in the *Excellence in Development for Affordable Housing* category, the development welcomed its first residents in May 2021.

Spotlight on... Richard and Max's timber-framed self-build

Richard and Max were involved in every aspect of building their home on the Isle of Skye, from designing to finishing and everything between. While Richard had good theoretical knowledge of building through his work as a drawing and design technician, both he and Max had little practical experience, with Richard describing himself as a "terrible DIYer who decided to build a house".



Exterior view of the self-build



Inside Richard & Max's new home. Credit: RNDDS, Isle of Skye

Having learnt a wealth of new skills to make their timber-framed build a reality, the couple now enjoy a home with exceptional airtightness and minimal energy demand with much of the heating being supplied by a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system (MVHR). Achieving an EPC A and SAP rating 110, Richard and Max also benefit from our new 1.25 per cent C-Change discount, designed to support the development of the most energy-efficient homes.



The affordable homes on Ulva Ferry, Mull

Also in Scotland, the Ecology-backed **Taighean a' Chaiseil project**, a community-owned housing, health and business development in Staffin, on the Isle of Skye, has been announced as a winner at the Scottish Homes Awards 2022. Families moved into the six homes earlier this year which have been built to support rural repopulation through the provision of high-quality, low-energy affordable housing. The development won the Community Contribution Award which recognises the efforts of 'delivering a significant contribution to a local community'.



New residents at the Staffin development

We're supporting the exciting expansion of the **Leeds Library**. The growth of the library helps secure the long-term future of this historic building and provides a shop front to raise the visibility and accessibility of an iconic cultural resource. It is the first expansion to the Library's premises in 143 years. The additional space will unite its collection of over 140,000 books under one roof, and create a new hub for culture, the arts, education, and learning.



Carl Hutton, CEO of the Leeds Library

Our support for **Co-housing Bristol** has now enabled the completion of seven dwellings on the city's outskirts. Providing affordable, low-carbon homes built to Passivhaus standard, the development offers the benefits of shared communal resources. Facilities such as washing machines, tools, storage sheds and garden areas are shared, reducing the demand for resources as well as maintenance costs.



Works underway at Co-housing Bristol

In Cornwall, **The Peninsula Trust** has completed work on three former coastguard cottages in the seaside village of Cawsand, overlooking Plymouth Sound.



Jakob and Chloe, new residents of Peninsula Trust's coastguard cottages

In an area where around 60% of all properties are second homes, the cottages represent a lifeline for some local families who had been facing homelessness due to the shortage of affordable housing. The magnitude of the problem was highlighted when the Trust received over 400 applications from locals seeking a home. Those who were successful include Chloe and Jakob (pictured) who work locally in the fishing and hospitality industries. They are now benefitting from living in an affordable, energy-efficient home that they know is safe from being sold off as a second home.

Important news about your savings monthly statement

Currently, we post a monthly statement every time you deposit a cheque or make a withdrawal from your savings account.

Many members would prefer to receive less paper, so we have decided to stop sending monthly statements, in turn helping us reduce our carbon footprint. The final monthly statement will be for transactions during August and will be sent out in early September.

You will continue to receive an annual statement by post in January for all accounts except ISAs, which are sent in April.

Viewing your savings transactions

It's easy to keep track of all your transactions by using our online service.

Simply go to online.ecology.co.uk and click on the 'Register' button. Please have your Ecology savings account number to hand.

Rate changes

After a lengthy period of record low interest rates, the Bank of England has announced several increases in the base rate since December 2021.

We constantly monitor the effect of these changes across the wider market along with other factors so that we can review rates and balance the needs of our saving and borrowing members, while remaining committed to helping as many people as possible to build or renovate sustainably.

All our lending is funded by our members' savings, delivering positive impact through support for green building and sustainable communities.

Our mission to build a greener society has never been more urgent as we strive to use the power of purpose-led finance to deliver a sustainable future.

Please check ecology.co.uk regularly for any updates on rate changes.

Staying safe from fraud



Elyn Higgins (left) is Ecology's in-house expert in financial fraud. Here, she shares details of some of the latest tips to keep your money safe from fraudsters.

We now face a bewildering array of fraud and scam attempts, many of which have been fuelled by recent events. Criminals find opportunity when we are most vulnerable and with the pandemic, war in Ukraine and cost-of-living crisis, opportunities are rife. Let's focus on protecting you, our members, from those who are exploiting the challenging economic climate for their own gain.

Be alert to scam phone calls, emails and texts

You may have heard the term 'vishing' being used to describe situations whereby somebody claiming to be from a reputable company, such as a bank or governmental organisation, calls you to fraudulently obtain your personal information. Phishing is similar but carried out via corrupt links in emails, texts and websites. According to Citizens Advice, around 40 million people have been contacted via these methods so far this year. This is a 14% increase on last year and it is expected to rise.

Energy scams

Some of the biggest 'up-and-coming' scams born out of the cost-of-living crisis are energy scams. Fraudsters are using the rising cost of energy to prey on people's anxieties. Pretending to be representatives of Ofgem (the UK energy regulator), scammers are convincing people they should switch their provider to a fictional cheaper option. Buying into the hope of saving money, people are divulging their bank details to facilitate a non-existent switch. The scammers are also attempting to collect bank details ready for the £400 energy bill rebate that every household is entitled to; in reality, the Government has confirmed that the payments will be made in October directly to your energy provider.



Now is the time to be vigilant as this scam could well be confusing given that the recent Council Tax rebate was paid directly into bank accounts for many. Considering the energy scam, Ofgem have provided the following guidance:

1 – STOP

Reject, refuse or ignore contact from 'Ofgem' that looks or sounds unusual, such as a request for your bank or personal details. Ofgem will never ask for this information

2 – CHECK

Check email addresses. Any email to or from Ofgem always ends @ofgem.gov.uk
Check branding. The Ofgem logo will always be present in official communication. It should never look stretched, blurry or distorted

3 – PROTECT

Only criminals will try to rush or panic you. Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam

HMRC rebate fraud – still going strong

The anxiety surrounding the rising cost of, well, seemingly everything, teamed with sophisticated scam techniques can cloud our judgement. The HMRC 'you're owed a tax refund' scam is one that has been in circulation and highlighted in the media for many years, yet it still makes up 41% of all attempted scams. I'm sure most of our members will have come across it at least once before. The reason it is still so prevalent is that the phishing emails used in this scam have evolved over time to look remarkably genuine. With many of us open to an unexpected rebate as household finances come under pressure, please don't be tempted to click on that link. Instead, call HMRC on a trusted number. Remember the old adage: *'if it sounds too good to be true then it probably is'*.



Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police.

They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment.



News from the Ecology Team

Ecology runs for charity and supports plastic-free



Team Ecology moments before the run

Ecology team with 15 runners and walkers, almost double that of last year, and a team of willing volunteers to help keep everybody hydrated.

Ecology was the headline sponsor for this year's Solstice Saunter – a five-mile run at Bolton Abbey, North Yorkshire, raising essential funds for the Sue Ryder Manorlands Hospice in Keighley. Through our sponsorship and collaboration with the organisers, Ecology helped to reduce single-use plastic water bottles at the event.

Taking place on the longest day of the year – Tuesday 21 June – the event saw record participation from the

Ecology goes tree planting

Earlier in the year, the Ecology team donned their wellies and worked their shovels in collaboration with Bradford Environmental Action Trust (BEAT) as part of the Forest of Bradford's effort to plant 1 million trees. More than 20 colleagues took part in the project over three days and planted an impressive total of 1,500 trees at Wilsden. Well done team!



Members of the Ecology team helping to plant more than 1,500 trees in Wilsden

Our garden update

Pippa Chapman, Ecology's gardener, gives us an update on our garden.

"It's been a mixed harvest this season. We have had an abundance of crops like beetroot and radishes but are experiencing lower yields for other vegetables and particularly slow growth for our summer peas and potatoes. The reason could be a

notable decline in water levels, making us mindful of how this might impact future garden planning and prompting us to experiment with varieties that are more adaptable to dry conditions.

"A surprise invasion of tree bees has been welcomed and they are busy pollinating our garden flowers, vegetable patch and meadow. We are keen to welcome wildlife to our grounds and have been encouraged to see wrens, dunnocks and tree creepers – not to mention our resident pheasant and guinea fowl – enjoying the bird feed on offer. Our newly acquired hedgehog house has also had some visits. Elsewhere around the site, maintenance has been



▲ Pippa working on the wildflower beds
▲ Bumper harvest

ongoing with tree thinning helping to promote growth, and the planting of wildflower seeds in part of our vegetable patch attracting a wealth of pollinating insects."



Our wildflower and herb bed in front of the garden meeting room

Collaborating to save lives

We've worked in partnership with seven other businesses on the industrial estate adjacent to our offices in Silsden to fund the installation and ongoing maintenance of a new community public access defibrillator. Defibrillators are vital in saving lives, with access to one within the first crucial moments of an emergency increasing the chances of survival.



Notice Board

Visit us at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show

Homebuilding
& Renovating
Show

November 4-6
Harrogate Convention
Centre

We are exhibiting at the **Homebuilding and Renovating Show** in Harrogate from **Friday 4 to Sunday 6 November**. We look forward to welcoming members to our stand as well as speaking to new potential borrowers and discussing opportunities to lend on exciting new projects. Come and say hello at stand **C238**. For more information about the show go to harrogate.homebuildingshow.co.uk.

Your views matter

We would like to encourage all members to continue providing feedback through the financial services review platform Smart Money People. Your insights help us improve our services.

In 2021, Ecology was shortlisted for six categories in the British Bank Awards, and successfully achieved 'Best Ethical Financial Provider' and 'Treating Customers Fairly Champion', all thanks to our member voting and feedback through Smart Money People.

If you'd like to see our reviews or leave a comment, please visit smartmoneypeople.com

 Smart Money People



Excellent Customer Reviews
4.94 stars from 560 reviews

UK Passivhaus conference 2022



Ecology is sponsoring this year's Passivhaus conference which is organised by the Passivhaus Trust. The event takes place on **26 October** at the Exeter Corn Exchange and includes the option to visit the UK's first Passivhaus certified leisure centre and public swimming pool.

For more information please visit passivhaustrust.org.uk. A 10% early bird discount applies if you register by 9 September.

Renaming our office



We've renamed our offices 'Ellis House' in recognition of Paul Ellis' 40-year involvement with the Society.

Member Meet-ups

Gareth, our new CEO, is planning to share more on his vision for Ecology's future during a series of member events in the autumn. We'll be sending details of how you can get involved soon.

Ecology gardener releases her first book

We're excited to announce that our very own gardener, Pippa Chapman, will have her first book published by Permanent Publications in September. *The Plant Lover's Backyard Forest Garden* teaches you how to create stunning multi-layered

food forests, no matter the space. Learn all about polycultures and guilds to produce healthy, low-maintenance



Pippa Chapman

food without compromising on adding beautiful flowers for pollinators and the home. In this book, Pippa also offers useful tips on seed saving and propagation to help keep costs low, as well as a whole chapter on soil to help you understand how to keep your soil healthy.

If you wish to purchase Pippa's book, you can get 20% off the RRP (£16) if you pre-order before **31 August**. Visit ecology.co.uk/pippasbook for more details on how to get your copy.



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



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