



WINNER
Natural
Environment
Champion

Welcome to **Ecology** - Silsden's very own building society serving the whole of the UK.

We're dedicated to building a greener society by providing mortgages for properties and projects that respect the environment and support sustainable communities, funded through our simple, transparent savings accounts. We use your savings to lend exclusively to projects that align with our commitment to sustainability. You'll always know your money is working to create a better planet - from reducing carbon emissions to building energy efficient-homes. By saving with us you'll never fund fossil fuels, mining companies, tobacco, the arms trade, or deforestation.

Ecology Building Society was established in 1981 and we built our headquarters here in Silsden in 2003. Our gardens were originally designed on behalf of the Permaculture Association to incorporate and interconnect productive, educational and leisure activities for our colleagues and the local community.

We follow sustainable, wildlife-friendly, pesticide-free permaculture methods that aim to mimic natural ecosystems. We aim to amplify local biodiversity and to maximise the positive environmental impact of our site, while promoting opportunity to grow and harvest food, and incorporating the re-use and recycling of resources and waste products.

Our gardens include both a public area that is always open for use by local residents, and a private area around our office for use by our colleagues.
You are welcome to explore all areas today.

1. **Woodland** - ash, sycamore, birch, hazel and willow. Ivy ground cover with spring bluebells, primroses, lords and ladies, wild garlic and cow parsley.
2. **Ornamental bed in front of the garden room** - full of daffodils in spring, with scented roses, herbs and woodland strawberries.
3. **Garden Room** - constructed from two up-cycled redundant shipping containers with solar panels on the roof and electric battery storage to minimise the mains electric requirements.
4. **Raised bed for annual veg** - our on-site allotment area for colleagues to grow their own veg if they don't have the space at home.
5. **Food forest bed** - a permaculture bed of edible harvests including apples, pear, cherry plum, mulberry and autumn olive trees, redcurrants, blackcurrants, gooseberries, raspberries, blackberries, woodland strawberries, rhubarb and a variety of perennial herbs including fennel, lemon balm, chives and mints.
6. **Ornamental bed** - planted for year-round colour to enjoy from within the office.
7. **Straw bale round house** - straw bales are stacked to form the walls and rendered with a lime mortar externally and clay plaster internally to form our Board Room. The roof is insulated with sheep's wool. Straw is a fast-growing, abundant, renewable, local agricultural by-product that provides excellent insulation, showcasing a sustainable alternative to typical building materials.
8. **Composting bays** - food waste material from our compost tumbler is transferred to these composting bays to mature in to a nutrient rich mulch for our garden.
9. **Hot composter** - we separate and collect all of our food waste and we use an insulated hot compost tumbler to speed up the initial decomposition process before the material is moved to our composting bays to mature.
10. **Berry borders** - summer-fruiting raspberries, gooseberries and whitecurrants in our community garden for local residents to harvest and enjoy.
11. **Yew and juniper patch** - native evergreens planted for structure and shelter in the community garden framing the seating area.
12. **Protected trees** - our large sycamore and majestic lime tree at the junction of Belton Road and Hainsworth Road have been protected by a Tree Preservation Order since 1993.
13. **Rose hedge** - a mix of dog rose, field rose, burnet rose and sweet briar. A hedgerow that looks and smells beautiful when flowering.
14. **Orchard** - apple and pear trees in our community garden providing fruit for local residents to pick.
15. **Meadow** - allowed to grow wild throughout the year providing habitat for pollinators, birds, caterpillars and butterflies with guelder rose, bird cherry and hawthorn trees for surrounding structure.
16. **Fruit trees** - sweet cherries and plums for locals to help themselves.
17. **Electric vehicle charging points** - provided free of charge to our colleagues, utilising energy from 100% renewable sources.
18. **Gravel beds** - there is no soil beneath this gravel so here we have plants adapted to scree-slope type conditions.
19. **Defibrillator** - we host a Community Public Access Defibrillator in partnership with Silsden Town Council to provide our local community with an easy-to-access unit in an emergency.
20. **Office building** - constructed from renewable, reclaimed and recycled materials as far possible and designed to have low energy requirements with an airtight structure. Insulation material is manufactured from recycled paper; bricks were reclaimed from a former windmill; tiles made from recycled glass; re-used locally sourced dry stone walling stone externally; low U-value windows to minimise heat loss and provide lots of natural light to minimise electrical lighting requirements.
21. **Living roof** - provides habitat for plants and insects, it also adds to the insulation value of the roof, absorbs rainfall and reduces runoff to our soakaways.
22. **Solar panels** - we have 66 photovoltaic panels that contribute significantly to our energy supply and 100% of our mains electricity is from renewable sources.
23. **Rainwater harvest tank** - our guttering system feeds in to a tank that is used to flush our toilets, greatly reducing our use of mains water and preventing rainfall runoff from entering the mains drains, which in turn helps to reduce flooding and the risk of untreated sewage overflow to rivers during heavy rains.
24. **Air source heat pumps** - our building uses no fossil fuels as our heating system is powered by two heat pumps using electricity from only renewable sources.
25. **Willow coppice** - coppiced annually to provide sticks for basket weaving and similar crafts. This year used to weave a new living fence to create a screen around our air source heat pumps.
26. **Meadow** - allowed to grow throughout the year providing habitat for pollinators, birds, caterpillars and butterflies.
27. **Hedgerow** - a mix of beech, holly, gorse, dog rose and hazel.
28. **Composting area** - we keep all of our garden waste on site.