

PBANews



Welcome to our Autumn 2026 Newsletter. As another busy year begins to draw to a close, we're delighted to share some of the successes, milestones and stories that have shaped the past few months.

Established in 2010, the business has grown rapidly over 16 years, building a strong national reputation and highly skilled team that delivers ecological and environmental management services across the UK.

We are a specialist independent ecology and environmental management practice, based in the beautiful and dramatic landscape of the Yorkshire Dales.

With continued growth, exciting opportunities and valued client partnerships, there's plenty to celebrate and even more to look forward to.

We would be pleased to welcome our clients, colleagues and community to visit and discuss future plans.

Our Own Sustainable Development project

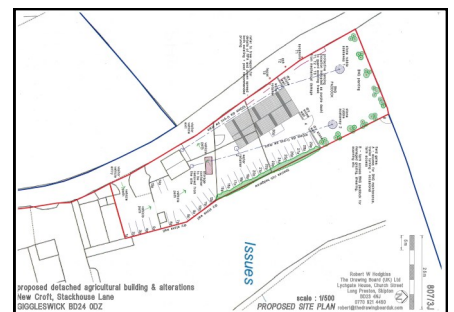
Just over a year on from PBA's transition to an employee ownership trust (EOT), we are excited to announce plans for a major new development to further improve and expand the company's New Croft HQ in Giggleswick this winter.

A new agricultural-style barn will provide enhanced field storage, maintenance and garage facilities, whilst creating opportunities to improve our existing premises. The project will enable the conversion of our annex into a bespoke training and meeting facility, complete with upgraded field laboratory and wet room facilities, alongside the creation of a spacious new open-plan office suite.

The development reflects our ongoing investment in both sustainability and innovation. A large solar panel array will help power our offices and growing fleet of electric vehicles, further reducing our carbon footprint, while an expanded rainwater harvesting system will build upon a scheme that already supplies 95% of the water used for vehicle washing and biosecurity cleaning of field equipment.

The plans also include improved site access and parking, and the creation of a dedicated Biodiversity Net Gain paddock featuring species-rich tree planting and a new native hedgerow.

This investment in our facilities, people and environmental commitments, will ensure that PBA remains well placed to increase capacity, enhance the service we provide to our clients and broaden the range of ecological and environmental expertise we offer in the years ahead.



Visit from Sir Julian Smith MP

On 17th April our supportive MP, Sir Julian Smith, and local councillor David Staveley visited our headquarters to learn more about our varied ecological work and how we support early careers development across the region. During their visit, they spoke informally with several apprentices and members of our team. Both were impressed by PBA's commitment to supporting young people, particularly those from rural communities, and recognised the importance of businesses actively engaging with schools and local communities to create career pathways into specialist sectors.

After the visit, Sir Julian said, "It was fantastic to visit PBA Applied Ecology with Cllr Staveley and see first-hand how a local business is creating real job opportunities for young people in our rural communities. Through apprenticeships, traineeships and partnerships with local colleges, PBA is helping young people gain valuable skills and build long-term careers close to home."



At PBA, our highest company value is simple: we care about people. We believe in recognising potential, supporting personal development and creating opportunities for individuals to succeed.

Kimberley's sabbatical



Over the last few months, Kimberley has been spending her sabbatical in Switzerland, supporting groups of Girl Guides on exciting outdoor adventures and expeditions.

Sharing her passion for nature, Kimberley has introduced girls from around the world to the wonderful flora and fauna of the Swiss Alps while helping them develop valuable skills such as teamwork, confidence

and resilience. Through exploration, challenge and discovery, the Guides have created unforgettable memories and been empowered to achieve more than they thought possible.

We're delighted that Kimberley has had the opportunity to combine her love of the natural world with inspiring the next generation of adventurous young women, and we look forward to hearing more about her experiences when she returns.



Environmental Management Team - New appointments

We are pleased to welcome George and Harry to our growing Environmental Management Team.

George joins the company as Environmental Manager, bringing extensive experience and technical expertise that will support the continued growth of this service area. Harry joins as an Environmental Graduate and is already making a positive contribution with his enthusiasm, fresh ideas and passion for the environment.

The Environmental Management Team provides a wide range of client-focused services, helping organisations to overcome environmental challenges, meet regulatory requirements and deliver positive environmental outcomes. Through a combination of practical field-based work, problem-solving and strategic advice, the team supports clients across a variety of sectors and projects throughout our operational region.

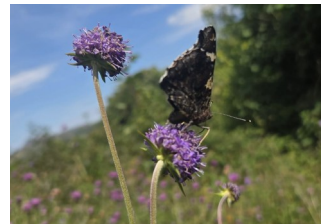
We are thrilled to have George and Harry on board and look forward to the valuable input they will have as we continue to expand and enhance the services we provide to our clients.



New Changes to BNG

Over the past two years, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has started to change the way development and nature work together. During 2026, however the Government introduced a large number of revisions to the statutory framework for BNG in England.

From August 2026, developments on sites with a red-line area of 0.2 hectares (2,000 square metres) or less are exempt from mandatory BNG requirements in England, provided they do not negatively impact onsite priority habitats.



From November 2026, the Government has confirmed that BNG will apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). This marks an important step forward for the integration of nature into major infrastructure planning and provides much-needed clarity after a period of uncertainty. A mandatory 10% BNG requirement will apply across all NSIP types, with no exemptions or voluntary approaches.

Later in 2026, the Government expects to introduce two further exemptions: (i) for development whose key objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity; and, (ii) a targeted exemption for development that enhances parks, playing fields and public gardens.

We will have first-hand experience of the impacts of BNG requirements on developers as our own office development progresses over the next few years.

£46M Flood Risk Management Scheme at Littleborough



The Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS), will provide enhanced flood protection for homes and businesses in the wider Greater Manchester region. First approved in May 2020, the project is part of a comprehensive, three-phase programme to develop one of the largest inland flood relief schemes in northern England.

This joint venture between the Environment Agency and Rochdale Council aims to reduce flooding risk across Rochdale and Littleborough through the use of a new flood storage area at Gale, raised flood walls and upgrades to culverts and bridges on key local watercourses such as Greenvale Brook, Town House Brook and Buckley Brook. It will also protect critical local infrastructure from flooding, including the tram

network, bus interchange, schools, colleges, a grid substation and the wastewater treatment works. On visiting the works, Paul Waugh, Rochdale's MP, said, "We know all too well in Rochdale and Littleborough the devastation caused by floods like the one we had in 2015. So it is encouraging to see firsthand the progress made on this huge engineering project, which will protect so many homes and vital local businesses from future floods".

We are pleased to be providing a comprehensive range of ecological and environmental management services in support of this exciting flood risk management scheme, helping to ensure its sustainable delivery at every stage. Through regular site visits, PBA works closely with the Environment Agency to identify and address environmental considerations as the project progresses. Our support includes the management of invasive non-native species through routine site walkovers, alongside proactive biodiversity protection measures, bat scoping assessments of mature trees, badger and otter surveys, and nesting bird checks ahead of works. These measures help to minimise potential impacts on protected species and habitats, ensuring that construction activities are undertaken responsibly and in compliance with environmental legislation. We provide ongoing ecological advice to site teams and respond to any concerns raised by contractors or members of the local community, enabling the project to move forward with confidence while safeguarding the ecological value and long-term resilience of the natural environment.

Supporting Career Pathways For Local People

While we recruit passionate ecologists and environmental professionals nationwide, we remain deeply committed to nurturing local talent and creating opportunities for young people on our own doorstep. Growing up in a rural community can be incredibly rewarding, but it can also present unique challenges when it comes to education, employment and career development. Young people leaving school today face a difficult landscape. Rising living costs and the challenges of good long-term career opportunities in geographically isolated areas all contribute to uncertainty about what comes next.



At the same time, some students are questioning the value of traditional higher education pathways. The costs associated with university can feel overwhelming. For many young people and their families, taking on significant debt with no guarantee of employment at the end is becoming increasingly difficult to justify. That is why apprenticeships, vocational training, internships and degree traineeships are becoming increasingly important.



PBA has built a hugely capable and experienced workforce. In the early years we were mostly ecology-related graduates, often with postgraduate training and significant work experience. As the business has grown, we have increasingly broadened our career pathway opportunities. As a business, we are proud to be rooted in the local community, and over 50% of our current workforce were schooled locally. Many first came to us through holiday work, work experience placements or careers events before progressing into seasonal and permanent employment.

We have partnered with organisations such as the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT), whose Green Pathways programme provides invaluable support for individuals pursuing careers in the environmental sector. Together, we have helped several apprentices successfully complete their qualifications and transition into permanent employment with PBA.

Watching someone arrive with little experience and then grow in confidence, develop new skills and become a valued member of the team is incredibly fulfilling. Young people also bring fresh perspectives, new ideas and enthusiasm that strengthen our organisation and help drive innovation as we continue to grow.

First 'Ghost' Pond in the Dales



The term 'ghost pond' was first coined in Norfolk by our very good friend Carl Sayer, Professor of Limnology & Freshwater Ecology, University College London. When Carl first looked at lost ponds in Norfolk, he found they were like shadows in the landscape. "Even though they're completely lost," Carl says, "you can usually see where they used to be." He thought, let's call these 'Ghost Ponds' and if we dig there, he wondered if the seeds would still be alive, even if they'd been farmed over.

Carl started the Ghost Pond Project in 2013 and has since restored dozens of former historical ponds, mostly in Norfolk. He believes this is the most successful ecological restoration ever known, yet this is the least supported form of freshwater restoration. "Ponds and small water bodies are so neglected and overlooked," he says. "People don't realise the astonishing biodiversity you can get in such a small thing. Everyone thinks big is good. But at one small 'ghost pond' you literally go from nothing to colossal gains in biodiversity. Ancient collections of species can potentially be restored, which are now rare in the landscape."

This autumn, we are excited to launch a new pro bono conservation that aims to bring this innovative restoration idea to the Yorkshire Dales. At the foot of Giggleswick Scar, covering part of what is now the golf course, once stood a large post-glacial tarn. A well-preserved carved log boat dating from the 14th century was discovered during drainage works in 1863. We have explored the site of the former tarn with a peat probe and we have found that a deep layer of lakebed material still resides beneath the golf course.

With no external funding at all, we have teamed up with renowned regional house-builder Verity & Co Homes, Giggleswick



School and Settle & Giggleswick Golf Club. This autumn, on the edge of the fairway of the golf course, we hope to create the first 'ghost pond' in the Yorkshire Dales!

This will be a demonstration project, encouraging others to take up the idea of finding and restoring lost ponds across the region. This will also be a great learning experience for everyone involved, not least the pupils of Giggleswick School.

A brilliant new project combining history, geography and ecology; also perhaps reawakening a dormant seedbank of aquatic species that are now rare or extinct in the local landscape.

Yorkshire Dales Wildlife Rescue

Located just 6 miles up the valley at the former Horton Junior School, this brilliant local charity is the region's only wildlife rescue, providing vital care and rehabilitation for many hundreds of injured and vulnerable birds and mammals.



The Rescue was founded during the Covid-19 pandemic by two local women, police officer Jane Carpenter and artist Penny Hunt. Since then, they have made it their mission to help wild animals in need and help the community understand their needs through support and education. Jane says 'being able to rescue a wild animal and return it to its habitat is the best feeling in the world. It

consumes every moment of spare time we have as we both work full-time, but we have had lots of volunteers come on board to help us. The family of rescuers, volunteers and transport volunteers is growing and we're working really closely with vets too. It's absolutely fabulous and it has been life changing for a really good reason.' The Rescue now has over 70 registered volunteers and is growing rapidly; taking in animals from well beyond the National Park.



Patrick Grant, best known for the BBC's The Great British Sewing Bee, has become the charity's first patron. In August, PBA founder Paul Bradley accepted an invitation to join the Trustee Board. PBA is a keen supporter of the Rescue, and has just recently agreed to donate a Berlingo van, which will perhaps become the Rescue's first wildlife ambulance.

To donate, fundraise, volunteer, support or sponsor an animal visit www.yorkshiredaleswildliferescue.com, where you can learn more about what to do if you find an animal in need.

Clean Commute @ PBA

As part of our ongoing commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, we launched the PBA Clean Commute Challenge this year to encourage more sustainable travel choices.

Employees earn points by walking, cycling, or sharing lifts on their commute to work. Points can be redeemed for rewards through our local partners, The Dales Deli and Settle Swimming Pool, or donated to our chosen charity, Freda's Community Nursery. The initiative has been enthusiastically embraced by our team and reflects one of the values at the heart of PBA. By choosing greener ways to travel, staff are helping to reduce emissions, support local organisations, and contribute to a more sustainable future for our community.

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