

PBANews



Investing in Growth

This edition of the PBA newsletter marks the 3rd Anniversary of our move to New Croft in Giggleswick. Following another successful year, the PBA Board has embarked upon the company's most ambitious programme of ongoing investment yet. In the coming year, PBA will continue to grow the range of ecological and environmental services that we can provide for our clients. This continued growth follows our appointment to a number of long-term service agreements and a desire to meet our current client's growing environmental needs.

This Spring will see continued investment into our most important resource, our staff, with a recruitment drive and opportunities for internal advancement. In addition, we continue to invest in our facilities and the equipment that is required to ensure we can provide a high-quality service to our clients. Recent new additions to our fleet of vehicles enables us to deploy the necessary teams and equipment to a growing range of project sites efficiently and will reduce the carbon footprint of our work, an important element of our ethos.

PBA is scheduled to connect to B4RN in Spring 2020 – the world's fastest rural broadband service, 20 times faster

than broadband in Leeds city centre! This, alongside our location adjacent to the vibrant market town of Settle and wonderful wildlife sites, places PBA in the ideal position to recruit talented ecologists and reach sites spread across the country with none of the city traffic jams.

Having occupied the ground floor of New Croft since 2017, PBA is taking on the remainder of the building from April. This expansion increases our office space and allows us to install a high-tech conference room. Such enhanced capabilities enable us to improve our ability to develop and deliver projects efficiently. Project outputs produced in collaborative group meetings will be digitised via a large screen interactive board to be shared instantaneously with clients. Videoconferencing facilities will remotely connect us and our inputs to projects, including environmental design, to our clients' teams.

The whole team is excited to continue the development of PBA Applied Ecology and look forward to sharing news of this growth in capabilities and our outreach work with you all – our fantastic community of clients, collaborators, colleagues and suppliers. We look forward to another successful and productive year of delivering high-quality projects across industrial, conservation and academic fields. We extend an open invitation to you - come and visit us here at PBA HQ. We would love to sit down for a cuppa, show you our facilities and discuss how PBA can help facilitate the delivery of projects that matter to you and your business in the future...

Contact PBA

**PBA Applied Ecology Ltd, New Croft, Stackhouse Lane,
Giggleswick, Settle, North Yorks., BD24 0DL**

T: 01729-822063 E: enquiries@pba-ecology.co.uk

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Caring for Rescued Bats

As well as conducting licensed bat surveys for planning permissions and applying for Natural England bat mitigation licenses, we also work with the North Lancashire Bat Group, to care for and rehabilitate injured bats.

PBA's registered bat carers respond to calls from members of the public who have found injured or grounded bats. The species of bat is identified, and the health and condition assessed. Where possible the bats are rehabilitated back to full health and released close to where they were found.



Whiskered bat in a temporary home at the PBA office



Constructionline
Gold Member

We are delighted to announce that PBA has recently achieved Level 3 Gold Standard with Constructionline - the UK's largest procurement and supply chain management service for the construction industry.

Constructionline collects, assesses and monitors standard company information through a process that is aligned to PAS 91:2013, the standardised pre-qualification questionnaire developed by BSI to reduce duplication within the construction industry. Their aim is to provide efficiency savings to public and private sector buyers and the construction industry as a whole by streamlining procurement procedures and improving the supply chain management processes by reducing risk, creating cost efficiencies and helping buyers.



The biennial Quarry Life Award competition, organised by Heidelberg Cement Group (Hanson's parent company), aims to raise the understanding of the biological value of quarry sites, both during and after extraction. PBA Director Paul Bradley was chosen to be one of only two externals on the UK Judging Panel.

Tice's Meadow Nature Reserve in Farnham, Surrey, formerly a sand and gravel quarry, was named as an international winner and claimed a €10,000 prize. *"The Tice's Meadow biodiversity trail makes it possible for anyone to learn about nature and get closer to wildlife while going for a walk around one of our former quarries,"* said Martin Crow, national sustainability manager at Hanson UK, who attended the awards ceremony in Brussels.

A biodiversity project carried out by a team from the University of South Wales has won the UK research section. The project, which looked at the value of translocating ancient woodland soils within quarried landscapes at Forest Wood quarry, Mid-Glamorgan, claimed the £4,400 first prize.



Daniel Cooper, chief executive officer of Hanson UK, who presented the awards, said: *"We recognise that our sites are a valuable natural resource and we are committed to maximising the benefits they can provide both for biodiversity and the local communities in which they are situated"*.

Supporting Local Sports



Over the last year, PBA has been very proud to support a number of local sports and community activities. We have again sponsored a home match of Settle Cricket Club and will be welcoming guests to join us for another fine afternoon of cricket at this most scenic ground this coming summer.

PBA has sponsored two Settle FC players and have also partnered with Giggleswick Parish Council to install two new sets of goal posts for the local community to use at Harrison Playing Fields in the village.

Following a successful launch last year, the Settle Half Marathon returns to Giggleswick on 23rd February 2020. The route runs out and back past PBA's offices and the organisers have added options of 10 mile and 10 km distances this year.



Cumbria Infrastructure Recovery Programme

Storm Desmond wreaked havoc across north-west England in December 2015, with Cumbria receiving a record 405 mm rainfall in 48 hours. The floods that followed damaged over 600 bridges and more than 2,500 km of carriageways – leading to a 4-year NEC-procured infrastructure recovery programme. Following receipt of funding from the Department for Transport, Cumbria County Council commenced a £120 million programme to repair, replace and add resilience to over 1200 individual bridge, carriageway and slope schemes across the county.

PBA was commissioned to carry out initial ecology screening assessments at more than 250 bridges across Cumbria. A systematic approach was developed to enable the required assessments to be undertaken efficiently and safely. Screening assessment reviewed the repair works that were required at each asset, and then visited each site checking for features of apparent or potential ecological constraint, including protected species and invasive non-native species.



Once the ecological surveys of the main bridge packages had been completed, PBA then worked to review contractors' method statements, provided input to EA/LLFA Environmental Permit applications, obtained the required Natural England protected species licenses where necessary, and provided ECoW/ACoW support during the repair works.

Where major assets were found to have been damaged, repairs were progressed either as smaller work packages or as stand-alone projects. PBA has recently completed an end-to-end commission providing ecological and environmental services throughout the £1.5M project to replace the flood damaged Ford Bridge at Burneside. This is a particularly sensitive site ecologically; the watercourse being an important part of the River Kent SAC and home to white-clawed crayfish and salmonids.

The Infrastructure Recovery Programme has also involved a number of major highways projects across Cumbria, where PBA has been engaged to provide a range of ecological services. At Grayrigg, north of Kendal, a massive slope collapse during Storm Desmond threatened the A685. At this site PBA's geomorphology capability was



commissioned to develop an options appraisal, topographical survey and detailed design and method statement for permanently realigning Thursgill Beck. PBA successfully obtained an LLFA Environmental Permit for works to create the new 150m long river channel which was completed in December 2019.

At Pooley Bridge near to the outfall from Ullswater, PBA is currently commissioned to carry out a comprehensive scope of ecological and environmental services in respect of the £5M scheme to provide a permanent replacement for the 300-year-old stone bridge that was washed away in 2015. Installation of the new bridge will require deployment of one of Europe's largest mobile cranes. The new Pooley Bridge is scheduled to be open before July 2020, in time for the busy summer tourist season.

Throughout our works to assist the Cumbria Infrastructure Recovery Programme our teams have maintained the highest possible standards; not a single reportable health & safety incident has been recorded over almost 4 years and 250+ project sites across Cumbria. All completed projects have also been delivered in line with the permissions, permits and licenses that were issued and in line with the expectations and standards of the environmental regulators.



We are delighted to have been chosen to provide much of the required ecology and environmental support over these four years. Our current and future clients will benefit from the unique knowledge and experience that PBA has accrued throughout this diverse programme of major civil engineering works.

Recent Arrivals



Anna joined PBA as an assistant ecologist in the summer of 2018 after completing a BSc in Ecology and Conservation Biology at the University of Sheffield. As part

of her degree she spent a year working at an ecological consultancy in Nottingham so came with industry experience which she has applied to projects at PBA. After a successful first year Anna was promoted to Project Ecologist. Anna's spare time is spent exploring the Dales and further afield on her mountain and road bikes. She is also enjoying her second season with Kirkby Lonsdale hockey club.

Dan worked with PBA throughout his PhD and joined the team in spring 2019 following the completion of his doctorate at



University College London. Dan has always held an interest in ecology, studying Zoology at undergraduate level and attaining a first class MSc in Aquatic Resource Management. Dan's particular passion is crayfish, and he has worked with PBA to generate high quality research, which has been presented internationally. Outside of work, Dan is a keen musician, and has joined Settle Swing and Brass bands.

Lawrence joined PBA in 2019 after the submission of his PhD at the University of Leeds, which addressed river responses



to extreme hydrological events in natural streams in SE Alaska. Prior to this, he

completed an MSc in Conservation, achieving a Distinction and collaborating with PBA on his thesis. Previously Lawrence spent a year watching wildlife and exploring remote regions across Europe, before working for the Cumbria Wildlife Trust as an Assistant Reserves Officer. In his free time Lawrence enjoys an active and outdoor lifestyle.

Penalties for River Pollution Offences

The total sum of fines that have been handed down by UK courts since 2010 for water pollution offences now totals well over £50 Million. Here are just a few examples of recent court cases.

Thames Water has been hit with a fine of £607,000 for releasing millions of litres of raw sewage into a stream in Maidenhead, which killed hundreds of fish. Severn Trent Water has also been fined £500,000 for discharging thousands of gallons of raw sewage from its sewer network onto land at Sutton Park, West Midlands. The Environment Agency brought a prosecution against Weetabix resulting in a fine £140,000 for polluting the River Isle with thousands of litres of diesel fuel and putting at risk fish and plant life. The clean-up operation cost Weetabix a further £500,000.

Large civil engineering projects can be especially vulnerable to incurring huge fines for silt pollution to nearby watercourses. The contractor building the new Aberdeen bypass was issued with a £280,000 penalty for polluting two of Scotland's most important salmon rivers. In Wales, NRW have announced that a company in Flintshire has been fined £32,000 following two incidents of silt pollution on local watercourses. It was found that the operator of Parry's Quarry in Alltarni did not have the adequate pollution prevention methods in place.

Avoiding pollution incidents is much cheaper and much less stressful than allowing your activities to pollute a watercourse. We are very proud that, at sites where we are deployed, no PBA client has ever had to face a prosecution for water pollution offences.

Movember!

As a busy year drew to a close, six members of the PBA team were still hard at work during November – growing a fine set of 'taches' to raise important funds for a number of men's health charities.

Like many, we have been touched by some of the issues targeted by the 'Movember' initiative. We couldn't be prouder of these fine achievements, and the money that has been raised - for research for prostate and testicular cancer and raising awareness of men's mental health.



Career Pathway Programme

PBA has introduced a new Career Pathway Programme. This enables up to two local A-level students, with a strong interest in natural sciences, to benefit from a structured programme of paid employment in summer vacations. Students may join for just one year or choose to continue with the programme for up to five years. For those who successfully complete

the programme and achieve suitable university qualifications, PBA has committed to offering full-time permanent employment and potential career progression.



Anna and Alex have now joined Paul as authorised STEM Ambassadors for the North Yorkshire Area. In November, they attended a networking event to meet local teachers and other STEM ambassadors, and to learn about how PBA can encourage more young people into STEM careers.