

The **co-operative** loan fund borrower case study.

Ecosulis Ltd:

Conserving nature, protecting species

Ecosulis Ltd, is a business based in Bath that provides specialist consultancy and contracting services in ecological and environmental assessments, protected species work, arboriculture and biodiversity management. It also offers tree surgery, landscaping, ecological mitigation works and environmental contracting services.

As well as a head office in Bath, the company also has regional offices in Richmond, Monmouth and Chester and a combined resource of more than 70 staff across the UK.

Since it was established 16 years ago, Ecosulis Ltd has supplied its services to land owners, land managers, engineers and developers, and built a reputation for excellence. Projects it's undertaken on behalf of its clients include:

- Undertaking a stag beetle presence/absence study of a site scheduled for residential development on behalf of McClean Homes. The study found that the site was a breeding ground for the species - which is listed as a Priority Species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (2003). As a result of the work by Ecosulis the stag beetle's habitat is still on the site, even after residential development, and the landowners have been given instructions on how to ensure that it continues to remain there.
- Involvement in the pre-development works for great crested newts, including the restoration and management of derelict ponds, creation of new ponds and installation of amphibian fencing and tunnels on a site intended for residential development in Chelmsford. Ecosulis also undertook a studies of the site of other species including badgers, otters, water voles, bats, hedgerows, breeding and wintering birds, aquatic plants, invertebrates and reptiles. Data from the studies have been used to design mitigation at a landscape level.

Despite its success, the future of the business became uncertain when its then current owners decided to retire. To avoid the closure however,

advice on business succession was sought from the Wales Co-operative Centre.

In January 2007, the business finally became 100% employee-owned thanks to financial support from a combination of sources, including The Co-operative Loan Fund. The succession has not only protected the jobs of its staff at its head office, it's also ensured that Ecosulis Ltd will continue to provide its valuable services and protect and nurture biodiversity.

For more information about Ecosulis Ltd and its work, visit www.ecosulis.co.uk or call 01225 874040.

For more information about The Co-operative Loan Fund please contact the fund managers, Cooperative & Community Finance, on 0117 916 6750 , email info@co-opandcommunityfinance.coop or visit www.co-operativeloanfund.co.uk

