

EBNet Newsletter August 2026

New

Biofilm Microenvironments workshop report

An EBNet-supported workshop on *Biofilm Microenvironments*, coordinated by [Dr Joe Weaver](#), aimed to develop a shared definition of 'microenvironment', explore the potential if such microenvironments were perfectly controllable and measurable, and identify gaps between current knowledge and the idealised scenario. The event also assessed existing and complementary skills and established priorities for bridging gaps and driving innovation. Outputs are now available on the [Resources](#) page in the form of a [Position Statement](#), [Outcomes & Recommendations](#), full [Report](#) and [Executive Summary](#).

WasteEng 2026 Keynote

[Dr Meredith Barr](#), who leads EBNet's [Biochar WG](#), gave a Keynote Lecture at [WasteEng2026](#) on *Scoping the Potential of Integrating Thermal, Thermochemical, and Biological Conversion Technologies*. The presentation outlined the outcomes of the joint [BBNet/EBNet](#) workshop she ran last year on [Integration of thermal and bio-conversion technologies](#). Our thanks to London SouthBank University and the [Supergen Bioenergy Hub](#) SHARE Network for funding Meredith's travel to WasteEng2026, while EBNet is out of travel grants. It looks as if she may be joining the WasteEng Organising Committee, so watch out for more action in this exciting field.

Biorefinery actions

A lot of activity in biorefinery and related areas at present. Late July saw a meeting between four EBNet WGs to discuss the potential for cross-WG collaboration in this area. Dr Yue Zhang, who with [Dr Luca Alibardi](#) co-Leads our AF WG, has been busy commenting on outputs from IEA Bioenergy's [Task 42](#) and the [European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform](#). EBIC and EBNet ECRs have highlighted this topic in the forthcoming EBIC conference. The [CBE-JU](#) also has a series of major calls open in this area at present (see Funding below).

Dr Angela Bywater in the News...

Warmest congratulations from EBNet to our former Network co-Manager Angela Bywater, awarded a PhD for her thesis on *On-farm anaerobic digestion viability: policy perspectives and operational opportunities*. Much of the work was carried out while working for EBNet and our predecessor the [Anaerobic Digestion Network](#) Phase I NIBB. Angie also maintains her staunch support for the [AD WG](#) - as seen in her recent [reflections](#) for WG members and others on attending the World Biogas Association Summit 2026.



Spotlight on...

Do you have news to share with other members? Email us details if you want a shout-out in the next update, or on the [News page](#)

CIWM 'Think Again' presidential campaign

CIWM's [Think Again](#) campaign is challenging employers, educators and industry leaders to rethink how the sector talks about careers, attracts talent and opens doors for the next generation.

The aim is for participants review the language used to describe the waste sector, and actively showcase the breadth of careers and opportunities available. This isn't just a matter of squeamishness: lack of public understanding and failure to communicate a vision has real effects on recruitment, funding and performance. CIWM's [research](#) shows that over 50% of UK employers in the sector are struggling to fill critical roles, from drivers and operatives to technical specialists, environmental professionals and regulators. Many of the issues identified apply across the Env Biotech sector - see e.g. our pieces on [What is Environmental Biotechnology?](#) and [The Glamour Factor](#). EBNet strongly supports this initiative and encourages members to [sign up](#).

Making Microbes Matter

The [Making Microbes Matter](#) project is using metagenomics to analyse and track microbial communities in wastewater with a view to improving understanding and enhancing treatment performance. The project is supported by the [Water Innovation Fund](#), and brings together four major UK water companies (United Utilities, Yorkshire, Northumbrian and Anglian Water) with Newcastle University's [Prof Tom Curtis](#) and [Dr Ben Allen](#) – also known to EBNet members as co-Leads of our [N2O WG](#). Great to see these ideas gaining currency across the water and wastewater industry. For a brief piece on this see also: [How metagenomics could transform wastewater treatment](#)

PFAS Action

As usual a hive of activity PFAS. [CL:AIRE](#) has published new PFAS site profiles and a new technical bulletin. [Better Water 4 All](#) hosted an excellent webinar showcasing [PFAS biotransformation](#). [CIWEM](#) is running two policy-focused webinars on *PFAS: From Source to Solution* on 21 & 29 Sept 2026 from 12-13:00 UK. These explore from initial input to chemical route and management options as these substances infiltrate the water system and spread to freshwater and coastal environments.

Biofilm Create Competition

The National Biofilms Innovation Centre ([NBIC](#)) is now inviting entries for its 2026 **Biofilm Create!** Photography and Art Competition. This year for the first time the competition is open to entrants from anywhere in the world. Categories include Photography, Art (including painting, sculpture, textiles, dance poetry, short stories, music and more) and a Special Theme: Showcasing the Impact of Biofilms in Industrial Settings.

[CIWEM Special Issue on microplastics](#)

Don't miss the special issue on [Microplastics](#) hosted by the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management ([CIWEM](#)), with a deadline of 31 Aug 2026. CIWEM's [Water and Environment Journal](#) is open to submissions from both members and non-members on key issues and research themes across the field.

Events

Online

[BBIA The Science of Biodegradability: Testing, Verification and Compliance](#) - 10 Sept 2026, 12-13:00 UK

[Elemental: Collaborative Ethics webinar](#) - 14 Sept 2026, 14-15:00 UK

[BBIA Unlocking Value Chains in Bio-Based Innovation](#) - 22 Sept 2026, 12-13:00 UK

And don't miss [PhycoClub](#)'s regular [PhycoFridays](#) on the last Friday of each month: details for August 2026 not yet available

In person

[Better Water 4 All ECR Conference](#) - 3-4 Sept 2026, University of Surrey

[NBIC: Biofilms Beyond Healthcare: Industry Challenges, Solutions and Collaboration](#) - 8 Sept 2026, by application

[Microbiology Society: Biotic Control of Bacteria](#) – 8 Sept 2026, Nottingham

[IWA Wetland systems for Water Pollution control](#) - 13-17 Sept 2026, Chania, Greece

[EBIC ECR Conference: Engineering Biology for Environmental solutions](#) - 16-17 Sept 2026, Southampton

[Contamination & Land Remediation Expo](#) - 16-17 Sept 2026, NEC Birmingham

[Resource & Waste Management Expo](#) - 16-17 Sept 2026, NEC Birmingham

[Water, Wastewater & Environmental Management Expo](#) - 16-17 Sept 2026, NEC Birmingham

[IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition](#) - 4-8 Oct 2026, Glasgow

[Elemental: The Future of Engineering Biology in Metal Recovery and Processing](#) - 7 Oct 2026, London

[8th Eurasia Waste Management Symposium](#) - 26-28 Oct 2026, Cappadocia, Turkiye

[European Biosolids & Bioresources Conference 2026](#) - 17-18 Nov 2026, Telford

[11th International Symposium on Energy from Biomass and Waste](#) - 23-25 Nov 2026, Venice, Italy.

Abstracts **3 Sept 2026**

[IWA Diffuse Pollution and Eutrophication](#) - 24-27 Nov 2026 Vienna, Austria

[IWA Global Sanitation Summit](#) - 25-27 Jan 2027, Cape town, South Africa

Funding

Selected funding opportunities are highlighted below. Find more at [UKRI Funding](#).

Funding

[JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) - 28 Aug 2026

[IBioIC Scale-up Accelerator](#) - 1 Sept 2026

[Supergen Energy Networks: ECR Seedcorn Fund](#) - 7 Sept 2026

[Royal Society University Research Fellowships](#) - 9 Sept 2026

[Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking](#) - 22 Sept 2026 and after

[EBIC Flexible Funding 2026](#) (with an EBIC partner) - 9 Oct 2026

[UK Bioimaging Access Fund](#) - 30 Nov 2026

[Elemental Hub Business Interaction vouchers](#) - 27 Nov 2026 or before

[EPSRC Network Grant](#) - open

Exchange & Travel

[JSPS Invitational Fellowships 2027](#) - 28 Aug 2026

[Processes ECR Travel award](#) - 31 Oct 2026

[UKRI Collaborate with researchers in Brazil](#) - open

[EPSRC overseas travel grant](#) - open

[EPSRC working with overseas scientists](#): Luxembourg, Brazil, Germany, US - open

[BBSRC International Travel Award Scheme for the Biological Sciences](#) - open

Jobs and training

Jobs

[Research Assistant Biofilter Taste-&-Odour Informed Design](#) - 18 Aug 2026, University of Glasgow

[Research Fellow in Bioprocess Sustainability Evaluation](#) - 22 Aug 2026, Elemental Hub, UCL

[Assistant Professor in Environmental Engineering](#) - 27 Aug 2026, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

[Professor of Sustainability and Environmental Engineering](#) - 2 Sept 2026, UCL

[Research Scientist in AI-Driven Enzyme Engineering \(KTP Associate\)](#) - 2 Sept 2026, Cranfield University

PhDs

[Engineering Next-Generation Biofiltration through Single-Cell Technologies and AI for Sustainable Water Treatment](#) - 24 Aug 2026, University of Glasgow

[Process options for hazardous chemicals treatment at point-of-entry to sewer](#) - 26 Aug 2026, Cranfield University

[Physiology and Ecology of Methanogens](#) - 28 Aug 2026, EPFL Lausanne, Switzerland

[Investigating selective pressure for AMR under environmental factors](#) - 7 Sept 2026, University of Manchester/Peking University

Training

[AICatalyst2026: AI in the Biosciences Training Conference](#) - 4 Sept 2026, York

[IBioIC: Advanced Downstream Bioprocessing](#) - 8-10 Sept 2026, Edinburgh

[Wastewater Treatment](#) - 16 Sept 2026, Aquaenviro online

[Odour Management, Monitoring, Control, Process Emissions & BAT](#) - 24 Sept 2026, Aquaenviro online

[Bioprocessing Entrepreneurship Scale-up Technologies \(BEST\) Residential Challenge](#) - 2-6 Nov 2026, Durham, **apply now**

See also [BB-REG-Net](#), [CIWEM](#), [CIWM](#) and [CL:AIRE](#) for online training and eLearning opportunities

Publications

[Physical and biological fate of protozoan \(oo\) cysts in slow sand filtration: A review](#). Bretagne, S.L., Chipps, M., Harris, J. and **Hassard, F.**, 2026. *Science of the Total Environment*, 1031, p.181810.

[Isolation of a single *Serratia fonticola* strain from interstage samples in a drinking water treatment plant: Genomic insights and floc-shielding effects during chlorination](#). Exton, B., Gutierrez, V.C., Gave, R., Montgomery, L., Banks, J., Whitehead, N., Jarvis, P. and **Hassard, F.**, 2026. *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety*, 316, p.120147.

[Origami-paper microfluidics device for rapid diagnostics in low-resource settings](#). Pan, Y., Hui, Q. and Yang, Z., 2026. *Device*, 4(5).

[Anaerobic digestion site-wide optimisation and decision-making: An industrial perspective and review](#). Murali, R., Bywater, A., Dolat, M., Dekhici, B., Zarei, M., Hilton, L., Sadhukhan, J., Zhang, D. and Short, M., 2026. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 226, p.116402.

And don't miss:

[Two new UKWIR reports on faecal indicator die-off and GHG emissions estimation](#)

[Two new IEA Task 37 Case Stories available](#)

Still here?



Conversations within EBNet, and ongoing work on the Survey carried out earlier this year, indicates a full range of views across our membership, from those who embrace genetic engineering of microbes to those who abhor it, and similarly with the use of artificial intelligence tools.

So a [story](#) this week on the use of AI to design synthetic viruses capable of reproduction in a host cell may be your best dream or worst nightmare. The designer bacteriophage were able to kill *E. coli* - an important capability: the role of bacteriophage in wastewater treatment is an area of interest to several EBNet researchers. Sounds like the perfect plot for a 2026 [Coccus Pocus](#) story! For more on this story see [Generative design of bacteriophages with genome language models](#) | [Science](#).

See EBNet's [News](#) pages for more on Events, Funding and Publications - or use the tags to follow [Working Groups](#) and other topics.

And where else to look?

There is a growing range of UK Networks and Hubs relevant to Environmental Biotechnology. The six UKRI Engineering Biology Mission Hubs include the Environmental Biotechnology Innovation Centre ([EBIC](#)), which builds on and expands some of EBNet's themes. Two other Mission Hubs, [Elemental](#) and [P3EB](#), also have an environmental biotech focus. The Better Water for All Network+ ([BW4All](#)) is another direct successor to EBNet. EBNet members are active in the Global Center for Sustainable bioproducts ([GCSB](#)) and [C-Loop](#) Hub, while [NBIC](#) continues to support research, knowledge exchange and development in biofilms.



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