

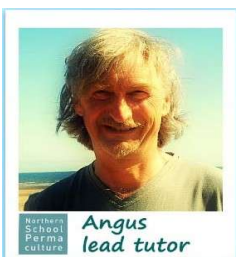


Studying Permaculture Design with the Northern School

At the Northern School of Permaculture we aim to provide you with:

- A focus on creative thinking and problem solving (no technical background required)
- Teaching from skilled practitioners and experienced tutors who are ready to provide you with advice and guidance to help with your own projects
- Straightforward “northern hospitality”
- Freedom from state sponsored education – and there is no “homework”, although we do provide you with guided learning resources for each module should you wish to consolidate your learning
- Continuous (during and after the course) access to a library of online handouts
- No compulsory activities, you can always “opt out”

Northern School contact details



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Permaculture Design Course with the Northern School

The PDC with the Northern School of Permaculture is internationally certified by the PRI (Permaculture Research Institute in Australia). The 72 hour PDC is based on the original curriculum designed by Bill Mollison, it is a classroom based course where you learn the theory of permaculture design although there will be plenty of opportunities for practical activities and exercises during the course delivery.

In order to complete the course and apply the knowledge you have acquired, you will work on a group or individual design project. Once you complete the course, you will be awarded the international PDC certificate.

No prior knowledge of permaculture is required. If you do wish to do some pre-reading, Rosemary Morrow's *Earth User's Guide to Permaculture* (2nd Edition) is a good place to start,

What to bring with you to the course?

An open mind and a clear head are usually Angus' main requirements. In addition bring a book and pens or a laptop/ portable device for taking notes if you wish to do so.

Meals (vegetarian and vegan) are provided, also a selection of teas and coffee but if there are any other particular drinks or snacks that you cannot do without please bring them with you.

For outdoor and leisure activities, you should also have outdoor gear, including suitable boots and perhaps a spare blanket, shawl or poncho.



What to bring if you are staying overnight?

If you are travelling by car, it will be a big help if you can bring your own bedding – duvet or sleeping bag and pillows. There are platforms to sleep on, but to be on the safe side, you could bring a sleeping mat, too. If you are travelling by public transport, please check your needs with us to make sure you will be comfortable.

There are showers next to the bunk barn, please bring towels and suitable footwear.

There are several optional items (such as a torch) that might help with your stay – we will send you a suggested list once you have paid your deposit.



Travel to the Gathering Fields

The Gathering Fields is at Swainshead Hall Farm near the head of the River Wyre in the beautiful Forest of Bowland. The area is quiet with stunning views from the hillside and farmyard. There are no major transport routes running through - the easiest way to get there is by car through Dolphinholme (near Junction 33 of the M6 / A6). The nearest towns are Lancaster and Garstang.

The postcode is LA2 9DN. GPS 53.970224,-2.704318

Joining instructions with directions will be sent nearer the date.



Course schedule

The course runs over 12 days. We start on Monday 4th September at 10.00am. Finish on Friday 15th September at 4.00pm. We are allowing space in the programme for free time with the option to do off-site visits and tours of the surrounding area. Full programme to be published nearer the date.



Course topics

Design – good design is about doing things more elegantly and economically. Permaculture Design concentrates on the way things function. We follow the principle that in Nature elegant forms arise from the things that function well. This is the heart of the course. We study ethics, design strategies, methods, techniques and tools in a gentle introduction to the art and craft of permaculture design.

Natural patterns and systems – with billions of years of experience in creating systems that work well, Nature is a powerful teacher and a source of constant inspiration to permaculture designers. Understanding nature and the underlying way our world works is of great benefit to permaculture designers. We will explore the uses of natural patterns and how to apply them when designing.

We further explore in depth the workings of these natural resources essential to life on Earth:

Soils – most of the living things that we depend on have sprung up out of the soil. Our soils are a precious resource. And we learn how to go about building and regenerating them.

Water – is vital for life and is another resource that we must take care of and use wisely.

Forests, trees and the way that they use energy, make a huge contribution to the health and stability of the planet.

Climate – permaculture designers can move across climate zones and still work effectively, as long as they have access to local knowledge. Sometimes local conditions produce a climate that is like that in another zone, thousands of miles away. We will look at climatic factors and, include micro-climates.

Human activities:

Cultivation – the growing of plants of all types, including aquaculture and silvaculture.

Earthworks – Throughout our history, humans have worked on the landscape to enhance growing areas, manage water and produce access routes. We will look at one off investments of energy in earthworks and their use in earth repair.

Society – Social and cultural factors are traditionally the main barrier to the transition to a more sustainable world. We will examine human nature and our impact on the planet, through some key principles of healthy settlements, cities and their hinterlands, human organisation, right livelihood, business and finance.

We use many examples on the course and case studies to illustrate the course topics.

Why do we do permaculture design?

Permaculture Design is a system set up with the following functions in mind

- conserve and replenish natural resources
- increase our human energy and well-being
- optimise the use of free, abundant energy sources (sun, wind, rain...)
- make the best use of specific site and climatic conditions
- arrange design elements in the most productive way
- integrate people into a supportive, productive landscape
- support the development of sustainable and diverse communities

We seek to provide a secure and sustainable place for all things on this Earth.

Our students and Northern School community of permaculture design practitioners and teachers share the ethic of care and respect for all the living systems on the Earth, together with a desire to put right any damage caused in the past. People of all backgrounds and beliefs arrive at this point where you are now sharing a willingness to create a better world. Permaculture design gives us the tools to do it efficiently.

There are no other requirements or qualifications needed at the start of this journey. The course is not “academic” but it does involve learning about ideas as well as objects, and the ability to reflect and think creatively. If you are a more practical person, you can use the opportunity to be more reflective (don’t just do something - sit there!). If you are more of an ideas person, then this is the chance to start putting those ideas into practice.

Whatever your background and experience studying Permaculture Design will enrich your life and equip you to develop effective, holistic strategies for dealing with change and challenges.

Physical ability is not important for taking part in the course. The practical side of the course is about doing design work and we don’t have to do much work outdoors. We do try to get fresh air and sunshine whenever we can though and we will do some observation walks and moderate occasional outdoor activity.



A brief introduction to Permaculture Design

When we look carefully at nature, patterns common to all natural systems emerge. Nature proceeds much more efficiently than human society, there is better use of energy and no waste. Permaculture design applies these patterns to the development of sustainable human settlements. The aim is the harmonious integration of landscape and people while providing them with food, energy, shelter and other needs, both material and non-material, in a sustainable way.

To begin to design, consciously, all aspects of our complex human settlements is a necessary yet straightforward task.

Millions of us find our lives disrupted by poor design - architecture, transport systems, service delivery, computer systems, even the delivery of food onto our plates. Through good design we can develop practical, achievable solutions to the problems that threaten our own well-being, the problems in our neighbourhoods, loss of biodiversity and the overall planetary degradation.

Armed with the permaculture design tools, techniques, frameworks, ethics and knowledge we can even begin to repair and reverse the damage that has been done. Through sound design work we can work around the erratic weather patterns and global warming caused by climate change and explore efficient ways to deal with social disruption, we can react positively to all the changes facing us.

Don't tell too many people though because doing permaculture design is fun. And we cannot tolerate people having fun while they are working, can we? ;-) People come to learn and do Permaculture design when they are ready, when they feel the inner call so let them find this gem hidden in plain sight when their eyes are finally seeing beyond looking. We are happy to be here to guide you on this life changing journey of becoming a permaculture designer.

Your notes

The origins of Permaculture Design

Permaculture is about designing systems based on the principles of the natural world. The philosophy behind permaculture is one, of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and careful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them; and allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions.

“Permaculture Design is a system of assembling conceptual, material and strategic components in a pattern which functions to benefit life in all its forms.”

Permaculture started out as “permanent agriculture”, as a response to the destructive power of modern agricultural practices kickstarted by the ironically termed “green revolution”.

“Permaculture is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, the stability and the resilience of natural ecosystems.”

“without permanent agriculture there is no possibility of a stable social order”

Permaculture quickly moved to recognize that it is in human culture that the real problems lie. The problems are not just destruction of soils and pollution of waters but also our use of energy and material resources. In colder climates, a large part of permaculture design work needs to be directed towards buildings and our towns and cities. Without a permanence in our culture, there is no possibility of a stable social order.

“we can build a global, interdependent and cooperative body of people involved in ethical land and resource use, whose teaching is founded on research, but is also locally available everywhere, and locally demonstrable in many thousands of small enterprises covering the whole range of human endeavours, from primary production to quaternary systems management, from domestic nutrition and economy to a global network of small financial systems. Such work is urgent, important and necessary and we cannot leave it to the whims of government (always short term) or industry as we know it today...”

from “Permaculture - A Designer’s Manual”. Bill Mollison. 1988

Your notes