

Sustainability Forum – Meeting Notes

Held on: 4th of June 2024 – 13:00 – 15:00 - TEAMS

Attendance & Apologies

Attendees: Paulo Cruz (Chair – Head of Operational Sustainability), Kärt Tori (Sustainability Coordinator), Derry Wyllie (Student Communications), Therese Fraser (Head of Campus Services), Kathleen Campbell (ARC Manager), Mary Daly (Strategy & Planning), Alan Chim (Head of Asset Management), Karin Helwig (SCEBE), Sara MacLean (Students' Association), Greg O'Donnell (Conference & Events).

Apologies: Richard McAvoy, Gillian Hunter, Yvonne Dempsie, Stuart Martin, Yvonne McVey, Nicholas Healy, David Halliday, Martin Eilidh, Wilfred Obi.

Notes from the previous meeting

Available from the University's [sustainability pages](#).

Updates – Head of Operational Sustainability (HOS)

1. Reported on the energy saving project with the global engineering company. The project was approved by Finance & General Purposes Committee and our focus has been on mobilising and supporting its execution. The Project centres around five opportunities that will: enhance visibility of where energy is used on-campus (to a building-level); cut energy use with enhanced building controls (with a new building management system - BMS); improve efficiency of ventilation systems and heat distribution network; and maximise the electricity output from the University's Energy Centre. Work started in mid-April and is progressing well. You can [sign-up here for the project updates](#).
2. Linked to the above project is the appointment of an Energy Management role and we are delighted to advise that the recruitment process is underway (with applications closing today – 04/06/24).
3. Since the last SF meeting we have completed two projects with students in SCEBE, both on waste and recycling and part of [the University's Circular Economy Plan](#). The first was a waste composition analysis with 3rd year Environmental Management Students that shows that in there are significant amounts of food in the general waste bins in the library and as a result, the University will be trialling dedicated food wastes bins on the ground floor. The second is a recycling game called [the Campus Cleanup](#), developed by students in the Applied Gaming programme. The game is designed to help students and staff understand what can and cannot be recycled at the University. The game will be available on the University's webpage and will part of a recycling challenge during freshers' week.
4. The University's [Sustainable Travel Plan](#) and the [Climate Conscious Travel & Expenses Policy](#) have been recognised as examples of good practice to cut emissions from business flights in a recent review of the Public Sector by [Transform Scotland](#) (Scotland's Alliance for sustainable transport). The Plan and Policy targeted a decrease in emissions from business flights from the pre-pandemic average of 1,500 tCO₂e per year to below 1,400 tCO₂e by 2025-26 and were supported by a behaviour change campaign (the #myclimatepledge). The Policy and behaviour change campaign have had a significant impact on emissions from business flights, which in

2022-23 were below 990 tCO₂e (surpassing the 2025-26 target by 34%). To celebrate this achievement, this initiative has been put forward as the University's entry for the 2024 Green Gown Awards under the "Creating Impact" category. The Transform Scotland [Fight or Flight 2024 Report is available here](#).

Updates – Sustainability Coordinator (SC)

5. Reported on the current status of the Fairtrade Audit. Evidence for the Fairtrade award was submitted on 19th of April. The student volunteer auditors have now completed their audit and we should hear back from the Fairtrade Foundation in the beginning of July regarding to the audit outcomes. Once the Sustainability Team has the results, Fairtrade Steering Group would hold a meeting to give an overview of the audit outcomes.
6. The Sustainability Team (together with GSBS) have facilitated 3 successful cohorts of Carbon Literacy Training (CLT) for the University Students and Staff since February 2024. The total number of participants is 40. Currently planning for facilitating online CLT for London campus. Those who are interested in future CLT sessions, can [sign-up here for the waiting list](#).
7. In March, [the University planted new oak trees next](#) to the entrance gates. The old leylandii was cut down to make space for the oak trees and to extend the beech hedge alongside the fence. The oak tree planting was part of our biodiversity enhancement initiatives within the University's Biodiversity Plan. Oak trees replaced leylandii as they offer a greater benefit for the local biodiversity by [a] offering habitat and food source (oak leaves) for Winter Moths which in turn [b] are an important food source for Great Tits and Blue Tits that are known to nest on campus.
8. New Biodiversity project to record species diversity on campus via the iNaturalist app has been launched and everyone is welcomed to participate. The instructions on how to join the project are available from [the Sustainability Biodiversity pages](#). Campus BioBlitz (citizen science project) will take place from 22/07/24 – 26/07/24, including 2 introduction sessions to the project and using the iNaturalist app. The BioBlitz event will celebrate the World Nature Conservation Day on 28th of July. Further information on the event will be available from the [Sustainability's Events & Campaigns page](#).
9. The University also took part of the [No Mow May campaign](#) during the month of May where certain lawn areas were left uncut to allow grass and wildflowers grow. The No Mow May aim was to enhance biodiversity by allowing flowering plants to get established and provide nectar for pollinators and invertebrates. In addition, [11 ducklings hatched on the University campus](#) in the end of April. The mother and the ducklings were spotted on making their way towards the Milton and the mother with the ducklings were safely transferred to the Claypits Nature Reserve.
10. The Sustainability Team has now started recruiting for Travel Advisors (TA) for the 2024-25 academic year. TA's role is to provide students and staff with sustainable travel options (as well as money saving tips) Last year TA's spoke to over 1000 people about their options for more sustainable and cheaper commuting. The [applications are open](#) until 23rd of June 2024.
11. New [Sustainability Newsletter](#) as part of the University's [Student & Staff Engagement Plan \(S3EP\)](#) was launched in March 2024. We currently have 136 subscribers.

Updates – Others

12. A. Chim gave an update on the Estates Net Zero Carbon (NZC) project which will be incorporated into the University's Master Plan. The NZC will look into existing space utilisation and is likely carried out in 3 phases: [1] assessing the current space and its use; [2] improving the use of existing space; [3] retrofitting (achieving [EnerPhit standard](#) and utilising renewables). William Harley building will potentially be the key starting point for retrofitting. The 1st iteration of the Master Plan should take place by December 2024 and already has executive support.
13. A. Chim reported on the Caledonian Court Phase 2 refurbishment project continuation in summer 2024 which will see three new blocks being refurbished. During the C. Court refurbishment project in summer 2023, electric panel heaters were installed to replace storage heaters. However, the electric panel heaters were identified to use significantly more energy. Within the new blocks being refurbished during summer 2024, modern storage heaters will be used to ensure commitment to sustainability and campus decarbonisation.
14. A. Chim also informed on the successful completion of the Annie Lennox 2nd and 8th floor refurbishment project that incorporated sustainability principles whenever possible such as the use of upcycled furniture and LED lighting. The upcoming refurbishment project of CEE building will see the ground floor being redesigned into 3 new classrooms and 3 computer labs. The project will take place over summer 2024 and is estimated to be complete by September 2024.
15. S. MacLean said that the Students' Association is currently in the progress of the [Green Impact audit](#) and they are aiming for the excellence award, 5th year running. Audit results should come within the next few weeks. In addition, new uniform recycling project has been set up by the Students' Association to help SHLSH students to donate and recycle their placement uniforms for the purpose of reuse by other students.
16. M. Daly reported that the [THE Impact Rankings](#) results should be out next week. In 2023 the University ranked 101-200 for 4 SDG's.

Planned Activity – HOS

17. Organising the [campus BioBlitz event](#) in July (**22/07 - 26/07**) to celebrate the World Nature Conservation Day on 28th of July. You can sign-up to the BioBlitz [introduction sessions here](#).
18. Currently preparing for the People and Planet University League assessment that will take place from **8th of July – 23rd of August 2024**.
19. Starting to plan the Freshers Week & the Fairtrade Fortnight activities for September 2024.
20. HOS is in the talks with academics from SCEBE to explore the potential of building a pond on campus to further enhance biodiversity and support the Biodiversity Plan initiatives.
21. University's internal auditors recommended that the University review its sustainability governance arrangements. One proposal being considered is a body with direct link to UPRG that will have oversight for the University's various sustainability plan and targets. HOS will provide further updates/consultation as appropriate.

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22. S. MacLean asked if the Energy Saving/Building Management project (BMS) will result in a room level regulation of temperature. HOS responded that at the moment this is not possible on a room level, but only floor level. In future the BMS has the potential to be developed into a room level monitoring system by adding more sensors.
23. K. Campbell asked if there are any dates set for closing the ARC due to the BMS project. HOS responded that this will be informed in due time.

Date of Next Meeting

2nd of October 2024 – 13:00-14:00 – TEAMS