Biodiversity Plan – Implementation Document

This is the Implementation Document for GCU's Biodiversity Plan 2023 (approved by GCU's University Planning & Resourcing Group on 11th May 2023). It is a working document and will be updated as and when required. Changes will be documented in the Change Log included after the table with the proposed measures. GCU's Head of Operational Sustainability has ownership of this document and all enquiries should be sent to (in the first instance) sustainability@gcu.ac.uk.

Date: 11 April 2023
UPRG Approval: 11th May 2023
Version Number: 1.2
Author: P. Cruz (Head of Operational Sustainability)

Ref.:	Biodiversity Intervention	Theme	Delivery/Rationale	Target(s)	Output(s) (2029-30)	Delivery Partners	Additional Resources	Progress Status
BP_M01	Understand biodiversity on campus	Metrics	Identify simple methodologies for baselining and tracking (quantity and quality) biodiversity on campus. Likely that methodologies will be thematic (e.g. Green Infrastructure Index, Butterfly counts etc) and citizen science orientated.	[1] Monitoring procedures in place by June 2023. [2] Initial baseline by/from Sept 2023. [3] Triennial review of biodiversity (2026 and 2029).	[a] Monitoring Procedures [b] Report with baseline of biodiversity on campus [c] Triennial biodiversity surveys and reports.	Volunteers and student projects (SCEBE)	None.	[1-2] In progress. [3] Not started
BP_M02	Understand impact of site's industrial legacy.	Metrics, Engagement	The University is on previously industrialised land. Develop student projects to understand potential impact of this legacy. Subjects to be explored with academic leads.	[4] 1+ biodiversity related student project per academic year (from 2024-25).	[a] Short presentation/briefing note on topic researched (annual as appropriate).	EMS/Chemistry programme projects (SCEBE)	None	
BP_M03	Map interventions	Metrics	Create a series of maps/plans to locate the various interventions. Sub plans to be created for specific areas where necessary (e.g. to inform grass cutting regimes).	[5] Map(s) with biodiversity interventions by Sept 2023.	[a] Maps of biodiversity on-campus.		None	Grass cutting regime mapped.
BP_M04	Contribute to soil health	Intervention	The industrial heritage of GCU's site means that soils are unlikely to be of particularly good quality. A series of measures, such as spreading leaf mould or grass cycling (where cut grass is left in-situ) could help improve soil health on campus.	[6] Leafmould making area established by Sept 2023 [7] Litter picking procedure altered to direct leaf litter to leaf mould area (Sept 2023). [8] Specify the use of GCU leafmould in new grounds maintenance contract [**TBC**]. [9] Specify grass cycling in new grounds maintenance contract [**TBC**].	[a] Leafmould area established. [b] Litter picking procedure established. [c] Leafmould actively used. [d] Grass cycling adopted practice.	Estates & grounds maintenance contractor.	£500 to set up Leafmould making area. Other elements incorporated to Grounds Maintenance Contract and litter picking schedule (as they are standard practice).	[6] In place [7] In place [8-9] Grounds maintenance contract not drafted.
BP_M05	Plant Wildflowers	Intervention	Develop a staged approach to developing wildflower meadows/patches. Adopted a phased approach to develop capacity.	[10] Wildflower meadow requirements identified by Oct 2023. [11] Trial wildflower meadow planted by April 2024. [12] Remaining wildflower meadows planted by April 2026.	[a] Requirements documented (Oct 2023) [b] Plan for establishing pilot wildflower meadow (Jan 2024). [c] Wildflower meadow established (March/April 2024) [d] Wildflower meadows established (March/April 2025 & 2026)	Estates & grounds maintenance contractor.	£1,000 per year for 3 year to purchase seed and prepare ground. Funded through existing sustainability budget.	[10] Complete April 2024. [11-12] Trialling how reduced frequency mowing regimes impact establishment of wildflowers on campus.

ID	Name	Type	Description	Actions	Outcomes	Responsibility	Cost	Status
BP_M06	Edible Plants	Intervention	Understand scope for planting more fruit trees and herbs. Manage/develop established fruit trees and herbs (the later in the roof of the SAF Library). Potentially subject to outputs of BP_M02.	[13] Consult with head chef regarding most commonly used herbs. [14] Build raised bed and plant herbs (March 2024). [15] Plant additional fruit trees (March 2025)	[a] List of herbs to plant. [b] Raised bed [c] Additional fruit trees planted. [d] produce used in on-campus catering offer.	Estates, grounds maintenance contractor, catering contractor.	One-off £2,000 for the purchase and planting fruit trees. Funded through the sustainability budget.	[13-14] Opportunity not identified. [15] Potential locations being considered.
BP_M07	Hedges	Intervention	A beech hedge was planted along the main University access road in the Campus. There is an opportunity to extend it by potentially replacing the leylandii by the gatehouse.	[16] Remove leylandii by Gatehouse by Jan 2024. [17] Extend beech hedge to fill space left by leylandii by March 2024.	[a] Leylandii by gatehouse removed. [b] beech hedge extended.	Grounds maintenance contractor.	£1,000 for contractor to water beech hedge (funded through sustainability budget). Pruning incorporated into the Grounds Maintenance Contract.	[16] Complete. [17] In progress.
BP_M08	Increase tree cover	Intervention	GCU has a number of trees at different stages of maturity. The proposal is to increase tree coverage and develop a succession plan to limit the impact of tree removals (e.g. due to disease, age or size) on biodiversity.	[18] Survey tree condition (by Sept 2023 and then triennially) [19] Identify potential locations for additional trees by Sept 2023. [20] Plant appropriate trees in identified locations by Sept 2023.	[a] Tree condition survey [b] List of suitable locations. [c] Planting schedule that factors in tree condition and available location.	Arborist contractor	£500 for the purchase and planting of trees. Incorporated into the Grounds Maintenance Contract.	[18] Not started. [19] In progress. [20] 6 oak trees planted on campus March 2024.
BP_M09	Provide Shelter	Intervention	Provide both artificial and natural shelter to encourage wildlife to establish itself at GCU. Shelter could include (but not exclusively): bird boxes, bug hotels and potentially ponds.	[21] Review usage of existing bird boxes (Feb 2024) [22] Install additional bird boxes (if appropriate) by March/April 2024 [23] Identify potential location for bug hotels/pond (inc. consultation) by Feb 2025. [24] Build bug hotels from August 2023. [25] Create (if appropriate) pond by August 2025.	[a] Report outlining whether existing bird boxes were successful and whether there is potential for more. [b] Additional bird boxes installed. [c] Report to support decision to install/build bug hotels and/or a pond. [d] Bug hotels in place. [e] Pont created (if appropriate)		£500 for materials. Funded through sustainability budget.	[21] In progress [22-24] Not started [25] Location identified.
BP_M10	Provide Water	Intervention	During the drier, hotter months of the summer, there are no open water sources for wildlife on campus. The proposal to establish several 'natural' water sources that is readily accessible to wildlife (with natural in this case meaning harvesting rainwater of	[26] Identify locations and options for making natural water available to wildlife by Sept 2023.	[a] Review of options for establishing natural source water available on campus. [b] Natural water points installed.	Estates	£500 in the first two summers. Funded through the Sustainability Budget.	[26] On-going. [27] No locations identified.

			refrigeration condensate). These would be in addition to and independent of a pond (BP_M09).	[27] Create natural sources of water on campus by May 2024.				
BP_M11	No pesticides, synthetic fertilizers or peat	Intervention	Although not extensively used at GCU, excessive use of pesticides and fertilizer can have a detrimental impact on biodiversity, soil and health. Peat extraction is extremely destructive. GCU will therefore shape its grounds maintenance operations to ensure neither are used.	[28] No pesticides, synthetic fertilizers or peat used in GCU's grounds maintenance operations by [**TBC**].	[a] Provision added to new grounds maintenance contract.	Estates	None.	Grounds maintenance contract not drafted.
BP_M12	Weed control	Intervention	Although not extensively used at GCU, excessive use of weed-killers can have a detrimental impact on biodiversity, soil and health. GCU will therefore shape its weed control practices to ensure that (a) only biodegradable weed killers are used and (b) only on hard surfaces.	[29] Biodegradable weed killer used sparingly (and only on hard surfaces) from (**TBC**).	[a] Provision added to new grounds maintenance contract.		No additional cost. Incorporated into grounds maintenance contract.	Grounds maintenance contract not drafted.
BP_M13	Signage	Engagement	Provide signage to (a) highlight the University's work on biodiversity and (b) link to more information online.	[30] Signage in place for all 'active' BP interventions.	[a] Signage template with QR to webpage [b] Template text for each intervention. [c] Website updated [d] Signage in place	Brand	£500. Funded from existing sustainability budget	Not started
BP_M14	Talks and tours	Engagement	Host talks and tours to highlight how the University is supporting biodiversity in its Estate. This intervention could potentially be used to recruit volunteers for BP_M15 (Citizen Science Surveys) and BP_M16 (workshops).	[31] Annual programme of talks.	[a] Plan of talks. [b] Host of talks.	Volunteers	£200 per year (for hospitality). Funded from existing sustainability budget	One walk/tour developed (Every Tree Tells a Story). Others in plan.
BP_M15	Citizen science surveys	Engagement	Harness support for biodiversity by providing students and staff an opportunity to get directly involved in supporting biodiversity in the university through citizen science surveys to benchmark biodiversity on campus (links to BP_M01 "Understand biodiversity on Campus").	[32] Annual thematic surveys	[a] Survey plan/calendar. [b] Thematic surveys. [c] Survey reports.	Volunteers	£250 for materials. Funded from existing sustainability budget	In development.
BP_M16	Workshops	Engagement	Harness support for biodiversity by providing students and staff an opportunity to develop practical skills to enhance biodiversity away from the University. Examples of workshops: bug hotels, bid boxes, etc.	[33] Annual workshops	[a] Plan of workshops [b] Host workshops	Volunteers	£200 per year (for hospitality). Funded from existing sustainability budget	Not started.
BP_M17	Web-cams	Engagement	Web cams provide access/ a connection to biodiversity in difficult to access/sensitive areas in an obstructive way (e.g. bird boxes).	[34] Webcams in place (as appropriate)	[a] landing pages for web cams.	IT	£200 per year (based on the cost of the camera monitoring the peregrine falcon nest). Funded from	Cameras available for deployment as required.

								existing sustainability budget	
BP_M18	Social Media Content	Engagement	Use social media to highlight how the University is supporting biodiversity in its Estate.	[35] Biodiversity social media posts and images (from Sept 2023).	[a] Bank of social media posts and images. [b] University's comms teams feature biodiversity posts.	Comms.	None.		In development.
BP_M19	Mailing List	Engagement	Create biodiversity content for sustainability newsletter and help highlight how the University is supporting biodiversity in its Estate.	[36] Biodiversity content in sustainability newsletter (from Sept 2023).	[a] Biodiversity articles.	Sustainability Team	None.		On-going

Change Log

Date	Changes & Updates
20/5/24	Progress updated. Changes highlighted.