

SUSTAINABILITY BOARD REPORT

January 2022



PEOPLE AND PLANET FOSSIL FUEL DECLARATION

The Students' Union President Evan has been working with the UWE Bristol Directorate on signing the People and Planet's fossil-fuel free declaration. This is a declaration from the University that they hold no investments/holdings in fossil fuel extractor companies, and a commitment to not invest in future. The declaration will be signed and publicised at the end of January. This would make UWE the 93rd UK university to commit to divestment since the campaign began in 2014, with the previous being on November 2021. This has come about through the partnership working between UWE Bristol and The Students' Union.

THE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

The Students' Union Sustainability Committee have been recruited and trained by the Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator. There are just over 30 students on the committee this year, with 20 being incredibly active. We have started weekly meetings and are beginning to plan our sustainability campaign for the week of 21st – 25th March 2022, the theme and details of the campaign will be decided in the coming weeks. Outside of our weekly committee meetings, some committee members have also been involved in other sustainability work, such as:

- **Sustainable Food:** Meeting with the vegan charity Viva! to organise some events for later in January, such as some student-led outreach stalls, a social media storm and a talk about Veganism.
- They have also launched a cheaper oat milk campaign with Veg Society, where they are campaigning for oat milk to be cheaper than cows' milk on campus and for it to be the default option when you get a hot drink.
- Some committee members have also come to a meeting with Rania (VP Community and Welfare) and Faith (Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator) to discuss sustainable food at UWE and engage with The Sustainable Food Guide from SOS-UK.
- **Tree Planting:** Some committee members are helping me organise a tree planting session at the end of January with a local organisation called One Planet Matters.
- **Sustainable Fashion:** helping to make our clothes mending sessions more regular (run by a student). Some committee members of agreed to bring in clothes for our next clothes swap in February, and to help promote it and run it on the day with LGBT+ Society.
- **Blog Posts:** a number of committee members have been writing blog posts for our website on topics such as COP26, how to have a sustainable festive season and boycotting Amazon.

DECOLONISING ACTIVITY

As part of our annual SOS-UK/NUS Green Impact Accreditation, we have been set new criteria to proactively support decolonising and decarbonising action:

“Decolonising an institution and union goes beyond practices like diversifying the curriculum. Decolonising is not just about addressing the legacies of colonialism, like racism and

social inequalities, in degree outcomes and the contents of the taught curriculum, but also in the activities, operations and culture of the institution and union.

Decolonising practices are most effective alongside decarbonising initiatives to realise climate justice and a fairer world for all. For example:

- Celebrating and valuing a wide range of knowledge systems and expertise in relation to climate action (such as Indigenous knowledge).
- Divesting from fossil fuels and the inequalities that reliance on fossil fuels perpetuates.
- Exploring how HR and recruitment practices can improve wellbeing and create more inclusive and sustainable work environments.”

To this end, Students’ Union colleagues are discussing examples with the EDI Team and looking at synergies between supporting strategies. The Students’ Union is also helping to organise, plan and promote the ‘Decolonising the Faculty of Environment and Technology seminar series’ (3 seminars are arranged for Feb-March).

We are also discussing with Fabia Jeddere-Fisher and other colleagues the possibility of arranging another seminar series in April titled ‘Decolonise and Decarbonise’, collaborating with the African Voices Forum and Black and Green Ambassadors. We have interest from Sustainability Committee members in organising these sessions.

GREENER FUTURES

We have launched our Greener Futures Accreditation 2021-22, which is our sustainability competition for sports clubs and societies. 17 student groups are taking part and are now completing the challenges in the Greener Futures workbook. Challenges include signing petitions, coming to our events, volunteering in the local community, running their own sustainability campaign, etc. Here are some examples of what they’ve been up to so far:

UWE Lacrosse have been cooking veggie food and making sustainable Christmas decorations:



Women's Rugby have all been using their reusable water bottles:

UWE Formula Student have all been recycling:



UPCOMING PROJECTS

Sustainable Food:

- Veganuary competition – The Green Team and Halls Life: students are sending in their favourite recipes and the winner gets a vegan hamper.
- We are also exploring more food growing options on campus with Richie (Grounds Manager).

Feel Good February:

- Free Sustainable Period Products ('try something new'): We will be having a stall on each campus during Feel Good Feb for 'Try Something New' week where students will be able to order free sustainable period products, such as period pants, reusable pads, and menstrual cups. Sustainability Committee volunteers will be helping to run these and chatting with other students about the benefits of using sustainable period products.
- Climate Anxiety Café for staff and students (with Vicki Harris) will return to our events programme.
- We will be offered Green Campus Tours (with Vicki Harris).

Fairtrade Fortnight: planning talks and social media promotion with Vicki Harris.

Biodiversity, green projects, conservation:

- Regular Community Garden sessions (every other Wednesday from 12-3 during term time).
- Conservation Volunteering Day at Splatts Abbey Wood is organised for 12th February and we are hoping to have these sessions run regularly.

ESD and Sustainability Careers – Bristol SU Collaboration:

- We are in conversation with Bristol SU to share resources and ideas about Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Decolonise and Sustainable Careers, we meet every

couple of months to share ideas and we are hoping to do a collaborative event sometime this academic year about ESD.

New e-learning package:

- The Green Team has purchased an e-learning package from One Planet Matters which covers topics of Social and Environmental Justice. The Sustainability Committee are going to help promote this to students, as well as offering to Students' Union staff.
- We hope this will be a fantastic addition alongside the emerging Carbon Literacy module in development.

THE GREEN TEAM – LOOKING BACK

Green Week (Climate Action for 2021) October 2021:

We had over 50 events for students and staff to get involved with (both online and in person), such as:

DIY sustainability sessions:



Charity shop crawl with LGBT+ Society:



Extinction Rebellion stall and introduction talk (new student society):



Clothes mending session, run by a Glenside student:



Litter pick around Cheswick Village:



Community Garden session:



Other Green Week events included:

- Linking the SDGs to your studies
- Climate Anxiety Café
- Free Cycling Check Ups
- Green Campus Tours
- Green and Sustainable Careers drop-in
- Sustainable Cook Off

STUDENT MATTERS TO DISCUSS

1. Plastic-Free Campus Project Work

The Students' Union have been working internally and with UWE Bristol colleagues to shape the emerging plastics plan. We are excited to create firm targets, measurable milestones and a timeline we can all agree too, knowing we have the resources and expertise to progress.

2. Hedgehog Friendly Campus Gold Accreditation

....is a go! Hedgehog Friendly Campus litter pick is arranged for February to help us achieve gold accreditation status.

3. People and Planet's Fossil-Fuel Declaration

Evan to talk to this point.

4. Ecosia

The Students' Union are extremely supportive of the proposal to set the University's default search engine to Ecosia. The Students' Union brought in guidance for its staff on how to make the switch and have only seen this as a positive.

“By installing Ecosia, you are joining a global movement of users who are empowered to turn an everyday action into a force for social change. Your clicks on ads and online purchases generate revenue, which they use to support community-led tree-planting programs all over the world. This means less CO2 in the air, as well as sustainable jobs, educational opportunities, healthier people and environmental security for local communities. They use at least 80% of their profits from ad income for tree planting. For more information go to: <https://www.ecosia.org/>

By creating an account, you should be able to track how many trees you have planted. For every 42 searches you plant 1 tree!”