

Sustainability Board – November 2016

The Students' Union Report



Green Gown Awards

On Thursday 10 November, The Students' Union at UWE and UWE Bristol picked up a total of four Green Gown Awards, as well as being highly commended twice. The EAUC's (Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges) Green Gown Awards was a celebration of remarkable sustainability initiatives, starring 21 Winners and 26 Highly Commended entries from 115 finalists representing 1.5 million students and 240,000 staff. With an audience of 390 sustainability leaders applauding sustainability excellence within tertiary education, the Green Gown Awards celebrated those that are making the radical change that is needed to make all our lives better.

The Students' Union was **highly commended** in the Student Engagement category for "The Green Team #ThinkGreenBeGreat". This award is for all our amazing students, student leaders and support staff who inspire, connect, develop and enable ideas and passions to spark and create lasting change. Thank you to everyone – this is everyone's award!

Please do watch out video here: <https://vimeo.com/187400428/a2864dcf7d>

UWE Bristol were winners in the four categories of:

- **Continuous Improvement: Institutional Change** for Positive Footprint: Phase 2 - our [Sustainability Plan 2013–2020](#) (PDF).
- **Learning and Skills** for [Our Green City: Global challenges, Bristol Solutions](#) - a free six-week online course looking at challenges faced by cities in relation to food, nature, transport, resources and energy.
- **Student Engagement** (*large institution*) for Green Capital: Student Capital – our joint project with University of Bristol which saw students donating more than 100,000 hours to sustainable activities.
- **Leadership** for [Professor Jim Longhurst](#)'s work to lead the university's efforts in the field of sustainability.

We were also highly commended in the Built Environment category for Soft landings: Keeping it REAL.



Events and Activities

There have been several events taking place, from a Greenpeace film night, Green Team meetings (generating student ideas), facilitating Reduce the Juice volunteer interest evenings and scheduling Thunderclap for COP22/Paris Agreement. There are currently 1,300 members on the GreenTeam mailing list.

We held a food waste café evening in the SU bar, collaborating with our HallsLife Programme; building community within UWE managed halls of residences. Under the banner of our “BYOB: Bring Your Own Bowl” event series, we partnered with FareShare to offer a Big Green Week food waste special, serving over 200 students and crating conversations. Due to its success, we ran a scaled down trial event at Glenside.

Halley Nursery

The Students’ Union’s Nursery incorporates sustainability in their activities every term, crating learning through play. End of October, we invited parents and children down to a woodland action day, featuring local artists working with autumn colours, leaf printing, creating dens from willow tree cuttings and using berries as paint. In addition, there was trail through the wood and we were very pleased to have wonderful photos taken, which we will share with you in due course.



Big Green Week

The Students’ Union would like to thank Vicki Harris and all colleagues around the table, for making it so accessible and open to students. We had lots of student ideas, which we outline below.

Online Democracy

The Students’ Union at UWE has recently reviewed its democratic structures and how it engages with its members. After thorough research and a democratic vote a new online democratic model was chosen so that any student anywhere can submit an idea online that other students can vote

for. This will reduce the amount of paperwork and printing but also is a move forward for accessibility for all students to engage with The Students' Unions democracy.

Students and Students' Union staff came together to actively campaign for green issues on campus during Big Green Week. This activity received a great response from students – we had 222 votes on green ideas in the 3 weeks after Big Green Week. For a newer platform this is a great level of engagement and encourages traffic in the future.

Student ideas are listed below, those in the 2:1 and 2:2 category will go to Student Council on 24 November, needing 50%+1 majority to pass.

Idea 1: Have More Solar/PV On University Buildings

“UWE may have largest single roof-mounted PV array at a UK university but it can go further as this is only powering 50% of the Robotics Laboratory and University Enterprise Zone Building. What about all the other UWE owned buildings? UWE Bristol spends circa £3m/year on electricity; surely it would be beneficial to produce more themselves so money can be spent elsewhere for the benefit of us (students). And one of UWE's 2020 targets is for the University to be a Carbon Neutral campus by 2040, so investing in solar/PV is one way to help reach this target.”

Idea 2: Put A Water Fountain in The Students' Union Building 1

Idea 3: Food Waste Bins On All Campuses

“Introducing food waste bins in UWE and SU food outlets on all campuses. The food waste can then be sent to an anaerobic digestion site where it can be made into biogas and fertiliser. Biogas produced from the digestion can be used to provide vehicle transport fuel for Bristol's Bio-buses, or to supply homes with energy.”

Idea 4: Biodegradable and Recyclable Coffee Cups On All Campuses

“Use biodegradable and recyclable coffees cups in UWE and SU outlets on all campuses, instead of plastic based non-recyclable cups. With the recyclable packaging company Vegware located in Bristol, there's no excuse.”

- We are pushing ahead regardless with these.
- The Students' Union would like to enquire why UWE are not upping reusable drink money off prices to 20p like SU?

Idea 5: Not currently on SU Agenda as did not pass vote threshold: waterless urinals

Idea 6: UWE Already undertaking:

Idea:

change to using a renewable energy company: change from a company that uses fossil fuels to an energy provider such as 'good energy' to reduce our carbon footprint and set a standard for other universities, seeing as we are situated in the green capital of Europe.

Green Impact Accreditation

The criteria for this accreditation has been updated, and released on 26 September for organisations to sign up. This strand of work will be led by the Students' Union Building Manager, Donna Prince. There is a new pot of NUS funding (pilot until Dec 2016) for “£750 for every new partnership a union develops in their community.” We are exploring a bid to this fund. We are working to the submission deadline on 5 May.

We now have 4 new bike plants for our cyclists – from the Greenhouse at UWE.

Compostable Cups

The Students' Union will soon be able to offer our students (and staff customers) compostable cup as an alternative to the Starbucks-branded paper cups currently in use at Glenside and Frenchay Students' Union bars. A student has designed our compostable cups; it is now a six week turnaround for ordering and printing. We are hoping we should be able to go live when the students return in the New Year. We will also continue to sell re-usable bamboo cups, as well as increasing the "own mug discount" to 20p. The Students' Union hopes that this will set a trend the University can follow in due course. It would be worth understanding the amount of coffee cups used at all the catering outlets across the campus sites to assess the impact this shift could make.

We are also hoping for a New Year launch date for re-usable plastic cups at Frenchay instead of the single use plastics we currently have.

Change for Change

We have re-launched the Change for Change fund, giving students funding for their ideas – making it simple to create change on campus for other students. There are two upcoming student led change for change applications; one for the re-purchase of reusable mugs for bower (from recycled source) and another for a permaculture film night to happen late November.

GreenSpace

GreenSpace sessions are running well, with the second session taking place at the beginning of November. There are currently 8 Project Leaders, with first aid training taking place this semester. We were very pleased that the project featured in the Filton Voice magazine.

Greener Futures Award

Our Greener Futures Award engages with UWE Sports Clubs and Societies in the sustainability agenda. The Green Team presented at the Societies and Sports Conferences to outline the scheme, inspire green student leaders and advertise change for change funding. We are now working with our student leaders to create a new framework for Greener Futures moving forward to make it as efficient and effective for these groups as possible. We are working to increase engagement from our clubs and societies incrementally over the next 4 years.

Green Team Resource

We welcome two new student staff to aid the Green Team – Hannah and Charlotte. This additional resource will enable the Green Team to deliver more focussed work on our newer projects like a website/ social media communication, Greener Futures, community garden and GreenSpace. They are contactable through the mail green team email thegreenteam@uwe.ac.uk

Community Garden

The Community Garden held a big celebration event at the end of May for all the amazing work students have done on the garden and our GreenSpace project. This involved nutritious local food from a student enterprise, bird box making for our local woodlands, music and of course gardening. Over 30 people attended and we were delighted to welcome, amongst others, Steve West, Helen Lloyd-Wildman and Jane Harrington.

The Community Garden is now holding monthly Action Day sessions, involving lots of staff as well as students. We have bought new tools for the garden and we are about to install a new gate for the garden to improve access for incoming students and create a more welcoming environment.

We are working with the Wellbeing Service and Healthy University to create a link between the Garden and mental health. We are creating marketing that the Wellbeing Service can give out to students who might benefit from this activity. There is a potential for a student MA project to research and evaluate this link – understanding if there are measurable wellbeing benefits to students engaging in this activity.

Bristol Big Give

Students were involved in spreading the message about giving unwanted items to charity rather than landfill at the end of last term. We gave out information to students across campus and helped to collect many tons worth of clothes and homeware. We then held a Big Sort Out at the end of term and have restocked our Swap Shop products for the new academic year. We are coming around the table with partners at UWE and Bristol University to start planning the Bristol Big Give for the year ahead.

Bower Ashton Christmas Fair

The Students' Union is hosting a Christmas Fair on Thursday 1 December. The newly elected City Campus Officer has decided that the chosen charity for the event will be Groundworks South. This charity works towards a future of sustainable communities which are vibrant, healthy and safe, which respect the local and global environment and where individuals and enterprise can prosper.

They work hand-in-hand with communities to:

- Create and improve green spaces for community benefit and to reconnect people with nature;
- Provide training and support to help those furthest from the job market back into work; and
- Promote greener living and working to help families and individuals save money, resources and reduce waste.