



Keele
University

**THE SUSTAINABLE STUDENT
BUNGALOW PROJECT (SSB)**

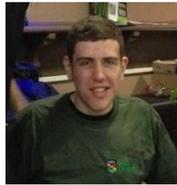
2014/2015

Annual Report

Our Team



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Introduction

At the beginning of the year, we decided that our main focus would be on three main areas; improving and increasing the capacity of the garden, engaging new people with a diverse background into the project and finally, engaging more with social media (You-tube videos and Facebook updates) and getting the idea of sustainable living into the Keele student community more. Together with this, we continued with previous initiatives; to monitor and record waste and energy. Additionally, we added to this by taking part in a PhD Research Project which involved the occupants using energy monitors to observe our energy consumption inside the bungalow.

In this report, we have subdivided each of our main objectives and we will discuss to what extent we succeeded in achieving these objectives along with the hindrances we faced while trying.

Key Goals

1. Waste and Energy Monitoring

At the beginning of the year, the bungalow house mates removed the general waste stream from the kitchen. This was in an effort to encourage that all things

were either re-used or recycled and we found that this was quite successful. We rarely found that any of our waste needed to go into the general waste. All paper waste was either composted or recycled. All food waste was composted. When throwing out plastic and metals, we always recorded its weight with the objective of minimizing our waste by the end of the year, by using the data as a bench mark for the next time.

2. Garden and Raised Beds

We began to make proposals for the raised beds with the help of Francis Roberts and aimed to collaborate with estates and accommodation. Jane Barker and Andrew Grant were both filled in on the overall proposals and were happy to approve with the placement of the new beds. Materials were sourced from John Knott who was kind enough to donate the beams. The beds were partially completed towards the beginning of the summer with the help of a former Keele student who was happy to help with building the beds.

The outdoor tap was proposed along with the raised beds and was paid for through the Think:Green society and should hopefully be installed on the outside of the building already. This would make watering the garden significantly easier as occupants even in previous years watered everything by hand with watering cans and buckets.

Additionally, we managed to sign post the garden so that the visitors know what is in there. This was a great step in making the garden more visitor friendly.





3. Student Engagement

This year we managed to introduce the SSB Project to a greater diversity of students. We managed to have a few communal meals in the bungalow, integrating international and EU students in to the dialogue. Not only that, most of these students were from different degree backgrounds, which added a new take and ideas to the mix. During these meals, we tried to serve mostly vegetarian and vegan dishes, introducing our guests to a variety of options when it comes to eating sustainably. A total of 10 different nationalities visited the bungalow during this year. These included, Malaysians, Chinese, Kenyans, Indians, Maldivians, Australians, Mexicans, Cameroonians and Ugandans. The range of courses that we managed to bring together included Maths, Computer Science, Law, Business Management, Biomedical Science, English, Neuroscience, Physiotherapy, Medicine, Pharmacy, Geography and International Relations. Having this diversity and inclusion enabled us to have in-depth conversations about the idea of sustainability at a global scale, incorporating all the different professions. This was interesting as a lot of our

guests took away from our discussion a realization, that the environment and sustainability did have real life applications in their chosen professions as well. Additionally, we also had communal meals with local students more regularly who are already part of the Green Keele Society.

4. Social Media

When it came to social media, we put a concentrated effort to be as accessible as possible. We made sure we regularly updated our Facebook page with the progress of the garden and the kind of produce we were getting out of it. We also dabbled in video making which included short instruction videos on how to garden, manage compost and even a cooking video. Following are the links to these videos.

- 1) How to plant your seedlings

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHExnfuKoiw&list=UUsJqx8ez3YIqz_ym-tdsuTw

- 2) How to plant out plantlets

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6i9a8e6QxTs&list=UUsJqx8ez3YIqz_ym-tdsuTw&index=2

- 3) How to manage compost

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQUAM9hmVKU&index=1&list=UUsJqx8ez3YIqz_ym-tdsuTw

- 4) How to make onion soup

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqhqY15rGmA&feature=youtu.be>

Challenges

When trying to achieve our goals in student engagement, we found it difficult creating dialogue between local and international students. This was because we didn't try hard enough to integrate the two different groups and also because we found it hard trying to find a time which was suitable for everyone.



The garden has remained a challenge with each successive year as it requires a huge time commitment to both learning how to garden, and to managing crops whilst juggling academic work. Even when things were planned out, and crops were planted, sometimes things just didn't grow. Having to wait two weeks for new crops to grow could sometimes throw off our seasonal planting completely meaning some beds were left empty as it was too cold for them to germinate.

One of the main challenges that we faced throughout the year was communication with each other and finding time to work on the SSB project together as a group. Some of us lacked motivation towards the project which was a huge challenge in trying to achieve our goals. We believe that communication was a challenge, because we didn't take the time to build a relationship between the four of us at the start of the year. Therefore, we didn't fully understand each other leading to some misunderstandings, negatively affecting the project.

On the whole, the experience taught us all a lot about time management, group work and what it means to live communally. We learnt that proper communications plays a huge role in group projects. It takes time understanding each other and our differences and it takes effort to make it work.
