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**Keele University Sustainability Forum 2013**

**Panel:** Professor Pat Bailey, Pro-Vice Chancellors Environment and Sustainability, Huw Evans, Environmental Manager, Dr Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainability,Emanuel Blondel, President, Student Think Green Society

**Audience:** A number of postgraduate and undergraduate students and staff members (about 15 people).

**BIODIVERSITY**

**Staff: I witnessed birds’ nests being cut off trees by external contractors on site earlier in the year. I report this to the Estates and Development Directorate, but didn’t hear anything back about this. I was incredibly shocked by the happening.**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

Thank you for raising this. It is incredibly important that this does not happen again. There have been other reported incidences of grounds work being undertaken at the wrong time of year.

There are procedures in place in order to protect species on campus, but we are currently updating the induction process for all contractors on campus to try and overcome some of these issues.

If you do notice that anything like this is happening in the future, please do report this straight to me, and I can escalate it quickly.

**Response from Pat Bailey, Pro-Vice Chancellors for Environment and Sustainability:**

A few things like this happened at the same time. This has led us to create a new steering group called the ‘Biodiversity Strategy Team’. As well as regularly meeting to discuss moving forward around protecting and enhancing biodiversity on campus, a representative from this group (an ecology specialist) is now going to be attending Estates group meetings to review future planned works and support the avoidance, or minimising of biodiversity disturbance in the future.

**WASTE AND RECYCLING**

1. **Student: What is the situation with recycling rates and projects on campus?**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

We currently recycle around 40%, which we quickly need to improve. This doesn’t include green waste and cooking oils. We are aiming for 60% by the end of the year excluding oils and green waste. This includes halls of residence, which have a lower recycling rate than the University Buildings.

Recently we have increased the number of external recycling bins. We also hope the new Green Impact (GI) scheme will drive more recycling in departments.

**Response from Pat Bailey, Pro-Vice Chancellor Environment and Sustainability**

We are currently tied into a waste collection service that doesn’t cater for all our needs. We hope with the next waste tender that we can further drive this rate up. We have a vision to be 0 waste to landfill by 2020.

1. **Staff: Could we liaise with other organisations to boost up our recycling. E.g. Manchester airport is up to 80%.**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

We currently work with the Environment Association of Universities and Colleges, the EAUC. We use case studies from other institutions, and let this guide our planning in this area of recycling, and other Sustainability Projects.

1. **Student: It is very frustrating that I cannot currently recycle glass. Why is this?**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

This is not something that was covered within the last waste tender within students’ halls. It is something we will be considering for the next waste tender.

1. **Staff: I am frustrated by good furniture going in skips. I’m now using the GI site that currently has items on there for use. Could this be advertised further?**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

It is great to see that people are using this. I will try and increase its visibility. I will try and increase the use of this over the coming year.

HE ACTION POINT: Increase awareness of the furniture recycling through ‘Announce’, and ‘Sustainability Newsletter’.

1. **Staff: Staff find it hard to find where recycling bins are on campus for things like glass. Could this information be added to a Keele Campus Map and distributed?**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

I have been working on this with the Keele University Digital Imagining, and Illustration Service, KUDIS. This should be released early next year.

1. **Student: Within halls of residence at the end of the year, a lot of electronic devices are left over. These very often end up in general waste. Is there something we can do about this?**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

This issue is partly due to the short turn around period to clean the halls at the end of the year. British Heart Foundation collection points have now been placed on campus, and since going in have collected over 2 tonns of goods to be sold at the local charity shops. There are also small scale schemes that have been run for a number of years in some of the halls linked up with local charity shops.

There is still a lot more to do. We need to organise with volunteers to collect items and store them. I am really interested in working with others to get a bigger scheme set up. It also important that we don’t push the smaller ongoing projects out that have been working well for a number of years.

**Response from Sarah Amphlett, Student Union Volunteering Manager:**

I have also been trying to set up something similar with the residential managers. We already collect a lot of the food, and send it to food banks.

**Response from Student:**

I think it is important to keep as much as possible within Keele, rather than the next group of students repurchasing everything new. Could we organise something so that future students access these items at low cost for example cutlery, dishes, and dry food. The earnings can then go to the charities. I understand that the main problem to overcome in this is around storage over summer.

**Response from Susan Warrender, Head of Catering and Retail:**

Student support are also interested in assist a scheme like this.

**Response from Revd. James Stewart:**

The chapel has space that is not used a significant amount over the summer. There is a possibility we might be able to make use of this space for storage over the summer.

ACTION POINT: Huw Evans to organise a meeting about a halls re-use and recycling scheme including Susan Warrender (inviting Student Support), Sarah Amphlett, Revd. James Stewart and Residential Managers.

1. **Student:** The Library are after a visual cue to get students to think about recycling more. Is there any support they can get with this? It would be good if it could be moved around.

**Response from Student:** Public transport in Vienna have also done this and it has had a great impact.

ACTION POINT: Philippa Calver, Sustainability Project Officer to follow up.

**ENERGY AND BUILDING STOCK**

1. **Student: I’m interest to know more about the future of insulation and windows on campus, for example the windows don’t shut in the William Smith Building.**

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

The Energy Management Team in the Estates and Development Directorate have an action plan of projects to do every year. Windows are generally not high on the list due to long pay back period. In some cases double glazing windows can have a pay-back of 20 – 25 years.

**Response from Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainable Development:**

Smaller local measures can also be undertaken to overcome some of these issues. For example a recent energy audit as part of the Keele Green Impact Scheme in William Smith showed that the windows don’t shut as paint needs to be chipped off. This work has started already.

**Response from Pat Baily:** In regards to the William Smith Building, there will be an over hall, which includes cladding and double glazing in the next year.

1. **Staff: Is the refurbishment plan published? It would be good if this could be published so that individuals are aware of when their building is due to be refurbished and can plan accordingly.**

**Response from Pat Bailey, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Environment and Sustainability:**

I don’t think this is published at the moment as it does change depending on urgency. It is also linked to other more sensitive information. I will look into separating the two parts and publishing what we can.

ACTION POINT: PB will check if what can be published in regards to the building refurbishment plan.

1. **Student: We have a wealth of experience within the student body, both academically and practically. Could we include students and research projects into the process of the new building, not just giving the project to an external contractor?**

**Response from Emanuel Blondel, President of Think Green Student Society, and Resident of the Sustainable Student Bungalow:**

The student sustainable bungalow wants to expand. We have lots of students engaged now, and we want there to be a middle stage at least, perhaps by utilising the experience we have to form future thinking on what student halls should look like, and the type of community the space should foster. We are calling this process ‘Phase Two’.

**Response from Huw Evans, Environmental Manager:**

For ‘new builds’ we now trying to meet BREEAM standard. We could get a student into planning boards to input into this for new buildings. This should ensure students’ participation in the process.

ACTION POINT: HE to get in touch with students when new boards are created for future building work.

**Professor Pat Bailey, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Environment and Sustainability:** I think it is very important to provide opportunities for student to use what they are learning on campus, and supporting the University to become more sustainable at the same time. There have sometimes issues around projects sounding good, but not being able to be fitted into the timescale required. We are going to collate a list of projects that students may want to use as part of their ‘Projects’ with the staff who work in sustainability related roles within the Institution to provide interesting and useful project work for students.

We have recently created a working group looking directly at student engagement. We are also setting up a working group on Green Transport. Both of these are to ensure we have cross working with a range of stakeholders in the institution.

I see a range of ways to get students involved in sustainability projects on campus through greater consultation, the formal curriculum and bigger co-curriculum research projects.

**Response from MSc Environment and Green Technology Student:** I have been running swap shops, but MSc students would be keen on running projects on campus that aren’t always purely geothermal or Dorothy Clive gardens.

**Response from Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainable Development:** We also have an opportunity tolink this with volunteering, and advertise it through the SU volunteering. For example, students could competitively apply for mini funding for projects.

ACTION POINT: PB to collate a list of ‘Sustainability’ project work that students can get involved in to increase their work experience, and ensure that their skills are being used to make Keele more sustainable.

**Lavinia Ioana Udrea, SU Environment Representative**: I will be running workshops as part of my PhD around developing a sense of responsibility towards nature working with Keele Students

ACTION POINT: PB to meet with LIU to discuss project and how it can support sustainability at Keele.

**SUSTAINABLE CATERING**

**Student: There isn’t a clear marking of food on campus for vegetarian or vegan. This makes it incredibly hard for a number of vegan students to have access to suitable food.**

**Response from Susan Warrender:** Looking at the Comus restaurant specifically, we have in the past made vegan food, but this was often not purchased and became food waste. The demand isn’t yet high enough to create a vegan dish daily. We do have vegan food weekly.

**Student:** Would it be possible to have a vegan or vegetarian week as part for Green Week?

**Response from Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainability:** One thing that we could try is to have a meet free day, and just don’t advertise it, but see if anyone complains. Vegan will obviously be slightly harder.

ACTION POINT: ZR to arrange meeting with Susan to discuss suitability of meet free day/ week as part of Green Week.

**STRATEGY**

**Lavinia Ioana Udrea, SU Environment Representative:** Many students don’t know where to go when they want to talk about sustainability issues on campus. Would it be preferable to have one place to go where the sustainability staff are based? Would this increase the number of students, especially international students that are engaged?

**Response from Zoe Robinson, Director of Education for Sustainability:** I suggest this could be brought up at the next Environment and Sustainability Steering Group (they are student representative). There are differing views about whether this is the most appropriate thing for the institution, but it does need to be discussed.

**Response from Revd. James Stewart:** Doesn’t the hub act as this?

**Student:** It does, but as this is far away from the main campus, many people don’t know what is happening.

ACTION POINT: LIU to bring issue up at next ESSG meeting.