

# SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2020-22



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## Message from the Vice-Chancellor



**T**his 2020-22 Sustainability Report outlines Oxford Brookes University's environmental sustainability performance for the last two academic years.

The report provides an overview of the work completed to mitigate our local and global impacts and addresses our sustainability aspirations across the University's operations, research and academic programmes. We recognise the complexity of our organisation, the social, economic and environmental impact of our operations, and our key role in research and as educators.

We therefore strive to deliver and continually improve our performance, using an accredited environmental management system and

relevant policies and strategies covering all aspects of sustainability.

It has been a challenging couple of years in many respects, but we have met these challenges head on and continue to make strides on our sustainability journey.

I would like to thank all our staff, students and partners for your valued contributions to our sustainability aspirations during this period, and in helping to build towards a more sustainable future.

**PROFESSOR ALISTAIR FITT,  
VICE-CHANCELLOR**

## Leadership and Governance

Sustainability has been identified as a key enabler in the 2035 University Strategy and will help to underpin the future direction of Oxford Brookes in line with student, staff and societal expectations. The University declared a climate emergency in the autumn of 2021 as the COP26 Climate Change Conference was taking place in Glasgow.

As part of the announcement, Professor Alistair Fitt, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, commented: "Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our time and we can already see the serious impacts it is having across the world." The declaration was delivered in parallel with the launch of the University's new carbon reduction strategy.

Environmental sustainability at Oxford Brookes is guided by the framework of our externally certified ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management System (EMS). The EMS enforces an environmental policy that sets out our principles and goals, and is supported by a series of strategies outlining our key vision, drivers and objectives for each key aspect of environmental sustainability. Aspect specific action plans measure, report and communicate our performance via assigned, time-bound and SMART targets. These policies, strategies and action plans are reviewed at least annually

by the Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG).

In our latest annual EMS surveillance audit we achieved no non-conformances for the fourth year in a row with four key areas of best practice, demonstrating our commitment to continual improvement. The new Sustainability Steering Group was established in 2021 – the main purpose of this group is to provide directional guidance on the University's sustainability aspirations and their implementation across the institution. Our progress on our sustainability journey has delivered a 35 place jump in the People & Planet sustainability league tables. Advancing from a 2:2 university to a 2:1.

In recognition of our local and global impacts this report is aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDGs are a set of 17 global goals aimed at promoting prosperity while protecting the planet. They understand that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that support economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. Oxford Brookes recognises the importance of engaging with the SDGs, to promote a greener and more equitable future for all.

### The UN's Sustainable Development Goals



This report has been compiled by the Environmental Sustainability Team, with key strategic internal partners. We welcome your feedback on environmental sustainability at Oxford Brookes. If you have any thoughts or questions please get in touch with us via [sustainability@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@brookes.ac.uk). If you would like more information about our policies, strategies or action plans please visit our sustainability website [www.brookes.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/sustainability)

# Energy & Carbon



## Vision

Oxford Brookes recognises that urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it. Our strategic goal is to reduce emissions in accordance with legislation and the requirements of the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit the rise of global temperature to no more than a 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

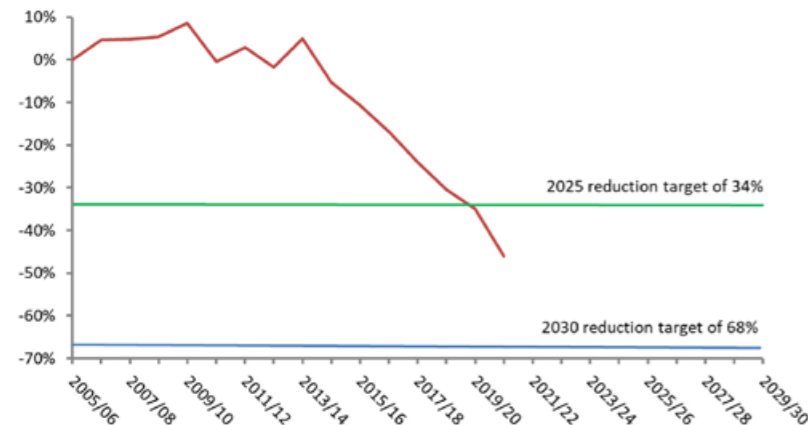
In support of this commitment we aim to achieve:

1. A reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions of 68% by 2030. This reduction in emissions, from a 2010 baseline, relates to the operation of our buildings and infrastructure.
2. To become a net-zero carbon organisation by 2040, where only unavoidable emissions are offset.

## We declared a Climate Emergency in 2021

The next phase currently underway is to finalise our approach so that a full net-zero strategy roadmap can be published. This needs to be a clear and funded plan of action which controls the costs and future risks that we face, whilst ensuring that the strategic outcome of reducing our emissions is in line with the requirements of the Paris Agreement.

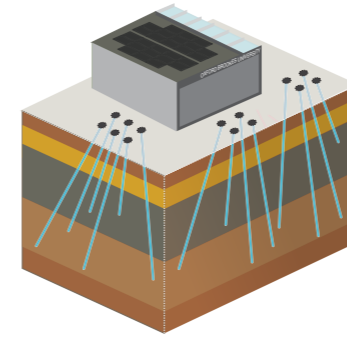
In 2020/21 our emissions were 46% lower than our baseline. Due to the pandemic emissions were lower than expected, and during the next reporting year we expect the ongoing downward trend to soften, or rise slightly due to higher utilisation of our estate.



## Net Zero and 1.5 degrees

Oxford Brookes intends to become a net-zero organisation by 2040 and by doing so aims to limit the rise of global temperatures to no more than 1.5°C in accordance with legislation and the requirements of the Paris agreement.

## Progress & Initiatives:



### Geo-Exchange project

Oxford Brookes became the first UK University to have an operational geothermal heating system in 2022. The system was funded by a £2.3m award from Salix Finance using Phase 1 of the Public

Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The system has been designed to contribute some 1.2 GWh/yr to the energy requirements of the John Henry Brookes Building - this is the equivalent of abating 100% emissions relating to both Abercrombie and Colonnade buildings, or a 20% reduction in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions for the Headington site. The performance of this system will be monitored and optimised over the next two years, helping us to understand and further develop our approach to heat decarbonisation.

### Heat Decarbonisation Plan (HDP)

Recognising the fact that it will not be feasible (functionally or economically) to achieve our net-zero ambitions without decarbonising heat a bid was submitted to Salix for Low Carbon Skills Funding to develop a heat decarbonisation plan. This was completed in March 2022 and provides Oxford Brookes with a strategic timeline, indicative costs and high level ambitions to be further developed as an integral part of the Oxford Campus Vision. HDP Phase 1 was a start, but the strategic options now need to be developed up to the point of investment and procurement, alongside workshops and engagement. Delivery of HDP Phase

2 is now underway, with Salix Finance fully funding the project cost of £282k, and is due to be completed by March 2023.

### Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP)

81% of the carbon emissions in Oxford City comes from buildings, and Oxford Brookes is responsible for an estimated 2% of the total emissions<sup>1</sup>. As a large institution within the city we therefore take our contribution and responsibilities seriously and signed the ZCOP charter in October 2021, alongside the other major emitters within Oxford, to collaboratively work towards Oxford City's 2040 net-zero target<sup>2</sup>. These partnerships and collaborations are key to driving sustainable change within our communities.

Oxford Brookes is actively engaged, and leading ZCOP sprint groups, in support of these aims. We are championing the active travel sprint group and are one of the first to deploy 'vehicle to grid' charging at our Headington Hill site as a part of Project LEO (Local Energy Oxfordshire) who are running trials to build a greener, more flexible electricity system in Oxfordshire.

### Green Energy

The University has secured funding to deploy a further 300kWp of photovoltaic panels - this rollout will mean that all suitable roof space on our existing buildings has been utilised. It will bring our total installed capacity up to 700kWpa, or half a million kWh's of electricity per year, which is the equivalent annual electricity needs of 125 UK homes.

There is also active research within the university to deploy a battery storage system in the Lloyd building.

## Future risks and the need for continued intervention

Since the last Annual Sustainability Report the urgency of the climate crisis, in addition to the war in Ukraine, means that the needs and expectations of our students, staff and key stakeholders have evolved. We're also currently experiencing the biggest utilities price increase since the 1970s. There remains now more than ever the need to be efficient in how we manage our estate and invest in projects which support and deliver sustainability interventions at Oxford Brookes.

We are in the process of appointing a new Energy Manager who will focus on the performance and

optimisation of our physical estate, delivering significant carbon and costs savings and the generation of new decarbonisation project ideas.

Recognising the need to reduce costs the start of the heating season in 2022 saw the estates team implement a 'gas demand reduction plan' which aims to reduce gas use by 15% whilst maintaining comfort and productivity. This has got off to a good start and we will continue to analyse and optimise performance to deliver emission and saving reductions.

1. Climate Emergency Strategy Support report September 2019, [https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1184/new\\_data\\_on\\_carbon\\_emissions\\_in\\_oxford](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1184/new_data_on_carbon_emissions_in_oxford)  
 2. <https://zerocarbonoxford.com/>

# Waste Management



## Vision

To embed a culture of sustainable waste management throughout the organisation, by delivering the principles of the waste hierarchy and integrating these principles into every aspect of the University's processes and operations.

## Progress and initiatives

Our Waste Strategy and Action Plan have been developed to meet the objectives of our Social Responsibility Framework, Environmental Policy and integrate into the University-wide 2035 Strategy. Delivering a sustainable waste strategy across the organisation will enable us to reduce our environmental impact, meet legislative requirements and decrease the financial burden of our waste streams.

## Showcase

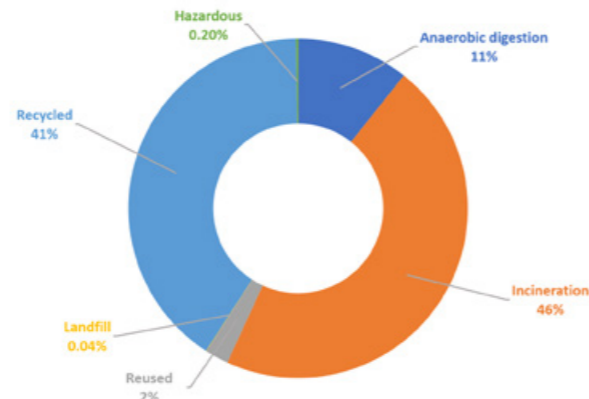
A great example of sustainability being put into action has been the achievements of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences' Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC). The NMC has taken action to stop buying bottled water and instead promote and encourage the use of reusable and refillable bottles. With the introduction of new water fountains, which is expected to save around 14,000 single-use plastic bottles a year.



## High-Level Targets

**1. University-wide recycling rate of 75% by the end of 2025 - Working towards at 54%**

In 2018 we set an ambitious target to reach a University-wide recycling rate of 75%. We are working towards this target and need to build momentum post-pandemic. This year we will have a specific focus on improving catering waste and working on engagement with students in halls to increase our recycling percentages.



*Donut Graph showing university-wide 2021/2022 academic year waste breakdown*

**2. Achieve <2% waste to landfill for all managed sites by the end of 2025 - ACHIEVED AT 0.04%**

Due to our use of energy recovery from general waste and our high level of recycling from skips and construction sites, we reported 0.04% of our total waste going to landfill.

**3. Achieve a 90% recycling rate for all construction site wastes - ACHIEVED AT 96%**

## Pandemic challenges

The pandemic created many challenges for our waste management strategy delivery. While total waste production decreased due to lower occupancy rates, the pandemic led to reduced recycling rates and the creation of new sources of waste. The increase in disposables, PPE and clinical waste all led to an increase in the percentage of incinerated waste. In addition, many of our most effective behaviour change initiatives and in-person engagement activities were necessarily put on hold.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we were innovative and delivered engaging webinars and instagram take-overs with partners such as Replenish Oxfordshire and the Brookes Union. [Replenish](#) is managed by Community Action Groups (CAG) Oxfordshire and funded by Oxfordshire County Council, whose mission is to help people cook and grow healthy food with zero wastage. Replenish also supported us in delivering a 'Eat Well, Waste Less week' with Oxford Direct Services, in support of the Waste and Resources Action Programme, [Food Waste Action week](#).

## Key Partnerships

Oxford Direct Services (ODS), a council owned social enterprise won the tender bid for our general, dry mixed recycling and food waste in April 2021, having committed to a wide range of sustainability measures, which helped them to secure the contract. For example, ODS committed to convert 25% of its fleet to electric by 2023 and only services our sites using their new electric refuse collection vehicle.

We partner with ODS to deliver a range of successful engagement events including students in the community and our halls, delivering face-to-face engagement through door-knocking, Earth Day fairs, Freshers' Fairs, and at the Science Bazaar.



## Pack for Good Campaign

We continued our successful campaign and partnership with the British Heart Foundation (BHF). In the 2020/21 academic year, staff and students raised over £25,000 from donations and in 2021/22 we raised £37,000. Dr Ashley Hayden from the Oxford Brookes Environmental Sustainability Team raised an additional £2,180 by completing the London Marathon on behalf of the BHF campaign.



**21.4 tonnes diverted from landfill – that's the equivalent of 126306 kg CO<sup>2</sup> emissions**

**£37,408 total raised from your fantastic donations**

Internally we are effectively managing our furniture and bulky waste re-allocation programme to reduce waste production. Where we cannot reallocate within the University we have established a network of local charities and social enterprises where these items can be re-used, including local schools, the Oxford Food Hub and various Community Action Groups. Oxford Brookes staff were offered free membership to Share Oxfords Library of Things, a great new initiative aiming to help make Oxford a sharing community for the future, tackling the climate emergency, the cost of living crisis and forging community bonds.

Our Green Impact programme has seen our Sustainability Champions engage with their teams around the waste agenda to educate and deliver positive behaviour change.

# Water



## Vision

A culture of efficient water use and management across our estate, in line with our Social Responsibility Framework, Environmental and Sustainability goals

## Progress and initiatives

Our Water Strategy and Action Plan have been developed in-line with the new University-wide 2035 Strategy. We are developing high-level targets for improving the water efficiency of our organisation, with the aim to save us money, reduce our impact on the environment and enhance our reputation as a sustainable university.

## Annual water use reporting graph (m<sup>3</sup>)

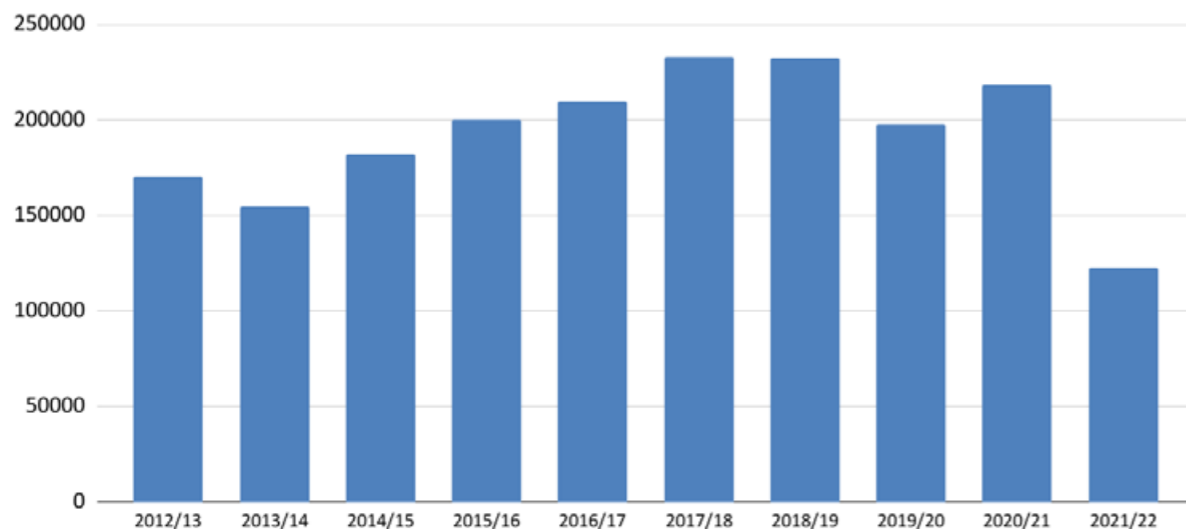
In the 2021/22 academic year we have seen a significant decrease in annual water usage to levels below any previous year's use (baseline data 2012/13). This reduction can be attributed primarily to our redevelopment programs (an increase in use will be seen when some buildings come back on-line), but lower occupancy rates alongside our proactive conservation and efficiency measures would also have contributed to this decrease.

Reducing our water use and wastage is important to us, we deliver this in three key ways:

1. The installation of water efficient showers, taps and toilets in our buildings with all new developments requiring a high level of water efficient fixtures and fittings.
2. Our smart water meter loggers and on-line portal provides 'real time' data and alarms, enabling us to find hidden water leaks.
3. Rainwater harvesting at our Headington Campus and Clive Booth Student Village captures rainwater for use in toilets and irrigation.

All our redevelopment and refurbishment programmes follow our internal Sustainable Design Criteria, specifying higher water efficiency standards moving forward. In addition fiscal meters and mains supply into each building are required to have automatic meter read loggers installed. This will also include the metering of any rainwater harvesting systems.

Annual water use reporting graph (m<sup>3</sup>)



## Partnerships

We changed our water retailer provider in 2021 with the appointment of The Energy Consortium (TEC) to act as a third-party broker for the supply of water, wastewater and ancillary water services. This is being delivered and managed through a framework agreement between TEC and WAVE (Anglian Water). This new partnership has enabled more accurate billing systems, bill validation, real-time alarms and an online portal, enabling us to react in good time, analyse trends and manage our water-use in real time.

## Leaks

Our Clive Booth Student Village previously had a network of old, inefficient, and leak-prone pipework and water infrastructure. Due to the redevelopment of this site, we have seen a large drop in water use and the constant low level leakage rates across this large and complex site have finally ceased. We recognise that water use will increase again as the new development is completed. However, now with brand new water infrastructure, high efficiency fittings and 'real-time' water loggers, we expect the usage to be much lower than we have seen historically on this site.

## Spotlight - Thames Smart Water

Thames Water were commissioned in the spring of 2022 to deliver a water conservation/efficiency project across selected sites. This service delivered a full review of our existing facilities (toilets, urinals, taps and showers) replacing faulty and inefficient components and reducing the flow rate to showers and taps across the residences.



**Total leak fixes** 18,300 litres per day

If left unattended to, these leaks would cost your business an estimated £38.43 per day, adding up to £14,026.95 per year.

**Total leak fixes** 4,572 litres per day

If left unattended to, these leaks would cost your business an estimated £9.60 per day, adding up to £3,504.44 per year.

# Transport



## Vision

To embed a culture of sustainable travel throughout the University, where everyone is actively involved in reducing their transport emissions and will be advocates for the same level of provision for sustainable travel at their future places of study, work or home environment.

## Progress and initiatives

We have worked extensively over the last few years to ensure sustainable transport is considered as the natural choice to commute to campus. The pandemic had a significant effect on students and staff travel behaviour with the majority avoiding public transport, following Government guidance. Working closely with key partners, we ensured the University BROOKESbus services remained safe and secure throughout. Post-pandemic has seen the University introduce agile/hybrid working patterns. Allowing the majority of staff to fulfil their work commitments (typically 2/3 days per week) whilst at home, this has reduced the need to travel to campus on a daily basis for some colleagues. We are still evaluating the full impact of the pandemic on our staff commuting patterns.

In 2021, we established the new internal Travel Advisory Group, involving University-wide stakeholders, to advise on the emerging University transport strategy. We have recently commissioned TPS transport consultants to support us to deliver a new car park management strategy and sustainable travel strategy and plan for the University. The first phase of this work was to conduct a student and staff travel survey. This was achieved in spring of 2022, receiving nearly 2,500 responses. The results have been published on the University's [travel webpages](#). This survey will help to support the University's transport strategy to deliver the aspirations of the Oxford Campus Vision.

## Initiatives

In 2021, we secured a Department for Transport grant to promote the benefits of sustainability for our students and staff post-pandemic. Recognising the importance of safety, we held proficiency and maintenance training sessions which were also open to our external community. In addition, we have worked with the University's Bike Dr to offer discounted second hand bicycles to our students and staff. This incentive has been extremely popular and we have continued for this academic year.

To support sustainable travel incentives, we have held a range of initiatives aiming to ensure inclusivity. In 2022 we ran a Step into Spring campaign, supporting Staff Wellness week, World Car Free Day, Cycle to Work Day and European Mobility week, with associated incentives to encourage participation. We have also delivered a range of student and staff incentives to promote and support sustainable travel. This includes discounted bus tickets (locally and nationally), cycle to work schemes,, walking and cycling accessories offers and access to personalised travel planning services. The range of full [travel offers](#) can be reviewed on travel webpages.



This year's Alumni Sustainability lecture focused on the future and benefits of sustainable travel in an urban environment. This explored and imagined how urban environments will affect sustainable travel norms and how cities can become truly smart and integrated.

We proactively manage the security of bicycles on campus. Each year, the team collects abandoned bicycles across all campuses. These bikes, after a period of time, are donated to local charities. One of the charities, Sanctuary Wheels, provides free refurbished bikes and tuition for refugees across Oxfordshire. Many of this year's bicycles have supported people who have fled from the conflict in Ukraine.



## BROOKESbus

The BROOKESbus services remain an important feature for our University, ensuring sustainable and secure transport between our campuses and halls of residence. We have recently integrated the services with local bus services to improve frequency, remove duplication from the local bus network and provided new services to the John Radcliffe Hospital and to Oxfords Park and Ride schemes. These services have rebounded positively after Covid-19, currently operating at 121% based on pre-pandemic patronage.

Since 2012, we have transported approximately 23.5 million people on our BROOKESbus service. This has saved an estimated 15 million car journeys each year from Oxford's busy roads and around 15 million kg of carbon emissions. Furthermore, we have been making the transition away from plastic cards to app-based travel passes. App-based ticket holders currently make up 97.5% of all journeys made by our students or staff, reducing the need for single use plastic.

As part of the UK's government pledge to decarbonise transport, Oxfordshire County Council have been successful in winning funding from the [Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas \(ZEBRA\) scheme](#) to deliver an electric bus network. This will deliver a total of 159 electric buses operating within the Oxford region which includes the BROOKESbus services. The first delivery is anticipated in March 2023; further updates will be provided in our next annual sustainability report.



# Biodiversity



## Vision

In line with the Government’s strategy, Oxford Brookes University has a vision to address the UK and global biodiversity crisis through the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across the university estate and wider global aspects through our teaching and research programs.

## Progress and initiatives

In the past two years we have seen real progress around biodiversity protection, enhancement and delivery. However, in recognition of the global biodiversity crisis we want to increase our efforts and have delivered a new Biodiversity Strategy, with the following key objectives:

- The creation and delivery of the new 4R hierarchy:
  - REFRAIN, from activities which could harm species and ecosystems;
  - REDUCE harm by taking steps to mitigate negative impacts;
  - RESTORE species and ecosystems that have been harmed;
  - RENEW, strengthen and invigorate biodiversity via proactive effort.
- Delivering of biodiversity net gain at a minimum of +10% across our redevelopment programs.
- Development of landscape and ecology management plans across all sites to be retained. These plans will include habitat baselines and the implementation of a robust monitoring regime.

- Creation of internal partnerships, adoption of best practice and a Living Laboratory approach to biodiversity across our estate.
- Creation of external partnerships and contribution to Oxford’s biodiversity network, to enhance biodiversity across the city and our local community.
- Engagement with students, staff, and the local community by providing education, training, and involvement in local initiatives and biodiversity enhancement programmes.
- Continuing to promote biodiversity locally, nationally and internationally through our research and teaching programmes.

The new strategy and holistic approach will allow us to better manage our biodiversity across our estate and beyond. It will be supported by a newly established Biodiversity Advisory Group, whose purpose will be to inform and influence the development of the strategy, deliver a living lab approach and site specific landscape and ecology management plans.



## Initiatives

- Planting for Pollinators - we have worked with students and staff to create Nectar Cafés across our estate. A Nectar Café is an area of flowering plants that provides a nectar and a protein source, whilst providing a habitat that insects can use for their lifecycle. New nectar cafe’s at our Headington Campus were widely enjoyed by staff, students and visitors and were featured across many departments communications.
- Marston Road Quad - we are privileged to manage a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, next to the Milham Ford Nature Park. There are over 72 species of flowering plant and 23 species of fungi in the quad. Of greatest note are the rare species of wild orchids; the Bee Orchid and Pyramidal Orchid. In order to maintain the biodiversity of this site, the quad receives hay meadow management. This site is undergoing a slightly different mowing regime at present to halt grasses overtaking the meadow, which has resulted in a 14-fold increase in pyramidal and bee orchids since 2018.
- Our ‘rewilding’ project at Harcourt Hill with the natural grassland meadow has continued to show improvement this year with the lack of mowing allowing an increased diversity of local species. Rewilding projects are of great benefit to local wildlife and we have seen many new plant species emerge allowing an appreciation of the natural world doing what it does best when left to its own devices. We have expanded the rewilding areas to include an increasing amount of verges by simply decreasing the mowing regimes across this site.

- In the last annual report we had recently signed up to be a Hedgehog Friendly campus university with the formation of the new staff and student team, a great initiative run by Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS). We fulfilled our ambitions and in 2021 we were awarded Bronze status under the Hedgehog Friendly Campus framework. We now have a well established working group with both students and staff, have provided training for the grounds team, delivered surveys, litter picks, fundraised and are actively progressing initiatives to achieve a Silver award for this year, a great collaborative achievement for these volunteers.
- We are an active signatory to the Oxford’s Swift City group programme and installed swift boxes at Headington, Clive Booth, Paul Kent and Crescent – these are being monitored by the Environmental Sustainability Team. Possible, unconfirmed sightings of swifts were reported at our Headington Hill site, these will be monitored and reported for next year. Many of our staff volunteered as surveyors during the summer. City wide results have shown a 20% reduction this year which is disappointing and new strategies are being developed to raise local awareness of the many ways that we can help these vulnerable birds.

We continue to deliver many other initiatives and management regimes to protect and enhance our biodiversity on site. We were the first university in the world to install bee-centred **Freedom Hives**, which are doing well with both hives overwintering a hive. Bird, bat, and owl boxes are installed across our campuses to provide homes for wildlife, alongside bug hotels at several campuses to welcome overwintering guests.



# Sustainable Food



## Vision

To deliver and promote, in partnership with our catering contractors Gather & Gather, a ‘sustainable food offering’, in line with our Social Responsibility Framework, Environmental and Sustainability goals, whilst continually striving to enhance the consumer experience.

## Progress and initiatives

The sustainable food agenda has always been important at Oxford Brookes. We recognise the importance of providing healthy food and the environmental, economic and social impacts surrounding food systems. Moving to more sustainable food systems will have a positive impact on the climate and biodiversity crisis and meet the needs and expectations of our stakeholders.

Gather & Gather joined us in January 2020 after successfully embedding the sustainability agenda into the heart of the tender. They’ve had a difficult start to their contract, with Covid-19 restrictions, reduced student numbers, staff recruitment issues and spiralling supply chain costs. This has heavily impacted on the delivery of our sustainable food strategy and action plan targets. However, we have still delivered progress in key areas and this is a priority aspect for this academic year.

- Fairtrade University status - We have a proud history with Fairtrade, being certified as the first Fairtrade University in the world in 2004. We achieved a Fairtrade University award for our work over the last two academic years (2020-2022), and are one of only 26 higher education institutions to have achieved Fairtrade University status. The award recognises a broad range of activities undertaken within the institution, working towards a more just, equitable and sustainable world for all. This includes raising awareness of ethical and sustainable consumption and increasing the availability of Fairtrade products on campus. Students were recruited as volunteer auditors and given training by the NUS and the Fairtrade Foundation, equipping them with transferable skills and experience in Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment accredited auditing.



- Plant Based - In line with the latest research, we have moved away from a vegetarian/vegan framing approach, which separates out vegetarian/vegan offerings from the menu’s, to embed vegan and vegetarian choices across all of our menu’s. Targets were met ensuring that vegetarian and vegan offerings were available at each catering outlet every day, with our menu’s offering over 50% plant-based options across our catering outlets in 2021/22.



**HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**

- GreenHouse Gas Emissions (GHGE) - We are partnering with the Humane Society International’s (HSI), Forward Food Programme and completed a full GHGE baseline assessment of our menu’s. With a target of reducing GHGE’s by 20% by the end of 2022. Forward Food have continued to support us in delivering engagement and educational programs. HSI hosted a cookery demo creating sustainable and accessible plant based dishes to support our Earth Day Fair in 2022. Sharing the essentials of creating plant based dishes and details of the Forward Food programme. Helping create more sustainable meals at scale, making climate friendly menu’s more accessible and delicious.



- Partnerships - One of our key partnerships is with [Good Food Oxford](#) and we are proud signatories to the Good Food Oxford Pledge, aiming to catalyse actions by individuals and organisations that will promote a healthy, fair, ethical and environmentally sustainable food system. Fiona Steel, Good Food Oxford Manager, helped us deliver an online sustainable food panel discussion, with other key partners on the complexities of good food choices - Hungry for change - the power is on your plate!



- Palm Oil - A full review of palm oil within the supply chain has been completed with our catering suppliers. A new Palm Oil statement requires completion and targets set for this coming year. We are signatories to the Sumatran Orangutan Societies drive for Oxford City’s bid to become a [Sustainable Palm Oil City](#).
- Life Water - Gather & Gather partner with Life Water and drop4drop and have funded the construction of 20 clear water projects, changing the lives of over 18,000 people. Having a clean provision of water now means that the communities no longer have to face the threat of water-borne illnesses and can focus on their livelihoods, education and family life. To find out more visit: [www.life-water.co.uk/pages/what-we-stand-for](http://www.life-water.co.uk/pages/what-we-stand-for).
- Food Waste - Our food waste is segregated and taken to our local anaerobic digestion plant, which creates energy for local homes. We have baselined and set new targets to reduce kitchen food waste and deliver a food waste target of no more than 5% of revenue within our catering outlets. We deliver a [Too good to go service](#), discounts on reusable cups, free water at all outlets, and we are actively engaging with students on discounted offers to aid them during the cost of living crisis. Our on-site Co-op shop partners with our local food bank Oxford Food Hub, diverting food from the waste streams and providing meals for the homeless and disadvantaged people in the Oxford community.

If you want to know more information about our sustainable food ethos and [accreditations](#) please refer to our website and review our Sustainable Food Strategy and Action Plan. Gather & Gather are part of the Sustainable Restaurant Association community and are dedicated to making every meal served as sustainable as possible. They have a company-wide 3\* Food Made Good Award, which is the culmination of a year of ambitious progress and innovative change across their kitchens. We are currently exploring extending the award to specifically cover Oxford Brookes’ sites.

# Student & Staff Engagement



## Vision

To create a culture of sustainability awareness, opportunities and engagement programmes, enhancing student and staff experience and 'upskilling' our community to create a behaviour change sustainability legacy.

## Progress and initiatives

Our new sustainable engagement strategy and action plan have been developed to meet the objectives of our environmental sustainability policies and strategies, our social responsibility framework, and to integrate into the University's 2035 strategy. It aims to deliver a culture of sustainable awareness, opportunities and engagement programs, in line with UN sustainable development goals and our guiding principles.

## Initiatives



### Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF)

The Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) aims to support more sustainable and cost-effective laboratory research and management. The framework consists of actions regarding waste,

water, energy, travel, research quality, and procurement. Baseline calculators are provided to enable users to quantify the costs and impact of their actions. Oxford Brookes received a Bronze award in 2022 for our progress in areas such as the reduction of plastic waste.

### Green Impact

While some progress was made during the pandemic, in 2021 we fully launched the Green Impact programme. This SOS developed initiative uses social change theory to help staff play an active role in sustainability at the University. Teams complete actions and collaborate to create meaningful change in their departments. In the 21/22 program, we had 9 teams sign-up with, five staff teams receiving the bronze award.

Student auditors assessed the staff team's performance, gaining valuable auditing skills, and an IEMA approved certificate. The programme received great feedback from the student auditors.

**Green Impact at Oxford Brookes in pictures 2021-2022**

- Teams took part in Fairtrade Fortnight and shared comms with their departments
- Trees were planted by team members across campus
- Reducing energy & water use was promoted through comms, posters and stickers
- The use of 'Ecosia' as a default search engine was encouraged by departments
- Teams got involved with biodiversity events, such as wildflower seed planting
- Staff took part in sustainable travel weeks & shared travel initiatives



## Sustainability Events

The pandemic scuppered many of our in person events in 2020/21, but we still managed to deliver various webinars, online lectures and share hints and tips on how to be more sustainable at home.



### Showcase at the Science Bazaar

In 2021 the University's Science Bazaar went online with the theme of Discovery and Exploration. More than 400 families joined for activities which included workshops, games, videos, and podcasts. Kids and their parents also got the chance to build and race their own balloon-powered rocket cars, with around 1,000 kits being distributed via schools to local children. In 2022 the Science Bazaar theme was Growth. Sustainability colleagues teamed up with Oxford Direct Services to deliver Waste Warriors, helping children to discover the impact waste has on the world around us and how we can help by recycling at school and at home.

In 2021/22 we were fortunate to be able to deliver in person events in time for our annual Fairtrade Fair, Earth Day and our Pack for Good Campaign launch.

### Showcase - Earth Day

Earth Day moved back to being in person in 2022, with a fantastic Earth Day Fair and a host of green activities for students and staff. Tips to reduce the carbon footprint of food were explored with demonstrations of plant-based cookery, supported by Tony's Choccolony. Green campus initiatives ranged from hedgehog surveys to advice on cutting energy consumption and e-bike and e-scooter demos. Oxford Direct Services gave tips on recycling and the Berkshire, Bucks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust supported us on the day, with biodiversity initiatives. Oxford Brookes student Christoph Kurzman

showcased a furniture upcycling project, where he made stools from the old beds from Clive Booth Student Village. Some of his furniture has since been purchased by the University for the Deli catering outlet.

Like many across the UK, students are facing increased household energy bills so advice was available on what legal responsibilities private landlords have to make properties green as well as how to reduce energy consumption using smart meters and green energy suppliers.

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/news/earth-day-celebrations-at-oxford-brookes/>

### ECOSmart Platinum award



The ECOSmart scheme, run by Greengage Solutions, recognises eco-friendly hotels and conference venues that meet certified high standards of environmental sustainability. In recognition of its sustainability standards, Oxford Brookes Venues were awarded a

Gold accreditation in 2021 and a Platinum accreditation in 2022. ECOSmart accreditations provide a quality stamp of approval to help companies make a sustainable decision when booking, providing the University with a competitive edge.

We continue to support the Brookes Union Environmental Network Officer and the Union's various sustainability related societies. We endeavour to create a joined up holistic approach to engagement and as outlined in our new strategy we are looking forward to delivering more in this arena over the coming years. Communication is key to our success and the sustainability website has been updated to include new content for student and staff engagement. We will continue to direct staff and students on how they can get more involved, including groups to join, hands-on activities to take part and ways to get sustainability ideas heard by the university.

## Education



The reflection of sustainability in the University's curriculum and pedagogic culture has increased considerably over the last two years. A key overarching development has been the University's introduction of the **IDEAS model** and toolkit. This is a framework for inclusive curriculum and practice development where the S in the title acronym stands for "sustainability mindset". The toolkit poses a set of student-voiced questions to support programme teams to reflect on sustainability. These questions include "Where in my course am I able to explore definitions of sustainability, taking account of social equity, economic viability and environmental sustainability?", and "How is my course preparing students for a working life as changemakers in a greener, more circular economy?"

Mirroring this curricular development and seeking to further develop the sustainability aspects of our Education and Enterprise pillar of Strategy 2035, an Education for Sustainable Development Working Group has been convened. Launched in May 2022 and bringing together colleagues from across faculties and directorates, the group has a remit to identify ways in which sustainability considerations can be better reflected and embedded across the full range of University curricula. Specific proposals set out by the group include the incorporation of sustainability content as a major component of new student inductions, the development of a credit-bearing, cross-institutional module on sustainability, for adoption into students' programmes at Level 5 and working towards embedding sustainability themes and competencies across all disciplines and levels at Brookes. Recognition of the

vital importance of developing staff and students sustainability skills, values and attributes to support these efforts is foregrounded.

In the wider sector, Oxford Brookes staff and students again took part in the Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS) annual Teach In event which campaigns to encourage all educators across sectors to embed the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) into all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. This year's SDG Teach In, the fifth such event, ran from 21 February – 11 March 2022 and Oxford Brookes came 6th nationally for the number of students reached. This meant we were in the top 10 institutions, with 34% of our students reached. 134 Education institutions, 141,369 students and 772 educators took part in the largest Global Goals Teach In event ever. **SOS UK** selected one of Oxford Brookes' entries as a case study that was published alongside other examples of good practice in their end of year impact report. Educators pledging were invited to contribute their entries to a shared Padlet, housed on the **Global Goals 2022 website** in order to exchange ideas and examples, providing a visual record of examples to motivate others.

In addition to these cross-University initiatives, a number of faculty-based projects have been undertaken. This includes the launch in Technology, Design & Environment of a British Council-funded project on Education for A Sustainable and Resilient Future. This follows a successful application to a UK-Turkey Higher Education Institutional Partnerships Funding stream for 2022-24. The project is led by Dr Esra Kurul and Professor Rajat

Gupta and will enable the research team to evaluate the integration of sustainability and resilience matters into curricula across Oxford Brookes and to share best practice outcomes of this evaluation with a partnering institution, TED University (TEDU) in Turkey. The plan is that the evaluation at Oxford Brookes will form the basis of TEDU's integration of Sustainable Development Goals into their undergraduate curricula of courses. The Oxford Brookes project leads are currently working with members of the Sustainable & Resilient Futures RIKE (SRF) representing the four faculties to ensure direct representation of each in the delivery of this project.

There has similarly been a good deal of activity in OBBS where a number of colleagues are closely involved in Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRiME) initiatives and other development activities. The **Future Pathways** ESD project led by Cathy d'Abreu has successfully embedded ESD across 3 programmes and 46 modules using the QA and quinquennial review process. ESD and the SDGs were embedded into programme and module descriptors; teaching, learning and assessment strategy at programme level and Learning Objectives were then aligned. The project was presented as an example of good practice at the Advance HE Sustainability Symposium 2022 and at Sustainability in Learning and Teaching Seminar Series (**University of Glasgow/Advance HE Connect**) November 2022.

Also in OBBS, the Pathways team will shortly be hosting a Sustainability in Teaching and Learning Conference which considers the contribution that might be made

by English for Academic Purposes provision to the sustainability agenda. Involving keynotes from Professor Simon Kemp (lead author Advance HE and QAA ESD Guidance Document 2021) and Isabel Rimanoczy, (author of The Sustainability Mindset Principles), the **BALEAP PIM: EAP for a more Sustainable World Conference** March 2023.

Synergies between these different strands of faculty-based activity were captured, and the scope for further collaborations identified, in a joint proposal for further reflecting sustainability in the undergraduate curriculum: **UG Sustainability proposal spring 2022**. The proposal identifies new avenues for building upon the essentially transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of sustainability in the curriculum and the positive collaborative opportunities that arise as a result.

These examples of Faculty or RIKE-wide initiatives are coupled with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aligned work in modules across our four faculties. For example, in HLS, Ka Yan Hess has been leading the design and implementation of a spiral curriculum for environmental sustainability in the BSc and MSc (pre-reg) occupational therapy programmes with colleagues at the Department of Sport, Health Science and Social Work. Mina Samangoeei, Jane Anderson and Ricardo Assis Rosa have integrated holistic sustainable design teaching and learning in the undergraduate architecture programme in TDE.



# Research & Knowledge Exchange



**The Sustainable and Resilient Futures RIKE Network** (SRF) was established in April 2021, following its developmental activities that were included in our last report. SRF is one of seven current RIKE networks which bring together staff from across the University with a shared interest and expertise in specific themes or areas. The RIKE Networks contribute to the delivery of the Research and Innovation Pillar of the University Strategy.

The SRF Network has just over 100 members from all faculties and some directorates. Its members share a common aspiration: to address pressing global challenges through research and innovation that contribute to sustainable and resilient societies and environments. Sustainability, in all its forms, is fundamental for societies to thrive. Concerns regarding humanity's increasing destabilisation of the Earth and its resources, and of growing societal inequalities at local and global scales, remain central in current debates. Climate change, socio-economic inequality, rights to resources and their distribution between human and non-human species, are major global issues that lie at the heart of the Sustainable & Resilient Futures agenda, aligning with and addressing the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These are key areas of research among Network members, which are categorised under the following themes:

- Climate resilience
- Sustainable resources
- Cities and infrastructure
- Society, justice and behavioural change
- Institutions and governance
- Education and skills development

Examples of the research and knowledge exchange activities that our members undertake in these areas include:

1. The Small Business Sustainability Basics programme delivered by Small Business Britain in collaboration with Oxford Brookes Business School (OBBS). This programme aims to help small businesses make the most of the opportunities of sustainability. It can be categorised under SRF's Institutions and governance theme.

Dr Sara le Roux, Dr Lauren Tuckerman and Prof Tim Vorley from OBBS recently launched their report on **Small Business Sustainability: Insight & Implications** at the House of Lords. The report highlighted that a large proportion of small businesses are progressing with some form of sustainability activity, and that 69% of businesses were actively lowering their carbon emissions. The report makes recommendations for small businesses, business support practitioners, big business and government on next steps.



2. The School of Architecture and the School of the Built Environment are home to substantial research activity under SRF's Cities and Infrastructure theme.

The THEOW (The Effect of Offshore Wind on the Human Environment) project by Dr Bridget Durning and Professor John Glasson evaluated the socio-economic impacts of offshore wind farms that have been widely stated and recognised, but had never been explored before. The study showed that "local jobs, contracts and the Unlock our Future Fund connected to Vattenfall's Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm are estimated to generate well over £5 million each year for the Aberdeen and wider Aberdeenshire economy over a 20-year period within its operating life".

The T-cosy project lead by Professor Rajat Gupta involved the deep energy retrofitting of a six-flat council block in Great Yarmouth, turning it into a healthier, greener and climate friendly property. The project aimed to develop a fast, efficient and cost-effective solution to deep energy retrofit, creating a super-insulated envelope around the building that is extremely airtight with no thermal bridges. Residents remained in-situ for the whole retrofit and access to the flats was required only three times during the build. The project received a national award at the **Inside Housing Development Awards** in November 2021.

3. SRF's Sustainable Resources theme covers human and non-human access to resources; understanding the complex interactions between humans and wildlife; environmental and social impact assessment; biodiversity and resource use.

Timea Korda-Kovats and Dr Mina Samangooei from the School of Architecture collaborated with Dr Sangeetha Thondre from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences and Dr Emma Davies from the Department of Psychology to deliver the Edible Streets in Oxford project. This project aimed to understand the feasibility of growing food directly on residential streets. In collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council Public Health and Good Food Oxford, it designed an edible street in Oxford. Findings showed that there is interest and enthusiasm for growing food in streets to create more opportunities for community cohesion as well as the health and well-being benefits, but significant issues around Public Liability insurance and gaining a licence for using council land. As an extension of the Edible Streets Project, two MSc Applied Human Nutrition students conducted their summer (2021) research project to map the urban edible gardening initiatives in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire and explore the impact of these initiatives on diet and lifestyle of the participants.



4. Learners of all ages need to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to develop and implement solutions to complex and interconnected global challenges, including climate change, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, poverty and inequality. Oxford Brookes is very well placed to support learners of all ages in this journey. Research and practice under SRF's Education and skills development theme follows the principles of UN's Futures Literacy capability and contributes to the institutional activities that are covered under the [Education Section](#) of this report. They focus on empowering individuals, communities and societies to transform their current realities such that their futures are sustainable and resilient through education and skills development. To this end, Education for sustainable development (ESD) is practised across our four Faculties on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes as described in the [Education Section](#). A couple of examples in which SRF members were involved include:

a. OBBS is represented at [Our Shared World](#) - a coalition of 300+ institutions, businesses and organisations, which states that by 2030 we "ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development". It is also home to the [Future Pathways Project](#), described in the Education section of this report.

b. The ERASMUS+ funded [InCLIMATE](#) (Integrating climate resilience in EU higher education) project that is being undertaken by Dr Maurizio Sibilla and Dr Esra Kurul. An eLearning platform has been developed as part of this project. It includes interdisciplinary educational materials on climate resilience, climate change, environmental management, energy efficiency and renewable energy, environmental impact on urban areas and urban policies, and is organised as an online modular course. It will be available as an open source educational material at: <http://elearning.inclimate.eu/> until the end of 2025.

The Sustainable and Resilient Futures Network will continue activities under its Education and skills development theme, starting with its project funded by the British Council's Connect4Innovation: UK-Turkey Higher Education Institutional Partnerships Fund 2022-2024 and entitled: "Education for A Sustainable and Resilient Future" (please refer to the [Education Section](#) for further details).

## Procurement



### Vision

To be a leading organisation in the higher education community for sustainable and ethical procurement, in line with our Social Responsibility Framework, environmental and sustainability goals

### Progress and initiatives

Procurement always strives to show transparency and accountability when it comes to good procurement practices. Whether it is a supplier being set up in our finance system, or a large impacting framework purchase, we always look for the best value and how the procurement activity may have a positive social, environmental or economic impact on the wider community and subsequent supply chain.

A valuable programme that the University utilises is the NETPositive Supplier Engagement tool, that allows us to engage with suppliers around sustainability aspects, who in turn generate their own bespoke Sustainability Action Plan. The target for the year 2021/2022 was 75%, we are working towards this new target and delivered 68% in 21/22, demonstrating a continual year-on-year improvement, due to a concerted effort by the procurement team. This has been a multi-month push to onboard as many suppliers with like-minded business ethics.



### Showcases

- Mattresses in our halls of residences - we have been working proactively with sustainable removal companies and contribute to more products and mattresses being put back into service rather than clogging up landfills. End-of-life mattresses are recycled into new items such as pillows, chair/couch cushions and new mattresses for social housing. In the UK, almost 10 million mattresses wind up in landfills annually.
- University-wide travel - we now primarily use Diversity Travel for rail, hotel, and air travel. As part of their sustainability promise and Green initiatives, when booking travel, a user can now calculate their carbon footprint, to make more sustainable choices. This is an initiative that is being introduced through many travel companies, but Diversity Travel is one of the first that you can choose the most sustainable way to travel if conference calls just will not do.
- Global Distribution and printing - this tender enabled us to procure a local company to Brookes, that also has the capability to use local suppliers from each relevant country we require copy and print from, significantly decreasing transport emissions

More strategically, the University is now a member of Electronic Watch via the Southern University Purchasing Consortium (SUPC) being fully affiliated on behalf of their members. Electronics Watch is an independent monitoring organisation bringing together public sector buyers and civil society organisations in electronics production regions, with experts in human rights and global supply chains. It gives us feet on the ground visibility to production processes and factory practices, wherever these places may be. This information is then embedded into framework agreements such as the Servers, Storage and Solutions (SSSNA) framework and the Desktops and Notebooks Framework Agreement.

## Community Engagement & Social Responsibility



### Vision

To develop and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders to contribute to and work in partnership with our community and wider society. In collaboration with colleagues across the University, we encourage students and staff to participate in a range of initiatives to help make a positive social and environmental impact to our wider community.

### Progress and initiatives

#### Volunteering and giving:

- We continue to run targeted campaigns throughout the academic year to actively encourage staff and students to volunteer. Supporting local groups, organisations and campaigns which benefit the local community and enhance the staff and student experience.
- As a founding partner of Team Oxford, we work to help connect employees with organisations in Oxford that depend on volunteers.
- The Oxford Brookes Volunteer Centre brings together and promotes volunteering opportunities to students. They can find out about opportunities that match their interests or try something new and gain new skills. This makes a difference to the community, can be rewarding for students as well as enhancing their CV.
- The University also works with Oxford Hub, a student-founded organisation and now a place-based charity offering volunteering, skilled placements, projects and programmes to respond to community needs.
- We have open and accessible campuses. We welcome members of the public to our community friendly sites by holding a range of events, such as our series of free open lectures, art exhibitions and award winning gardens as well as offering a wide range for first class facilities and services.

#### Community Engagement & Social Responsibility:

- The University employs a team of Student Community Wardens who help students settle into their private rented accommodation and assist in resolving any tensions that may arise between residents.
- We continue with the House Champion Scheme, a partnership approach between Oxford Brookes, Thames Valley Police and Oxford City Council to encourage students living in private rented accommodation to be responsible neighbours and help them settle into their community. Information is provided by representatives from all partners and our Student Community Wardens to students in areas largely populated with Brookes students.
- As a responsible neighbour we respond to any concerns raised by members of the local community.
- The University continues to support a number of local campaigns such as the yearly OxClean campaign; we promote these events as volunteer opportunities to staff and students to help keep Oxford clean and tidy.
- We support local groups such as Headington Action with their annual activities, such as Headington Christmas Lights, Connected Communities and Headington Festival.

## Ethical Finance



#### Commitment:

The University does not directly invest or plan to invest in fossil fuels, arms, tobacco, alcohol, or border industry companies or any company complicit in the violation of International law. If there was an identifiable disinvestment in the future, the University is committed to directly reinvest in community renewable energy and energy projects on campus.

#### Progress:

We delivered our new Ethical Investment Policy, in June 2022. This policy is subject to regular review by the Finance and Resources Committee on behalf of the University. In reviewing the Policy, the CFO will consult with the Sustainability Steering Group which includes representation from both staff and students.

[www.brookes.ac.uk/Sustainability/Ethical-Finance](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/Sustainability/Ethical-Finance)



This report has been compiled by the Environmental Sustainability Team. We welcome your feedback on environmental sustainability at Oxford Brookes. If you have any thoughts or questions please get in touch with us at [sustainability@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@brookes.ac.uk). If you would like more information about our policies, strategies or action plans please visit our sustainability website at [www.brookes.ac.uk/sustainability](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/sustainability)

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