



# FUTUREPROOF

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## **Celebrating our second year of FutureProof**

FutureProof was officially launched in June 2018. Since then we have held 18 workshops at Canterbury, Medway and online on key sustainability issues and built a network of 69 Sustainability Champions representing 54 teams and departments from across the University. 62 of these champions are actively engaging with sustainability issues and activities, with 39 of them working on their own projects developed in their own departments. Please take a look at the rest of the poster series below to see what kind of things the champions have been doing.

**For further information please email [sustainability@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@kent.ac.uk)**



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## Increasing Recycling rates in the School of Sport and Exercise

**Exercise** - Andy Wickens, the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences Senior Technician and Sustainability Champion, realised that the school did not have a sustainability plan with regards to the waste being produced during the school's practical classes and research activities. Andy noticed that the majority of the recyclable materials (hand drying paper towels and couch roll, used to cover the therapy treatment beds) was being disposed of in the general waste. Andy also noticed that the school was using a lot of single use plastic cups and sent a large number of bath towels (used for comfort in sports therapy) to be laundered.

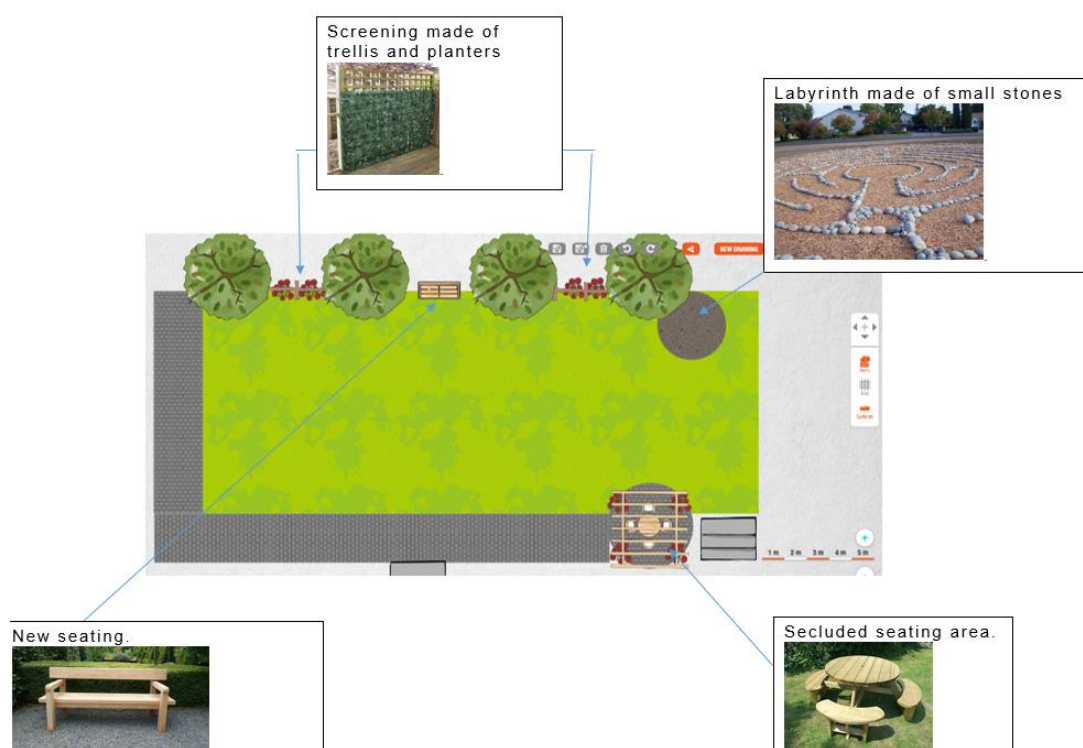
Andy has put a sustainability plan in to action. Reusable plastic beakers are now used during practical classes. These are simply washed after each class ready for the next session. This saves the disposal of 50-100 single use plastic cups a class. Andy has also investigated the sports therapy practices and put in place a more efficient means of using comfort towels. This has reduced the school's laundry by one third saving more than 300 loads of washing per year (cutting down on the use of electricity and chemicals entering the environment).

Andy discussed lab waste with Emily Mason and Emma Dimond and Recycling bins have subsequently been placed in the school's laboratories, therapy clinics and rehab gyms so that hand washing paper towels and couch roll is recycled, rather than being sent to general waste.

In addition, all SSES students are given a free reusable water bottle when they first join the school, reducing the amount of single use plastic cups being used at the University's water fountains.



**The Medway Secret Garden** – Last year we reported progress on creating a wellbeing garden at the Medway campus that was designed by the Sustainability Champions in Student Services. We have had a number of challenges over the year with infrastructure, the coronavirus lockdown and now funding. However, we remain committed to making this idea a reality and will look at new ways we can deliver this much needed project. The project aims to maximise the limited green space at the Medway campus by creating a quiet space for reflection that can be utilised by students, staff and the wellbeing team. For more information, or if you would like to help support the project, please email [sustainability@kent.ac.uk](mailto:sustainability@kent.ac.uk)



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**Sustainable Food Strategy** – guided and implemented by staff, students and sustainability champions the Sustainable Food Strategy has enabled lots of changes to our food offerings across Kent's outlets.

Rutherford Kitchen has changed its produce supplier with fruit and vegetables now being sourced from local growers. The menu is now adapted by the chefs regularly to reflect the seasons and showcase local produce.

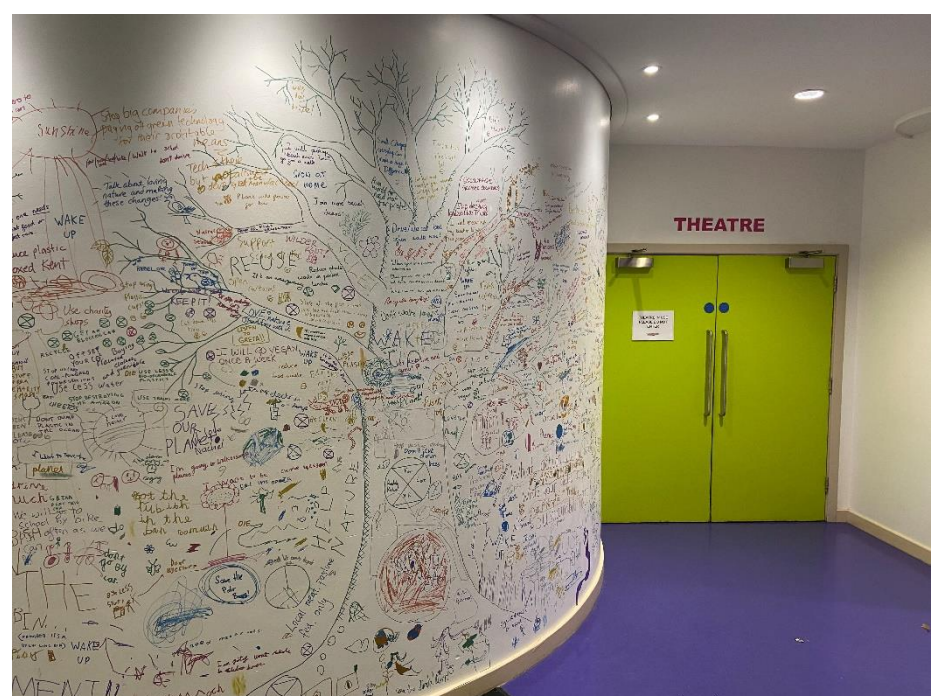
Menus across Kent Hospitality outlets saw a big increase in vegan options. Many of the new options replaced the red meat options reducing the carbon and water impact of these menus. These efforts were recognised by PETA who included Kent in their list of 20 most vegan friendly Universities.

The group is now working on a strategy refresh to continue the momentum of these changes.



**Project Zero at the Gulbenkian** – The Gulbenkian is still on a mission to reduce its impact across the sustainability board. Since the start of Project Zero, headed up by Sustainability Champion Daniel Parsons, they have:

- Removed all single use plastic bottles in the café, saving an estimated 50000 plastic bottles since August 2018
- Switched to reusable plastic pint and half pint cups which has significantly reduced their single use plastic cup buying
- Partnered with 'Too Good To Go' and sold 626 magic bags. These are bags of food that would be thrown away and instead offer meals to customers at significantly reduced rates
- Sent all their milk bottle caps to a company that reuse the plastic, that's about 300 caps a week
- Hosted a family day on climate change with thoughts, ideas and pledges shared on the 'SustainabiliTree.'



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## **The School of Anthropology and Conservation's response to the Climate Emergency—**

SAC Sustainability Champions Dr. Miguel Alexiades and Dr. Charlie Gardner began reaching out to SAC students to scope interest in sustainability and in engaging with the University and its commitment to embed the SDG into its teaching, research and operations. They received a good response and facilitated a number of meetings which led to the creation of the SAC Sustainability Working Group, a loose network of students and staff from across different programs and disciplines in the School—the group currently has about 100 people on its mailing list.

The group agreed to prioritize encouraging the School to declare a climate and environment emergency and over several months, and in consultation with a number of colleagues around the University, developed a draft declaration which was signed by 136 staff and students from SAC and sent to the School's Senior Management Committee. After some iterations and amendments, the declaration text and targets were approved by the SMC and School governing body and an official declaration was made during an event in September 2019, barely six months after the group first started forming.

The event was attended by over 200 people from across the University, with Professor Tracey Kivell, Head of the School, officially declaring the emergency and the School's ambitious targets.

**Reduce emissions by at least 45% by 2025, reaching net zero by 2040 or, at the very latest, 2050.**

The full declaration document can be read on the SAC's blog. The event was closed by Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Karen Cox: *"I have been truly moved by what I've heard this evening. We know what the goal is, but we need to be brave and bold to get there. And we need collective ideas to move this forward."* Following the declaration student led sub groups were created within the SAC Sustainability Working Group: Curriculum, Emissions, Sustainable Food, Green Spaces and Mental Health, Networking and Waste.

The most active since have been: Curriculum, which has been feeding into the Responsible Futures Program, as a case study; Emissions whose activities have included conducting an energy audit in the building; and Food Sustainability and Waste who are working together alongside the Create café on how to embed sustainability into the procurement, operations and branding of the café. The process of calculating and reducing direct and indirect emissions within a School setting will hopefully provide other Schools and Departments with a case study to demonstrate the principle and develop an approach that can be scaled up across the University.

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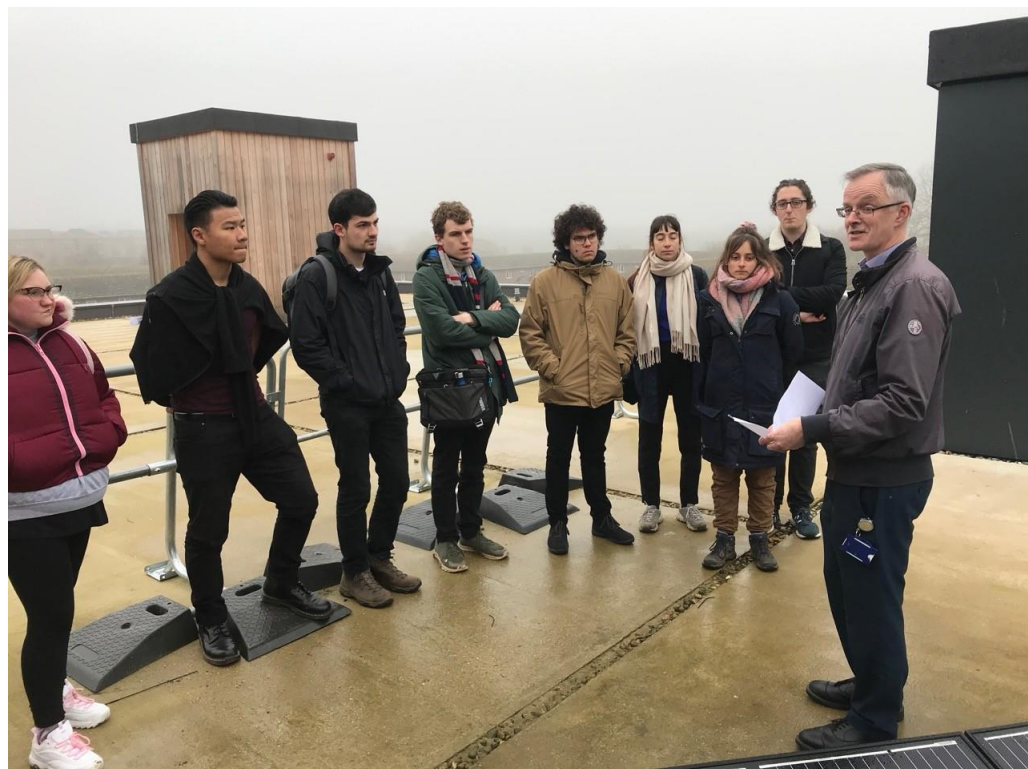


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**Student led solutions to Sustainability challenges (SAC)** – Sustainability Champion Miguel Alexiades, convener of the module ‘The Anthropocene: Planetary Crises and the Age of Humans’ has been working to embed the module within the work the University is doing to embed sustainability.

The module’s assessment is serving as a Living Labs case study to demonstrate how student assessments can directly relate to the climate and environment emergency and address a sustainability aspect in the School of Anthropology and Conservation (SAC) and across the University.

All work has been carried out in consultation with the University’s Sustainability Team, Estates Department, Kent Hospitality and the Procurement Team, with representatives guiding students on a tour of the campus and highlighting key areas where more needed to be done.

This posed the question of what is the role of students in the crisis and what solutions could come up with through their academic study?

There are now 31 student teams working on a broad range of issues and problems, in some cases directly working with and supporting the activities of the SAC Sustainability Working Group. These include: calculating travel-related emissions from SAC research and teaching-related activities; surveying attitudes and opinions across SAC staff regarding temperature in the building; preparing materials to sensitize students on best practice relating to waste and recycling; or mapping out land-use and management of open and green spaces; among many others.

It is hoped that the solutions the students come up with can be implemented by the sustainability team and other colleagues to continue to make sustainable improvements across the University.



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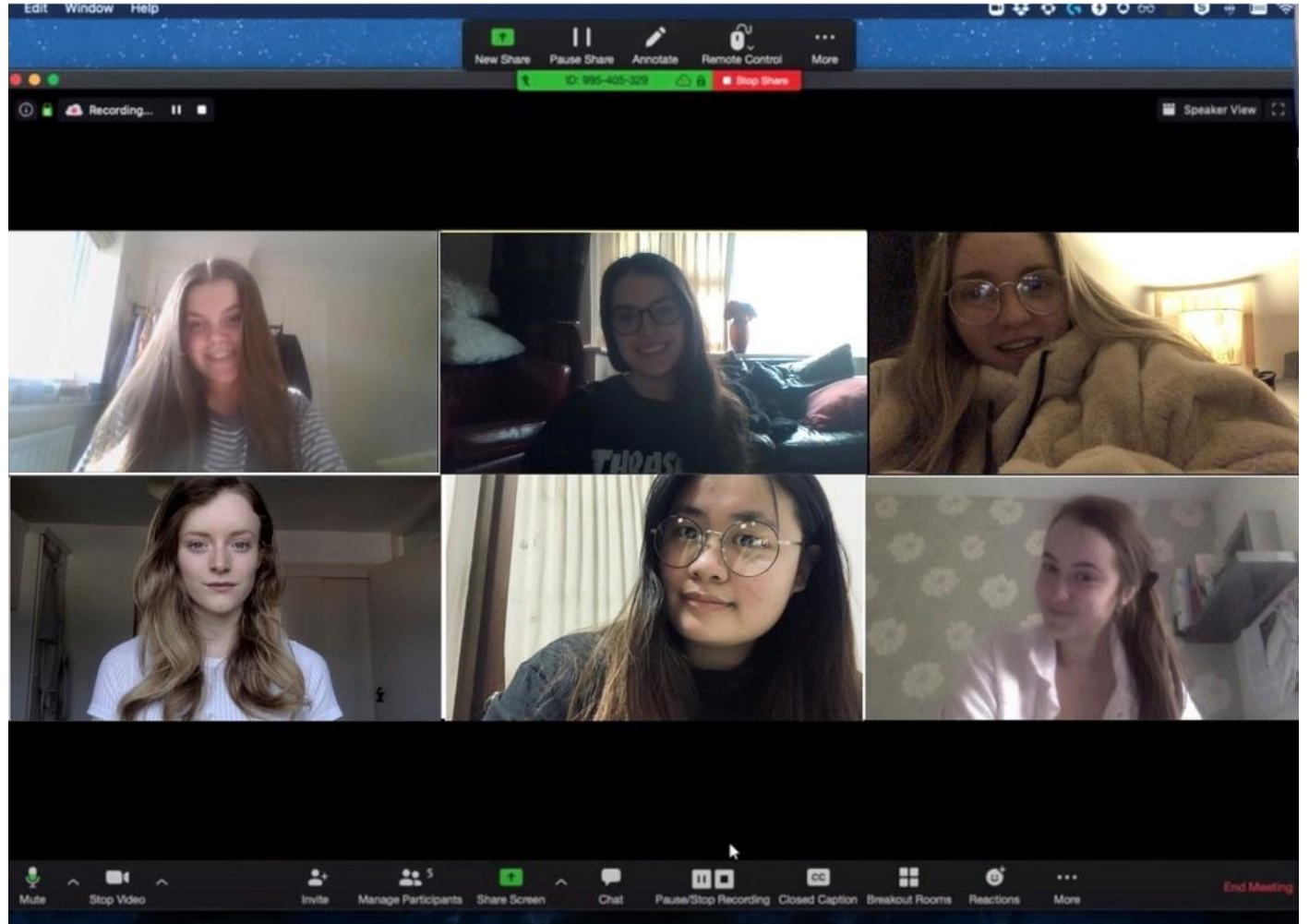


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**Student led solutions to Sustainability challenges (KBS)** - Stage 2 Market Research students have taken part in a challenge to help improve recycling rates at student accommodation on campus. They were set the problem by the University's Sustainability Coordinator, Emily Mason. She explained that recycling rates were lower at the Parkwood student village, and that contamination of recycling was higher. She asked students to research attitudes to and awareness of recycling among the students living on campus and to put forward recommendations for how to improve the situation.

Over several weeks, working in groups, students prepared secondary research from a range of sources as well as conducting face-to-face interviews with focus groups, carrying out online surveys and observations around campus. As well as their regular seminars and lectures, students were given advice by two industry professionals: Jo Pullen from the Innovation Tribe who helped the groups to dig deep into understanding the problems they were tackling, while Amy McManus from AM Marketing lectured on creating impactful video to showcase their work.

In the final stage of the challenge, students prepared in-depth pitches detailing their research and ideas for increasing sustainability. A shortlist of pitches was chosen by Module Convenor Dr Rachel Duffy, which were put forward to Emily and Rebecca Smith, the ASPIRE Project Officer and KBS Sustainability Champion, to judge. The judging was really difficult as all the groups had carried out excellent research and found key data which will be useful to the Sustainability team in the future.

The winning group were Daisy Whitewood, Dylan Osei-Bonsu, Holly Heaps, Jay Newman and Natasha Skeens. Student, Sophie Freill, from one of the finalists groups said: "What we enjoyed most was hearing different perspectives to the same problem, this really challenged us to delve deeper into the project. Being students and researching students it would have been easy for us to make a lot of assumptions but by carrying out interviews with both students and staff this really pushed us to investigate the issue further. If anything this project has shown us that sustainability is not something we should ignore – it's something all of us can contribute to and we should!"



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## Electronic Filing System at the School of Politics and International Relations – Jill Hayes, Sustainability Champion,

“When I commenced at the University of Kent in 2016 as PA to the Head of School, I took over a predominantly hard copy filing system. The problem was of lack of storage space, as the 2-draw pedestal containing staff files was at maximum capacity. Another cabinet already housed boxes of past staff files, plus records including sickness absence, study leave and Health & Safety. I had already rearranged the furniture in my office to make it safer and maximise space, but there was no room for additional storage. I arranged via the IT Helpdesk for a top-level filing system, so that only the Head of School and relevant Professional Services staff could access applicable folders. This tightened security of confidential information and allowed the Head of School access when off campus, which assists working greatly. I instigated the scanning of staff folders, so that documentation was overhauled, then filed electronically. All hard copy documentation was confidentially disposed of. Folders and files were recycled, for use by other staff in the School. Electronic filing has streamlined documentation and saves considerable time when searching through records. It makes archiving much simpler when filed into years. The other bonus was an empty 2 draw pedestal, which I swapped for a 3 draw one and made better use of the space, which tidied away the refreshments and confidential storage bag. There is no longer a need to print records, so the printer is being relinquished, saving printer cartridge and paper costs.

## Increasing recycling within labs -

Led by School of Biosciences Sustainability Champion Alex Moores and following the successful recycling lab trial in the KFG Lab featured in the last report, we have now extended this trial to cover all labs across the School of Biosciences.

All workbenches are provided with a small recycling bin which details which common lab items can be recycled, this is then emptied into the communal recycling bins in the lab by the lab users. We have created new posters with detailed information on what items can be recycled from within the lab, which items have to go as general waste (including gloves) and which items have to go to autoclaving. This initiative is projected to double recycling rates in the school based on the data from the trial.



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**Utilising the Kent Community Oasis Garden for Education** – The New Modern Languages module SCL505 ‘Cultures of Sustainability’ has been inaugurated with an extra-curricular discussion about permaculture and the planting of an apple tree. To mark the new module, permaculture expert Jo Barker held an informal discussion in the Kent Community Oasis Garden about the principles of permaculture, and the planting of a Red Falstaff heritage apple tree.

This was followed by a foraging walk, identifying the variety of hedgerow plants and ‘weeds’ that are edible and nutritious.

School Sustainability Champion and Module Convenor, William Rowlandson, who organised the session, commented: “It is important that we consider the scope of teaching beyond the confines of the seminar room and lecture theatre. Whilst this was an optional session and therefore not attended by all the group, it was a successful event, introducing the notion of the campus as a Living Lab and exploring the principles of permaculture and sustainability from the perspective of the Humanities. We hope to hold more similar events later in the semester and in subsequent years.”

The Kent Community Oasis Garden is also taking part in a research project headed up by Sustainability Champion Silvio Caputo along with Victoria Schoen from the School of Architecture looking at energy and water usage of the space alongside the productivity of the site.



**New partnerships** - The Kent Community Oasis Garden is now working in partnership with East Kent Mind to use the site not only for sustainable food growing but to increase opportunities for students and staff wanting to engage in activities that reduce anxiety and improve mood.

KentCOG has remained active over the lockdown period with KentCOG coordinator presenting online ecotherapy sessions each week and showcasing produce, ideas and activities on KentCOG’s new Instagram feed and its blog.

Upon reopening, KentCOG will continue with its program of weekly sessions and monthly guest facilitators ranging from permaculture experts, beekeepers and wellbeing advisors.

Keep an eye on the KentCOG blog for more information or join the mailing list by emailing [kentcog@kent.ac.uk](mailto:kentcog@kent.ac.uk).



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**Hedgehog Friendly Campus Project** - In July 2019 The University launched its participation in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus project - created at the University of Sheffield to use the unique spaces that university campuses are, to raise awareness of the plight of UK hedgehogs and take action to safeguard their future.

The hedgehog is in trouble, with populations plummeting 50% since 2000. Increasing habitat loss means hedgehogs are moving out of their rural homes and into built up areas. But here they face a whole host of challenges, including road traffic, litter, poisoning and lack of access to food and water. We are lucky enough to have hedgehogs on our campus however, the roads that cut through campus are causing particular issues with hedgehogs being hit by vehicles at an alarming rate.

So far the University of Kent has set up a steering group made up of the Landscape and Grounds Supervisor, Sustainability Champions from the School of Computing and the Development Office, along with the Sustainability Network Chair (Kent Union) and the Sustainability Coordinator. The project also has a mascot - Kent Bunny - who is doing his bit to raise awareness about his fellow woodland friends.

We have been carrying out staff and student litter picks in the wilder areas of our campuses and these will continue throughout the year; we have created a toolbox training session for the Landscape and Grounds Management team so that they know what to do if they find an injured hedgehog, how to check for them before strimming and what the biggest risks to hedgehogs on campus are.

The steering group are working towards Silver Award this year and have hosted an online workshop about hedgehogs which will be followed by a surveying techniques workshop over the summer. The Landscape and Grounds Team have constructed a number of hibernacula in the woodlands across campus and will be stickering all their strimming and mowing equipment to ensure they remember to check for hedgehogs before working.



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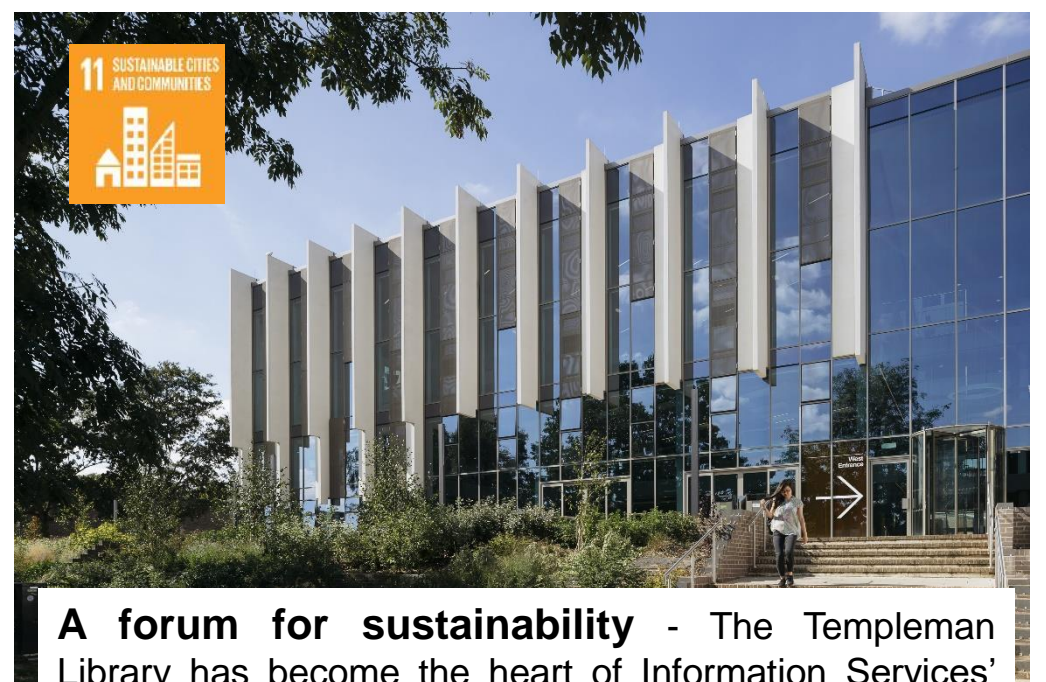
## Collaborations at Medway -

The University of Kent Sustainability Team have been working alongside their counterparts from the University of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church University to celebrate the students and staff at the Medway campus who are committed to embedding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through their actions.

A poster series was created showcasing these individuals at an exhibition in the Pilkington building. Students, academics and professional service staff from across the three University's were celebrated for their contributions towards the SDGs including our very own Lynne Regan, a Sustainability Champion from the Student Support and Wellbeing Team at Medway.



**The relevance of sustainability to all** – There is no formal part of the Computer Science degree associated with sustainability so the Sustainability Champion Dominic Orchard put together a special session for all Computing students during Enhancement Week called “You, Computer Science, and the Future of Humanity” with the help of the Sustainability Team. The session was designed to highlight the climate crisis and get students thinking about technology specific problems and solutions.



**A forum for sustainability** - The Templeman Library has become the heart of Information Services' Sustainability efforts. Led by Sustainability Champion Julie Tiff, IS are embarking on a full impact assessment of their activities so that they can have a robust plan for reducing their impact. They are also going to use the library space to host forums for students and staff to discuss sustainability challenges and solutions creating space for sustainability at the heart of the Canterbury campus.

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**Trees** – Students and staff joined the Environment Conservation Sustainability Society to plant 50 trees as part of the Climate Fightback project.



**Biodiversity** – Spotted last summer, fledgling Kestrels, photographed by Ruth King along Parkwood Road.



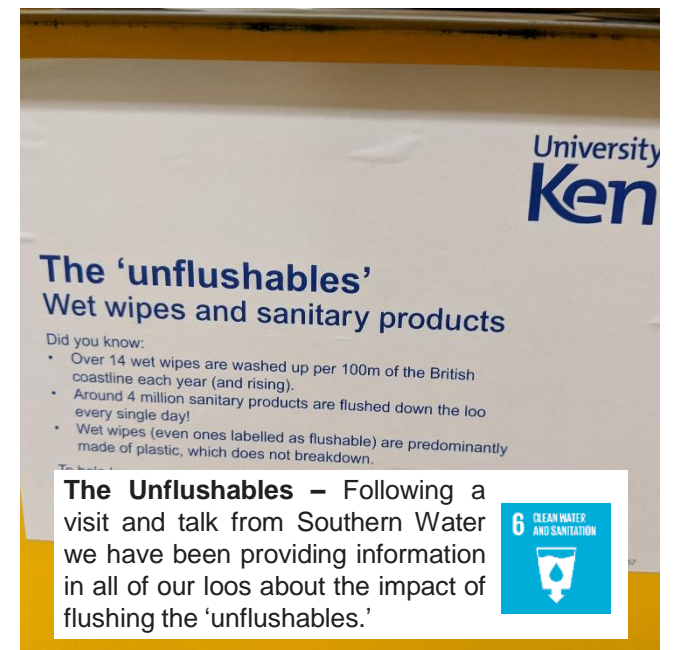
**Sustainability Report** – the sustainability team published their 2020 report detailing how we are embedding the SDGs and plans for an important decade ahead.



**Community**– The sustainability team have been sharing Kent's work with the local community through the community newsletter and local events.



**Education** – Responsible Futures was launched last year bringing staff and students together working on how to embed sustainability throughout the curriculum.



**The Unflushables** – Following a visit and talk from Southern Water we have been providing information in all of our loos about the impact of flushing the 'unflushables.'



**Ecotherapy** – During lockdown KentCOG coordinator Emily Hill has been publishing her top tips on how to bring nature into the home to support mental wellbeing.



**History**– The School of History Champions held a student and staff forum to discuss ideas on how they could incorporate sustainability into their School's activities.



**Wellbeing Week**– The Sustainability Team took part in Medway's wellbeing week arranged speaking to students about the benefits of growing plants inside.



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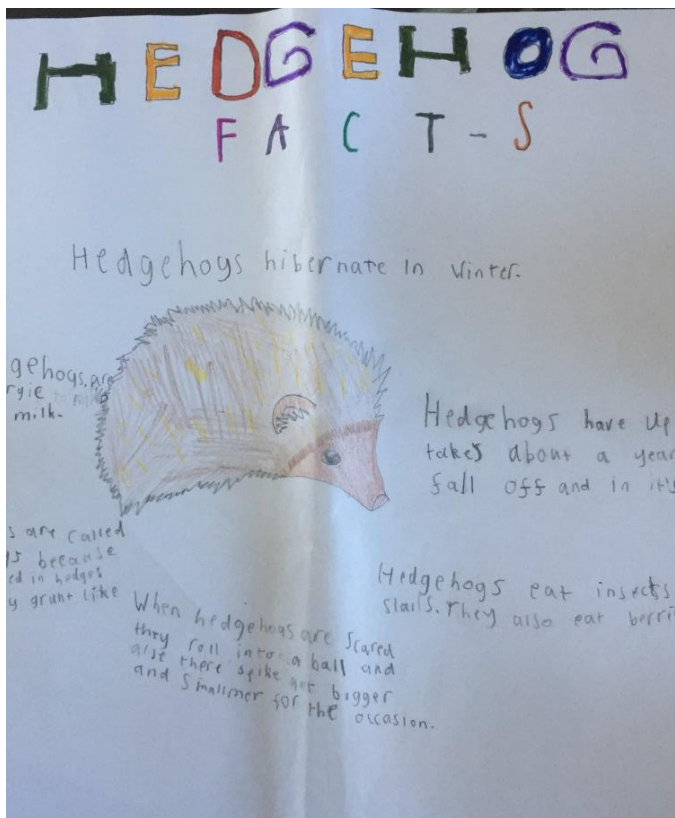
**FutureProof from home** – Our FutureProof year on campus was cut short but that hasn't stopped Sustainability Champions from continuing to improve the environment around them.



Sustainability Champion for Student Services, Kelda McCabe has been gardening - "After finally having access to my very own (small) garden one of the first things I wanted to do was try to grow some vegetables. Since the lockdown I've dedicated even more time to it and tried to cram even more into this tiny patch.

The most satisfying thing to grow so far has been radishes as they're so quick. I bought a packet of rainbow radish seeds to try to make things a bit more interesting and here is my first 'crop'. Growing fresh veg means very low food miles, less plastic (as not buying it pre-packaged), and the best part is the joy in growing!

It's so special to know that I grew this food from a tiny looking seed that could have blown away in the wind. It's great to care for something and feel a sense of achievement as it grows stronger over time. I feel incredibly lucky to have a garden to grow things in, but there are plenty of options for windowsill crops! Radishes would even do quite well in pots, and they only take around 6 weeks."



Sustainability Champion Emma Marku's (International Partnership) son Aston has been supporting our Hedgehog Friendly Campus Project by producing a fact sheet for us to share.



Bethany Chater (Sustainability Champion for Keynes College) created a miniature wildlife pond in her garden using a cat litter thunder box tray and some natural materials from around her garden.



Sustainability Champion, Lynne Regan from Medway's Student Support and Wellbeing Team has created a beautiful wild corner in her garden that transforms from daffodils and crocuses in spring to wildflowers for summer.

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