

# SUSTAINABILITY AT KENT

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



**Proof**

Please check this proof carefully

**Kent**

Design & Print

*“In this time of cascading crises, the need for coordinated efforts for bigger and bolder sustainability action has never been greater. Launching and growing the Sustainability Network during this year of explosive interest for sustainability has been a privilege. I’ve had the amazing opportunity to oversee the fantastic work of the Network’s student groups and University staff and facilitate partnerships for collaborative action at an institutional level.*

*It can be easy to feel hopeless in the face of the current global challenges, but the importance of celebrating progress should not be underestimated. Every success invites another and brings us closer in tipping the balance in favour of the planet. There may be still a long way to go but I remain hopeful thanks to the inspiring staff and students of Kent.”*

**Carolyn Postlethwaite**  
Kent Union Sustainability Network Chair



# FOREWORD



I am pleased to introduce the University's Sustainability Report for 2020. As well as showcasing our achievements, this report looks to our plans over the next year as we begin to step up our level of ambition and action in this area. Whilst the University still faces significant external and internal challenges, we intend to build upon previous success as we enter a new decade and reinforce our commitment to sustainability.

As signatories to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Education Accord we are using the 17 goals to help shape our work across the organisation as we contribute to tackling these complex global challenges. Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals recognises the importance of partnerships and collaborations in achieving sustainability aims and we are working to strengthen existing partnerships and to forge new ones as part of our ongoing work around the Engagement and Civic Mission stream of our institutional strategy.

I hope you enjoy reading this report. As you read through you will see that the achievements within are the result of efforts across professional services, academic schools and the student body and I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the sustainability movement at the University.

**David Nightingale**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Civic Mission



# Community

A regular update from the University of Kent for local residents and businesses | Issue 10

## OUR COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

The University of Kent has backed Canterbury City Council's recent commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, while also leading on its own work to develop a comprehensive plan that responds to the ecological crisis.

these within its operations and teaching with the focus now moving to a phase of intense planning and action to address the climate and ecological emergency.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Karen Cox said: "We fully acknowledge climate and ecological crisis for our planet. As an institution that teaches about the global environment and strongly aware of our responsibility to have a positive impact on the world, we are committed to the development of a comprehensive plan that includes..."

We are delighted to strengthen the relationship...

...committed to the development of a comprehensive plan that includes... Since...

# LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABILITY

## Introduction

As signatories of the Sustainable Development Goals Education Accord, the University of Kent is committed to embedding sustainability across everything we do. From our operations and engagement to our teaching and research, this report celebrates our achievements and recognises the work of our staff and students in delivering sustainability across our campuses and in having a positive impact on the local communities in which we live and work.

## University Strategy

The University of Kent recognises the importance of Sustainability and has included our commitment to the SDG Education Accord within the Engagement and Civic Mission strand of the Institutional Strategy: Kent 2025.

## Our overall vision is that

“Our education and research, and the talents of staff and students, will support social, economic, cultural, intellectual and public life in ways that will make us one of the leading civic universities”

Sustainability is key to helping us achieve the ambitions of Kent 2025 through:

- Ensuring we have a positive impact on society, the environment and the local economy
- Improving financial resilience through reduced operating costs and reliance on diminishing natural resources
- Providing our students with the knowledge and skills to face global challenges



# LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABILITY (CONT)

## SDG Accord

The accord sets out the role that universities and colleges can play in the delivery of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that were created by 193 global leaders and agreed at the Sustainable Development Summit, New York in September 2015.

## Steering group

January 2020 saw the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Sustainability Steering Group. Chaired by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement and Civic Mission) David Nightingale, the group includes representation from professional service and academic staff as well as Kent Union. The overall remit of the group is to lead on the delivery of the requirements of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Education Accord signed by Karen Cox in February 2018. To provide a framework for this work the group will be producing a university-wide sustainability strategy covering the whole institution through teaching, research, administration, operations and engagement with civic society.

## Climate Emergency

In July 2019, Canterbury City Council declared a climate emergency. This move was fully supported by the University of Kent.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Karen Cox said: 'We fully acknowledge the climate and ecological crisis facing the planet and strongly support Canterbury City Council's recent declaration. As an institution that researches and teaches about the causes and effects of global environmental change, we are strongly aware that our staff and students have a combined responsibility – both as a leading exemplar of what must be achieved and as a wider advocate for sustainability – to enable the radical societal changes needed to mitigate the causes of global heating.'



'We are determined to harness the unique strengths we offer as a university in tackling the crisis, bringing together combined expertise across our education, research and wider functions. We are currently preparing an ambitious sustainability strategy informed by research from the School of Anthropology and Conservation that will enable us to set clear targets to reduce emissions, along with tangible steps to get us there. Alongside this, we will play a lead role in the wider movement to tackle the crisis, by contributing to the collective knowledge base and through our impact across society.'

## EMS

The University operates an Environmental Management System to the ISO14001 International Standard for Environmental Management.

An EMS is a structured framework which helps us to manage, evaluate and improve our environmental performance in a verifiable way. The system is based on the 'plan-do-check-act' cycle which enables us as an organisation to identify and control the environmental impact of our activities; to continuously improve our environmental performance; and, to implement a systematic approach to set and achieve environmental objectives and targets.

Our main objectives and commitments as seen below form part of our Environmental Policy which was reviewed in February 2019.

- Embed sustainability through building the UN Sustainable Development Goals into our research, education, leadership, operations, administration and engagement
- Reduce carbon emissions in accordance with the University's Carbon Management Plan
- Improve energy and water efficiency and reduce reliance on fossil fuels
- Protect the environment and prevent pollution
- Optimise reduction, reuse, recycling and disposal of waste
- Reduce the impacts of transport and travel and encourage sustainable alternatives
- Manage the use, storage and disposal of materials to reduce environmental impact
- To develop our Estate in a sustainable and sympathetic way in line with our growth plans and Masterplan for the Canterbury campus.
- Manage our campuses to protect and enhance biodiversity
- Promote sustainable procurement, both internally and through the University's supply chains
- Communicate with staff, students and relevant interested parties and promote sustainable behaviours
- Report annually on all aspects of this Policy to The Safety, Health and Environment Executive Committee.

The EMS and progress against our targets and objectives is overseen by the Environmental Sustainability team which is made up of representatives from the Safety, Health and Environment Unit, Estates Department, Kent Hospitality and Procurement.

### Training

In early 2020 we relaunched our induction training e-learning which is mandatory for all new staff at the University. Sustainability Awareness covers all aspects of our sustainability activity and equips our staff with the knowledge and skills required to contribute to achieving our targets and objectives.

### FutureProof

FutureProof is the University of Kent's bespoke culture change project that provides a framework, challenging and supporting each University department to review their impacts against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and working to create positive change.

In June 2019 FutureProof celebrated one year of achievements by publishing an end of year report that showcased the incredible range of projects from our staff sustainability champions that represent over 50 different teams, departments and schools from across the University. You can read more about the champions and their projects on page 29.

## FUTUREPROOF

*Building the University of the future*

# DELIVERING SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

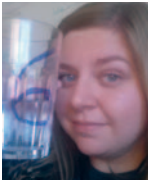
Your sustainability team work on a diverse range of projects across the University, take a look at some of the things they have been working on this year:



## Catherine Morris

### Environmental Adviser

I work across both the Estates Department and Safety, Health and Environment Unit primarily on managing the University's Environmental Management System. Day-to-day I can be doing anything from writing key strategies for the delivery of sustainability to advising schools and departments on legal compliance. Luckily I still get to spend plenty of time out and about on campus with Emily raising awareness and promoting what we do.



## Emily Mason

### Sustainability Co-ordinator

I work in the Estates Department working on sustainability engagement. I support staff and students in realising their sustainability ideas and projects and supporting a shift in culture at the University to embed sustainability in everything we do. I lead on the FutureProof project and Catherine and I split the projects between us to ensure we support as many people and departments as possible.





### Sustainability Steering Group

Chaired by David Nightingale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement and Civic Mission, this group is responsible for overseeing all Kent's sustainability activity including development of an institution wide Sustainability Strategy.

### Education for Sustainable Development Steering Group (ESD)

This group consisting of academic and professional service staff, students and Kent Union representatives are working on implementing Responsible Futures, an NUS designed framework to embed sustainability across the formal and informal curriculum.

### Operational Sustainability Team (OST)

The OST is made up from staff within the Estates department with operational responsibility for areas which impact on the environment such as waste management, biodiversity and transport. Staff share best practice and collaborate to improve performance.

Over 100 staff and students help drive and deliver sustainability at the University through a variety of different projects and groups.

### Champions Network

Staff champions from across the University come together regularly to discuss projects, share ideas and learn more about sustainability topics during regular workshop sessions.

### Environmental Sustainability Team (EST)

The EST is responsible for managing the University's Environmental Management System including reviewing progress against targets and driving continual improvement across the organisation.

### Sustainable Food Steering Group

Commercial Services, Kent Union and Professional Services staff come together to develop the University's Sustainable Food Strategy and drive forward improvements across our outlets.

# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY



**The University has a responsibility as an institute of higher education and as an employer to minimise any inequality in its performance across all nine protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act.**

The increase in female professors from 31% to 33.5% over the past year is an indication that Kent's ongoing work for gender equality through Athena SWAN and Kent's leadership development programmes (Aurora and Insights) are having a positive impact on female staff's ability to reach senior positions. The University remains committed to addressing its gender pay gap and will continue to work at reducing the pay differential between male and female employees as well as begin to incorporate ethnicity as part of the pay gap data-monitoring.

The mental health of staff and students continues to be an area of focus, and the University was successful in identifying and responding to the rising numbers of staff and students needing help by putting in place appropriate support mechanisms and training and by raising general awareness with a range of specialist support available, including inclusive learning plans, one-to-one mental health and wellbeing advice, mindfulness courses, counselling, support groups, activities and more. The University will continue to explore avenues for support for staff and students – for example, by implementing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), by implementing the Thriving at Work Standards or by signing up to the University Mental Health Charter. The University will continue, through the Thriving at Work standards implementation, to research into the causes of mental health at the University and implement solutions where possible.

Kent recognises that employing people with a known disability and enabling them to reach their potential is central to the creation of a diverse and multi-perspective workforce. Kent is proud of its work around eliminating bias from recruitment and selection processes and to have achieved its Level 2 Disability Confident accreditation.

Lastly, Kent recognises the importance of embedding equality, diversity and inclusivity into the University's culture and ways of working. Joint staff-student initiatives have become more frequent, through the organisation of events to celebrate and increase EDI awareness across campus – for example, Black History Month, Disability History Month and LGBT+ History Month, as well as celebrating a diverse range of international days. Where collaboration has been most fruitful is in the implementation of cross-university projects, such as the Government Digital Accessibility Project.

Here are some other achievements, more details on each can be found in the University's EDI report:

- Decolonising the curriculum
- Accessible teaching and learning: Times Higher Education Award for Outstanding Support for Students
- Diversity in the curriculum: Talis Aspire Creativity Award 2019
- Staff wellbeing: Combining personal development and wellbeing – Belong and Grow



## Case study

### Equality, diversity and inclusivity in Information Services

Information Services believe that all services at the library should be available to all, so a group of staff set out to implement a number of projects to create a truly inclusive environment.

#### Book Club group

The library, Kent Union and Student Support and Wellbeing created a book club for students beyond academia in a confidential and safe library space. Topics have included LGBTQ+, with discussions on the themes of gender identity and sexuality.

#### Diversity Mark Initiative

The Diversity Mark project produced a 'diversity dash-board' for reading lists that provides academics with a space to reflect on their resource choices and kickstart discussions with students.

#### Scholarly Communications Conference

The inaugural conference set out to 'feature underrepresented voices in Scholarly Communication' and was described by one delegate as 'one of the most welcoming, sustainable, collaborative and inclusive conferences I have attended.'

# CLIMATE ACTION



**Over the last decade we have reduced our carbon emissions by over 29% which meant that we achieved our 2020 target of 23% reduction a year early.**

By summer 2020 we will publishing our new Carbon Management Plan which will set out our vision for the next 10 years to achieve much more far reaching reductions in carbon emissions across the whole university.

Phase 1 of the plan for 2020-30 will set out ambitious targets to reduce carbon emission across our whole institution from our buildings and operations to our teaching and research using a pan-institutional approach where everyone understands their role in ultimately achieving net zero carbon emissions.

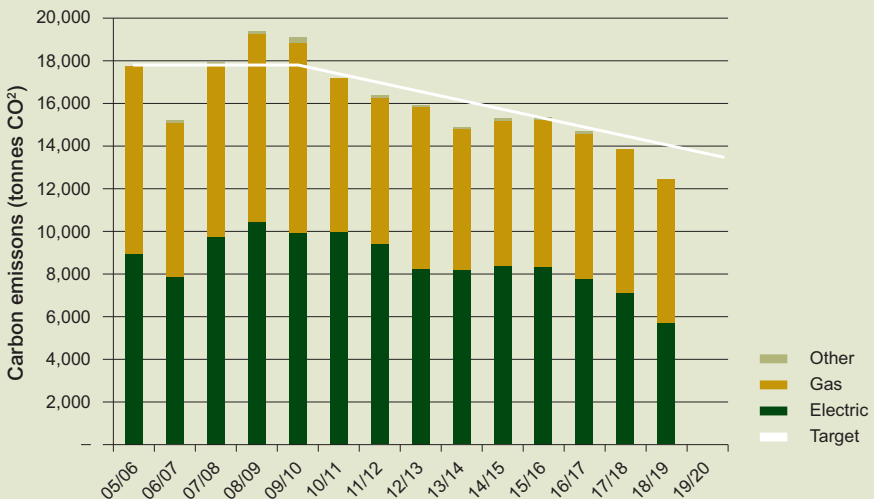
The key elements of the University's Carbon Management Strategy are as follows:

- 1 Reduce the demand for energy – eg avoid unnecessary heating and cooling and improve insulation
- 2 Efficient use of resources – eg optimising performance of the Building Management Systems (BMS) investing in low energy heating and lighting systems
- 3 Decarbonising – eg renewable energy systems

This approach can be considered an energy use hierarchy.

When embarking upon a carbon reduction programme, actions from the top of the hierarchy should be prioritised over those lower down. Behaviour change should not be considered as a separate 'step' in the hierarchy but rather should be considered at every stage of carbon reduction.

**Target and actual carbon emissions**





## Case study

### How have we reduced our carbon emissions?

#### **John Kingsland, Head of Energy and Environment**

Hello, I have been working to reduce the carbon emissions arising from University activities for the past five years. During this time I have visited the various buildings on the sites, and spoken with a number of building users. Further to that, I have been checking consumption data for the buildings and checking the building controls. By pulling all these threads of information together I get a better sense of how the buildings are operated, and how the various systems within them use energy.

Based on this I assess where there are opportunities to undertake energy saving projects, fit low carbon technologies, and increase the capacity for on site renewable technologies.

The task to reduce carbon emissions is a big one, and I am not alone in my efforts to achieve this. My colleagues in Estates are part of the team, and the people I speak to in the buildings regularly help, so thank you to all of them! More widely awareness of the need to reduce carbon has increased dramatically, and this too helps across the University.

# WASTE AND RECYCLING



**Our waste strategy sets out how we will improve waste management at the University through applications of the waste hierarchy. Our focus over the last year has been maximising reuse and education on where our waste goes.**

We have seven permanent British Heart Foundation donation points across the Canterbury campus. Year-on-year our staff and students are donating more items which all raise money through the Canterbury BHF Charity Shop. In the 2018/19 academic year donations rose by 27% raising an incredible total of £54,054. We are now holding pop up shops in collaboration with Kent Union to help further promote reuse on campus through the STUFF project.

In collaboration with The School of Anthropology and Conservation a field trip was organised for 2 groups of students to visit the Viridor MRF based in Rochester. All mixed recycling at the University of Kent is transported to a Viridor MRF where the items are sorted through a conveyer belt using magnets, air, vibrations and lastly hand picking to segregate materials ready for bailing and selling within the recycling industry. The trip enabled students to see this taking place in real life and learn about an operating MRF.

Gumdrop bins are being reinstalled across our campuses. Not only do these reduce the amount of chewing gum dropped onto the floor but when full the chewing gum is sent off and turned into a range of new compounds that can be used in the rubber and plastic industry.

## CO2 (KG) SAVED

0 3 8 1 2 5 9

## TREES EQUIVALENT

0 0 0 0 5 2 2

## WASTE AVOIDED (KG)

0 1 2 9 6 5 2

## TOTAL SAVINGS (£)

0 7 9 4 3 7 9

WarplT Figures for the University of Kent – WarplT allows us to reuse furniture across the University, or with partner organisations instead of throwing it away.



## Case study

### Student Foodbank and Freecycle (STUFF)

In June 2019 STUFF was created by Kent Union and The University of Kent Estates Department to address the need of a student foodbank on campus as well as an opportunity to increase the reuse of student goods on campus.

Some students may experience situational hunger or insecurity while others may demonstrate chronic hunger or insecurity and a need for continued support. Regardless of circumstances, no student should have to choose between food and other basic needs. The foodbank exists to help ease that choice and provide support. Students can collect from the foodbank with no questions asked from the STUFF Distribution Centre in Eliot N2.1 during the distribution times, all they need is their student ID

We have also incorporated a freecycle scheme to include household items such as pots, pans, cutlery, crockery and other items such as clothes, shoes, bedding, toiletries etc. At the end of the year we find that a large amount of household items coming from student accommodation is thrown away so to try and

close this loop STUFF collects these items and offers them out to students moving into accommodation.

STUFF freecycle items can be collected from pop-up freecycle shops throughout the year. A small donation is requested with proceeds going to Canterbury Foodbank.

Throughout the year both staff and students are encouraged to donate unwanted non perishable food and freecycle items. They can donate pre loved or unwanted items at a number of permanently sited drop off points around the campus.

Since June 2019 we have collected 0.478 tonnes of food donations (non-perishables) and 0.734 tonnes of freecycle items. 0.130 tonnes of food donations and 0.037 tonnes of freecycle items had been claimed by students by December 2019, with nine students using the foodbank part of STUFF since the start of the academic year.

For more information about STUFF please visit the Kent Union website.

# EMBEDDING CIRCULAR THINKING



## Procurement has a crucial role in delivering against Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Many of our waste and carbon priorities can only be achieved if we change the way we spend our money. From the suppliers we work with and buy from to the types of stationery we choose; we all have a role in responsible resource use and rethinking 'waste.'

The way we buy is central to us realising our aims to embed circular economy principles into our strategic objectives as a University.

To ensure this the Procurement Team sit on our Sustainability Steering Group and procurement activities are referenced throughout our plans for carbon, waste, travel and food.

Ensuring items we no longer need are reused is also a crucial step, so engaging with suppliers that support this is important. Worn out carpets and computers that we no longer require do not have to end up as waste.

## What is a circular economy?

Looking beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model, a circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits.

It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designing waste out of the system.

Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital.

It is based on three principles:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems.

*Ellen MacArthur Foundation*





## Case study

### University of Kent supplier – Interface

In 1994 Interface, a global commercial flooring company, set out to eliminate their negative impact on the planet. In 2020 Interface delivered against their Mission Zero commitments becoming the first flooring manufacturer to achieve carbon neutrality across the full cycle of all their products. Their ReEntry program works to keep used carpet out of landfill ensuring that carpet and other flooring options are reused where possible, repurposed or recycled – in that order.

Interface's Net-Works project is a cross-segment initiative designed to tackle the growing environmental problem of discarded fishing nets.

It supports Interface's Mission Zero® goal to source 100% recycled material for their carpet tiles. Interface has partnered with the Zoological Society of London to buy discarded fishing nets from some of the poorest communities in the world. The nets are recycled into new yarn meaning less virgin material is used, fewer nets are left in the ocean and a new source of income is created for the communities.

You will find interface carpets in the Lumley building, in Parkwood residences and across the Medway campus.

## Case study

### University of Kent supplier – CDL

The UK produces an estimated two million tonnes of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) annually, with only 15-20% recycled. The University sent 100% of its WEEE waste to be recycled however, with the help of CDL we have managed to increase the amount actually being reused.

Between September to December 2019 CDL were able to reuse 21% of our WEEE waste (this amounts to 1.5 tonnes of computers, printers, tablets, fridges etc) with the rest continuing to be recycled. We hope that by continuing to work with CDL we can continue to send a significant amount of our WEEE waste to be reused where possible.

# BIODIVERSITY



## **The Landscape and Grounds Management Team work closely with the Sustainability Team to ensure that biodiversity protection and enhancement is a core feature of our work.**

When designing a project all elements are assessed for biodiversity impact from the time of year we carry out the work, to the provenance of plants and how we will manage an area going forward.

Over the last year we have completed five landscape projects all of which were assessed by the sustainability team for biodiversity impact, including:

- We cleared out existing poor quality plant growth, cleared litter and planted native wetland plant species around Keynes pond to improve the amenity of the area whilst protecting the long term biodiversity of the pond
- We completed the coppicing in two coupes of Brotherhood wood continuing to improve the structure of the woodland and allow more light in to increase the diversity of plant species found there
- We commissioned a hedgerow survey across all our 600 acres allowing us to better manage and protect these wildlife corridors.



Image: Ruth King



## Case Study

### We are a Bronze level Hedgehog Friendly Campus

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 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 so the University has set up a steering group made up of students and staff from the Estates Department, the Conservation Society, Kent Union and the School of Computing to address some of the problems facing our hedgehogs. We have been carrying out litter picks in the wilder areas of our campuses and 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, and how to check for them before strimming.

This work has led to us achieving a Bronze level award for from the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Project and we hope to continue this work and continue to make improvements for this iconic species.

# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



**The Transport Team based in the Security and Transport hub are on hand year round to advise staff and students on the different options available to them to travel to campus. As well as negotiating with the bus companies to secure discounted travel and providing bike maintenance services through Dr Bike the team keep everyone up to date and informed through regular transport newsletters and a dedicated twitter feed.**

This year we trialled successful dedicated car share bays to encourage more people to car share.

We also redesigned Giles Lane car park, including installing ANPR barriers and a vehicle message sign to indicate number of bays available on the approach to the car park. This has significantly reduced the number of cars circling around campus looking for a parking spaces subsequently improving air quality.

Over the next year the team will be working on a number of projects behind the scenes to streamline services making them more efficient. They will also be working closely with the Sustainability Team and Energy Manager on the development of the University's next Carbon Management Plan which will include the scope 3 carbon emissions from business travel and commuting.





## Case study

### Can car engine idling be reduced using persuasive messages?

#### Canterbury Air and Noise Pollution Experiment 2018-19

Professor Dominic Abrams, Dr Tim Hopthrow, Hirotaka Imada, Hilal Ozkececi, Dr Fanny Lalot and Dr Anne Templeton

Engine idling is one of the most significant contributors to air pollution, especially in urban areas. Persuading drivers to turn off their engines when at a standstill can reduce both air pollution and noise pollution which negatively impact air quality and human health and can impact local biodiversity. In the summer of 2018, researchers from the School of Psychology conducted a study looking at the effectiveness of different types of messaging on driver's behaviours.

Monitors placed near two level crossings in Canterbury (St Dunstan's and St Stephens) measured air pollution and noise levels and the researchers were able to monitor the impact of different types of persuasive messaging aimed at encouraging drivers to switch engines off. The most effective message was designed to motivate drivers to switch off their engines by reminding them of their responsibility.

As well as helping us to design signage for on campus traffic, the findings of this study can also be applied to other environmental behaviours and help us to design effective communication around encouraging pro-environmental behaviours.

# SPACE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



## Refurbishments

Spaces across the University are being refurbished and updated all the time and achieving this sustainably is something we are increasingly looking to do. One of the main ways we are reducing the impact of refurbishments is through furniture reuse. 'Warp It' is an online tool managed by Interior Services, to advertise redundant/surplus furniture and equipment within the institution. It has proven very helpful for departments with limited budget because they can view and source items such as desks and task chairs for free, whilst saving them from being sent to landfill. The system also cleverly supplies data on consequent savings on CO2 emissions and waste diverted, so the benefits of sustainability are highlighted to the user.

Recently, soft-seating from 'Warp It' was used to quickly fit-out a space as a new MPCC Common room. This saved the redundant furniture from ending up in landfill and gave the furniture a second use. Woodlands was also furnished sustainably for the School of Psychology, entirely via the use of 'Warp It'.

As a team we want to encourage the repair of our existing furniture by opting to recover furniture and repair broken elements in favour of buying new. We are currently re-upholstering all the seminar chairs throughout Grimond.

## Space utilisation

The way we use spaces and in particular offices has changed significantly over the last decade. Evolving technologies and increased uptake of flexible working patterns mean that the traditional model of individual offices is no longer appropriate. We are now exploring space-utilisation approaches to use the spaces we have more effectively. Post-occupancy evaluations of recently built buildings have provided evidence that cellular offices are utilised poorly, occupied on average 20% of the time.

In the future we will explore the possibilities of implementing a space policy which will take a more activity-based approach to space allocation, providing a range of work space settings to better suit the needs of all the different work activities we all do each day. Moving away from allocated single occupancy cellular offices will improve the utilisation of spaces significantly and prevent the need for new buildings of cellular offices being constructed unnecessarily. This will then allow focus to be on new-builds to provide facilities in a space efficient way thus helping us to reduce our footprint and lower our energy consumption.

## Case study

### Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS)

The new KMMS building, for example, is a brand new building and the internal spatial layout has been considered very differently. Rather than providing cellular offices, the project team have opted for an open-plan layout, with cluster desks for teams and with plenty of break-out meeting areas using screens and high-back seating, to create areas for privacy.

The use of furniture to zone will mean the spaces can easily be adapted in the future, without the need to extend or undo. This approach allows us to limit our footprint, rationalise space and control energy usage.



## Case study

### Gulbenkian lighting

During refurbishment work carried out at the Gulbenkian Theatre, all 39 halogen house lights were replaced with LED alternatives. The old installation comprised of 150w lamps while the new ones are only 22w which have a lifespan of 50000 hours.

When maintenance and lifespan are taken into consideration and estimating that lights can be on for around 12 hours a day throughout the year the energy savings can be roughly calculated.

- Energy saving – 85%
- Annual cost saving – £2,812
- Cost saving over life of the lamps – £32,184
- Annual energy saving – 21,805kWh
- Return on investment – 13 months
- CO2 saving – 12,211kg.

This is a pretty amazing saving for just 39 LED lights.

As an extra, the emergency lighting within the theatre was also replaced by a new LED system that utilises remote monitoring and has the ability to self-test the emergency lights and report back any issues. This allows the maintenance department to manage their labour resources better as the need to manually test and inspect the emergency lights across campus is reduced. This is an initiative that is slowly being rolled out across the campus by our Building Service Engineers as and when refurbishments are carried out. Mandela, the Estates Department, Cornwallis South and the Science Hub are the latest to use this technology.

# SUSTAINABLE FOOD



## The sustainable food strategy overseen by the Sustainable Food Steering Group has driven a lot of changes across our outlets.

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

Kent Hospitality released new menus across their Canterbury and Medway outlets, increasing the vegan options available. Their efforts have been recognised by PETA, who have included the University of Kent on their list of 20 Most Vegan-Friendly Universities. In addition to this, many of the new vegan and vegetarian items replaced red meat items that were

previously on the menus as part of an effort to reduce carbon and water intensive food items.

Kent Union have been working hard to support the Sustainable Food Strategy and were instrumental in pushing for reusable water bottles and coffee cups to be made more available and visible. All staff members can claim a water bottle at any Kent Hospitality outlet, and students that moved into accommodation on campus received a free water bottle and coffee cup. Bed and board students also received a reusable food container that can be traded in for a clean one each time they use it at bed and board outlets.

In 2020 we will be releasing an updated strategy that focuses on the five biggest sustainable food challenges as identified by students and staff at Kent that we will be working on over the next year.







## Case study

### Sustainable fish

Since September 2019 all the wild caught fish that is served in our meals across all outlets is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) as Sustainable Seafood.

The blue fish label is only applied to wild fish or seafood from fisheries that have been certified to the MSC Fisheries Standard, a science-based set of requirements for sustainable fishing. Each MSC certified fishery has been independently assessed on its specific impacts to wild fish populations and the ecosystems they're part of. But it doesn't stop there; all along the supply chain MSC fish is clearly labelled and separated from non-certified fish with DNA testing done to ensure it can be traced back to the sustainable fishery it came from.

This ensures that the fish we serve you is from well managed, sustainable stocks of fish, and not from overfished populations or species that are vulnerable.

Beyond this the MSC are actively working with fisheries, suppliers, retailers, and scientist to ensure robust regulations and ultimately encouraging a market for fish that is based on sustainable principles thus allowing our oceans to recover to healthy ecosystems.

The Sustainable Food Steering Group will be now looking at what farmed fish we use and ensuring it meets as a minimum RSPCA welfare and environmental standards and/or the Aquaculture Stewardship Councils standards. This will be followed by reviewing what fish goes into our sandwich fillings.

# SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS NETWORK



**At the University of Kent our Sustainability Champions are a vital part of our delivery of sustainability actions and projects, and since 2010 have delivered thousands of actions and ideas to help Kent improve its sustainability.**

In 2020 over 65 members of staff are now part of the Sustainability Champions Network representing over 50 teams, departments and schools.

Sustainability Champions are key in the delivery of the FutureProof project coordinating their department/school's actions taken to promote and embed sustainability.

In less than two years of FutureProof we have passed 20 projects ranging from reducing paper within an office to creating new modules with sustainability education embedded in them.

At the end of the 2018/2019 academic year we held a garden party at the Kent Community Oasis Garden to say thank you to all the champions and launched the FutureProof Annual Report which you can find on the Sustainability webpages.

Sustainability Champions are catalysts for change and much of the sustainability work at Kent is led by these volunteers who give up their lunchtimes and free time to ensure that Kent is heading in the right direction.





## Case study

### Project Zero

#### The Gulbenkian Sustainability Champion Daniel Parsons

The Gulbenkian have been on a mission to reduce all waste where possible from their café, theatre and cinema operations. Over the last year and a half they have:

- Removed all single use plastic bottles in the café, saving an estimated 50,000 plastic bottles since August 2018
- Switched to reusable plastic pint and half pint cups which 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 normally be thrown away.
- 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. Thoughts and ideas were shared on the 'SustainabiliTree'.

## Case study

### Increasing recycling within labs

#### School of Biosciences Sustainability Champion Alex Moores

Following the successful recycling lab trial in the KRG Lab featured in the last annual report, we have now extended this trial to cover all labs across the School of Biosciences. All workbenches are provided with small recycling bins 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 is projected to double recycling rates in the School based on the data from the trial.

5

GENDER  
EQUALITY

*"I am currently undertaking a Doctorate in Education, investigating the experiences of transgender students in Higher Education. The study will explore the challenges that these students face and how/whether their needs are being met by their universities. It will also investigate the policies the universities have in place and how/whether they are implementing these, with the aim to influence policy to ensure this student group is better supported and represented."*

**Lynne Regan**  
University of Kent



# FUTUREPROOF PROJECTS



**Here are some more of the projects undertaken by the Sustainability Champions as part of FutureProof. Read more details about them in the FutureProof annual report on the sustainability website.**

## The Medway secret garden

Designing and fundraising for a wellbeing trail and garden that can be used by all. (see page 32 for more information)

## Greening Keynes

As part of Keynes College's 50th anniversary the Master's Office launched a sustainability scholarship, supporting a student to develop a sustainability community at Keynes centred around growing food and wellbeing.

## Reducing the impact of the Kent Student Awards

Inspired by the Sustainability Champion in Student Services, the Kent Student Awards 2019 was run with a marked improvement in its sustainability. Menus were designed to be low carbon with a third of it being plant based; organic wine was served; reusable decorations were used in place of disposable single use items; and tickets were not printed out.

## Meadow trials

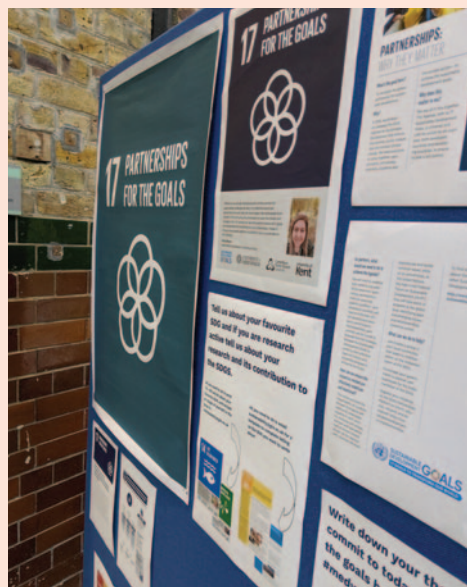
Champions from the Landscape and Grounds Team trialled a series of mini meadows across campus to see which mixes and which soil types worked best. With this information they hope to create larger wildflower meadows on our campus.

## Case study

### Medway collaboration

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, academic and professional service staff from across the three Universities were celebrated for their contributions towards the SDGs including our very own Lynne Regan, a Sustainability Champion from the Student Services Team at Medway.



# COMMUNITY



**Partnerships are extremely important to ensuring social and environmental sustainability. Working with our local community allows us to form valuable partnerships that reach out from the University and tackle local and regional issues that affect us all.**

## SDG Forum

As part of the University's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), we are a member of the Canterbury SDG Forum, a network of

local groups, institutions and charities that are working in partnership to enhance the visibility of the SDGs in Canterbury and be a catalyst for sustainable action in the city. We contributed to a report released last year that outlined the key challenges to the district and have University staff members on the Education subgroup and Canterbury Climate Action Partnership subgroup.

## Sustainable art

We are proud to be working with Canterbury College Art and Design department with students producing a series of sustainability themed art pieces that will take pride of place in the Kent Community Oasis Garden.

## Canterbury Climate Action Partnership

**William Rowlandson, Senior Lecturer in Modern Languages, SECL**

I research and teach the period of Cuban history that follows the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, in which Cuba underwent a rapid and profound economic collapse, with consequent material shortages, hunger and malnutrition. Cuban people, often without state approval, initiated projects, strategies and activities to provide the basic requirements for living, in particular, urban organic agriculture, local markets and street kitchens. This historical period, with its riddles and contradictions, has inspired to me to consider sustainable practices that arise out of crisis and urgency.

As such, I have focussed my attention locally, participating in environmental and sustainable campaigns, projects and partnerships, on campus and in the city and district, emerging in response to crisis, with sustainability as their driving principle (such as: the student-led Anthropology and Conservation Sustainability Working Group, Decolonise UKC, UCU industrial actions, NUS-led Responsible Futures, FutureProof workshops, Beetbox Food Cooperative, Kent Community Oasis Garden, Billhook Nook, the Tree Ogham woodland art trail.)

Such projects, I argue, constitute examples of 'Living Labs' that work across professional domains, disciplines, institutions and wider society. I also see them as contributions to the discourse of (re)wilding, in that they enrich, diversify and complexify conventional educational models.

Off-campus, I am co-founder and Deputy Chair of Canterbury Climate Action Partnership (CCAP), an independent organisation formed in June 2019 as a partnership between the Canterbury Society and the Canterbury Sustainable Development Goals Forum, working closely with City and County Councils. It has grown to include representatives from other local civic society groups, the three universities, business, residents' associations, faith groups, youth groups, Greenpeace and many others. The partnership's main role is to bring together like-minded interest groups within the district to mobilise action towards a more sustainable future; especially to achieve a zero carbon district by 2030.



## Case study

### Kent Community Oasis Garden (KentCOG)

KentCOG is a community garden at the University of Kent that is run by community members, students and staff members. It is run in partnership with East Kent Mind alongside other groups such as the Whitstable and Herne Bay Beekeepers and Groundworks. The garden is focused on enhancing the wellbeing of those whose volunteer there, encouraging people to engage with sustainable food, get some gentle exercise and meet new people.

Student Support and Wellbeing also use the garden to support students who benefit from being outside and taking part in a community project. Plans for the garden include fundraising to make it fully accessible as well as a haven for people and biodiversity; growing produce for catering outlets on campus; and hosting wellbeing workshops.

# WELLBEING



**The Estates Department, in collaboration with Kent Union, have been working on a series of wellbeing spaces that enhance the natural environment for both people and environment.**

Research shows that spending time outside can change the way we feel, with positive effects of both our mental and physical health.

Projects completed include:

- More colourful seating across central campus
- A new shaded area and planting at the entrance to the KentCOG project
- Willow pods to sit in dotted around campus
- A revamp of Giles Courtyard into a wellbeing courtyard
- Woodland seating at Sibson
- New seating and hibernacula on the library lawn

## Coming this year

A woodland trail that makes the most out of Medway's limited green space. We are creating a secret garden of curiosities, art and quiet space that can be used by all but will specifically be used by the Student Support and Wellbeing team to use as an alternative space for students who use their services to benefit from meeting and talking in a more relaxed environment.

We will also be installing more benches, biodiverse planting and vegetation noise barriers to create a space that is peaceful and welcoming.

This space has been designed by the Sustainability Champions at Medway supported by the Sustainability and Landscape and Grounds Teams.

On the Canterbury campus a new walking trail is to be installed that guides people across the campus using the 17 sustainable development goals to take you from central campus to the Kent Community Oasis Garden. This trail is designed to educate staff and students on what the goals are, get people out and about exploring the campus, and encourage everyone to discover the community garden.







## Case study

### Enjoying the central Canterbury campus

Giles Courtyard Wellbeing Space, located next to the Wellbeing Services at Keynes College, is designed to support wellbeing and encourage people to take a break away from studying and working.

Landscape and Grounds consulted with key stakeholders including the Student Wellbeing and Counselling Service, Keynes Master's Office and the Sustainability Team, to ensure that the plans would support biodiversity as well as people. The existing larger trees were all kept to retain height and valuable nesting, foraging and perching opportunities for birds, whilst removing the smaller conifers that made the space very dark.

This has led to increased light exposure to the garden, allowing a greater diversity of plant species to grow providing valuable foraging opportunities for invertebrates, birds and small mammals. Staff and students also have the opportunity to grow their own herbs and produce in the new raised beds that have been placed in the courtyard.

On the library lawn new benches have been installed that create a new place to sit and also act as hibernacula for invertebrates. This, alongside the new hedgerow planted, will increase the foraging opportunities for our campus songbirds.

# KENT UNION SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK



## What is the Sustainability Network?

2019/20 saw the launch of the Kent Union Networks – spaces for different groups of students who share an interest or identity. This included the new Sustainability Network lead by the elected Sustainability Network Chair, Carolyn Postlethwaite, replacing the Environment Officer role in previous years. The Sustainability Network is a community to unify students across the University, Schools and student groups to discuss sustainability issues and collaboratively create bigger events and campaigns.

## Achievements

Here are a few of our key campaigns this year:

### Climate Action Week

Organised a week of events between 11-15 November 2019 relating to sustainability issues and climate action including talks from academics, workshops focusing on waste and promoting intersectionality and BAME engagement in the climate movement, and the first on-campus climate strike at Kent.

The week was a collaborative campaign with a number of student groups: UKC Conservation Society, ECS – Environmental Conservation Sustainability, Climate Justice Society and UKC Amnesty International.

We've signed - have you?  
**The SDG Accord**

*Recognising as educators, we have a responsibility to play a central and transformational role in attaining the SDGs*

### Kent Union to sign up to the SDG Accord

Submitted a successful petition with Sasha Langeveldt, Students' Union President, on Kent Union's Changelt platform, leading to Kent Union signing up to the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges Sustainable Development Goals Education Accord.

### Kent Union Environmental Strategy

Facilitated student consultation on Kent Union's 2020-2025 Environmental Strategy through Sustainability Network Nights.

### Responsible futures and Hedgehog Friendly Campus

Supported student engagement on projects promoting sustainability in the curriculum and led on awareness raising and care of on-campus biodiversity through the Hedgehog Friendly Campus initiative.



## Case study

### Students lead on tree planting

The UK Committee for Climate Change has called for dramatic increases in woodland creation as part of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. In response, the Woodland Trust called on all areas of society to participate in their 'Big Climate fightback' and students at Kent answered this call.

Students from the Environmental Conservation Sustainability Society (ECS) brought together students and staff from across the University to plant 50 new native trees on campus.

Supported by the University's Landscape and Grounds team from the Estates Department, ECS Society secured 50 free trees from The Conservation

Volunteers 'I Dig Trees' fund, and a piece of land that borders Bluebell wood on the Canterbury campus for the trees to be situated.

In December 2019 volunteers came together to plant the trees on a beautiful winter's afternoon. The new trees, once established, will be an extension of Bluebell Wood providing more cover for the numerous bird species that feed and nest in that area, such as great tits, wrens, nut hatches and tree creepers.

The ECS society hope to carry on this tradition annually supporting the University's efforts to curb the effects of climate change.



# SUSTAINABILITY ACTION AT KENT UNION



## Signing the SDG Accord

Following a petition led by Students' Union President, Sasha Langeveldt, and the Sustainability Network, Kent Union's Board of Trustees approved signing up to the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Education Accord.

The SDG Accord provides Kent Union with a framework to act for sustainability, as it encourages the incorporation of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals into all of Kent Union's practices.

## 2020-2025 Environmental Strategy

Kent Union is due to launch its new 2020-2025 Environmental Strategy this year. The creation of this strategy has been led by Students' Union President, Sasha Langeveldt and student consultation was carried out through the Sustainability Network. It has now been approved by Kent Union's Board of Trustees. The strategy outlines commitments to sustainability action in line with the SDGs and structural changes such as the creation of a Kent Union Sustainability Committee. The five-year strategy focuses on six of the SDGs. Here are some of the strategy headlines:

### Climate Action

- Kent Union declares a Climate and Ecological Emergency, setting targets to surpass or meet the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations

- Lobby the University to declare a Climate Emergency and set emissions targets in line with IPCC and equip relevant resources needed for implementation.

### Responsible consumption

- Ensure Kent Union outlets and partners reduce excess packaging, food waste and high environmental impact foods, while diversifying sustainable alternatives, such as vegetarian and vegan options.

### Affordable clean energy and sustainable cities and communities

- Ensure all new and existing Kent Union buildings meet sustainable standards, and lobby the University to do the same.

### Quality of education

- Continue to support Responsible Futures in partnership with the University as well as aim to work with Decolonise the Curriculum – to decolonise and embed sustainability within the formal, informal and subliminal curriculum.

### Life on land

- Encourage use of University green spaces for learning, teaching, research and wellbeing
- Work with the University to rewild and increase biodiversity on campus.

# HOW CAN A SCHOOL REpond TO THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY?



**School of Anthropology and Conservation (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's 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 Tracy Kivell (pictured below), 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 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 working 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 of the building and running a SAC Citizens Assembly to identify priority areas for action; 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.

## Case study

### Living Labs project

Dr 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.

# EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Work in the area of sustainability in the curriculum has gained significant momentum over the last couple of years as the scale and urgency of the climate and ecological crisis has become apparent. We have increasingly been exploring ways to ensure that our curriculum enables our students to gain the knowledge and skills needed to tackle these global challenges.

## What is ESD?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) originated as a United Nations programme that encourages changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to enable a more sustainable and just society for all. It encourages a holistic approach to sustainability that goes beyond 'being green'.

Our graduates, regardless of their field of study, once in the workplace will face very different conditions than those of a generation ago, and will need competence to cope with conditions of uncertainty, complexity and rapid change, as well as to contribute positively to a more sustainable, safe and secure future.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS







## Case study

### Using student research to inform sustainability action in Sibson

The Sibson Green Team is made up of Sustainability Champions from Kent Business School, the School of Mathematics, Statistics and Actuarial Science, and the Sibson café. The Sibson building is one of Kent's most sustainable buildings, however, champions noticed that users of the building were not always acting in the most sustainable way. The Sibson Green Team decided to use this as an opportunity to embed sustainability into the curriculum of a particular cohort of students.

Every year, students taking the KBS marketing and market research modules are given 'real life' challenges to work on. Dr Rachel Duffy set Stage 2 market research students a challenge to look at attitudes to sustainability in the Sibson building.

Students received an initial briefing from the sustainability team, and were set the challenge of researching use of single use plastic, recycling and energy consumption in the building, and then proposing marketing deliverables to help improve people's behaviour in these areas. Students then pitched their ideas to the Sibson Green Team champions explaining their methodology, findings and solutions.

The challenge was valuable, not only in the findings that came out of it, which the group are now implementing in the building, but also in helping to spread the word about Sustainability work going on at the University.

# RESPONSIBLE FUTURES AND SDG TEACH IN



## Responsible Futures programme

In September 2019 Kent joined a cohort of Universities signed up to the Responsible Futures programme. Responsible Futures is an initiative from the National Union of Students to enable a whole-institutional approach to embedding social responsibility and sustainability across the formal and informal curriculum.

Delivered in partnership between institutions and their student unions, the programme is a framework to assist in creating an environment for staff and students to work together to embed social responsibility and sustainability into teaching and learning and ultimately helping to ensure students leave education with the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to lead society to a more just and sustainable future.

Since signing up we have been busy setting up a steering group to oversee activity and organising events to raise awareness of ESD across campus. We now have over 20 academic and professional service staff engaged and we hope to significantly expand this throughout 2020.

## SDG teach-in

During the week of the 17-21 February 2020 academics across Kent took part in the SDG teach-in. This is an annual event coordinated by the NUS where academics pledge to make links to the SDG's within their taught courses during the week. Academics from across the University from diverse disciplines pledged to incorporate the SDGs in their teaching for the week.

### Examples included

**DI510 Conservation and communities – Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Alleviation: linked agendas.**

**Dr Charlie Gardner**

This lecture explored the importance of biodiversity for poverty alleviation and discussed the role that conservation can play in meeting multiple Sustainable Development Goals

**HI426 Making History**

**Professor Karen Jones**

This lecture introduced students to environmental history as a discipline and encouraged a look at the past that puts humans in their 'place' as well as thinking about how scholarship and activism might fit together.

**nus**

**Responsible  
Futures**



## Case study

### Teaching Sustainability: Sustainable Teaching

On 1 March 2019 Kent launched its efforts into embedding sustainability into the curriculum with a one-day conference, organised by Dr Catherine Morris and Dr William Rowlandson.

The conference brought over 50 students, academic and professional service staff and visitors together to share best practice and to develop ideas for embedding sustainability across the student experience. This covered a wide range of approaches from the creation of stand-alone sustainability modules, incorporating sustainability into existing teaching and utilising pedagogy to embed sustainability skills.

Speakers included:

- Zoe Robinson, Professor of Sustainability Education, Keele University
- Catherine Morris, Environmental Adviser, University of Kent

- Paul Warwick, Associate Professor, Sustainability Education Lead, University of Plymouth
- Nicholas Thurston, University of Kent

The day was successful in bringing together and creating a network of staff, students and the wider community to share best practice and highlight the work that is being done. Following the conference outcomes were disseminated through the Learning and Teaching Conference in the form of practical guidance for staff and students on how to engage with, and initiate delivering sustainability education and embedding sustainability throughout the student experience.

This conference has acted as springboard for further work across the University including the launch of the Responsible Futures programme.

# SUSTAINABILITY AND INTERNATIONALISATION



## **Sustainability and climate change are clearly now a key focus in every sector; this includes internationally-positioned Higher Education and our related activities at the University of Kent.**

A brief search of the University's website, using related terms, will reveal a range of associated modules in diverse and globally-relevant disciplines. In addition to our educational offer, Kent staff are also involved in an array of research projects which seek critical solutions linked to this issue, of universal relevance.

As part of the 100th issue of International Higher Education (Winter 2020), the Associate Director of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) (Rumbley, 2020<sup>1</sup>), drew attention to the intensive use of air travel in academic internationalisation, which contributes to climate crisis. Rumbley also advocates that the international Higher Education community should prioritise immediate and creative solutions to offset these negative environmental effects, including the more extensive use of technology.

At the University of Kent, this ambition is reflected in our international partnerships and student recruitment strategies and in also our work to develop a comprehensive plan that responds to the climate and ecological crisis. Alongside our global strategic intent, Kent, as part of Kent's civic mission, Kent has also recently backed Canterbury City Council's commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

In addition to maximising the positive impact of international mobility, there is an ongoing drive at Kent to develop our on-campus activities in the form of activities described as 'Internationalisation at Home' in order to make better use of the diverse perspectives and approaches that we have access to within communities that are already within our reach. In this way, important efforts can be made to encourage carbon-neutral forms of intercultural knowledge development and exchange global learning opportunities can be made accessible to more people, without always needing to travel long distances.

Continuing to develop our actions, to make a meaningful contribution to sustainability, is obviously an important long-term commitment. This is evident through the many education and research initiatives associated with sustainability across our academic schools. The case studies presented here highlight just a few of the many additional ventures which are active at the University. These initiatives provide an indication of how our learning and research community is committed to sustainability whilst also remaining dedicated to securing meaningful impact through academic internationalisation.

**Dr Anthony Manning**  
Dean for Internationalisation

<sup>1</sup> Rumbley, L.E. (2020) Internationalisation of Higher Education and the Future of our Planet, International Higher Education, Winter 2020. Available at: [www.internationalhighereducation.net/media/sldw90/6ubnv9/663153b84b739cdeb299d8f4c85998b44e9fe5354.pdf](http://www.internationalhighereducation.net/media/sldw90/6ubnv9/663153b84b739cdeb299d8f4c85998b44e9fe5354.pdf)



## Case study

### GOLD Programme

Kent's Global Officer Leadership Development (GOLD) Programme provides a co-curricular opportunity for home and international students to gain experience in leading internationally-focused events at the University which develop leadership skills and inter-cultural awareness across the community.

As part of this year's range of activities the GOLD students have attended a dedicated conference session, led by Dr Carl Wright, Chair of the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership, on the topic of Sustainable Development Goals, with critical reflection on how students can enhance their own positive impact in local and international contexts.

This has also led to the planning of a Sustainability-focused Global networking event which will be open to all students at Kent. Also this year, the GOLD Officers developed a green marketing strategy to promote Kent's Annual World Fest celebrations. Additionally, the team has collected Foodbank donations at a range of other campus-based events.

## Case study

### GLO

To widen access to international intellectual exchange, without the need for travel, Kent has been actively promoting its Global Learning Online (GLO) model which encourages our students to collaborate, through internet-based learning initiatives, with students at overseas partner universities.

To date, students in France, Japan and Hong Kong have participated in this venture. In 2020 we have also extended our activity through the Connect programme, a virtual exchange mechanism supported by Erasmus Plus, which brings students from a wide range of nationalities together for a collective online learning experience.

# RESEARCH IMPACTS



## Kent's Global Challenges Doctoral Centre (GCDC)

### Supporting the UN SDGs through research

The University of Kent's Global Challenges Doctoral Centre (GCDC) was established in 2018 and is dedicated to supporting doctoral and postdoctoral research that addresses global challenges and supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GCDC is funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), a £1.5 billion fund established in 2015 by the UK government to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by ODA recipient (developing) countries. One of the main tenets of GCRF research projects is their contribution to the success of one or more of the seventeen UN SDGs. The GCDC was established in the academic year 2018-19 to help realise the aims of the GCRF while raising up the next generation of global challenge-led researchers at Kent.

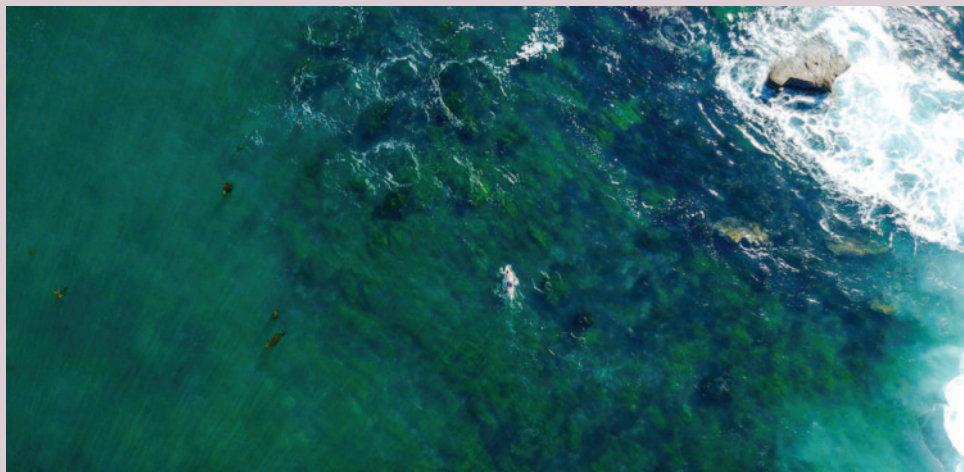
The GCDC funds an annual cohort of doctoral researchers, and in 2020, the Centre funded its inaugural group of postdoctoral research associates (PDRAs). GCDC research projects must demonstrate adherence to the aims of the GCRF and support at least one UN SDG. From projects on sustainable architecture in the Sudan (Goal 11), to the politics of climate change in South East Asia (Goal 13) to gender equality in Central Asia (Goal 5), the Centre's thriving and diverse research portfolio aims to make a significant contribution to the seventeen goals through innovative research.

In addition to funding ODA-compliant research, the GCDC works to support and connect academics working in GCRF-related areas across disciplines.



The GCDC coordinates a staff and student affiliate scheme to connect the wider research community of global challenge-led researchers, and the Centre hosts a range of specialised training and interdisciplinary events throughout the academic year, often with a focus on the application of research in supporting the UN SDGs. For instance, the Centre's inaugural 'GCDC Hangout' was led by the GCDC director, Dr Beth Breeze, and focused on the role of philanthropy in supporting the UN SDGs. A subsequent Hangout, led by the GCDC deputy director, Dr Frank Grundig, focused on climate change as a global challenge and the role of research in supporting UN SDG 13: Climate Action.

The GCDC is continually working to develop innovative ways to connect and support Kent's research community as it works to support the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals and the aims of the Global Challenges Research Fund.



## Case study

### Using algae to combat disease and support the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Conner Webb, a member of the GCDC's inaugural PhD cohort based in the School of Biosciences, is undertaking research that is contributing to sustainable economic development and wellbeing in South East Asia while supporting multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Conner works under the supervision of Professor Colin Robinson, and the project aims to address aquaculture disease outbreaks in South East Asia.

Specifically, the research team is working to identify strategies for producing strains of microalgae that will target particularly devastating pathogens. These particular disease outbreaks cause significant economic damage to the aquaculture industry and interrupt food supply in South East Asia, and the project's success will improve and sustain the

region's economy and wellbeing, addressing multiple UN SDGs, namely, Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 14 (Life Below Water).

When asked to comment on what it is like to be a GCDC PhD student, Conner says: 'It is incredibly motivating to be a part of a project that aims to tackle a serious global challenge, and meeting our collaborators in Bangkok made me realise this even more. Although the project is still in the early stages, it is very rewarding to see the potential application of our research'.

# CONTACT US

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