

Environmental Task Group
Thursday 9th February 2022
Team/Hybrid Meeting

Present:

Present:	School/Dept.
Prof Colin Reid (CR)	Prof of Environmental Law (Chair)
Trudy Cunningham (TC)	Environment & Sustainability Manager
Derek Mitchell (DM)	Energy Manager
John Rowan (JR)	Vice-Principal
Kevin Frediani (KF)	Curator Botanic Gardens
Allan Tough (AT)	Procurement Manager
Aidan McColgan (AM)	Deputy Director Estates & Campus Services
Stewart Kerr (SK)	Procurement Officer
Mark Stephenson (MS)	UoDIT
Dave Broadfoot (DB)	DUSA Facilities Manager
Moira Dean (MD)	DUSA Retail Manager
Maitaine Sandonis Perez (MP)	SRC Environment Rep
Nicolas Helps (NH)	Head of Safety Services

Apologies:

Scott Robertson	Head of residences & conferences ?
Mel Woods	DJCAD
Helena Moffat	Catering Manager

1. Welcome and apologies

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 8 December 2021 were approved.

3. Climate Action Group

CTR reported on developments at University level as climate and sustainability issues are being taken more seriously. With a policy goal and legal commitments to achieve Net Zero no later than 2045, the University is creating a high level Carbon Board, chaired by the Principal to oversee this. A more operational Carbon Action Planning Group will sit below that with a number of sub-groups: Education, Research, Carbon Smart Campus, Transport, Procurement & Supply Chain, and Investment & Financing, together with two sub-groups with a broader perspective, on New Ways of Working and Environmental Sustainability.

Many of the issues previously considered by this Group will fall under the remit of various sub-groups and accordingly this was likely to be its last meeting in its current form. There will still be a role for a broad group that looks not just at climate and carbon issues but at wider sustainability concerns, but there is a desire to avoid duplication and asking the same key individuals to attend multiple meetings. The new Environmental Sustainability Group may have small core membership with a wider circle of associates, to ensure strong communication and collaboration without making excessive demands on individuals. The exact format will be considered as the remits, memberships and priorities of the other sub-groups become clearer.

An initial task, which CTR has taken on over the summer, is to write a Sustainability Policy for the University and in the coming weeks he will be speaking to others to seek guidance and assistance.

CTR to lead on this

Prof Rowan expressed his appreciation for the work done over the years by this group in keeping attention focused on environmental issues and making progress on many issues, at a time when the University was not giving such concerns priority. The existence of the Group has helped the University to its high ranking in relevant league tables. <<Maybe make this more concrete?

4. Progress Report

a) Water coolers:

- Problems had been identified with slow response times from the contractors but this was being addressed.

- Scottish Water is installing refill stations for personal water bottles across the city and there is a possibility of having some on campus. **TC to follow up**

- It was noted that Campus Catering is still supplying water in plastic bottles despite the understanding being that these would be replaced with refillable glass containers. **?? TC to speak to Campus catering ??**

- Bottled water chillers have been replaced across campus where plumbed-in ones are practicable and it was questioned whether there was a need to maintain any bottled water chillers on campus. A clear policy against this would be welcomed. **TC to follow up with JR**

b) Waste:

- Attempts to reduce the spending on waste collections over the summer when there were reduced volumes had faced complaints about the loss of daily pick-ups.

- The introduction of the deposit-return scheme in August 2023 will have a major impact on behaviour and waste arisings, removing tonnes of waste from our waste stream. It is hoped to have reverse vending machines on campus as part of the response.

c) IT (Mark Stephenson)

- Tips on sustainable printing and tools to support this were being prepared and would be disseminated.

- Environmentally sustainable IT is an integral part of the new Digital Strategy and the new Virtual Desktop Infrastructure enables more energy efficient operations and lengthens the working life of laptops.

- For occasions such as Welcome Week, a lot of printed information is to be replaced by the use of QR codes (which have become fashionable again).

d) Website

- Work is continuing on updating the University's websites, hoping to link and highlight various sustainability activities, but there was some concern over the status of some older but still valuable information and data.

e) Energy (Derek Mitchell)

- The days of using Salix and other cheap loans for small-scale projects has passed and the focus now was on a whole building approach, seeking to achieve Net Zero buildings, with carbon reduction as an integral part of all refurbishments. The new ?? Enterprise Hub?? Is to have a ground source heat-pump system and a wider plan for heating the campus is being developed.

- In future such energy reports will be made primarily to the Carbon Smart Campus sub-group of the Climate Action Planning Group.

- A new post of Energy ?????? has been approved.

f) Electric Vehicles

- There are problems across Scotland with many chargers stopping working and their status needs to be monitored and arrangements made for them to be reset easily without calling expensive external support.
- Staff and students will soon have to pay for using chargers on campus, but at a discount rate. The current free provision was seen as raising fairness issues in relation to who was benefitting from the free provision, since it is generally the better off drivers who have electric vehicles and there were examples of some being routinely charged on campus rather than at home.
- The pool cars and vans are in steady use but there remains a challenge in replacing the larger vans with electric vehicles, since there is limited choice, and all are expensive.
- It was noted that Premier Shops had also acquired an electric van and were happy with its performance.

g) Procurement (Alan Tough)

- APUC (Advanced Procurement for Universities and Colleges) is organising training on issue such as food and furniture and discussions on the circular economy include possible arrangements for laptops to be refurbished and taken back for use.
- A carbon audit of the campus had been contracted for and a separate audit is being undertaken of the Protein Phosphorylation and Ubiquitylation Unit (MRC-PPU) as part of a wider scheme organised by the Medical Research Council.

h) Welcome Week

- Arrangements are being made, to include various sustainability events, including on public transport and cycling.

i) Premier Shops (Moiria Dean)

- In addition to the electric van, sustainability is becoming important in many areas, such as the clothes provider, the materials for refillable water bottles, and looking at provision of goods as refills and the increasing use of local suppliers.

5. Botanic Garden and Grounds

- KF gave a presentation on the role of the University and its campus in the city's biodiversity and as a living laboratory. Various projects and plans were under development for the campus and Botanic Garden and the wider community.

6. Next meeting

CTR thanked everyone for their contributions and said that the membership and role of the Group and the timing of its next meeting would be determined as the wider carbon and sustainability structure within the University became more settled.