

Staff Sustainability Engagement Strategy (2025-2030)

Canterbury Christ Church University's Strategic Framework 2015-2022 announced our commitment to transforming individuals, creating knowledge, enriching communities and building a sustainable future, with sustainability as a cross-cutting theme.

In response to this, we developed a Framework for Sustainability 2015-2023 which articulates our vision, commitment, approach and responsibilities with regard to sustainability, and outlines as one of four key areas the 'Student and Staff Experience' at CCCU. In 2022 we published 'Our Response to the Climate Emergency' and launched our new Academy for Sustainable Futures.

In 2023 we began the transition to the University's new Vision 2030 strategy which outlines our commitment to building and shaping sustainable futures over the next seven years. In response, the Academy for Sustainable Futures developed a 2024-2030 Sustainability Strategy, upon which our sustainability engagement strategies are updated to reflect these new commitments, targets and ways of working.

This strategy document aims to outline our approach to staff sustainability engagement and to develop an action plan to build capacity and meet our sustainability commitments in this area going forward. The policy statement is as follows:

The University recognises the importance of the interrelationship between student and staff experience, and that a sustainable community is one in which everyone feels able to engage and contribute. Concepts of inclusion and accessibility are central to this principle, as well as developing a sense of belonging, to ensure enhancement of the breadth and depth of community experience.

Objectives outlined in this framework with regard to staff sustainability engagement are as follows:

- Enhance the level of engagement and participation in sustainability related initiatives
- Foster connections between individuals, communities and their environment
- Create spaces to support health and wellbeing

This strategy sets out the approaches and targets outlined in the Sustainability Strategy 2024-2030, and is annually reviewed and updated to reflect the current provision and any expected changes or additions for the coming year.

Our Approach

For over a decade, we have been developing and refining our initiatives, opportunities and processes, informed by research and best practice from across the sector, through a two-pronged approach to staff engagement at Christ Church:

1. From the ground up: individual empowerment and leadership opportunities.

The Academy for Sustainable Futures offers certified *Carbon Literacy Training*, advice and expertise, and one-to-one support for academic staff who want to take a lead on piloting or developing ways to embed sustainability into the formal or informal curriculum. The *Interdisciplinary Research Network* and *SHE Network* provide a space for researchers to come together to share and promote their work in many different areas of sustainability, and the Academy connects teams of professional services and academic staff across the University with itself and with one another to share best practice, collaborate and cross-

promote events, opportunities and campaigns that engage with one or more aspects of sustainability. We also work with individuals and teams to offer practical advice and share resources, knowledge and experience on ways to build sustainability into business practice.

We have curated an ever-growing library of sustainability resources, including Q&A videos, books, games, teaching aids, educational podcasts and creative spaces which staff are encouraged to use, and the sustainability team provides opportunities for staff to meaningfully engage with the natural environment on campus, through allotment and gardening projects, hop-growing, and the *Wilder Campus* initiative. We are also members of a city-wide *Canterbury SDG Forum*, *Canterbury Climate Action Partnership* and *Canterbury Biodiversity Forum*, and host quarterly *Blean Advisory Steering Committees* with Kent Wildlife Trust.

2. From the top down: representation, business planning and curriculum development support.

We provide one-to-one support to staff in mapping, developing and embedding sustainability within the curriculum, creating opportunities for collaborations with the Academy for Sustainable Futures through particular modules, and we contribute to strategic planning processes that inform business planning and impact our ways of working. We also encourage representation from both academic and professional services staff from across the University on our strategic planning groups, who take an active role in the development of policy and campus community life.

Induction Processes

Staff are actively encouraged to engage with sustainability in their area of work and working environment, and this begins with staff induction. All new staff are invited to a University orientation day, where they are given an introduction to the sustainability and environmental policies by members of the Senior Management Team. They're invited to explore a welcome hub with further information about, among other services and departments, how sustainability is put into practice at Canterbury Christ Church University, what opportunities there are to engage with sustainability in their new roles and how we can support them. They also complete an e-induction course upon starting work with the University which includes information and further reading links on sustainability at Christ Church. Additionally, *Carbon Literacy Training* workshops are offered via the staff development platform StaffLearn, so all staff are able to access and book further training as part of their continuing professional development.

Staffing and Resources

Sustainability at Christ Church is currently facilitated and supported by a team which now comprises two full-time and three part-time salaried staff, including professional services, academic and research team members, whose roles are entirely sustainability-focused. We are additionally supported by two part-time voluntary academics, four part-time paid student SGO roles, and a wider community of staff and students across the University and beyond who contribute their time, energy and expertise to our work.

Though the budget distribution across different aspects of our staff and student engagement work varies from year to year as needs and opportunities arise, we currently budget around £12,000 for student staffing between our Student Green Office team of four (recruited annually), and at least one or two paid project-based work experience opportunities for students each year. Our annual spend for resources, materials and educational and engagement tools is around £4,000 - £5,000, not including the cost of externally validated engagement programmes or initiatives, such as Responsible Futures or Green Impact, when we engage in them.

Staff Sustainability Engagement Strategy: Action Plan

The following broad-scope actions for staff sustainability engagement have been outlined in our Sustainability Strategy 2024-2030. In this section we have expanded on these to reference actions we have already or are currently completing, and to develop an on-going action plan.

We utilised the LiFE Index framework to oversee key areas of improvement in sustainability engagement; including strategy, action planning, stakeholder engagement, measurement, communication, training and support, implementation and links to the curriculum.

1. Provide opportunities that develop knowledge, skills and experience for sustainability

Current opportunities include, as outlined above: *Carbon Literacy Training*, one-to-one support for curriculum development, *Interdisciplinary Research Network (IRN)*, *Sustainability in Higher Education (SHE) Network*, the *Climate Ready* programme of opportunities and activities, the sustainability resources library, and regular conferences and education days with sustainability themes ranging from sector-wide to faculty-specific. In 2023 we appointed two new roles within the academy team: a climate education officer and a Dean of the Academy to lead on sustainability curriculum and research. We also had several members of the Academy team trained as Climate Fresk facilitators in 2023 and two members of the Academy team are trained as Carbon Literacy facilitators officially in 2024 in order to provide more of these opportunities to staff in upcoming years.

- a) Maintain a coherent portfolio of initiatives that are reviewed and developed every year. (Next review: June 2026)

2. Provide opportunities for staff to develop leadership skills for sustainability

Current opportunities include, as above: *Carbon Literacy Training* including support to deliver this training to others, *Interdisciplinary Research Network (IRN)*, *Sustainability in Higher Education (SHE) Network*, and physical and digital resources, advice and practical support for both individual and team-wide staff-led projects and initiatives to embed sustainability into business practice and the workplace environment.

- a) Monitor and review these opportunities annually. (Next review: June 2026)

3. Develop opportunities to support engagement with a sense of place within the natural and cultural environment

Current opportunities include *Wilder Campus* spaces and events, community allotments, drop-in community gardening projects, hop-picking, campus heritage and biodiversity walks, an annual *Climate Action Week* in collaboration with the *Canterbury Climate Action Partnership* and other local businesses and community groups, and annual *Foraging* activities with a hired instructor.

- a) Maintain a suite of opportunities, and review these and how we publicise and communicate them annually. (Next review: June 2026)

4. Develop networking opportunities for sharing ideas, knowledge and experience

Current opportunities are centred on the *Interdisciplinary Research Network (IRN)*, *SHE Network*, the *Carbon Literacy* community, and our wider community networks like the *Canterbury Climate Action Partnership*.

- a) Monitor levels of attendance and participation annually. (Next review: June 2026)

5. Develop methods of evaluating engagement in sustainability

Though we developed a comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation tool alongside our Strategic Framework 2015-22, we found it impractical to employ consistently given the broad and variable nature of our collaborations and engagement initiatives; further compounded by the pandemic which fundamentally changed the landscape for campus engagement. After Vision 2030 was finalised, a revised plan for monitoring and evaluating our progress against both our strategic sustainability commitments and our various engagement initiatives and opportunities was created through The Record of Engagement which tallies attendance numbers, anecdotal evidence of interest and a qualitative impact estimate. This was found to be more flexible and useful, however likely needs something more rigorous for evaluation.

- a) Improve upon the current M&E process for sustainability engagement at CCCU (Next review: June 2026)

6. Raise the profile of sustainability activities to support enhanced participation

Currently we publicise through the following channels:

DIGITAL: *Academy for Sustainable Futures* web pages, *StaffNet* notices and events, *In Touch* fortnightly newsletter (via Kirsty McDonald-Buckley), our own student-led Sustainability blog, Facebook, Instagram and Bluesky, monthly *Greenhouse* newsletter, email mailing lists and via a dedicated sustainability resources blackboard.

PRINT: Termly and annual publications including case studies, print publications of annual report highlights, monthly *Greenhouse* newsletter, information leaflets on individual sustainability projects and opportunities, engagement resources including Wilder Campus self-guided tour maps, skill-building activity and recipe cards, activity zines and where opportunities arise, through external publications and articles in local press, academic journals and sector-wide networks like the EAUC.

- a) Review the clarity, cohesiveness and effectiveness of the sustainability identity and opportunities on offer in light of the Academy for Sustainable Futures brand and the new Sustainability Strategy 2024-2030 commitments. (Next review: June 2026)