READING STUDENTS' UNION

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Last reviewed: June 2023

Next review date: June 2024

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy provides an overview on how RUSU operates sustainably, with the intention of contributing to sustainable goals as outlined in the Strategic Operating Plan. This policy will outline RUSU's commitments to environmental sustainability, why this is important and how we will measure our progress.

RUSU defines sustainability as environmental, economic and social responsibility. We will meet the needs of current students without compromising the needs of future students. This document focuses on sustainability however the wider definition will be considered at every stage. Adaptations to the processes outlined in this document may be made for the purposes of enhancing sustainability.

This policy should be audited, reviewed, and updated annually by the RUSU Environment Committee

2. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

RUSU firmly believes that any new measures introduced to promote sustainability should take the accessibility requirements of its staff and students into account. RUSU will not implement measures that create significant barriers for the disabled communities, including but not limited to D/deaf and hard of hearing, neurodiversity and those with mobility restrictions, and will allow flexibility on all aspects of this policy to enable any accessibility requirements to be met. Staff and students who have concerns about complying with any of the initiatives outlined in this policy are strongly encouraged to contact RUSU, where a staff member will be more than happy to discuss how RUSU can make reasonable adjustments to suit your requirements.

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3. ENERGY AND UTILITIES

RUSU is committed to promoting sustainability through a number of energy reducing initiatives. On top of this, the organisation will look to utilise more renewable energy sources in the future.

3.1 **Room temperatures** – we will ensure temperatures are maintained sensibly. RUSU will aim to keep its offices within a temperature range of 16-24°C.

3.2 **Portable heaters** – we will not permit the use of portable heaters unless faults to the building's heating system are causing the office temperature to drop below the recommended minimum of 16°C.

3.3 **Portable desk fans** – we will encourage staff to not use portable desk fans and will instead be asked to open windows or use the building's air conditioning where appropriate. Desk fans or alternative methods of cooling down may be used when office temperatures exceed 24°C.

3.4 **Staff responsibility** – staff will be encouraged to take responsibility for lights and appliances within their office space. This includes:
- Switching off lights in rooms that are empty.
- Not filling kettles to excess before boiling.
- Switching electronic equipment off when not in use as well as overnight where appropriate.
- Ensuring all unnecessary appliances are switched off during periods of building closure, such as public holidays.
- Opting to use the stairs instead of the lift and avoid activating the automatic doors, with the exception of staff who make use of these for accessibility purposes.

3.5 **Water consumption** – RUSU will aim to reduce water consumption by researching and utilising water saving devices on taps and toilets. RUSU will research into working alongside its suppliers to ensure water is sourced sustainably.

3.6 **Monitoring usage** –RUSU will monitor its energy usage by reviewing energy data when possible. This data will be compared to previous months/years to keep track of usage and allow for reasonable targets to be set.

3.7 **Renewable energy** – we will research into increasing the amount of renewable energy sources available to the organisation by working alongside the University's Estates Team and Sustainability Department. RUSU will prioritise the installation of new renewable energy sources in the future.

3.8 **Energy and Utilities: Measuring progress**

- RUSU will install one new renewable energy source to the building by the end of the 2020/21 academic year.

- Energy usage will be monitored throughout the year to track progress and targets will be set for energy reduction.
- Spot checks will be carried out by a member of the Environment Committee on a monthly basis to measure progress and will be reported into Environment Committee.

4. WASTE AND RECYCLING

Our work will be guided by four main principles which we will prioritise: prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle. Reducing our waste and improving our recycling will have a positive environmental impact on campus and save money on environmental costs, thus improving the facilities and experience we can offer students.

4.1 **Charitable reuse schemes** – we will support charitable reuse schemes on campus. This is currently UPP's collaboration with British Heart Foundation which recycles or rehomes items students no longer want when they move out at the end of the year.

4.2 **Signage in the building** – we will provide clear signage to make it easy for staff and students to dispose of their waste appropriately.

4.3 **Bins –** we will ensure that there are a suitable number of bins in all areas of the building.

We will ensure that our outlets are provided with appropriate bins to dispose of their waste correctly.

4.3.1 **Paper & cardboard** – we will provide bins in the building specifically for disposing of paper and cardboard.

4.3.2 **Recycling** – we will provide bins downstairs in the building that allow our staff and students to recycle

We will provide a recycling bin in the staff room so staff can appropriately dispose of their waste.

4.3.3 **Coffee cups** – we provide cup recycling bins in the building that allow staff and students to appropriately dispose of single use coffee cups.

4.3.4 **Non-recyclable** – we provide bins in the building that allow staff and students to dispose of their non-recyclable waste.

4.4 **Cigarette bins** – we will provide cigarette bins around the venue so that cigarette butts can be appropriately disposed of.

4.5 **Food waste** – Mojos provides a food waste bin in the kitchen which is collected once a week and taken to farms for feed.

We will provide a food waste bin in our staff room and in our building to help staff and students reduce their food waste.

We will encourage our external outlets and providers to consider ways in which they can reduce their food waste.

4.6 **Packaging** – we will work to ensure that the majority of the packaging we receive is recyclable and where appropriate, is recycled.

We will work to ensure that any food or drink purchased will contain the minimum packaging possible.

We train our student staff to appropriately dispose of packaging.
We will review any changes we can make in the products we buy to reduce the amount of packaging. This includes the packaging from the food that is offered in Mondial. We will encourage our external outlets and providers to carry out the same review.

We will encourage external outlets and providers to dispose of their packaging responsibly and ensure they are aware of the bins we have in place to do so.

4.7 **Events & club nights** – we provide our student staff with training to dispose of waste correctly.

We provide our student staff with the equipment to dispose of waste correctly e.g. clear bin bags, black bin bags, recycling, cardboard and waste bins.
We will ensure that extra provision is provided during big events such as Welcome Week, Varsity and Summer Ball to cover the sudden increase in waste that is being produced.

4.8 **Cleaning equipment** – we will use biodegradable cleaning chemicals.

We will research into providing more sustainable cleaning equipment that will reduce levels of waste e.g. single use blue roll.

4.9 **Plastic** – our plastic cups are currently recyclable but single use. We will research the alternatives available and where feasible will provide reusable cups e.g. for small events and meetings.

Staff and students are able and will be encouraged to bring their own reusable cups into the venue. During club nights we will promote this option for spirits and soft drinks which don't require a pint measure.

We will continue to research into how we can reduce our single use plastic during Union nights and other large events e.g. Welcome Week, Varsity and Summer Ball. This includes the merchandise and 'freebies' we provide to students.

4.9.1 **Plastic shopping bags** – we will no longer purchase plastic shopping bags to be used in our venue, our promotions or our events.

We will encourage external outlets and providers to find more sustainable alternatives to plastic shopping bags.

4.10 **External waste collection** – we will provide an appropriate number of bins to ensure adequate space for recycling.

4.11 **Personal responsibility** – we will encourage staff and students to take personal responsibility by providing clear and accessible information for how they can dispose of their waste.

4.12 **Batteries** – staff and students are able to drop off their used batteries at the RUSU reception to be appropriately disposed of.
We will work to promote this more with our staff and students.

4.13 **Printer cartridges** – staff and students are able to drop off their used printer cartridges at the RUSU reception to be appropriately disposed of. We will work to promote this more with our staff and students.

4.14 Waste and Recycling: Measuring progress
- RUSU will reduce their waste by 5% by Summer 2025.
- We will measure our waste reduction by annually comparing our waste charges.
- By 2025 there will be a 10% reduction in the single-use plastic cups we currently buy. Levels will be monitored by recording the opening and closing of stock.
- Spot checks will be carried out by a member of the Environment Committee on a monthly basis to measure progress and will be reported into Environment Committee.
- External outlets and providers will be encouraged to set reduction targets and will understand how they can reduce their waste in the building.

5. RUSU staff travel
Our commitment to sustainability is much broader than the actions we complete inside our building. We will support our staff in choosing more sustainable travel options wherever possible. Improving our staff travel sets an example and demonstrates a personal responsibility and commitment to being more sustainable.

5.1 **Work business** – where appropriate, staff will be encouraged to choose the most sustainable form of travel to conferences and events.
We will look into ways we can prioritise sustainability by building it into our decisionmaking processes when booking travel to conferences and events.

5.2 **Domestic flights** – our staff will not use flights to travel to mainland destinations. Any special circumstances should be raised with a manager and will be considered on a case by case basis.

5.3 **Vehicle hire** – before hiring, staff must consider alternative methods of transport for business travel.

We will encourage our student groups to use public transport over private vehicle hire.

5.4 **Car travel** – staff must investigate alternative public transport options before personal or hire cars are used for work business travel.

5.5 **Public transport** – staff will ensure that public transport is the preferred method of travel for work business. This can include buses, trains, trams, taxis and car share schemes.

5.6 **Staff travel to work** – where appropriate, staff will be encouraged to choose the most sustainable form of travel to work.

We will look into ways we can support sustainable staff travel to work. This will include finding ways to promote an internal car share scheme and adopt other available schemes such as cycle to work.

RUSU will ensure that travel options are outlined in our staff handbook and managers will be encouraged to discuss this with staff annually.

5.7 **Travel expenses for business travel** – where there is an option to take the train but a car is used, mileage payments will be capped to standard-class rail fare payments, e.g. if travel is required and the rail fare is £15, if a car is used staff won't be reimbursed for more than £15 even if the mileage payment is higher.

Any special circumstances should be raised with a manager and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Evidence will be required when submitting a claim.

Travel expenses will be covered for staff who choose to walk or cycle for work business at 10p per mile, e.g. conferences.

5.8 **Reduce travel costs** – we will carry out a review of RUSU's current annual travel costs and assess how these could be reduced in place of alternative methods e.g. online meetings and video conferencing.

Where appropriate staff will be expected to book their travel at least two-weeks in advance so cheaper fares might be obtained.

5.9 **Working from home** – we will carry out a review to see if we can improve working from home options to reduce staff travel. Where appropriate, staff will be encouraged to consider this option and will be supported in understanding how it can be utilised.

5.10 **Flexible travel** – we will carry out a review to see if we can improve our options for flexible travel. For example, considering the possibility of staff arriving later to work to avoid spending longer in traffic. Where appropriate, staff will be encouraged to consider this option and will be supported in understanding how it can be utilised, whilst being mindful of the needs of RUSU.

5.11 **Ad hoc travel** – staff should consider whether the trip could be tied in with other tasks, for example by having multiple meetings in one area.

5.12 **Health & wellbeing** – we will look into ways we can promote the health, wellbeing and environmental benefits of walking or cycling amongst staff and students.

5.13 RUSU Staff Travel: Measuring progress

- A review is carried out, recommendations are made, and this is publicised to staff and students before implementing it, for the following: work business, staff travel to work, reducing travel costs, working from home and flexible travel.
- Travel costs are reviewed and compared on an annual basis and reduction targets are set through Finance Committee.
- All staff will understand the options available to them and how they can be utilised through the staff handbook and new staff inductions.
- The staff handbook will be updated to reflect these changes.

6. Food & drink

Improving the sustainability of our food and drink not only has a positive impact on the environment but captures our values of being diverse and inclusive for all staff and students. We want to provide a place where staff and students are given a variety of options and can feel confident that the food and drink they are consuming is as sustainable as it can be.

6.1 **Sustainable food products** – where appropriate, we will purchase and serve food that is:

- Locally sourced
- Organic
- Seasonal
- Free-range
- Back British Farming
- MSC certified
- Fairtrade

We will be more transparent by improving the ways in which we make staff and students aware of the food they are eating by increasing the information provided on our website and in the building. Where purchasing and serving these options isn't possible, we will explain to students why this is the case.

6.2 **Vegan food** – we currently provide a selection of vegan food in our catering outlets. We will improve and increase the range of vegan food we provide in our catering outlets to support students in having the freedom to make better choices. We will encourage our external outlets and providers to improve and increase their range of vegan food.

6.3 **Vegetarian food** – we will continue to improve the range of vegetarian food so that the majority of food remains being suitable for vegetarians, demonstrating our commitment to providing sustainable food in our catering outlets.

We will encourage our external outlets and providers to improve and increase their range of vegetarian food.

6.4 **Fish & seafood** – we will not serve food that contains endangered fish. We will not buy fish that has been caught and sold unsustainably.

6.5 **Oil** – all oil in our kitchen is recycled in a buy-back scheme; money vouchers are provided to the kitchen in return which is then put back into the kitchen for future purchases.

6.6 **Meetings and events** – all of RUSU's meetings and events will offer vegetarian and vegan food as the default option, meat options will need be specifically requested. We will encourage our sports clubs and societies to host meetings and events that offer vegetarian and vegan food.

We will ensure that the standards we create throughout the year are upheld during big events such as Welcome Week, Varsity and Summer Ball.

6.7 **Menus** – we will adapt our menus to highlight the more sustainable food options to encourage students to make better choices and help them understand what the better choices are.

6.8 **Promotions** – we will continue running promotions that encourage students to choose more sustainable food options.

6.9 **Deliveries** – we will order food and drink in bulk where appropriate in order to reduce number of deliveries, whilst considering the reduction of food waste.

6.10 **Ethical companies** – where appropriate we will source food & drink that has been ethically produced.

6.11 **Alcohol** – where appropriate we will source sustainable alcohol products, including the packaging they come with.

6.12 **Soft drinks** – where appropriate we will source sustainable soft drink products, including the packaging they come with.

6.13 **Crockery and cutlery** – where appropriate we will provide reusable crockery and cutlery in the building.

Please refer to our Sustainable Crockery and Cutlery policy for detail on our commitments to providing sustainably sourced bar and catering consumables and external outlets.

6.14 Food & Drink: Measuring progress

- We will set targets to reduce our meat produce and increase vegan and vegetarian produce.
- Spot checks will be carried out by an Environment Committee member on a monthly basis to measure progress and will be reported into Environment Committee.
- We will record the number of vegan and vegetarian products compared to meat products we sell to measure any consumer behaviour change.

7. Governance

RUSU is committed to maintaining a consistent governance structure to support its environmental ambitions, with accurate documentation and correspondence relating to sustainability.

7.1 **Environment Committee** – RUSU will implement and maintain an Environment Committee, which will be managed internally.
The committee will meet on a monthly basis and be composed of staff members from each department as well as a student representative, in the form of the Environment and Ethics

Part-Time Officer or a similar role (see 7.9 for more information). This committee will be chaired by the RUSU President with the sustainability staff lead acting as secretary.

Environment Committee will provide a termly update of department progress to the Trustee Board, including any adaptations that should be considered to the policy.

7.2 **Sustainability Champions** – Staff members of the committee will be expected to act as Sustainability Champions for their departments and ensure sustainable practice is adopted wherever possible.

Sustainability Champions are expected to ensure their respective departments adhere to the principles outlined within this policy and will provide relevant updates regarding this to the committee.

Sustainability Champions will also offer an important channel to pass the feedback from staff in their respective departments.

7.3 **Staff roles** - The RUSU President and a senior staff member, allocated as the Sustainable Lead, will both lead on sustainability. There will be a demonstrable commitment to sustainability from senior staff within the organisation.

7.4 **Staff contracts** – we will ensure that sustainability is referenced in the contracts of all new staff starters, including student staff.

7.5 **Job descriptions** – sustainability will be mentioned in the job descriptions of all new staff members, including student staff, to demonstrate the expectation that staff will adhere to good sustainable practice.

7.6 **New staff induction** – good sustainable practice will form part of the training for all new staff, including student staff, and opportunities to pursue additional opportunities in sustainability may be offered to staff members where appropriate.

7.7 **Training and development** – we will provide staff with opportunities to develop skills pertaining to sustainability where appropriate.

7.8 **Strategic Operating Plan** – we will ensure that the SOP includes substantial reference to sustainability and is used as guidance in our decision making.

7.9 **Student Representation** – RUSU will continue to endorse sustainability through the use of student representatives, either in the form of the existing Environment and Ethics Part-time Officer role, or similar roles in the future.

Student representatives will attend relevant RUSU and University committees and working groups where appropriate.

7.10 **Sustainability audit** – an annual audit will be completed by the sustainability staff lead and the RUSU President to identify areas of good sustainable practice as well as key areas for improvement.

Each department's Sustainability Champions will feed in to this and provide any relevant information.

7.11 **Ethical banking practices** – we will research into how we can source all supplies of financial products and services such as auditors, banking and insurance services from organisations that can show the same commitment to sustainability as ourselves and also, if relevant, have an ethical investment policy.

7.12 Governance: Measuring progress

- The audit will be used to identify key areas for improvement and targets will be set to ensure progress. The SMART action plan can be used to add additional targets as a result of the audit outcomes. Progress will be monitored via the Environment Committee and this document will be made available on the RUSU website.
- A review of our banking practices will be carried out and recommendations will be made as to how they could become more ethical.
- The Environment Committee will carry out a sustainability audit in the Summer term to assess the progress that has been made across the academic year.
- A governance review will be carried out to ensure the documents and processes mentioned above are updated to sufficiently include sustainability.

8. Procurement

RUSU will demonstrate its commitment to sustainability by maintaining sensible measures relating to procurement.

8.1 **Electronics Watch** – we will research into affiliating with Electronics Watch to ensure all electronics are sourced responsibly and ethically.
RUSU will work to ensure that the University maintain its affiliation to Electronics Watch.

8.2 **Electronic disposal** – we will ensure that our electronics are disposed of in a responsible and ethical manner.

8.3 **Technology and software** – we will work to maintain up to date technology and software.
We will work to ensure technology and software available to staff is appropriately up to date to prevent any unnecessary printing.
We will ensure that we consider the energy efficiency of any new electronics devices.

8.4 **Multifunctional electronics** – we will research into how we can fully utilise multifunctional electronics, such as multifunctional printers, to reduce the number of electronics that are in use at any one time.

8.5 **Staff uniforms** – we will research into providing uniforms that are certified via Fairtrade or a similar ethical accreditation scheme.

8.6 **Merchandise** – we will research into providing stock in the merchandise store that is certified via Fairtrade or a similar ethical accreditation scheme.

8.7 **Single-use items** – we will research into identifying and reducing the single-use items we utilise and, where appropriate, provide reusable alternatives.
This might include washable towels instead of disposable cloths, and reusable cups or glasses at water fountains instead of plastic cups.

8.8 **Food and drink** - RUSU will research into supplying more ethically sourced food and drink within its commercial venues, as well as at RUSU affiliated events where appropriate.
This includes food and drink items that are Fairtrade certified or are accredited under a similar ethical accreditation scheme.

8.9 **Deliveries** – RUSU will research into decreasing the number of individual deliveries by ordering in bulk, whilst taking into consideration storage space and shelf life restrictions.
RUSU will also consider this in relation to potential food waste, and how we can ensure it is minimised.

8.10 **Cleaning products** – RUSU will research into only providing ethical sourced hand wash and cleaning products that are used in the building.

8.11 Procurement: Measuring progress

- RUSU will carry out a review to determine whether it is feasible for staff uniforms meet at least one ethical accreditation scheme, such as the Fairtrade scheme, the Fair for Life scheme, or similar.
- RUSU will carry out a review to determine whether it is feasible to increase the clothing lines in the merchandise store that meet at least one ethical accreditation scheme.

- RUSU will carry out a review of our current use of technology and software and produce a development plan that will allow all staff to access appropriate up to date technology and software.
- A review will be provided after researching into RUSU's potential affiliation with Electronics Watch and a recommendation will be brought to Environment Committee for discussion.

9. Resources

RUSU is committed to providing resources that not only aim to enhance the student experience but support all staff in delivering those opportunities. We live in a digital world and need to utilise the resources we have available without compromising the accessibility and inclusivity of our Students' Union.

9.1 **Promotional materials** – we will research into how our promotional materials can be more sustainable.

9.2 **Balloons** – RUSU will not use helium or balloons in our venue, in our promotion or at any of our events.
We will not allow students to use helium in our venue, or at any of our events.
We will encourage students not to use balloons in our venue, or at any of our events.
We will not allow external outlets and providers to use helium in our venue, for their promotion or during their events, unless they are an external private booking hiring out the venue.
We will encourage external private bookings to not use balloons.

9.3 **Banners** – we will research into purchasing banners that are made out of more sustainable material, ensuring they do not contain PVC.

9.4 **Printing and photocopying** – we will carry out a review to find ways to minimise the amount of printing that our current internal processes require, such as the processes in HR, Finance and Student Activities.
Where appropriate, financial records will be maintained electronically rather than printing hard paper copies.
We will monitor the levels of printing and photocopying from each department and each individual. Line managers will work with their departments to set targets depending on how much their role demands printing and photocopying. Departments will be asked to keep a record of how much they are printing and photocopying.
We will encourage our external outlets and providers to consider whether they can reduce their printing and photocopying.
The number of papers delivered for Student Media Stream 'The Spark Newspaper' each month will be reviewed regularly to minimise waste.
9.4.1 **Printing and photocopying colour** – all printers will be set to automatically print in black and white. Where appropriate, staff and students will be encouraged to print in black and white. We will encourage our external outlets and providers to print and photocopy in black and white.

9.5 **Double sided printing and photocopying** – all printers will be set to automatically print double sided. Where appropriate, staff and students will be encouraged to print double sided. We will encourage our external outlets and providers to print and photocopy double sided.

9.6 **Dating leaflets** – where appropriate, promotional leaflets won't be dated so that they can be re-used. When a leaflet needs to be dated, staff will need to justify this decision and this will need to be approved by their line manager.

9.7 **Paper** – we will purchase and use recyclable paper only.

9.8 **Apps** – we will promote apps to staff and students that we believe will support their sustainable development. The apps we promote at the moment are the JUMP platform, GIKI, and OLIO.

9.9 **Receipts** – paper receipts will only be provided on request in our catering outlets. We will research into ways we can practically provide digital receipts in our catering outlets instead of paper, e.g. during quieter periods of the day.

We will encourage staff to submit their expense receipts digitally to the Finance department.

9.10 **Petty cash** – we will research into ways that petty cash forms can be completed digitally, unless paper copies are requested for accessibility.

9.11 **Staff training** – where appropriate, staff training resources will be provided digitally, unless paper copies are requested for accessibility.

Staff will be supported in understanding how to work better digitally and take advantage of the online resources available to them and that they can use for students.

9.12 **Technology** – we will work to ensure staff are provided with the necessary technology to allow them to work more digitally.

9.13 **Interviews** – we will aim to reduce the amount of paper we use during interviews.

9.14 **Digital handbooks** – the staff handbook will be provided in a digital format unless a paper copy is requested for accessibility.

9.15 **Paperless meetings** – unless requested for accessibility, all meetings will be paperless, including paperless agendas.

We will encourage our student groups to hold paperless meetings, including paperless agendas, unless requested for accessibility.

9.16 **Last one out checklist** – each office/ area will be required to have a last one out checklist, and the last staff member to leave that office/ area will be expected to complete it.

9.17 **End of term shut down checklist** – each office/ area will be required to have an end of term shut down checklist. A staff member will be designated to be responsible for this or it can be decided that the last staff member that office/ area to leave will be expected to complete it.

9.18 **Reporting issues** – we will look into an online mechanism that will allow staff and students to report sustainable issues in the building.

9.19 **Stationery and Office supplies** –we order all our supplies from Frasers Office innovation who demonstrate their commitment to minimising impact on the environment in various ways including:

- Trading with companies who are demonstrating, developing or have in place environmentally sound policies, procedures and systems.
- Actively encouraging customers to use technology.
- Grouping deliveries to reduce mileage therefore reducing carbon footprint. - Offering single source supply therefore reducing deliveries, mileage and order processing.
- Highlighting eco-friendly products in their catalogues.

Where appropriate, we will only buy eco-friendly stationery and office supplies.

We will aim to reduce the number of deliveries for stationery and office supplies. We will encourage external outlets and providers to look into their stationery is sustainable.

We will research into whether there is a more sustainable supplier we could use.

9.20 Resources: Measuring progress

- Spot checks will be carried out by a member of the Environment Committee on a monthly basis to measure progress and will be reported into Environment Committee.
- We will set targets and keep a record of printing, photocopying and promotional materials that will be reviewed on an annual basis at Environment Committee.
- There will be a 10% reduction in the amount of paper we purchase by Summer 2021. We will monitor levels by recording the opening and closing of stock.
- Photocopying and printing will be monitored on a monthly basis. Ambassadors will be required to report on monthly figures into Environment Committee.
- A review of our internal processes is carried out, recommendations are made and this is publicised to staff and students, before implementing them.

10. Ecological Impact

RUSU will endeavour to monitor its ecological impact to prevent any significant damage to the natural environment.

10.1 **Minimising pollution** – RUSU will take steps to ensure pollution is minimised on its premises, including forms of light pollution, noise pollution and litter. RUSU will continue to monitor noise during Union nights as per our licensing requirements.
RUSU will commit to minimising its environmental impact by preventing water pollution wherever possible.
RUSU members may face disciplinary action if adjudged to be littering during RUSU events. This extends to student groups affiliated with RUSU.

10.2 **Greenhouse gas emissions** – we will work towards targeting a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by working towards utilising more renewable energy resources in line with the University.

10.3 **Assessing impact** - all RUSU events that take place outside of the RUSU building will require completion of an ecological assessment to ensure they are not significantly impacting the natural environment in a negative manner.
Any event organised by RUSU and its members that is deemed to present significant negative environmental impacts may be prevented from taking place.
In some cases, event organisers may be asked to show they have considered the ecological impacts of their event, and how they intend to minimise the effects.

10.4 **Negative impact** – RUSU will not endorse or support events organised by third parties (including the University) that are adjudged to have significant negative environmental impacts.
RUSU maintains the right to prevent activities from taking place on its premises that are considered harmful to the environment.

10.5 **Student groups** – student societies and sports teams are expected to consider their ecological impact and may face disciplinary action if found to be causing significant unnecessary harm to the environment during group activities.

10.6 **Local community initiatives** – RUSU will work to support local initiatives that promote biodiversity.
RUSU will strive to maintain an accurate record of local initiatives on its website to advertise opportunities for staff and students.

10.7 **Staff volunteering** – RUSU will endeavour to share volunteering opportunities amongst staff, specifically those related to sustainability, community and conservation.
Staff will be permitted to volunteer with these groups in line with the voluntary work allowance set out in their respective contracts.
Staff will be encouraged to speak to their managers about using the volunteering time available to them whilst taking into consideration the needs of RUSU.

10.8 Ecological Impact: Measuring progress

- RUSU will support or create at least 3 community initiatives in the 2020/21 academic year.
- To improve sustainable awareness and promote local initiatives, RUSU will hold a Sustainability Fair during Welcome Week with the target of 300 students in attendance.
- A form will be created for staff and students to use when assessing the ecological impact of any activities or events. These will be submitted to the Sustainability Champion of the department and reviewed at Environment Committee.
- RUSU will ensure the environmental audit recognises areas in the organisation that risk polluting the environment and a paper will be produced by Environment Committee that will identify how to minimise the risks.

11. Student Activities and Student Representatives

While this policy applies to all staff, students and external providers who are using our building there are particular aspects which are more relevant for Student Representatives and Activity Groups. These are:

- Travel
- Training
- Fairtrade
- Guidance on recycling, room booking, heating etc.
- Accreditations and awards - student experience, sports ball, societies ball, laurels, knights, Excellence Awards
- Sustainable funding
- Promote environmental volunteering
- Promote ethical societies
- Governance

11.1 **Student engagement** – Officers will be expected to engage their relevant student groups with this policy, identify areas that may apply to that student group and encourage them to follow the commitments that have been laid out.
This includes, but is not limited to: Student Voice Members, PTOs, Academic Reps, Halls Committee and Activity Group Committees.

11.2 **President candidates** –candidates will be encouraged to consider how sustainability could be incorporated into their manifesto when running for the role of President.

12. Working collaboratively

RUSU aims to work collaboratively with its suppliers, partners and stakeholders. This includes:

- University of Reading
- NUS
- People and Planet
- Reading Borough Council
- RE3
- The local community
- Oxford Brookes Students Union (particularly during Varsity)

RUSU will ensure that when we are in collaboration with others they are taking steps to comply with this policy too.

RUSU will aim to engage with local and national sustainability initiatives.

13. External providers

We encourage all external providers and outlets to follow this policy. By using our space, you are agreeing to follow the steps in place, where appropriate, to ensure sustainability.

14. Wellbeing

There are many benefits to sustainability, one of which is wellbeing, for staff in particular. There will be increased opportunity for learning as well as a sense of community and achievement. The benefits of following this policy will be made clear to staff.

15. Compliance

Compliance with this policy is required by all RUSU staff and external suppliers will be encouraged to comply and implement.

Student Activities will seek to incorporate sustainability into its Rewards and Recognition Schemes via the Knights Accreditation and Society Laurels Schemes.

Academic Representation will seek to incorporate sustainability into its RUSU Rep Reward and Recognition Scheme.

RUSU will continue to incorporate sustainability into its Student Experience Awards.

16. Communication

While taking these actions is important, it is also important that these are communicated to staff and students. RUSU commits to continually communicate with students on what steps it is taking to ensure a high standard of environmental sustainability. This will be communicated via social media, emails and other RUSU channels.

Alongside these requirements RUSU will be transparent in actions taken to improve sustainability across the building and staff team. This will be done by:

- Keeping the website updated
- Uploading minutes of the Environment Committee to the website
- Sharing tips/ good practice with students, e.g. Reading Rep green tip of the month
- Keeping information relevant
- Celebrating our wins and successes, e.g. Reading Rep Celebration Corner

In addition, student feedback will be considered on attitudes to sustainability to guide our policy review. Where there are decisions that would incur major sustainable change for the organisation, RUSU will seek student consultation before making a final decision.