

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE



Dear colleagues,

Winter weather is well and truly here. The last few days have seen ground frost, snow and ice as temperatures plummeted across most parts of our 4 Nations. In colder weather, the sustainability-minded put on more layers of clothing rather than turning up the heat – one of the [useful tips to help you lower your home's carbon footprint and save on your bills](#).



COP and Open Conversations

In our October update, Dr Victoria Hands, Sustainability Director, put a call out for articles discussing COP27 or the link between climate and nature, a key theme of COP27 and the sister COP on Biodiversity underway this week. My thanks again to all those who sent in contributions. We have now begun publishing some of these articles on The Open University's [Sustainability website](#).

There is also still time to [register for Open Conversations](#), which is happening 1 – 2:30pm this afternoon (Tuesday 13 December). Designed to promote and enable open conversation between panel members and the audience, these events will prompt dynamic discussion and a solutions-focussed approach whilst asking the questions that are often avoided on a range of sustainability issues. This Open Conversation event will:

- look back on COP26 and COP27
- consider the lower-profile sister COP on Biodiversity
- look to the future COP28 to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates

We will also ask:

- what if it is still possible to keep 1.5°C alive? Our panel discusses what this means.
- what if we all committed to take action now to contribute to reduced carbon emissions and protecting nature? Our panel describe what this might look like.
- what if organisations all committed to transformative action now?

The event will be a 90-minute interactive panel discussion held online (MS Teams) and featuring Professor of Climate Change and Energy, Stephen Peake; three of our OU

COP26 delegation, Dr Leslie Mabon, Dr Clive Mitchell, and Janice Ansine; and PhD student Meng-Chin Tsai. Dr Victoria Hands will host the event.

Knowledge Transfer Vouchers (KTV)

RES (Research Enterprise and Scholarship) is supporting the OU's endeavours towards sustainability through allocating HEIF funds for a KTV call focused on 'Environmental and Social Sustainability'. KTVs provide funding for projects to enable organisations which have not engaged with the OU before to partner with us to solve challenges they are facing, identify opportunities for further collaboration and develop lasting partnerships.

RES expect to fund approximately five projects (£5k- £10k) on 'Environmental and Social Sustainability'. Those that are aligned to at least one of the following UN Sustainable Development Goals (below) will be considered:

- Clean water and sanitation
- Affordable and clean energy
- Sustainable cities and communities
- Responsible consumption and production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on land

Please follow these links for the [KTV guidance](#) and the [KTV application form](#).

Key dates:

Submission deadline: 12 noon on Monday 16th January 2023

Successful applicants will be notified by email on Monday 23rd January 2023

Projects start/end dates: from February 2023- end of July 2023

Feeling Festive

With the winter break fast approaching and colleagues getting ready to spend time with friends and family, the Sustainability Office have come up with a couple of fun and useful things to get us into the festive (but eco-minded) spirit.

Go Green have pulled together their very own '12 days of sustainability'. Unlike the 12 days of Christmas, Go Green's 12 days of sustainability fall from 12 – 24 December, when Neville the Newt (the Go Green mascot) will be sharing an eco-friendly tip each day on the [Go Green Yammer](#). Please do join the group to see the tips and join in with the conversations. Alternatively, you can 'open' them yourself each day with [this advent style calendar](#). Just like a traditional advent calendar, you have to wait until the day to open them, however you have two days, and two tips, ready to be revealed.

You can also test your knowledge with the [Sustainability Office's Christmas edition quiz](#). Do you know what a group of geese on the ground is called? Or how much money is spent on unwanted Christmas gifts each year? This quiz will test and

hopefully expand your knowledge on both carbon footprints and Christmas songs. Feel free to share with your friends and colleagues.

As well as looking after the planet, we should think about looking after ourselves ready for the New Year. Organisational Learning have launched '12 Days of yOU' to inspire you to give yourself more time to focus on your own development, ready to start 2023, whatever it may bring. Each working day a new page will be available for you to explore on the ['12 Days of yOU' intranet page](#).

The Open University in Scotland have also been getting into the festive spirit and sharing advent posts on their [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). These advent posts cover everything from support for students during the busy winter months to information on making more sustainable choices.

Finally, the Information Security team have also shared some top tips on how to stay safe and secure, whilst making those purchases online this festive season. [Read them on OU Life](#).

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind colleagues of the 'gifting a positive legacy' section of [my last bulletin](#), where I ask what other ways we are able to share and show appreciation of each other that have a less carbon-intensive impact than consumerism. Perhaps sharing time, food, or an experience together would be both better for the planet and deeply appreciated by those we love.

On that note, I would like to wish you all a peaceful and restful winter break.

With continued optimism,

Nick

VCE Sponsor for Sustainability and Executive Dean, STEM Faculty

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