

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE



Dear Colleagues

[This infographic](#), which was put out earlier this year by the Sustainability Office, is a timely reminder of ways you can lower your carbon footprint while keeping warm in the colder months which are likely to come between now and next Spring.



Green Infrastructure Week

The OU is an official partner of Green Infrastructure Week (6 – 10 November). We will be holding a panel discussion on 8 November at 1 – 2pm focussed on ‘What would it take for hydrogen to have a place in the UK’s net zero energy future?’.

The event will be a 60-minute online (MS Teams) discussion, featuring OU academics, Marc Cochrane, Tarek Rashwan and Bill Nuttall, and PhD student Harri Williams. It will be hosted by Dr Victoria Hands (Sustainability Director, The Open University). You can [sign up to attend the event using this MS form](#), where you can also let us know if you have any questions for the panelists.

You can also catch up on the Net Zero week event we held in July ‘Net Zero Skills and the Role of Universities’ [here](#) and read our green skills article [here](#) (pages 28 - 31).

If you would like to collaborate on an event with the sustainability office, please [contact us](#).

Planet Earth III

The new OU/BBC series Planet Earth III started its eight-part series on 22 October, airing on BBC One at 6:15pm. Presented by David Attenborough, the series travels to new, previously unseen locations to explore stunning landscapes and tell extraordinary stories whilst showcasing behaviours, pristine environments, and the remarkable strategies that animals have developed to survive. The natural world has changed more over the past few decades than ever before, and this change has been felt right across every ecosystem and by the countless creatures that we share this planet with. You can read more about the series on [OU Life](#). Be sure to tune in each Sunday to watch the series and [the trailer](#) is available to view online.

ESD Changemakers

The OU has signed up for the [Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\) Changemakers programme](#). The programme involves partnering students with academics in aligned disciplines to co-create approaches to ESD in teaching and learning. This aligns with the OU's work on Responsible Futures (RF). RF is a structured approach to embedding sustainability across all aspects of student learning – including the formal curriculum which goes through a cyclical validation process, the informal curriculum such as our OpenLearn resources and the subliminal curriculum which is all the ways we interact with our students from marketing to enrolment to careers advice and alumni support.

If you would like to join the RF working group, please contact us at sustainability@open.ac.uk.

Open Societal Challenges (OSC) Platform

A new OU research platform for collaboration on some of the most important challenges of our time launched at the beginning of October. The OSC online platform enables those outside the OU to work with our researchers on society's most pressing issues – all of which fall under the broad definition of sustainability.

[The Platform](#) is based on a concept introduced in 2021 by Professor Kevin Shakesheff, PVC for Research & Innovation. Following OU community consultation, three OSC themes were announced: Sustainability, Living Well and Tackling Inequalities. The platform already hosts almost 100 OSC projects spanning these themes.

Some of the proposals aim to combat the climate crisis while protecting people's rights and improving living conditions now and in the future; others propose new models for living well, and many overlap across themes as they aim to redress inequalities across the world to bring about religious tolerance, gender safety and equality, and equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

Britain in Bloom

The OU's Walton Hall campus has recently been presented with a Gold Award in the Regional 'Thames and Chilterns in Bloom, large parks' category 2023.

'Britain in Bloom' is the largest horticultural campaign in the United Kingdom which assesses three core pillars: Horticultural Excellence, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation. As well as the huge amount of preparation and work undertaken by our Grounds Team, the award effort was supported by Estates colleagues and the Go Green Team who shared essential input on the environmental aspects we must consider now and for the future, such as No Mow May and reduced mowing to allow more habitat for our insects and pollinators, so critical to our food supply.

A tremendous achievement and congratulations to the Grounds Team pictured with the Britain in Bloom Judges: Pictured left to right: Britain in

Bloom Judge, Michael Gordon, Gareth O'Shiel, Britain in Bloom Judge, Peter Ward, Dan McCarthy, David Cairns, Dean Cobb and Oliver Hanbury.



How Bad are Bananas expands across OU

We are rolling out short taster sessions of the 'How Bad are Bananas' game, to engage staff in thinking about the carbon footprints of various commodities. All our carbon literacy training helps complete beginners identify, challenge and reduce unsustainable behaviours at work and at home. We now have 40 certified facilitators across England, Ireland and Scotland (Wales to follow). Some of our colleagues in Scotland followed their recent game training with delivery of a session at the University of Strathclyde, to a group of colleagues that they work with in a Lean community of practice which has representatives from all HE and FE institutions in Scotland.

They found the game got lots of engagement and everyone was able to come up with an individual pledge they are going to work on. In 6-8 weeks, they plan to deliver another lunchtime seminar with the same group and find out how people are doing with their pledges.

The Sustainability Office held its biggest online game to date earlier this month, with around 120 people participating during a Marketing and Communications all-unit meeting, with facilitators in five breakout groups. The activity received excellent feedback about its accessibility for those with little prior knowledge. It prompted lively discussion around sustainability and our individual and collective actions.

The 8-hour Carbon Literacy Training is still available as four four-hour self-study and a four-hour facilitated session. In addition, staff can request a 'How Bad are Bananas' version and face-to-face training for a minimum of 20 staff. If you are interested in the Sustainability Office bringing a short taster of the game to a meeting, event or assembly, or if you would like to be trained as a facilitator, please get in touch via sustainability@open.ac.uk.

News

The Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) inquiry into The UK and the Arctic Environment received expert evidence from the OU's Professor Mark

Brandon, to understand how the UK is currently working in the Arctic regions and to ask could we achieve more? [The report](#) was published last week, and Mark recommends taking part in any Select Committee reviews as a means of research informed policy and impact.

A [Nature podcast](#) explores how university researchers can engage with non-academic collaborators through research. Professor Richard Holliman's contributions focus on the methods and findings of an open access, [AstrobiologyOU-inspired paper](#) that he co-authored with Open University colleagues ([Dr Alessandra Marino](#), [Dr Andrea Berardi](#), and [Dr Ann Grand](#)) and indigenous researchers living in Yupukari and satellite villages in the North Rupununi in Guyana.

If you have sustainability news in your school, faculty, or nation, please do [let us know](#).

Go Green diary dates

- Wednesday 22 November at 12.30 – 1.30: Go Green Workshop – Eco Anxiety with Trudi Macagnino, Staff Tutor in School of Psychology & Counselling, FASS
- Thursday 30 November: Giki Live session (details to follow)
- 4th – 5th December: Giki challenge (details to follow)

I hope you will be able to join us for our Green Infrastructure Week and other events.

With continued optimism,

Nick

VCE Sponsor for Sustainability and Executive Dean, STEM Faculty

**Carbon
Literacy
Training**

**SPARK Lunch
& Learn
recordings**

**Warp-It
information
and sign-up**

**LinkedIn OU
Sustainability
Network**

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