



University of
Nottingham

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Sustainability Report 2020-21

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Introduction

Over the last decade, the University of Nottingham has demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental sustainability. Consultation on the University Strategy demonstrated that sustainability is highly valued by our university community and this was a major factor in its inclusion in the goals of the strategy:

We will make an outstanding contribution to supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our research and education, our engagement with partners and our behaviour on campus and in our communities. We will place a special emphasis on environmental sustainability, supporting the City of Nottingham's desire to be a net zero carbon city by 2028 and working with partners in China and Malaysia to improve sustainability within their regions.

Extract from the University Strategy Goals

In March 2020 the university declared a climate emergency. Building on this and to support the delivery of the University Strategy, in February 2021 we published our Environmental Sustainability Strategic Delivery Plan.

The Environmental Sustainability Committee is responsible for setting expectations, agreeing and setting policy, enabling and encouraging action and monitoring performance but, it is the *collective responsibility* and actions of all members of our university community that will be key to successful delivery of our sustainability ambition.

Over the last academic year the world has continued to be gripped by the COVID -19 pandemic and the numerous impacts brought along with it. The start of the 2020/21 academic year began following an extended period of hibernation for the university from the beginning of the national lockdown in March 2020, through to August 2020. During this time only essential workers and researchers were on campus and much of the estate was in a state of hibernation, with a gradual increase in campus footfall between August and the start of term in September 2020.

Whilst during this last year we have seen a slowdown in some of our areas of work and a reduction in face to face engagement, we have been able to accelerate several of our other programs, laying foundations for years to come.

This annual report highlights some of the key achievements and activities during 2020/21 to improve the sustainability performance of our university.



Top 3 place for the University in global ranking

In December 2020 the university was ranked **3rd in the world** in a list of the most sustainable universities.


The UI Green Metric, produced by the Universitas Indonesia, is the only university ranking in the world that measures each participating university's commitment in developing an 'environmentally friendly' infrastructure. The rankings look at six indicators: setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste, water, transportation and education.

Since first taking part in 2010, Nottingham has consistently been placed in the top four. Over 900 universities from 84 countries took part in the 2020 rankings.



Ambitious targets and a new delivery plan

Whilst the last year has been challenging in terms of engagement, we have been able to put in place new targets and ambitions to support our sustainability work, these lay the foundation and direction for the next decade.

Our [Environmental Sustainability Strategic Delivery Plan](#)  sets out our priorities to deliver against the University Strategy, with our key priorities being:

- Delivering our greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets from UK campus operations and developing a road map for delivery;
- Delivering the agreed actions from 'Locking in the benefits of lockdown' action plan;
- Delivering an Environmental Sustainability Engagement Plan;
- Developing a sustainability-focussed decision-making framework;
- Establishing a Research and Knowledge Exchange (KE) Environmental Sustainability Committee;
- Establishing an Education and Student Experience (SE) Environmental Sustainability Committee;
- Launching a Biodiversity Action Plan for UK campuses;
- Developing and publishing clear action plans for UNNC and UNM to support this strategic delivery plan.

Building on our Strategic Delivery Plan in March 2021, we endorsed a Science-Based approach to carbon reduction targets **for our UK operations**. Initially focusing on



scope 1 and scope 2 emissions, we have established the following target pathway in line with the protocols of the Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi).



This target is challenging and will require us to rethink how we all do things and make significant investments in our estate.

To meet our 2030 target we will need to reduce our carbon emissions by 26,484 tonnes

Whilst Scope 1 and 2 emissions are significant, it is our Scope 3 emissions, the indirect emissions that occur through our value/supply chain, that are a more significant element of our overall emissions and we will be focusing on four key areas of this over coming years:

- Construction / refurbishment
- University travel
- Paper products
- Food and catering

A switch to a more sustainable investment fund

In 2020/21 the university appointed a new investment manager, Cazenove Capital to manage its £59.4 million endowment portfolio and £9.5 million medium-term investment fund.

Cazenove Capital are well-aligned to the university's strategic goals and are a leader in sustainable investment. Over a quarter of our portfolio will be invested in companies that make a material contribution to the SDGs. This active investment approach is combined with a commitment to collaborate with investors and use our influence to accelerate change towards more sustainable economies

This new approach will help the university further divest from unethical areas as well as providing opportunities to make positive investments and ensure that future investments will give a significant weighting to ethical, social and governance issues and have positive impact.



go! Your sustainable choices matter

Recognising that we have big ambitions and are committed to embedding sustainability at the heart of our university community, we need to get everyone in tune with our ambitions. We need a culture shift to achieve this, by engaging with everyone who works or studies at the university to encourage them to act as sustainably as possible in all aspects of their university life. To help deliver this we developed and launched our go! engagement campaign.



Launched during our Universities for Nottingham Sustainability Action Week in March 2021, the campaign is insight-based and has been designed to reach out and connect with students and staff and provide a framework for all sustainability-based communication. It will help us to demonstrate our commitment as a university to tackling climate change, as well as empowering everyone to step up, take action and that individual sustainable choices matter. This campaign will be at the heart of all our engagement work over coming months and years.

Student Switch Off winners 2020/2021



The last year has been a difficult time for students but we have continued to engage with them to instil positive behaviours, a key part of this has been our annual Student Switch off competition. Students living in Lenton & Wortley hall won the 2020-21 Student Switch Off energy-saving and recycling competition.

Student Switch Off is an energy saving and recycling competition run by the National Union of Students (NUS). Over 40 universities take part in the competition in institutions across the

UK and Europe. The competition challenges students living in halls of residences to take positive action on climate change, right in their



accommodation, and encourages friendly competition between the halls to see who can save the most energy and recycle the most over the year.

Collectively we saved **33,000 kg CO₂** through electricity reduction in halls. This is equivalent to nearly 50 return flights from Manchester to New York. Over 400 students got involved with campaigns, taking actions such as saving energy, reducing waste, recycling more and saving water

Green Rewards



In March 2021 we launched our Green Rewards programme. It is an interactive programme for all staff and students at the university, rewarding behaviours that improve individual and university-wide sustainability and wellbeing.

The online platform and mobile app shows actions individuals can take and the impact they have, whether that's saving carbon emissions, electricity or single-use cups and bottles. In return, people earn Green Points and the chance to win vouchers for themselves and charity donations for their team.

To date, the programme has over **800** active users and collectively there have been more than **23,000 positive actions, saving over 25,000kg of Co₂**.

Communications



As well as our go! engagement campaign we have continued to focus and grow engagement through our social media platforms and our monthly Sustainable Nottingham bulletin.

We now have a direct reach through our channels of more than **10,000** and our newsletter lands in **more than 2,300 inboxes each month**.



18 in a row for Green Flag Award

Our parks and green spaces have never been more important for the physical and mental wellbeing of everyone. Here at the university we are fortunate to have exceptional outdoor spaces in which our community and the public can connect.

During this last year the university has been awarded Green Flag status for the **18th year in a row**. This international award by Keep Britain Tidy recognises well-managed parks and outside spaces and sets the standard for their management. The Estates Grounds Maintenance Team do a fantastic job of caring for our green havens and this year they have been more needed than ever for our health and wellbeing.



University Park has 18 consecutive Green Flags to its name and attracts students and visitors to its large leafy campus. It boasts an impressive mix of landscape features, including a variety of tree species, wildflower meadows and contemporary gardens, including the Millennium Garden and Jekyll Garden.

The Jubilee campus has received the Green Flag award consistently since 2017. It was established in 1999 when a former industrial site was regenerated into a thriving environmentally friendly campus with a strong emphasis on sustainability. Four lakes provide diverse wildlife habitats as well as peaceful areas where people can pause and reflect.

The successive Green Flag awards clearly demonstrate the university's commitment to being a safe, clean and secure environment, as well as a sustainable place to work and study.

Bronze Level Hedgehog Friendly Campus



Since the beginning of the 21st century, the number of hedgehogs in rural areas has plummeted by as much as 50% and in urban gardens by 30%. This means that hedgehogs are moving out of their rural homes and into built areas where they face a whole host of challenges, including road traffic, litter, poisoning and lack of access to food and water.

Since 2019 a small group of passionate members of the university community have been working hard to raise awareness of the plight of hedgehogs by participating



in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Scheme. This campaign aims to arm a new generation of hedgehog champions with the skills and knowledge to give the dwindling hedgehog population a fighting chance.

The work of the group was rewarded when early this year the University of Nottingham was awarded **Bronze Level Hedgehog Friendly status**.

This accreditation has been achieved by completing hedgehog-friendly activities, such as raising awareness and money via a bake sale, conducting a hedgehog survey to monitor hedgehog movements, litter picks on campus, and many other activities. The group is now working on attaining Silver Level.

No Mow May – increasing biodiversity

Our campuses encourage biodiversity all year round, but during May 2021 we took part in 'No Mow May'. The loss of flower meadows in the UK over the past 90 years has led to a steep decline in bees and other pollinating insects. Gardens and green spaces have subsequently become an increasingly important habitat, especially when areas are left undisturbed.



We have numerous wild areas across our campuses, where mowing has been reduced or stopped completely. Edges and margins are increasingly being widened and left to grow wilder. During May, new wild spaces were created including grounds near Derby Hall and a strip between Highfields Lake and Jubilee Avenue being left uncut. At Nightingale Hall, wildflower seed was sown to encourage a mix of bees and butterflies.

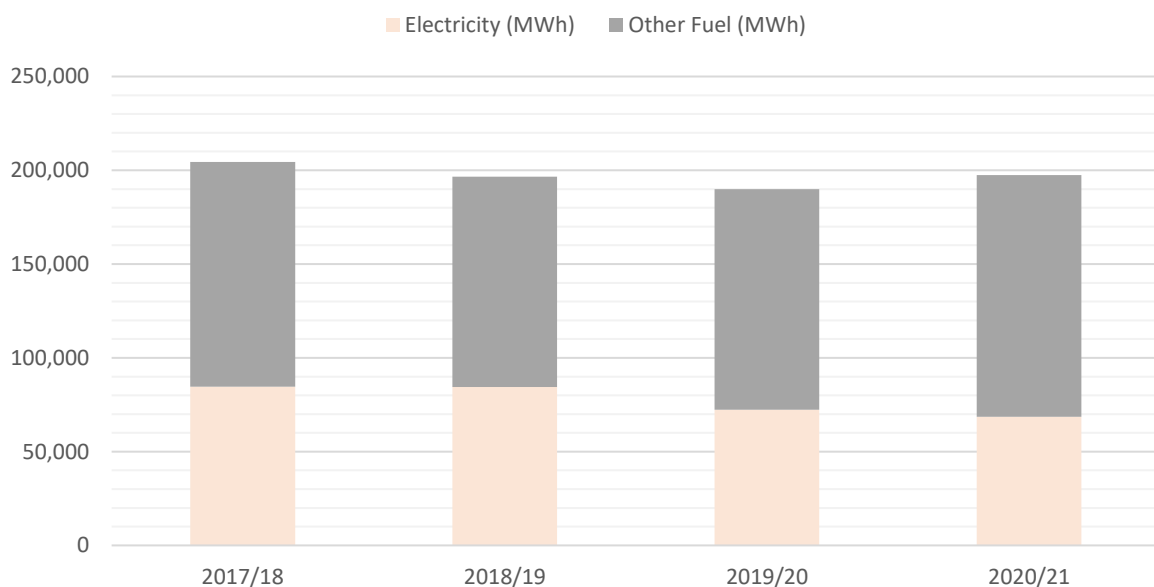
At Sutton Bonington we worked with volunteers and the Sutton Bonington student Sustainability Society to plant 420 new whips (young trees) across Sutton Bonington campus. There are also plans for 5,000 more trees to be planted within the onsite dairy farm before the end of the year.



Our energy and carbon performance

The last 12 months have been challenging in terms of our energy consumption and associated carbon emissions. Our building systems have been working harder than usual to meet our Covid secure ventilation requirements across the estate, whilst at the same time keep spaces up to adequate temperature. The combination of this and the fact that many of our energy recovery systems have been turned off, has resulted in an increase in gas use across the estate.

Electricity and other fuel

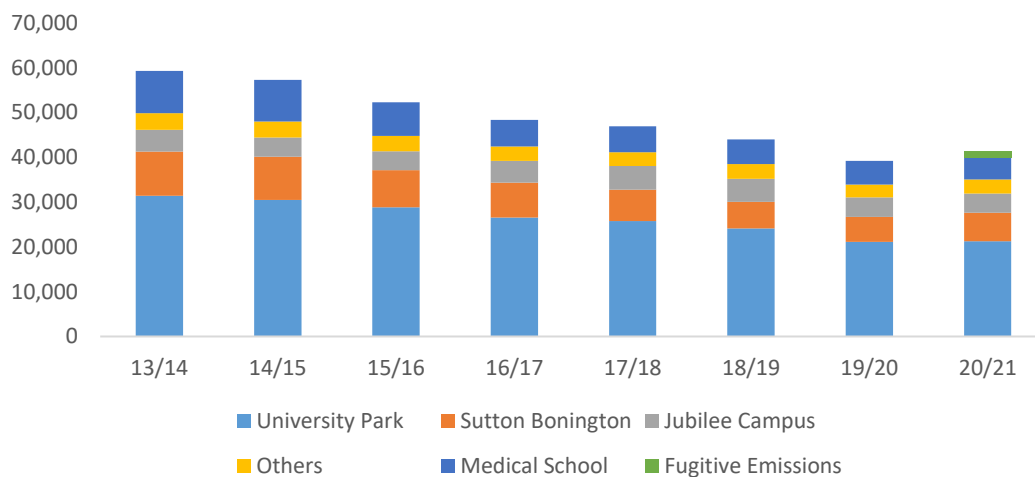


Generally, we have seen a decrease in electricity use across the estate as many of our teams continued to work remotely and a number of our buildings spent the early part of the year in standby. However, we have seen a disproportionate increase in electricity consumption at Sutton Bonington due to technical issues resulting in our combined heat and power system not operating. Analysis carried out over the last year has shown that the university's baseload of energy is hard to shift, even when our campuses are in a hibernate mode. The background energy consumption is responsible for around 4,500t of carbon emissions and £2m.

This year is the first year that we have used our revised SBTi methodology for determining our carbon emissions. As a result of this and the increase in gas consumption, we have seen our carbon emissions for this year rise to 41,382 tonnes from our reported emissions of 39,216 at the end of 2019/20.



Scope 1 & 2 emissions



This year's emissions are some way away from our trajectory figure of 39,494 tonnes. Whilst this is disappointing, providing covid secure space was a priority and we will need to roll forwards our carbon budget into future years to ensure that we truly deliver our fair share.

Nottingham Pack for Good campaign reaches £1million in donations

Since 2012 the University of Nottingham has joined forces with Nottingham Trent University and the British Heart Foundation (BHF) to provide donation points in each hall of residence on campus. The message is simple – **make packing easier by donating your unwanted stuff**.



Despite a challenging year for the campaign, partners continued to collect and store donations from students, which BHF were able to collect last summer.

Despite the impact of the restrictions, a remarkable 7,733 donation bags were collected **raising over £108,262** in funds for BHF research. This meant that a significant amount of waste, 61.86 tonnes (the equivalent of 10.3 elephants), has been diverted away from landfill. This equates to **629,590 kgs of CO₂** greenhouse gas emissions being avoided.

The amount generated by this campaign in Nottingham since its launch in 2012 has now exceeded £1million.



Green Gown Award for Vets in the Community project

The Green Gown Awards recognise exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges and their role in enabling and empowering young people to tackle pressing global issues. The student-run

veterinary clinic Vets in the Community (ViC) won in the Benefitting Society category for their work in caring for the pets of the homeless and vulnerably housed in Nottingham.



ViC provides veterinary care for these pets which in turn provides huge benefits to both the animal's and owner's welfare. Under supervision from qualified staff, veterinary students run the free service, providing vaccinations, flea and worm treatment, microchipping and general care. The work of ViC means individuals don't have to worry about how to feed their pets when things get tough, and they don't have to go without food themselves in order to look after their animals.

Award for Technical Sustainability Working Group (TSWG)

Drawing upon their pivotal role at the forefront of laboratory work, the TSWG was formed by technicians from across the university. The aim of the committed members of the TSWG has been to lead green initiatives and share best sustainable practices and ideas to make the university greener and more sustainable. The great works of the group has been recognised by a waste industry leader for playing a key role in improving sustainability and reducing the impact of our labs on the environment.

Enva, the university's waste contractor, has awarded the TSWG a Love Recycling Award for its commitment to environmental improvements and sustainable waste management

These initiatives have ranged from automatic recycling of 'dirty' solvents; running -80°C freezers at -70°C (saving 25% in energy or £300 per year); support LEAF green lab accreditation, which promotes best practice; and are introducing chiller units and waterless condensers across the laboratories in the Schools of Pharmacy and Chemistry, which respectively cut energy use and save around 1.2m litres of water a year.

Currently the TSWG is in talks with several other UK universities to help them set up similar sustainability working groups.

