

Sustainability Policy

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Approved by	Board of Trustees
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Review History		
Date	Name	Comments
July 2024	Ruth Dalton (Deputy Director of Membership Services)	Reviewed fit for purpose, review frequency changed to three years
March 2023	Ella Hatch (Vice President)	Full review

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1. Introduction

1.1. Mission

Liverpool Guild of Students is devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its members and is responsible for running the 'Guild' building, which includes a coffee shop, retail store, bars and state of the art events venue. We recognise and act upon our corporate social and environmental responsibilities and place this at the heart of our strategic planning. We are committed to demonstrating leadership in ethical, environmental and financial sustainability, by minimising the social and environmental impact of our activities through continuous improvements, and always aiming for best practice.

We will adopt the highest ethical and environmental standards in all areas of operation, meeting and exceeding all relevant legislative requirements.

We will only use offsetting should only be used as a last resort for emissions that absolutely cannot be avoided. If possible, in setting should be the preferred scheme. Any scheme used should be considered in detail and must be in line with Guild values and Sustainable Development Goals.

1.2. Green Impact

We have identified, as part of our participation in NUS' environmental accreditation programme - Green Impact Students Unions, how our activities impact society and the environment. We work with our stakeholders to improve our ethical and environmental performance and have gained Green Impact Gold or Excellent standard since 2010 and we will continue to improve our Green Impact score year on year.

1.3. Headline Commitments

1. Establish a baseline of waste to inform a waste reduction target
2. Get a baseline understanding of the carbon emissions within the Guild's control and work to match the University's net zero target
3. Create a Procurement Policy and guidelines for staff and students
4. Create a detailed Action Plan to support the implementation of this policy

2. Organisation

We will ensure that sustainability is embedded throughout all activities, opportunities and facilities at the Guild; maintaining transparency and ethical conduct in line with the Sustainability Policy.

We will do this through:

2.1. Training and Inductions

- All Guild staff, including Student Officers, will receive compulsory sustainability training to ensure consistency in sustainable practice.
- We will include a Sustainability Induction Session for all new staff and officers as well as organisation wide training, such as Staff Development Days.
- We will hold an induction session for new Student Officers to provide information on the Guild and University's approach to sustainability.

2.2. Job Descriptions and Roles

- Sustainability will be included in career and student staff handbooks, with specific detail included for each role.
- Sustainability will be reflected in all job descriptions.
- Sustainability procedures will be regularly reviewed and assessed to establish what is required of staff when mitigating environmental risks.

2.3. Reporting and transparency

- An Annual Sustainability Report will be uploaded onto the website for members to view. This will also be annually shared with the Trustee Board.
- Sustainability will be included within the agenda for Managers meetings to ensure continuous communication, improvement and accountability, with input from all teams
- Guild Senior Leadership Team will report back to the Trustee Board on changes and progression of Sustainability Policy and Action Plan.

3. Waste

We will minimise and manage waste efficiently and effectively as well as supporting behavioural change for all the Guild's members and staff, working to the principles of prevent, reduce, reuse, repurpose, repair and recycle.

We will ensure that the Guild facilities provide staff and students with the resources needed to manage waste appropriately.

We will do this through:

3.1. Behaviour change

- We will use Guild projects, such as Leave Liverpool Tidy, to enhance Guild members' knowledge of waste management services thus encouraging sustainable behaviour change.
- We will continue to find opportunities to enhance students' knowledge of how to reduce consumption and increase the use of reusables.

3.2. Internal waste management

- We will continue to create opportunities for students to manage and dispose of waste without causing environmental implications or risks.
- We will work with our waste management providers to measure our waste and agree yearly targets for reduction of waste sent for incineration. (Appendix 1: Guild Waste Streams).
- We will measure and seek to reduce food waste in the building.
- We will use recycled paper and only print when essential.
- We will not sell plastic bags in the Guild shop and will promote the use of reusable alternatives.

4. Water

We will prevent the use of harmful chemicals discharged into wastewater systems and monitor the amount of water used and wasted. Free and easy access to clean water should always be promoted and maintained.

We will do this through:

- Ensuring water usage is monitored and data is collected and reported upon
- Promoting the use of refillable water bottles by providing refill stations and using water jugs for events rather than individual bottles.
- Promoting water reducing behaviour via messaging throughout the building.
- Using smart water wherever possible for cleaning, to reduce the use of harmful chemicals.
- Minimising our consumption by reducing our use of water and installing water saving devices where possible.

5. Energy Efficiency

We will collect and monitor energy usage, invest in energy efficient equipment and solutions, support behaviour change for all Guild members and staff.

We will do this through:

- Measuring energy consumption and identify areas where savings can be made
- Ensuring our facilities support students who want to live more sustainably
- Ensuring that staff and students only use energy when needed
- Updating policies and procedures to consider sustainability and energy efficiency

6. Biodiversity

We recognise that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected. We will minimise and, where practicable, prevent greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, including noise and light pollution, from our operations and activities.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, both within the Guild building and with projects across campus.

- We will continue our biodiversity projects, such as the Green Wall on Guild Walk and the CTL permaculture garden.
- We will continue work to collaboratively with the University to identify other sites, on and off-campus, which can be developed to increase biodiversity and promote food growth.

7. Procurement

We recognise our responsibility to carry out procurement activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. We will strive to reduce the environmental, economic, social and ethical impact of our procurement activities.

We will work with suppliers to improve environmental performance and procure goods only with the highest environmental and animal welfare standards.

We will do this through:

7.1. Student Purchasing

- We will encourage and facilitate the sharing of equipment between societies and also between staff departments.
- We will create a strategy for behavioural change of societies' purchasing of items.

7.2. Guild purchasing

- We will provide guidance and relevant product information to staff members to allow them to select sustainable products and services.
- We will ensure that the Sustainability Criteria (Appendix 2) are included in specifications to suppliers and used in the award of contract.
- When buying new equipment, we will opt for the most energy efficient option within other parameters that need to be considered.
- We will continue to work with the purchasing consortium NUSSL to procure the most ethical and sustainable options available.
- We will consider whole life costs and not just initial purchase price when assessing product suitability and in the award of contracts.
- We will ensure that energy-efficiency is stated as a requirement for all refit tenders and suppliers are encouraged to submit offers for environmentally friendly alternatives.

8. Travel

We will support carbon reduction and behavioural change with regards to travel for the Guild's members and staff.

We will do this through:

- Capturing data on travel miles and uses of transportation for all Guild activity
- Only refunding economy class travel
- Never permitting domestic flights, and flights will only be purchased in exceptional circumstances (land-based travel should be considered first)
- Avoiding all avoid unnecessary travel where possible, e.g., using webinars and online meetings
- When travel is unavoidable, we will promote the use of sustainable transport. The Guild's Expenses Policy caps mileage payments to the standard-class rail fare and we pay a mileage rate for cyclists
- Promoting walking and cycling to our students and staff
- Offering a range of a range of services, advice and tools for students and staff to support sustainable travel

9. Student Engagement

We will offer students the highest standard of education, opportunities and facilities that support their wellbeing and sustainable development, providing opportunities to learn more about sustainability and ways to directly get involved. We will achieve this through 4 main areas: Advocacy, Volunteering, Academic, and Student Action.

9.1. Advocacy

- We will empower student leaders to be as sustainable as possible throughout their activity
- We will include sustainability training within our compulsory training for all student leaders
- We will continue to promote behaviour change through events and messaging throughout the building (waste, energy and water usage).

9.2. Volunteering

- We will promote a range of sustainable volunteering opportunities via the volunteering platform including opportunities around sustainability

9.3. Academic

- We will continue the Guild's Curriculum Mapping Programme and use the data to influence the University via the Education for Sustainable Development Working Group.

9.4. Student Action

- We will use the Climate Action Network (CAN) as a space for students to voice their opinions on sustainability issues
- We will get feedback from students on Guild and University sustainability in CAN meetings
- We will use the CAN meetings to create opportunities for students to act alongside officers
- We will give students the opportunity to experience sustainability activities and initiatives through the Give it a Go programme

10. Financial

We will always strive to be as financially sustainable as possible.

We will do this through:

- Endeavouring to 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 the Guild and, if relevant, who have an Ethical Investment Policy.
- As far as is practically possible, we will maintain financial records electronically rather than printing hard paper copies.

Appendix 1: Guild Methods of Waste Disposal

Waste type	Method of disposal	Further detail
Food waste	Coffee shop: Priority to throw away as little as possible – offer to staff at discount and to local organisations	Food waste from the Courtyard and Sphinx is currently disposed of through Refood. Other activities within the building may use general waste
	Courtyard and Sphinx: Refood/Rocket Composter	
	Guild Shop: Local organisations	
Cardboard	University	Collected and sold
General Waste	Suez	Incinerated for energy
Mixed Recycling	Suez	
Textiles (Saleable Clothing)	British Heart Foundation/swap shop	As part of the Leave Liverpool Tidy project
Confidential Waste	Confidential waste disposal	Shredded

Appendix 2: Sustainability Criteria

In order to procure the most sustainable products and services, we will:

- Give preference to:
 - suppliers who are ISO14001 certified
 - products and services that can be manufactured, used, and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Such products will be accredited through schemes such as 'Fairtrade', 'B-Corp' etc.
 - Local products, trades people and contractors to support the local economy and reduce delivery distance and transport emissions.
 - low energy products
- Use an ISO 14001 certified printing company or local supplier who uses certified paper and vegetable inks.
- Not use PVC materials for banners.
- Choose corrugated plastic board over foam-core for signs.
- Actively source timber products from certified sustainable sources when planning refits and/or new furniture.
- Encourage our suppliers to reduce or use more environmentally friendly packaging wherever possible.
- Purchase white goods in compliance with the University of Liverpool Purchasing Policy ('A' or 'AA' rating where possible but as a minimum rated 'B').