

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE



Dear Colleagues,

My last bulletin and the festive period seem like a distant memory as we continue to feel the chill of the winter weather – I hope you have been finding some of the tips that we shared in the [last edition](#) useful for keeping warm.



Catch up

My last bulletin was also on the day of the Open Conversations pilot event, where a panel of OU Academics and PhD students discussed their key points in relation to COP27 and 'keeping 1.5 alive'. Designed to promote and enable open conversation between panel members and the audience, these events aim to prompt dynamic discussion and a solutions-focussed approach whilst asking the questions that are often avoided on a range of sustainability issues. You can watch the recording of this first Open Conversation [here](#) – I thoroughly recommend it.

You can also [catch up on the last Go Green workshop](#) which featured excellent contributions from OU students Annie McHugh and Freya Wise, exploring how retrofitting and understanding embodied carbon can help existing buildings become more carbon-friendly. If you're interested in this topic, Freya has created [this short video](#) that provides a short summary of her PhD thesis.

Looking forward, the next [Go Green](#) workshop welcomes Jen Gale from Sustainable(ish) who will be discussing eco-anxiety and providing a realistic and relatable approach to being green. [Register via Eventbrite](#).

Carbon Literacy Training

A New Year also means new Carbon Literacy Training dates – available free to all OU Staff and Students. The training gives a solid awareness of climate change and the climate impacts of our everyday actions. [You can find out more information and sign-up via the Sustainability Website](#).

EAUC

The Open University has membership of the [EAUC](#) – the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges which is the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education. Membership is open to all OU students and staff with [benefits including](#) a monthly newsletter, excellent online resources, and communities of practice, as well as

regional meetings. Please email gogreen@open.ac.uk to be added to our membership account and access EAUC.

The EAUC also holds an annual conference and hosts the [Green Gown Awards](#) – if you have ideas to share in a collaborative workshop at the conference, or a poster session, or a project to enter in the Green Gown Awards, please let us know. Previous award winners can be found [here](#).

If you are based in one of the nations and are passionate about sustainability, check in with your Nations Sustainability Coordinator (Kate Signorini, OU in Scotland, John Addy, OU in Ireland, and Scott McKenzie, OU in Wales).

Award winning green content

Broadcast & Partnerships recently announced that [BBC Bitesize Careers](#), featuring the OU/BBC series of digital [Green Careers](#) and [Healthcare Careers](#) videos recently won a prestigious [NORA \(National Online Recruitment Award\)](#) for Best Employment Advice Website.

The NORAs acknowledge and reward excellence in online recruitment practice and views the recruitment sector from the perspective of the jobseeker. [Green Careers](#) feature the next generation of workers - in careers as diverse as engineering, gaming, horticulture and teaching - who are making their jobs more sustainable.

Friday 3 February also saw the return of The Big Green Money Show. The new 10-part OU/BBC series features Deborah Meaden and Felicity Hannah, discussing climate change and sustainability with some of the biggest names in business. The series was commissioned by Dr Caroline Ogilvie, Head of Broadcast & Partnerships with FBL Academic Consultants Professor Ali Atallah and Dr Rodion Skovoroda. I listen to the full show on [BBC Sounds](#) but you can also catch the 30-minute version on Radio 5 Live on Friday's at 5am. More information on [OU Life](#).

Tree Planting

Since October 2020, The Open University Graduate School have planted a tree for each graduating PhD and Professional Doctorate student at either Forest of Marston Vale (a Community Forest located close to the University campus in Buckinghamshire) or Neno Macadamia Trust in Malawi where the trees will support farmers and their families. The tree planting project is a way of us congratulating and marking each student's admirable success in completing their doctorate whilst demonstrating our commitment to climate action.

I wanted to share with you all a recent photo (below) of the new Queens Wood (Marston Vale) that the OU helped plant last year. It's fantastic to see so many saplings that will be maintained and grow into a new forest. Unfortunately, many tree planting initiatives do not succeed as they are planted but not maintained, meaning they don't succeed to fruition. However, we will be monitoring above-ground growth and changes in the soil, to give a full picture of how the trees are performing. You can [read more about the scheme in this article](#) by Robert Wilson, Manager, Student Opportunities and Lindsay O'Dell, Academic Director, The Open University Graduate School.



Robert and Lindsay's article was received in response to a call for articles from colleagues, that relate to climate change from their own disciplinary or lived experience (this call went out during COP27, Nov 2022). You can see the other articles on the [Sustainability website](#). If you have an article you would like to share, please email sustainability@open.ac.uk.

The OU in Scotland (OUiS) has also been busy planting and they have partnered with The Conservation Volunteers to plant a new community orchard. Staff from OUiS took part in a tree planting day at the end of January where they worked together to plant UK native heritage fruit trees. The new orchard, at Corstorphine Hill Local Nature Reserve, forms part of Edinburgh's ['Million Trees' project](#). It will serve local communities with accessible fruit for all to pick, and a beautiful and improved greenspace to enjoy once the trees have established. You can [read more in this OU Life article](#).

Hedgehog Friendly Campus

Continuing the outdoors theme, on 2 February, Sarah Cooling, Business Analyst, Academic Services, shared the news that The Open University has achieved the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Bronze Award for 2022-2023.

The Hedgehog Friendly Campus team worked hard last year to complete 11 of the 10 required activities to achieve the OU's first award. Their activities included creating a working group, surveying existing hedgehog numbers, litter picking events, participation in Hedgehog Awareness Week, and working closely with the Grounds Team to improve safety with the gardening equipment, and building and positioning hedgehog nest boxes (x5) and giant insect hotels (x2) around the Walton Hall campus. Congratulations to the Hedgehog Friendly Campus team on this excellent initiative and bronze award status. If you would like to find out more, please do visit the [Hedgehog Friendly Campus Yammer group](#).

International Book Giving Day

As Tuesday 14 February is both Valentine's and International Book Giving Day, it seemed fitting to give colleagues an opportunity to 'share the love' by sharing books. I am told that book ownership has been shown to have a direct positive impact on a

child's mental health, and by the age of 11 there is a 12-month language development gap between children from homes with plenty of books and those with very few. The [Children's Book Project](#) is a charity who collect pre-loved children's books and redistribute them to children who need them.

Go Green have placed a box in the **Go Green Centre** (Walton Hall campus) where you can donate children's books for the charity until Tuesday 28 February. Tom from the OU Students Association will then take these to the nearest drop-off points for the charity to collect. **Go Green** is also looking for volunteers to set up collection points in Nations and locations, if you are interested in helping to do this, please contact gogreen@open.ac.uk.

Reuse is the second rung of the reduce – reuse – recycle environmental hierarchy, and so we are also contributing to a more sustainable product lifecycle by donating the books to those who will use and perhaps love them once again.

Keeping the show on the road

Gillian Caglayan (Head of Projects & Portfolios – STEM, LDS) has kindly stepped forward to help in the Sustainability Office over the next few weeks while we are short-staffed owing to illness. I am very grateful to her for this, and to others who were also quick to offer support. I am equally grateful to everyone who gives time to our mission through the Sustainability Coordination Group and to colleagues who are part of our wider network of Sustainability champions. I would particularly like to acknowledge here the contribution of Lucy Gilbert, Sustainability Communications Manager, Marketing and Communications, who helps to draft these updates (though this paragraph is entirely my own).

With continued optimism,

Nick

VCE Sponsor for Sustainability and Executive Dean, STEM Faculty

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