

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE



Dear colleagues,

Some of us have been able to take advantage of the seasonal holiday window – if you did, I hope you were able to reach the state that I use as a measure of relaxation – four days offline and I managed to forget my password – it took 12 hours to finally recover if from the depths of my rested mind.



Sustainability Planning, Action and Reporting Kit (SPARK)

The OU Strategy [strategy](#), “Learn & Live”, demonstrates our commitment to social and environmental justice. Our two sustainability KPI’s are net zero carbon emissions and embedding sustainability in the curriculum using the Responsible Futures framework. We are working together across all Business Planning Units (BPU) to identify and reduce the negative sustainability impacts of our work and to prioritise activities that have the greatest positive impact. This Spring, we launch SPARK, to help us in this endeavour. SPARK enables engagement across the university and provides support and access to resources so that each BPU can make their own unique contribution to deliver sustainability in their work.

Visit our [internal SPARK page](#) to find out more.

Carbon Literacy

Our latest Go Green Workshop welcomed Jen Gale of Sustainable(ish), who praised our approach to Carbon Literacy Training! We are continuing to offer this free to all staff and students. Please spread the word and invite your colleagues and students to take advantage of this offer. You can sign up and find [future dates on the Sustainability Website](#).

Those who have completed their Carbon Literacy Training and submitted a pledge but haven’t yet received a certificate, please email carbon-literacy@open.ac.uk with a copy of your pledge so we can get one sent to you.

Giki Earth Day Challenge

Hot on the heels of Earth Hour which I mentioned last month we have [Earth Day](#) on 22 April which is another call to take action on climate change. This year, we are encouraging colleagues to sign up for Giki – a fun and interactive tool for finding out about one’s personal carbon footprint and what you can do to minimise your impact.

- Giki are hosting a 30-minute Webinar on Friday 21st April where everyone can find out about the best food ingredients for the planet, how to buy sustainably on the high street, and how to spot 'greenwashing'. You can register for the [8am session](#) or the [1.30pm session](#) via MS Teams.
- The Giki Earth Day challenge starts on Monday 24 April and takes a week-long focus on buying better and investing greener. Just [sign up here](#) so that you are ready to join in and choose one of the steps from the Earth Day challenge to take part.

The Sustainability Office would love to hear how you get on with your Earth Day challenges and would like to share the most inspiring stories with colleagues on World Environment Day, so please do email them to carbon-literacy@open.ac.uk.

Green Gown Awards

The Green Gown Awards recognise the exceptional sustainability initiatives being undertaken by universities and colleges across the world. If you want to check if your project might be suitable to enter for an award, then we encourage colleagues to review the [categories and criteria](#). I believe many of The OU sustainability-related projects, big or small, could be a possible winner. The Green Gown Awards are free to enter and there's no limit to the number of entries. Please contact the Sustainability Office with your ideas for submission or with your draft and benefit from the guidance and support from our Director of Sustainability – Victoria is an inaugural fellow of the EAUC and has been a judge for the Green Gown awards for many years (note: EAUC Green Gown judges only judge submissions from institutions with whom they have no connection, thus avoiding conflict of interest). Anyone seeking inspiration could take a look at [previous winners](#) who are always open to sharing their ideas and supporting others.

Warp-It stationery reuse pilot on Milton Keynes campus

[Warp-It](#) is a *Waste Action Reuse Portal* designed to support the reuse and redistribution of surplus assets, reducing carbon emissions and waste, and achieving financial savings by offering items for free. The impressive financial savings reported by users outside the OU means this is definitely something we should pilot.

TOTAL SAVINGS			TOTAL SAVINGS PER MONTH		
Place	Organisation	Total Savings	Place	Organisation	Total Savings
1	University College London	£1617161	1	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	£16534
2	The University of Edinburgh	£1233817	2	University College London	£12536
3	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	£1206959	3	University of Kent	£11703
4	University of Kent	£1053231	4	The University of Edinburgh	£10823
5	University of Glasgow	£1030403	5	The University of Queensland	£10092
6	The University of Queensland	£837612	6	University of Glasgow	£9200
7	University of Cambridge	£706175	7	Hywel Dda University Health Board	£7153
8	University of Tasmania	£524770	8	University of Cambridge	£6662
9	University of Oxford	£518109	9	University of Tasmania	£6174
10	University of Nottingham	£502284	10	University of Nottingham	£5644

Whilst Estates is responsible for surplus furniture and IT Services for IT equipment, we are starting our pilot in Milton Keynes with stationery and plan to do the same across the four nations.

For access and details of our pilot, visit our [internal Warp-It page](#).

Events

As usual we have some excellent sustainability-related events coming up across the University:

OSC Seminar Series

The Open Societal Challenges Programme is holding the first installment of their Interdisciplinary Seminar Series, which is kicking off with a focus on the Sustainability theme. The Seminar will take place via MS Teams on **Tuesday 25th April 11.30 – 12.30**.

OSC Sustainability Lead Alice Moncaster will introduce Tarek Rashwan (STEM) and Becca Harrison (FASS), who will each present the research work they are doing as part of their Open Societal Challenge (OSC). If you are interested, please [sign up via this webform by the 23rd April](#).

Go Green

On **Tuesday 25th April at 12.30 - 13.30**, Go Green will be joined by OU Professor Matthew Cooke. Matthew will be explaining the sharing economy and how this can positively impact the environment by improving resource efficiency and promoting sustainable growth by mitigating excess consumption. [Sign up for the event via Eventbrite](#).

Responsible Futures

The OU is following the Responsible Futures framework to embed sustainability in the formal, informal, and subliminal curriculum. Join us for a Responsible Futures webinar hosted by the University of Derby and Derby Union of Students on **Wednesday 26th 13.30-15.00** focusing on nature connectedness in student learning. All staff and students are welcome. [Registration page is available here](#).

Riding the Wind + Sun for 50 Years

On **Wednesday 26th April 2023 at 18.30** MK Gallery are holding Riding the Wind + Sun for 50 Years. This talk by OU Academic, Dr Derek Taylor, will tell the story of how renewable energy has grown from almost zero to becoming the dominant form of energy and the least expensive form of electricity. This will take place in The Sky Room at Tickets £10. Tickets are available from the [MK Gallery website](#) and discounted to £8 for OU students.

Circular economy as a 'toolbox' or a 'framework for thinking'? Choose carefully!

Organised as part of the Engineering and Innovation seminar series, this event welcomes Ken Webster, a circular economy pioneer, and former Head of Innovation at the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Ken will discuss how Circular Economy has become

'pretty big' in the mainstream as a toolbox to change, and how Circular Economy could be a harbinger of a shift in our frameworks for thinking about the economy as a whole. The event will take place on **Thursday 11th May at 12.00 - 13.00** and you can [join directly using this MS Teams link](#) (there is no registration, so please save the event in your diary with the meeting link).

Sustainability Research Fest

The Open Societal Challenges Programme invites colleagues to the first OU-wide Sustainability Research Fest on **Monday 22 May 2023 10.00 – 15.30**. The event will be focused on connecting OU research communities working in sustainability and paving the way for new interdisciplinary research collaborations across the OU. The day will feature a small number of talks as well as interactive sandpit sessions and speed-dating in groups to help connect OU research communities interested in sustainability. The event will be held in person at Walton Hall Campus, although a hybrid option will be available. If you are interested in attending, please [sign up by the 12 May using this webform](#).

I do hope you are able to get involved with the tools, initiatives, and events that I have shared in this bulletin. And that you can gain further insight, knowledge, and opportunities to support in achieving both our institutional and your personal sustainability ambitions.

With continued optimism,

Nick

VCE Sponsor for Sustainability and Executive Dean, STEM Faculty

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