

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE

I'm pleased to be invited to write the foreword to this month's Sustainability bulletin as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL). In the context of FBL, sustainability is not just at the heart of the business that we do -our teaching and research- but also the way we do business.



At my first 100 days in the role, I can clearly see FBL's interest and competency in this important area and the clarity of thought around linking financial sustainability with a wider positive impact on the world. In relation to our recent EQUIS accreditation audit, a focus on sustainability was evident and indeed is a requirement within the standards.

Finally, subject to contract, I've been able to bring an international corporate business opportunity in the area of ecological transformation to the OU and am working closely with the client, the Director of Sustainability, BDU and STEM colleagues along with Associate Dean Andrew Gilbert and our Visiting Professor David Taylor in that regard - we look forward to involving FASS and WELS in future delivery phases. The Open University's commitment to, and competency in, this critical area is evident to me, and I look forward to helping shape FBL's contribution to this important agenda.

Mark Durkin, Executive Dean for Faculty of Business and Law

New course for educators: Sustainable Pedagogies

The [Sustainable Pedagogies course](#) allows educators and their students to develop the skills and understanding to sustain a future in which all life can thrive. The 24-hour course encourages everyone to practise disruption for collective benefit, to think differently and be different, because staying the same is not an option given the challenges facing our environment and societies. Educators are challenged to go beyond minimal adjustments to their courses, and to transform the way they ask students to approach learning and living so that all life may flourish. The course consists of eight units, with each designed to take around 3 hours to complete, and was co-created by four Nations, four faculties team.

Dates for the diary

6-12 May National Hedgerow Week

This week in May is National Hedgerow Week. Coordinated by The Tree Council, *Life on the Hedge* is a three-year programme to benefit biodiversity. This year's theme is 'Connectivity'. When hedgerows are well connected to

other hedgerows, woodland or scrub, they enable the movement of plants, as much as animals. Connected hedgerows have richer plant populations, with more diverse seed being transported along their lengths on the wind, by rainwater, or via animals.

There is a fascinating resource pack which contains suggested social media posts, information about talks and much more. [National Hedgerow Week 2024 - Shared Assets Folder - Google Drive](#)

16 May at 1.30 - 3pm 'Think Differently' Systems Thinking in Practice (STiP) session: five ways of working for sustainability.

Come and learn together about the five ways of working and experiment with applying them to an improvement idea in a supportive setting. [Sign up for the session here.](#)

21 May and 11 June MK Sustainability Socials

If you are near to Milton Keynes, join us face-to-face, for the opportunity to quiz members of the Sustainability Office and find out answers to the sustainability questions you always wanted to ask. Come along to make new connections and foster pan-OU sustainability action.

Join us on Tuesday 21st May at 12 - 1pm for our Sustainability Social where Tracey Ho, the OU's Energy Manager will be on hand to answer your sustainable energy questions. [Sign up here.](#)

A further **MK Sustainability Social** is set for Tuesday 11 June with Dr Victoria Hands, Director of Sustainability.

5 June Go Green online workshop at 12 - 1pm

Join Kadmiel Maseyk, Senior Lecturer in Environmental Sciences to discuss the Living Lab Project within the grounds of the Walton Hall Campus. [Sign up here.](#)

5 June World Environment Day - your team challenge!

Will your team/unit rise to the challenge on World Environment Day? People often ask what can they do for World Environment Day to help deliver meaningful change. One challenge we are putting forward is for teams to aim to have 20% of their team trained in carbon literacy. You can sign up here for the latest training dates [Carbon Literacy Training - Expression of Interest Form \(office.com\)](#). Remember when team members have completed the training to add their completion or certification, along with their workplace pledge as evidence to your team/unit Sustainability Planning Action and Reporting Kit - [SPARK \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

12 - 13 June Sustainability Research Festival, MK campus, Library, full details here - [Event Details \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Higher Education Strategic Planners Association and Sustainability

The OU is a member of the Higher Education Strategic Planners Association (HESPA). The association has a special interest group on 'Sustainability in strategy and planning' that meets to share good practice across the sector.

At the last meeting, colleagues discussed progress towards ISO14001 accreditation. At the next meeting in July, the use of sustainability data in institutional planning will be the topic of discussion. If you'd like more details about the work of the group, please email the Sustainability Office sustainability@open.ac.uk

Open Societal Challenges - Challenge Us!

There is less than a week left in the Open Societal Challenges competition, Challenge Us! The Open Societal Challenges Online platform aims to enable those outside the OU to connect with our researchers on society's most pressing issues. As part of Open Societal Challenges, we are running a competition open to UK charities and Milton Keynes businesses to find the most exciting research ideas tackling real-world problems under our themes of Sustainability, Living Well and Tackling Inequalities. For more information visit [Challenge Us! Competition \(open.ac.uk\)](https://open.ac.uk/challenge-us). You can also find more about individual Open Societal Challenges on the OSC blog [OSC BLOG \(open.ac.uk\)](https://open.ac.uk/osc-blog).

Sustainability Research Showcase

An exhibition and showcase of the University's teaching and research in sustainability took place last month at the Wellcome Collection, the full story [here](#) and view our Sustainability Brochure [here](#).

New OU / BBC series to uncover the UK's fascinating wildlife

In this brand-new series co-produced by The Open University (OU) and BBC for BBC One and iPlayer, wildlife cameraman Hamza Yassin will reveal wildlife gems from across the four countries of the UK.



In Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles, Hamza will find and film incredible species and spectacles hidden amongst both our urban and wilder landscapes. From hidden nocturnal encounters, to perfectly camouflaged creatures hiding in plain sight, he will reveal that wildlife is everywhere; you just need to know where to look for it.

Dr Yoseph Araya and Dr Philip Wheeler from the OU are contributing to the production of the series as Academic Consultants, providing expert insight and research to support the creation of Hamza's Hidden Wild Isles. [New OU / BBC series to uncover the UK's fascinating wildlife - OU News.](#)

Wild Isles Live

One of the producers of Wild Isles, Alistair Fothergill from Silverback Films, is touring the UK delivering talks on the making of Wild Isles. Wild Isles was a OU/BBC Co-production and staff and students of the OU can receive a 10% discount on ticket prices by using the code WILD10. [Wild Isles Live - An evening of natural wonder.](#)

People and Planet methodology announced

The new methodology for the 2024/2025 People and Planet University rankings has been announced. Changes to the methodology this year include additional marks for prohibiting UK-flights for business travel, plant-based food outlets and an increased emphasis on ethical recruitment.

The OU was one of the most improved universities in the rankings last year and we are keen to follow-up our success and continue to demonstrate the improvements we are collectively making. People and Planet will be carrying out their marking between July and August. You can find out more about the methodology here [People & Planet University League Methodology](#) | [People & Planet \(peopleandplanet.org\)](#).

Research Excellence Awards - additional Sustainability emphasis

The OU Research Excellence Awards (REAs) recognise the outstanding research of staff and postgraduate research students and celebrate research-related achievements across our research community. This year, the application includes optional additional criteria relating to EDI, four nations and Sustainability. Submissions for entries are now open until Wednesday 29 May 2024 and guidance documents and application forms can be found on the [Research Excellence Awards intranet page](#).

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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