**University of Glasgow**
**Sustainability Working Group**

**Minute of 3 April 2025**

Present: David Duncan (Chair), Anna Brown (AB), Gioia Falcone (GF), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Scott Hilditch (SH), Gordon McLeod (GM), Stewart Miller (SM),Fabrice Renaud (FR), Sophie Renner (SR), Viola Retzlaff (VR),Cat Scothorne (CS), Sohail Shakoor (SS), Inge Sorensen (IS),Nicola Smock (NS), Angelica Wilson (SRC), Roddy Yarr (RY)

Apologies: Avril Conacher, Peter Craig, Saskia Drijver-Headley (GUEST)**,** Kelum Gamage, Peter Haggarty,Alasdair Thomson, Jaime Toney, Paloma Viegas (GUEST), Ronnie Webster,Natlie Welden

Attending: Amber Higgins (Head of Court / Clerk of Court), Sarah Finlayson (Clerk)

**SWG/2024/25 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies.

**SWG/2024/26 Previous Minutes and Actions**

The minutes of 4 February 2025 were approved.

*SWG/2024/26.1 Matters Arising*

*SWG/2024/26.1.1 Sustainability Training (SWG/2024/06)*

DD informed the Committee that he had raised the suggestion of making sustainability compulsory training with the Principal, and Director of People & Organisational Development, and it had been agreed that this would be taken to SMG for further discussion. This would be pursued over the coming weeks. The Committee also noted that a new post of a Sustainability Trainer would be discussed within budgetary constraints with the relevant budget holders.

**SWG/2024/27 KPMG Internal Audit Report**

RY introduced Paper 3 – KPMG Internal Audit report and the Committee noted the Audit recommended actions and areas of good practice. The actions included Offsetting, Sustainable Business Travel and Staff Commuting.

RY reported challenges in relation to Offsetting but discussions would continue with partners to find a suitable solution. The Committee also noted that Sustainable Business Travel accounted for 27% of the University carbon footprint and the planned response was due to be discussed with SMG. DD confirmed that support from SMG and Heads of College would be sought to improve the monitoring of Business Travel. The Committee discussed the importance of discussing Business Travel limits, ensuring any policy approved by SMG was fully implemented across the University.

The Committee also noted concerns in relation to parking and the possible introduction of local charges by Glasgow City Council and noted that no details had been confirmed to date.

During the discussion it was highlighted that due to the lack of connectivity in the various public transport systems the possible increase in parking charges would have the biggest impact on the lowest paid staff and those staff with limited options for travelling to work such as those with caring responsibilities.VR reported that the University currently offered interest free loans for travel season tickets. A query was raised about the possibility of booking overnight rail travel, through Selective Travel, as it was unclear if this could be done at present.

**Action:** SF to confirm if overnight train to London may be booked via Selective.

**SWG/2024/28 Travel Survey Results**

VR introduced Paper 4 – Travel Survey Results. VR outlined the results of the 2024 Staff and Student Travel Survey in comparison to the 2022 Travel Survey Results. Response rate was reported, with 21% of staff and 7% of students completing the Survey. The Committee noted there was a slight drop in Car Driver Alone, and a considerable drop in Walking. The Committee discussed reasons for this and noted that average days per week travelling to campus were slightly higher, with staff averaging 3.4 days compared with 3.1 days in 2022.

VR reported that the trend data showed total commuting carbon emissions from staff and students in 2024 of 3.9 ktonnes of carbon emissions, compared with 3.3 ktonnes in 2022 – the target being 2.0 ktonnes. The Committee noted that electric vehicles were also included in the statistics.

The Committee thanked VR for the update.

**SWG/2024/29 Offsetting update – Cashel Site Visit**

RY introduced Paper 5 – Offsetting update – Cashel Site Visit. It was noted that a site visit had taken place. However, during the visit it had been noted that the Carbon Credit potential of 28,000 tonnes was over the life of the site. It was reported that the site would also require maintaining and restoring of the peatland which would have ongoing management costs. RY reported that although this had appeared to be a good option, on further investigation a number of drawbacks had become apparent. This reinforced the need to work with the agreed partners (Scottish Wildlife Trust and the RSPB) in a mutually beneficial way. The Committee thanked RY for continuing to explore all options.

**SWG/2024/30 Estates and Sustainability Committee (March Meeting)**

RY introduced Paper 6 – Estates and Sustainability Committee and RY reported the inclusion of Sustainability within the Committee remit It was agreed that the outcomes of the Estates and Sustainability Committee would be shared with the Sustainability Working Group going forwards.

While discussing the ESC papers and the feasibility of the projects included, GF suggested that internal feasibility studies could be delivered by University staff and Masters students, working together with Estates and Sustainability Committee. By using internal resources, GF commented that the quality of the studies would be high, while costs would be lower.

GM suggested that the Estates and Sustainability Committee structure had 2 academic members of staff and 1 professional services member, and that views from various Schools and Colleges may vary greatly.

It was agreed that this would be passed on to the Committee Chair, but this was a sub-committee of Court and any changes to membership would need to be agreed by Court.

Action: RY to draw attention to differing views of Schools to the Chair of Estates and Sustainability Committee.

**SWG/2024/31 Update from Centre for Sustainable Solutions**

NS updated on the Centre for Sustainable Solutions activities.The Committee noted that a video was available on the ECAS Collaborating for Sustainable Energy Futures Panel Events:

[📢 Catch up on the highlights of the Collaborating for Sustainable Energy… | Centre for Sustainable Solutions](https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7297215742414843904/?actorCompanyId=77850702)

It was reported that the Centre had run a Wellbeing Economies film screening, “Purpose”, followed by a panel event. The Business Flights Town Hall Project continued. NS reported that the undergrad student on placement had made recommendations for change, to ensure all guidance and information relating to business travel are centralised and accessible. These recommendations would be implemented and progress shared with SWG at a later date.

Discussions with VP for Research Knowledge & Exchange had concluded that a working group would be set up, mapping accountability for environmental sustainability, to be used for research and innovation practice.

The Centre had supported GUEST for Glasgow Goes Green. NS reported working with the UK Universities Climate Network net zero universities sub-group to provide vision for resilient net zero universities in 2050. A joint response to Scottish Water Long-term Strategy consultation had been submitted. The Centre would be supporting a College of Arts & Humanities carbon neutral Arts Festival or Event Series. Liaisons had begun with the Scottish Climate Intelligence Service to identify collaboration opportunities for Scottish Government and Local Authorities to aid delivery of climate commitments. Finally, the Centre was involved in The Guild of European Research–intensive Universities Launch of their Insight Paper “Universities in the face of the climate and natures crisis: Redoubling our commitment to a sustainable future”.

The paper could be viewed with a URL Link:

[Insight paper: Universities in the face of the climate and nature crises - The Guild](https://www.the-guild.eu/news-and-blog/news/2025/insight-paper-universities-in-the-face-of-the-clim.html)

**SWG/2024/32 GUEST Update**

CS updated SWG on various events including: -

* Eco-Hub including enthusiastic volunteers
* Sewing Hub in collaboration with GU Fashion Revolution
* Student Refugee Week
* Glasgow Goes Green sustainability festival
* Sustainable Projects Night with research students
* Sustainable Transport week
* Women on Wheels
* Food Inequality talk
* Sustainable Laboratories night
* Community Fridge
* Student Donations

CS reported that the Exam Period would see a reduction in events, although an Earth Day event would be held. The Community Engagement Promoter had been collaborating with Glasgow schools on sustainability. September would also see a Careers Fair with the Scottish Ecological Design Agency.

It was noted that CS and AB would be concluding their roles following the SWG meeting in June. The Committee thanked them for their hard work

SM updated the Committee on Eco-Hub visitor numbers: -

* Visitors: 6464
* Coffee, Tea & Hot Chocolate Sold: 1886
* Free Homeware, Stationary & Textile Items Given Out: 4769
* Clothing Swapped: 369
* Plants Swapped: 6
* Pre-Loved Clothes Bought: 632
* Events: 3 Craft Workshops (3 more to go in April), 17 Bike Hubs, 3 Sewing Hubs (5 more to go in April), 13 GUEST Events
* Soc Events: 4 Neurodiversity Soc Events, 5 GU Fashion Revolution Events, 2 Student Food Coop Events, 1 Ukrainian Soc Event.
* Partner Events: 3 SRC Events, 1 Young Friends of Earth Scotland Event, 1 Event w/ Divestment Campaign, 2 Peer Career Support Pop Ups (3 more to go from April-June).

SM confirmed that recruitment would begin shortly for a permanent Eco-Hub Manager and thanked GUEST, and CS and AB, for their contribution.

**SWG/2024/33 AOB**

No substantive matters were raised.

**SWG/2024/34 Next meeting**

Date of next meeting: Friday 6th June 2025 10am - 12noon