

Aston University Sustainability Working Group
Action Sheet

Meeting: 29th April 2008

Meeting Date	Action	Who By	By When	Priority	Date Completed
03:10:07	Produce Catalogue of Taught Sustainable Modules - NB Business School	PH/SC	June 08	Medium	
19:12:07	Organise Sustainability Research Seminar	PH	June 08	Low	
17:01:08	Organise Aston Sustainability Web pages	LJ/PH	Mar 08	High	April 08
17:01:08	Viability of Aston event to coincide with World Environment Day - June 5	LJ/RM/GE	Mar 08	Medium	April 08
05:03:08	Update contacts sheet and circulate	PH/ES	April 08	Medium	April 08
05:03:08	Report on KPIs and per capita consumption data	GE/LJ	June 08	Medium	
05:03:08	Ascertain Student Guild engagement with sustainability	LD/VJ	June 08	Medium	
29:04:08	Explore better communication routes with the Aston community esp recycling	LJ	June 08	Medium	
29:04:08	Action changes/additions to Web pages (see minutes)	PH/LJ	June 08	Medium	
29:04:08	Organise follow up to Sustainability Teaching seminar	RC	June 08	Medium	
20:04:08	Produce draft proposal from 'Strategy' discussions	PH	June 08	High	
29:04:08	Campus Development Seminar	GE/LJ/PH	June 08	High	

Sustainable Aston Working Group

Minutes of Meeting

29th April 2008

Present:	Peter Hedges	PH	SEAS (Chair)
	Richard Middleton	RM	Chief Operating Office
	Garry East	GE	Estates
	Lynnette Jones	LJ	Estates
	Robin Clark	RC	SEAS
	Breno Nunes	BN	ABS
	Dr Stuart Cooper	SC	ABS
	Dr Julia Brown	JB	SLHS
	Dr Peter Quaife	PQ	SLSS
	Victoria Johnsen	VJ	Student rep
In attendance:	Emma Sutton	ES	Secretarial support
Apologies:	Professor Michael West	MW	ABS
	Graeme Hayes	GH	SLSS
	Caroline Witton	CW	SLHS
	Luke Davies	LD	Student rep

Apologies and welcome

Apologies received from Michael West, Caroline Witton and Graeme Hayes

1. Membership

All contact details on the membership list are currently up to date.

ES

2. Minutes of 5th March 2008 meeting

Minutes were agreed and accepted

3. Matters Arising/Action Points

3.1 Action Points

PH reports that 17 people have shown interest in the sustainability research seminar to be held on 3rd July 2008.

PH

- The Aston Sustainability web pages are now up and running.

- Luke Davies was not present at the meeting so was unable to report on the Student Guild engagement with sustainability; however VJ states that progress is being made.

LD/VJ

- LJ states that plans for World Environment Day are underway and will be discussed in greater detail in agenda item 5.

LJ

3.2 Combined Honours

PH attended the Combined Honours Tutors Group meeting to discuss with

PH

Combined Honours involvement with sustainability. PH states that engagement is difficult as the various subjects administered by Combine Honours have School representation. However, sustainability will be a regular Agenda item for Combined Honours Tutor Group meetings. PH is hoping to get the Environmental course re-launched, he is in discussion with the Combined Honours Directors.

3.3 EAUC Conference

LJ attended the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) Annual Conference. LJ tells the group that the conference was interesting but proved that Aston is far behind other Universities in terms of its engagement. There were a lot of academic staff at the conference, which highlighted that more Universities are trying to integrate sustainability into the curriculum. LJ states that the conference was useful because it was an opportunity to gain advice from other Universities who are ahead on sustainability issues. LJ refers the group to the EAUC website <http://www.eauc.org.uk/home> as it has a good discussion forum which can be used to obtain answers. RM asks if the web link can be placed on the Aston University web pages. PH says he will look into it and explore the possibility of setting up a link with another university to learn from their experiences.

PH

3.4 Revolving Green Fund

RM, LJ and GE worked together to submit a proposal for the revolving green fund. RM explains that the purpose of the consultation document was to mark the potential for future investment. HEFCE's response to the bid will be published in May 2008 and the decision of who receives the funding will be announced in July 2008. RM explains that Aston has put forward two potential projects in their bid for funding. The first proposal aims to develop the work on biofuels with Andreas Hornung, the second aims to refurbish the Main Building in a sustainable manner and then use it as an undergraduate area of research, analyzing the effectiveness of the refurbishment at reducing water consumption, heat loss etc. RM asks the group if there are any questions, all the group agrees that both ideas sound like positive projects for Aston.

RM/LJ/
GE

4 Chair's report

4.1 Web pages

The new Sustainability Group webpages have been migrated onto the new system. PH explains that in future this will allow members of the group to be able to take ownership of their own pages and edit them individually. PH states that the webpages help to highlight the group's presence within the University and are so far proving a success.

4.2 Recycling facilities

PH brings up the issue of recycling at the meeting because it has been raised several times by members of the University and is becoming increasingly prominent. PH feels the group needs to be able to have a standard reply. LJ explains the situation is very complicated, but is being looked into. The University needs to make sure it complies with the necessary legislation making it a lengthy process. LJ is working with purchasing on this to speed up the progress. LJ also hopes to be able to work alongside AWM as they want to create a regional exemplar for City centre waste disposal, however feels it is wrong to invest in waste contracts too soon. LJ has put the waste management strategy on the webpages, however PH and RM state that the problem obviously lies with communication as the message is not getting out. Therefore publicity needs to be clearer. JB suggests

LJ

producing flyers for the main entrance, LJ is to look into this suggestion and work on getting the information across to members of the University more successfully. LJ makes one final point about recycling and informs the group that she has arranged for a trial run to take place on mini recycling facilities, beginning next week. LJ is to report back on its success at the next meeting.

5. Environment and Sustainability Manager's report

5.1 World Environment Day

LJ is linking Environment day with the Birmingham Pledge as she feels it is too short notice to create a big event for Aston this year. RM suggests that the concept of World Environment Day could possibly be linked into *Astonbury*. RM is to write to the International Student Guild societies to ask them if they could have a stand at *Astonbury* to emphasise that it is a world event. VJ is to talk to People and Planet society to also try and arrange a stand at this event.

LJ/RM/
VJ

5.2 Climate Change Festival

LJ has been involved in the organisation of Birmingham Climate Change week which is taking place in central Birmingham 31st May – 8th June 2008. There will be lots of events organised by Birmingham City Council involving the three Birmingham Universities. The Vice-Chancellor is taking part in a high profile event and it is a chance for Aston to show their commitment to sustainability. LJ is going to work on ways to get the Aston 'people' (mainly staff as students will be off campus) involved. LJ thinks that it will be a good idea to encourage staff to make a pledge and also hold a seminar to discuss the sustainable changes which are being made on the Aston campus during the week of the festival.

LJ/GE

5.3 Campus development and tree planting

LJ reports that 200 trees and shrubs were planted successfully on Monday 17th March and more trees are being planted on the ABS site as we speak. In terms of campus development, PH is concerned over the size of the building compound. RM has received an email about this. GE states that this is necessary because of the size of the building work. JB states that in order to prevent people criticising the building work, communication needs to be stronger. PH suggests that GE needs to begin work on organising and setting a date for the campus seminar. PH also asks if photographs of the various stages of campus development can go up on the webpages to publicise the progress. RM states that group needs to look at improving its communication as it is a point which is being made over and over; therefore a strategy needs to be developed to ensure that information reaches people.

LJ/GE

5.4 Procurement Group

LJ reports that the Procurement group which is chaired by Sandra Bloodworth has begun developing their terms of reference and although there is not a massive group membership, it is steadily increasing its influence. There were three main issues discussed at the last meeting. The first was to find a way of making 100% recycled paper the only source of paper used across the University. The second was to reduce the number of printing equipment in departments and the third was discussing the University's existing and future waste contracts. However, LJ states the problem the group has is how to take the issues they are discussing forward. LJ asks how the group should ensure that the information compiled by the procurement group can be developed into corporate policies. PH states this can be discussed at the next meeting.

LJ

5.5 People and Planet

Friday 25th April 2008 was the submission deadline for entries into the 2008 People and Planet League table. LJ, RM and GE have spent the last couple of weeks collecting written evidence to prove the Universities Environmental policy has greatly increased. ES will circulate the submission to the group. The results of table will be published in The Times Higher Education on 5th June, coinciding with World Environment Day.

6. Immediate Goals and Initiatives

6.1 Initial Environmental Review

LJ distributes a copy of the Environmental Baseline to the group. She states that it is a starting point and that as time goes on more information can be added. It is up on the web pages, <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/about/environment/baseline-review>. GE asks if the group could give feedback on the baseline at the next meeting.

6.2 Campus Development Seminar

GE is hoping to start work on this soon; PH suggests it should be in June. LJ is going to arrange a date.

6.3 Sustainability Research Seminar

See 3.1 above

7. Sustainability groups reports

7.1 ABS

SC reports that a Research Assistant in ABS is working on the curriculum map of the school, is hoping to get this completed by the next meeting. The ABS sustainability group is campaigning for the introduction of a core module on social responsibility.

7.2 SLHS

SLHS discussed paper issues, communication around the university and mapping the recycling facilities around the School. JB also reports back on the Eco Town conference. A speaker from the conference has been invited to speak to the SLHS sustainability group about adapting old buildings to become more sustainable. JB to let the group know when the date so members of the working group can attend.

7.3 SLSS

PQ still working on the membership for the group

7.4 SEAS

PH still working on the membership for the group

7.5 Students/Guild

VJ is still working with LD to form a student sustainability group for next year. However, it may be easier to achieve firmer support from the Guild now that the new guild council has been elected.

7.6 Research

SC circulates a list stating all the areas of sustainable research which is taking place in each of the schools. SC asks to be informed if not all the information is correct. PH to add SEAS contribution

7.7 Teaching and Learning

RC reports that the teaching and learning seminar took place last month. It was quite successful, even though attendance was lower than expected. RC is now hoping to hold a follow up session before the summer in order to discuss the action points raised in the seminar.

RC

8. Eco Town conference

JB reported as part of item 7.2

JB

9. Sustainability Strategy

In order to access the group's next step, PH discusses how far the group has progressed since the first meeting last summer. PH states the groups successes:

PH/ES

- creating the working group
- commitment to senior management
- policy
- environmental manager
- network of sub groups
- webpages

To figure out how best to take 'sustainability' forward, group splits into two; each group comes up with five points they want to see in a sustainability strategy. Overall, both groups share a number of common themes: improving communication, introducing sustainability into teaching, behavioural change, meaning of sustainability and innovation projects. It is decided that PH should produce an outline plan incorporating the five points, for presentation and discussion at the next meeting. Powerpoint notes to be circulated

10. AOB

SC asks about the cyclist's scheme and the publication of cycle routes to campus, LJ and GE are working on this and progress will be discussed at the next meeting.

LJ

11. Next meeting

Week beginning Monday 9th June 2008