

## ***Sustainable Aston Working Group - Minutes of Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 – ACTION SHEET***

| <b>Meeting Date</b> | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Who By</b> | <b>By When</b> | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Date Completed</b> |
|---------------------|--|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 05:03:08            | Report on KPIs and per capita consumption data   | GE/LJ         | Jan 09         | Medium          | Feb 09                |
| 29:04:08            | Organise follow up to Sustainability Teaching seminar  | RC            | June 08        | Medium          |                       |
| 13:06:08            | Aston Sustainability Day for Feb/March 2009  | LJ/CW/GE      | Jan 09         | Medium          | Jan 09                |
| 25:09:08            | Draft Sustainability Policy  | PH/LJ/PQ/SP   | Jan 09         | Medium          | March 09              |
| 19:11:08            | Load Transport Plan onto web pages   | LJ            | Jan 09         | Medium          | Jan 09                |
| 19:11:08            | Explore inclusion of Sustainability Research and Teaching & Learning in Sustainability Event | PH            | Jan 09         | Medium          | Jan 09                |
| 18:12:08            | Present Ethical Investment Policy to Executive   | RM            | Feb 09         | Medium          | March 09              |
| 18:12:08            | Draw up draft Sustainability Awards Criteria   | PH            | Feb 09         | High            | March 09              |
| 03:02:09            | Draw up draft SAWG Terms of Reference  | PH/SC         | March 09       | Low             |                       |
| 03:02:09            | Explore concept of annual sustainability report  | LJ            | March 09       | Low             |                       |
| 03:02:09            | Plan for Eco-Campus compile Environmental Baseline   | LJ/PH         | March 09       | Medium          |                       |
| 03:02:09            | Submit application to Green Gown Awards  | LJ/PH         | March 09       | High            |                       |
| 03:02:09            | Comparison Aston KPIs with HE Sector   | GE/LJ         | April 09       | Medium          |                       |
| 03:02:09            | Seek funding for Sustainability Colloquia  | PH/RM         | March 09       | Medium          |                       |

**Sustainable Aston Working Group - Minutes of Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009 – ACTION SHEET**

| <b>Meeting Date</b> | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Who By</b> | <b>By When</b> | <b>Priority</b> | <b>Date Completed</b> |
|---------------------|--|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 03:02:09            | Explore concept of Sustainability Suggestions Scheme | LJ/CB/PH      | March 09       | Low             |                       |
| 26.03.09            | Submit application to Revolving Green Fund           | SKH/PH        | March 09       | High            | March 09              |
| 26.03.09            | Develop regular Environmental column in Aspects      | SKH/VJ        | May 09         | Low             |                       |
| 26.03.09            | Look into rechargeable batteries                     | CW/SKH/VJ     | May 09         | Medium          |                       |
| 26.03.09            | Set up blog on web pages                             | VJ            | May 09         | Medium          |                       |

## ***Sustainable Aston Working Group***

### **Minutes of Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

|            |                      |             |                        |
|------------|----------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| Present:   | Peter Hedges         | PH          | SEAS ( Chair)          |
|            | Richard Middleton    | RM          | Chief Operating Office |
|            | Robin Clark          | RC          | SEAS                   |
|            | Christopher Brewster | CB          | ABS                    |
|            | Peter Quaife         | PQ          | SLSS                   |
|            | Caroline Witton      | CW          | SLHS                   |
|            | Victoria Johnsen     | VJ          | Estates                |
|            | Sofia Kokolaki-Hall  | SKH         | Estates                |
|            | Stuart Cooper        | SC          | ABS                    |
|            | Lucy Bastin          | LB          | SEAS                   |
|            | Lucy Guildford       | LG          | Student rep            |
|            | In attendance:       | Adrian Lowe | AL                     |
| Apologies: | Julia Brown          | JB          | SLHS                   |
|            | Michael West         | MW          | ABS                    |
|            | Reiner Grundmann     | RG          | SLSS                   |
|            | Garry East           | GE          | Estates                |
|            | Lynnette Jones       | LJ          | Estates                |
|            | Emma Sutton          | ES          | Secretarial support    |
|            | Luke Davies          | LD          | Student rep            |
|            | Alex Wood            | AW          | Student rep            |

#### **Apologies and Welcome**

Apologies received from JB, RG, GE, ES, LD and AW.

PH

#### **1. Membership**

It was noted that MW would like to stand down from the group – the group would like to thank him for his help in establishing SAWG, gaining support from the Executive and for his continued support.

PH

It was also noted that LJ will be on maternity leave for the coming months, so SKH will be replacing her for this time. SKH informed the group that LJ had given birth to a baby boy (Gethin Wyn Rhodes) and a card was passed around.

#### **2. Minutes from meeting 03.02.09**

SKH noted that in item 4.2 the minutes should read “the policy... ticks all the right boxes for the EcoCampus Awards” not the Green Gown awards as stated.

SKH

#### **3. Matters arising / Action points**

##### **3.1 Action Points**

Covered elsewhere on the agenda.

### 3.2 Sustainability Award criteria

PH had sent a suggestion based on the draft definition of sustainability through to RM. RM confirmed that this has been modified into a list of alternatives which people can contribute to – these are much clearer and do not restrict nominations.

LB raised a question about the prize: is this really a prize as people are required to submit a proposal for the money? Discussion about whether an award without financial prize would be more suitable – RM mentioned that the idea of the money is to encourage further action. It was agreed that the award should be the main focus, with an opportunity to apply for money after. The time limit was also discussed; RM agreed that it isn't necessary to abide by this. RM to take ideas back for discussion.

### 3.3 Ethical Investment Policy

RM confirmed that the Executive have passed this to the Investment sub-committee (part of the Finance committee) and are waiting for a response. PH suggested using the Green League to put some pressure on them (noted that deadline for Green League response is May 1<sup>st</sup>). SAWG have received no comments back following LJ's presentation to Guild Council.

## **4. Chair's Report**

### 4.1 Terms of Reference for Group and Operating procedures

To be discussed at the next meeting PH

### 4.2 Revolving Green Fund

SKH informed the group that the deadline for this is 27.03.09 and that an expression of interest from Aston will be put forward. GE will attend an interview if requested at the next stage. The request is for a potential £75,000 to be used to purchase a cover for the Woodcock swimming pool and to improve heating controls in the main building. General feeling that we should do better this time around. Also noted that we will be putting forward a more advanced bid for EBRI funding to the Transformational Fund. SKH will report back to the group when we hear about the winners from last year. PH / SKH

### 4.3 Draft Sustainability policy

Generally positive comments about the draft policy and the Sustainability Definition. RM informed the group that he has made a number of small amendments. Both documents will now go to the Executive. PH

## **5. Environment and Sustainability Manager's Report**

### 5.1 Feedback on Sustainability event, 26<sup>th</sup> Feb

VJ mentioned that the event had been successful, and feedback was mainly positive. RM and LG in particular gave very positive feedback. VJ informed the group that responses to the questionnaire from the day were mainly positive but need to raise more awareness (further feedback on this at the next meeting, after analysis of online responses). PH / SC suggested a regular page in Aspects (VJ / SKH to work on this). RM asked about photos and videos from the day (VJ to find out). PH thanked everybody involved on behalf of the group. VJ

### 5.2 Eco Campus update

SKH informed the group that the bronze audit stage for the Eco Campus Award will take place in June. Evidence must be gathered before then: SKH will compile a checklist before the next meeting. SKH

### 5.3 Battery Audit

VJ informed group that there is a battery audit currently taking place (household batteries in main reception, others to be sent to stores). Asked for any advice on whom to contact regarding this. VJ

PQ raised the question of using rechargeable batteries. This has been looked at in LHS but CW explained certain issues. PH suggested running a reuse scheme where students bring in an old set and are issued directly with a fully charged set – it was agreed that this would need to be a central service to work (potentially Guild). SKH, VJ and CW to try and solve this problem.

### 5.4 Web pages and Blog/Newsfeed

VJ drew attention to the updated web pages, in particular to the new LHS page under SAWG and the CSI page to be set up soon. Any feedback or suggestions should be sent to VJ. VJ

VJ will be meeting with Uchenna Ndikom to discuss setting up a blog. It was agreed that this would be trialed internally to gauge interest.

### 5.5 Green Gown Awards

SKH informed the group that Aston has entered two categories: “Continuous improvement – institutional change” and “Social responsibility” and we will hear the results next week. SKH

PH thanked those who had been involved – SKH, LJ and CW.

## **6. Adrian Lowe: Sustainability in Catering Aston**

AL introduced himself to the group and explained he would be discussing some of the new initiatives in catering. AL

Mug for Life: these will hopefully be on sale in around a month, at a cost of £3.50, with a 10% discount on each drink afterwards. People were concerned that this discount wouldn't apply if they wished to use their own mugs. RM and AL pointed out health and safety issue (need a lid on the mugs) but AL agreed to look into the possibility of people using their own mugs. PH and RM show full support for this initiative.

Compostable containers: currently these aren't used in catering. AL would like to start using the cups and food containers. SKH mentioned that Estates are looking at the purchase of a composter to dispose of these, together with food waste. RM raised the issue of awareness, if we are going to be providing separate bins. PQ suggested that the products should be launched simultaneously with the composter and appropriate bins. RM gave his full support and also requested that we approach Coffee&Cream about similar (VJ to pursue).

Water: Resource water is now being sold in catering outlets, with a percentage of sales reinvested in rainforest preservation. In Conference Aston, they are installing a filtration system and bottling their own water, reusing bottles for hospitality. (It was noted that they are also working towards ISO14001 – SC is familiar with this and will feedback to the group). It was also pointed out that tap water is available in catering outlets if requested. RM suggested jugs of tap water in Café Lago; AL is happy to look into this but raised the question of finance for a plumbed in filter/cooler.

CB asked about food supply and the possibility of using local/organic. AL is looking into this but is tied into national contracts for certain items. Fruit, vegetables, meat and fish are already purchased locally.

CW stated that she would like to congratulate AL on the fact that catering are considering sustainability issues, considering they have a business to run. RM welcomed the steps that are being taken. PH suggested that some of the information should be put onto the web pages and thanked AL on behalf of the group.

## **7. Sustainability Groups reports**

### 7.1 ABS

SC reported that they are pressing forward with the curriculum, working on an MSc Social Responsibility and Sustainability and a Green MBA. Also, Carol Parkes has arranged an event at Aston regarding the Principles of Responsible Management Education (discussed at last meeting).

### 7.2 LHS

CW reported that the group were continuing with their existing projects and had also started waste audits in their labs, looking at plastic waste and returning this to the suppliers. LHS are also looking at their curriculum. PH requested that another active representative from LHS attends the SAWG meetings.

### 7.3 LSS

PQ mentioned that there is some interest in forming a group but RG has more to report.

### 7.4 SEAS

PH reported that they have not yet managed to set up a group but they are interested in conducting an energy survey/metering similar to the trial in LHS.

### 7.5 Sustainable Procurement group

VJ informed the group that the WhizzGo scheme is now up and running on site and the car is available to use and that so far there have been a number of staff and student sign-ups. SKH reported on the SUPC event she attended and put forward the idea of ethical corporate gifts, in particular from the "remarkable" company. RM replied that the people to speak to are Julia King, Graham Hooley and Stewart Comfort. SKH is to write a briefing document and provide gift samples to go to the Executive. PH wishes to congratulate the group on achieving the use of 100% recycled paper across the University.

### 7.6 Sustainability Teaching and Learning

PH reported that there is consideration of relaunching the combined honours undergraduate programme together with an ABS based MSc. These proposals have been backed by market research. RC informs the group that a support group for Sustainability in Teaching and Learning has been set up in CLIPP and they are currently looking at resources from other Universities and creating a document to present to teaching groups (next workshop to be early next academic year). Paul Gorman is to be the focal point for any information.

### 7.7 Sustainability Research

CB gave an update from last meeting: CSI has now been set up and an email went out informing staff of the kick off on the 11<sup>th</sup> May. The proposal for colloquia went out after the last meeting; CB requests that people add to the document where they can. The first workshop is to be on transport and CB is to meet with Julia King in May to discuss. RM offered his support to get this started.

### 8. People&Planet society update

LG apologies for her absence at past meetings. An update has been sent round with minutes previously, informing the group of People&Planet's presence at Welfare Day, One World Week and Green&Fair. The issue of engaging students was raised and LG mentioned that student membership of P&P was limited and it was difficult to maintain student interest. LG

The main event for the coming term will be Astonbury; LG would like to have a presence there all day, with posters, possibly some input into the bar and also by integrating into the entertainment (hope to invite a theatrical poet; PQ suggested trying comedian Mark Thomas). LG would also like to work with SKH on recycling facilities for the day. RM suggested using the big screen to show a video, and also reminded LG of the need to discuss options at the planning meeting (e.g. reduction on beer for return of cup to be recycled). RM also noted that staff tickets were available at a reduced rate.

RM raised the issue of Residences – is there a contradiction between providing all-inclusive utilities and running the Student Switch Off campaign? LG mentioned that her landlord has put a limit on their energy use, which they monitor throughout the year (similar in some private halls of residence).

### 9. Student perceptions at Aston University

LG said it is difficult to reach students, but that People&Planet would be trying to increase interest next year. It was suggested that the Fairtrade group and the subgroups work more closely with P&P and that there should be more done during Fresher's Week to attract students.

RC feels that the best way is to embed sustainability into curriculum and PH cited some previous successful final year projects.

VJ suggested the idea of an Environment and Ethics Officer in the Guild, which has been successful at other Universities.

### 10. Sustainability Suggestions Scheme

To be discussed at next meeting

### 11. AOB

VJ mentioned Earth Hour on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March and informed the group that the University was signed up to take part.

### 12. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed, but at some point during the w/c 4<sup>th</sup> May or w/c 11<sup>th</sup> May.

ES