



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

# ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2022-23



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# VICE CHANCELLOR'S FOREWARD



I am pleased to introduce the inaugural Queen's University Belfast Annual Sustainability Report.

This report has been established to provide updates on our progress in implementing our Net Zero Plan and in the delivery of other sustainability initiatives. We evidence this in the report through case studies, key performance indicators and by demonstrating how our approach to embedding sustainability in all that we do is having tangible impacts across the University and beyond. The report covers five key themes:

- [Research and Sustainable Solutions](#)
- [Sustainability in Education](#)
- [Embedding Sustainability across Campus Activities](#)
- [Outreach and Partnership](#)
- [Engaging our University Community on Sustainability](#)

2022 – 2023 was undoubtedly an exciting and defining year for sustainability at Queen's. Most notably, we carried out extensive work on the development of a strategic institutional approach to sustainability, conducting rigorous research and engagement activities to support its formulation.

This work bore fruit in October 2023 with the launch of our ambitious Net Zero Plan, which delivers an evidence-based pathway for the achievement of our sustainability objectives and it commits us to reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2040, as well as driving progress on a number of other sustainability fronts.

The year also saw us continue to climb in the global sustainability rankings and we were again recognised for our sustainability leadership, achieving Platinum in the Northern Ireland Benchmark Survey as well as securing Green Flag Accreditations for the fifth year running. We also secured, Fairtrade and Gold Cycle Friendly Employer accreditations.

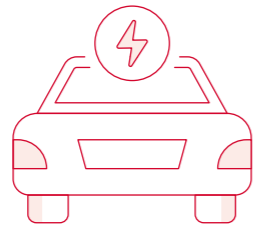
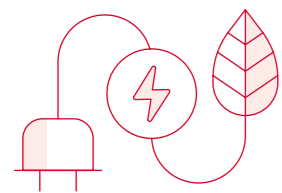
As you read the report, you will see that the progress and successes it outlines are the result of the commitment and collaborative working of both our staff – academic and non-academic and across all areas of the University – and our student body. I would like to express my thanks to all members of our University community who have played a part in driving forward sustainability at Queen's.

**Professor Sir Ian Greer**  
President and Vice-Chancellor

# SUSTAINABILITY IN NUMBERS 2022 - 23

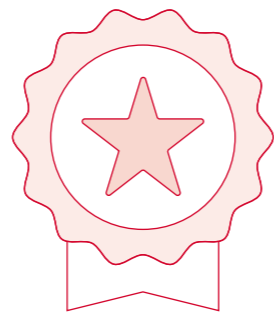
ELECTRICITY FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES

# 100%



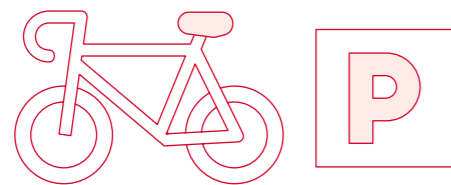
# 10

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS INSTALLED



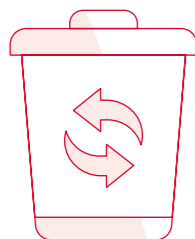
# TOP 6%

TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT RANKINGS



SPACES TO PARK A BICYCLE

# 1,530

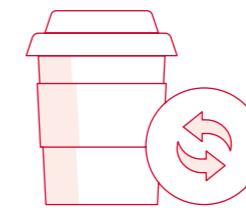


WASTE DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL

# 94%



**82%** STUDENTS AND **55%** STAFF USED SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT TO GET TO CAMPUS

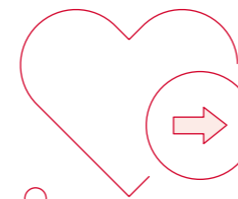


REUSABLE CUPS

# 27,000

# 115

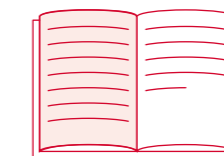
VOLUNTEERING COLLABORATIONS WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS



## BIG LOOP

- 1,556** BIKES AND ITEMS SOLD
- 640** BIKES REPAIRED
- 134** BIKES REFURBISHED
- 82** BIKES LEASED

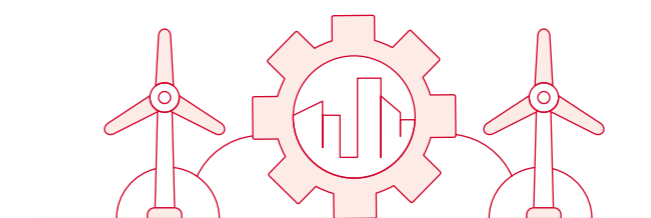
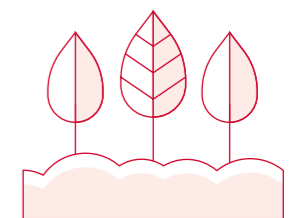
# 113



STUDENTS VOLUNTEERED FOR THE HOMEWORK CLUBS INITIATIVE

TREES PLANTED

# 150



# 423

STUDENTS TOOK PART IN CARBON LITERACY TRAINING



# OUR SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH



Queen's University Belfast is committed to social and civic responsibility and to supporting economic growth in an environmentally sustainable way both locally and globally.

As part of Strategy 2030, we are committed to embracing the Sustainable Development Goals across all our activities and to transitioning to a carbon neutral society.

In June 2023, Queen's set a target to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. This ambitious target reflects not just the critical contribution that the University makes through world-leading research and education provision on sustainability, but also through its role as a social and civic leader in the transition to net zero in Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland.

This report provides an overview of our ongoing commitment to sustainability across all areas of our activities – including research, operations, teaching and learning and outreach. Covering the period August 2022 – July 2023, this report spotlights our contribution towards the Sustainable Development Goals and provides an update on the University's carbon footprint and progress towards net zero emissions.

## GOVERNANCE

Successful delivery of our sustainability commitments requires strong and consistent internal governance at both strategic and operational levels. The University Sustainability Board oversees the institution's sustainability performance and reports to the University Management Board. The University Sustainability Board meets at least three times a year and includes stakeholders from across Queen's, including professional services, research, teaching and learning, the Students' Union and student community.



# BEING SUSTAINABLE AT QUEEN'S



Image: Green Flag Awards, Summer 2023

Our first annual sustainability report captures a range of exceptional activities that have occurred within Queen's university campus and beyond with our key stakeholders and partners.

It is through research, education, events, initiatives, and projects that Queen's University is achieving the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These Goals provide a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, both now and into the future.

## KEY REPORT THEMES

- Research and Sustainable Solutions
- Sustainability in our Education
- Sustainability in Campus Activities
- Outreach and Partnership
- Engaging our University
- Community on Sustainability



# 01 RESEARCH AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

## IMPLEMENTING NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN BELFAST AND BEYOND



Queen's University Belfast researchers have joined an international team of experts to develop nature-based solutions (NbS) to address pollution, urban regeneration, citizen health and climate resilience. Researchers are supporting five city partners - Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Katowice and Maribor - to share learnings and good practice on how to implement a range of NbS, from rain gardens to green bus stops.

In Belfast, Queen's researchers are working alongside Belfast City Council and local stakeholders including Friends of the Field and Friends of Botanic Gardens. An underused green space in the city's Lower Botanic Gardens is being regenerated with community, research, and climate-resilient gardens to enable local users to engage with nature conservation and food production. Future initiatives supported by Queen's Green Fund will better connect the project with the arts sector, with further plans to test nature-based drainage and implement an urban tree nursery on the site. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

**//** Working in partnership with our local council and in collaboration with local community groups has enabled us to understand how nature-based solutions can be used globally to solve urgent, real-world challenges.



Professor Jennifer McKinley and Dr Emma Campbell, School of Natural and Built Environment

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF BLUE AND GREEN SPACES VIA THE GROUNDWELL RESEARCH PROJECT



Queen's University Belfast researchers are leading a 5-year research programme called the GroundsWell consortium funded by the UK Prevention Research Partnership. The programme is reviewing the importance of urban green and blue spaces for chronic disease prevention, reducing inequalities and climate action. This is a UK-wide

programme with three pioneer cities in Belfast, Edinburgh and Liverpool.

Academics from Queen's have been working with EastSide Partnership and The Paul Hogarth Company to undertake a series of community engagement activities to explore how the local area can be climate resilient and support the future needs of the local community. Engaging with primary schools, the community sector, local interest groups, professionals and academics, councillors, MLAs and officials, and local businesses has enabled the formation of an action plan for the project.

**//** Green and blue spaces have a vital role to play in addressing many global challenges. We undertake research into how these spaces can help support local communities to address the climate and nature crises.



Professor Ruth Hunter, Centre for Public Health

## RECLAIMING OUR STREETS VIA THE STREETSACE PROJECT



StreetSpace is a research and teaching project in the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's University. StreetSpace works in collaboration with academia, students, government and local communities to analyse the potential for streets to be people-centred, accessible and inclusive public spaces. As part of this project, Belfast's Open Botanic Festival was launched and organised by Forward South Partnership. The festival closes Botanic Avenue to traffic for one day, inviting street performers, local bands, community groups and well-being organisations to take part.

**//** The StreetSpace project works with local communities, business and government to re-imagine urban spaces with festivals such as Open Botanic providing a real-world example of the benefits of change.



Dr Agustina Martire, School of Natural and Built Environment

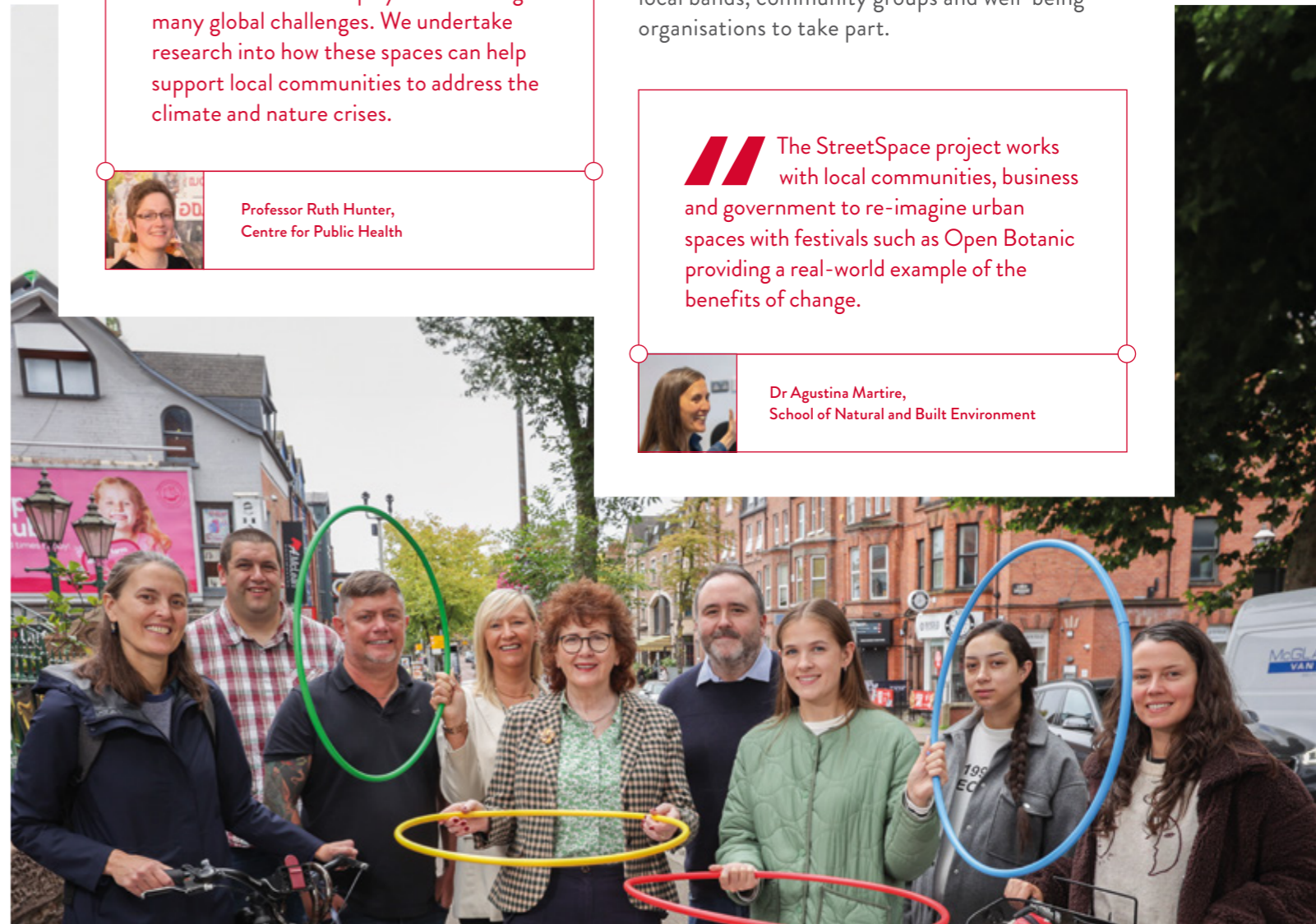


Image: Belfast's Open Botanic Festival, September 2023

## A PATHWAY TO OUR RENEWABLE FUTURE



### 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE) is an industry-led sustainable energy research centre that is bridging the gap between industry needs and academic research.

The publication of 'A Pathway to our Renewable Future' report has showcased that Northern Ireland has the potential to be an international leader in sustainable energy by building on regional innovation, with its inherent strengths in manufacturing, renewables, agriculture, education, and community development.

Research by CASE into anaerobic digestion, community energy systems, biomethane, wind, wave, tidal and gas power systems has enabled them to create a pathway to generating sustainable energy that also achieves inclusive and green growth.

**///** A Pathway to our Renewable Future' sets out a series of recommendations for Northern Ireland, including calling for a 'whole of government approach' in order to change how we do things, address the challenges ahead and maximise the economic benefits for society.



Professor David Rooney,  
School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering





# 02 SUSTAINABILITY IN EDUCATION


## GREENING OUR FUTURE CHEMISTS

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

The School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering has developed a Green Chemistry module which provides students with context and active learning that enables them to design routes to chemicals products in a way that minimises or avoids the use and creation of toxic products and waste. In doing so, it incorporates green chemistry principles into all chemical synthesis methods to create solutions and materials for society in a clean and sustainable way.

The module includes workshops that bring together support services, alumni and local industry to empower students to tackle real-world problems in holistic manner, whilst gaining subject-specific, employee and general skills and experience in group work, presentation and self-reflection.

**//** Integrating sustainability thinking and practices into our modules is the only way to ensure students are equipped with the correct skills and knowledge to tackle sustainability challenges in their future careers.



Dr Patricia Marr,  
School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering

## EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY VALUES IN OUR FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS

### 8 DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) is a UN-supported initiative that aims to raise the profile of sustainability in business and management schools around the world, and to equip business students with the understanding and ability to deliver change tomorrow. Working through seven principles, PRME engages schools to ensure they provide future leaders with the skills needed to balance economic and sustainability targets, while drawing attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Queen's Business School has been a signatory to PRME since 2017 and a PRME Champion institution since 2020. PRME Champion status reflects a commitment to thought and action leadership on responsible and sustainable management education. PRME provided an impetus to establish a systematic approach to identifying and enhancing the integration of the SDGs across the School's educational activities, research and scholarship, and societal engagement. From 2022, staff within the School engage with a wide range of stakeholders in order to explore opportunities for collaboration and have developed a range of initiatives, including the Northern Ireland School's Business Challenge, the Northern Ireland Business and Human Rights Student Ambassador Programme, and the Data for Good Hackathon.

**//** Queen's Business School has a long history of serving the needs of business and society both locally and globally. PRME provides us with an important platform and vibrant international network. We are committed to addressing sustainability across all aspects of our work and establishing initiatives that equip our students with the knowledge, understanding, and practical skills to deliver positive change.



Dr Laura Steele,  
Queen's Business School

## THE SDG PODCAST

### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

In 2022, the School of Nursing and Midwifery co-designed an audio podcast which provides information on the UN's SDGs and how each of these 17 goals applies to nursing and midwifery students. The podcasts also includes practical suggestions for how students can help to achieve the SDGs.

An evaluation of this podcast was carried out amongst year one nursing and midwifery students, resulting in 566 students taking part in the project. After listening to the podcast, and using a validated questionnaire, awareness of SDGs improved from an average of 50 per cent to 86 per cent, whilst understanding of the role of nurses and midwives in achieving SDGs improved from 70 per cent to 88 per cent.

**//** Nursing and midwifery have a crucial role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by optimising health. They can do this by understanding and addressing the connection between health and social factors such as poverty, social status, education, employment and food security.



Dr Gary Mitchell,  
School of Nursing and Midwifery



### BUILDING A CARBON LITERATE COMMUNITY

#### 4 QUALITY EDUCATION

In partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Carbon Literacy Training has been rolled out across campus. The course provides staff and students with certified training on carbon literacy and climate action, with over 900 members of our community becoming carbon literate. The interactive training provides staff and students with an understanding of climate change science and the climate impacts of our everyday actions. It encourages people to map their own carbon footprint and the motivation to reduce personal and organisational carbon emissions.

**///** In 2022, the School of Natural and Built Environment was the first school within the University to introduce mandatory Carbon Literacy Training to all our Level One students, as a result of the school declaring a climate emergency. Training equips our students with the information they need to address key environmental challenges in their careers, and personal lives.



Dr Will Megarry,  
School of Natural and Built Environment



Image: Queen's University Belfast Annual Student Summit, January 2023



# 03 EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

## OUR COMMITMENT TO NET ZERO BY 2040

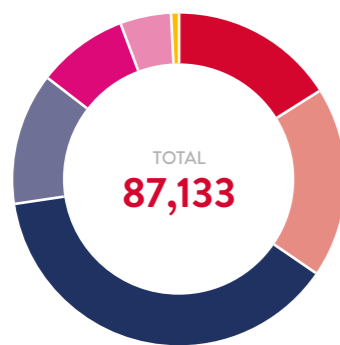
Our Net Zero Plan, approved by Senate in June 2023, sets out a commitment to achieve net zero by 2040 across Scope 1, 2 and 3 of our carbon footprint.

The plan defines the key principles to deliver this target, through a holistic approach to reducing emissions across the institution, improving our resilience and response to the impacts of climate change, carbon offsetting, where appropriate, and aligning all of this.

Reaching net zero emissions will require collective effort and support from all our staff, students, and external stakeholders.

To achieve this, we must ensure that we integrate climate action into all that we do, including the management and care of our staff and students, the oversight of our research and teaching, and our infrastructure, assets and operations, as well through as our engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

FIG. 01: TOTAL NET SCOPE - 1, 2 & 3 EMISSIONS / 2022 - 23 (tCO<sub>2</sub>e)



- SCOPE 1: 13,967 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Student Travel to and From Home Address - 16,179 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Procurement of Goods & Services - 33,144 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Capital Goods (Building Works) - 11,194 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Staff and Student Commuting - 7,674 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Business Travel - 4,309 tCO<sub>2</sub>e
- SCOPE 3: Other - 667 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

Total Carbon Emissions: Breakdown of Queen's University Belfast scope 1, 2 and 3 based emissions for August 2022 to July 2023. In keeping with best practice and EAUC guidance, the University is using a dual reporting method which includes reporting on location-based emissions together with market-based emissions. For reporting purposes, this is referred to as gross emissions and net emissions reporting. This graph provides a breakdown of our net (market-based) emissions. Please see appendix 1 for a full breakdown of figures.

**SCOPE 1 & 2 EMISSIONS:** We continue to make good progress against our carbon reduction targets, achieving a 35% reduction in our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions against the 2018-19 baseline. We have realised our carbon emissions reductions by procuring our electricity from renewable sources and adjusting our on-site energy generation.

**SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS:** Our indirect emissions account for around 79% of the University's total carbon footprint in 2022-23, a 10.7% decrease from 2018-29. This figure includes student and staff travel, student travel to and from home address, business travel, procurement, capital goods, waste, water, sewage and grid transmission and distribution. This decrease is a result of changes in working patterns following COVID-19 and a reduction in emissions associated with capital goods.



Image: Winner of Best Energy Achievement in Third Level Education, All Ireland Business Energy Awards 2023



### INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN OUR BUILT INFRASTRUCTURES

#### 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

The new Queen’s Business School Student Hub, located at Riddel Hall, was completed in May 2023. A low-energy, ecologically sensitive design approach was adopted from the outset. The building is a pioneer in its use of geothermal renewable energy. It also draws 100% of its electricity from renewable sources. Further sustainability features integrated into the building design include swift bricks, EV charging, green roof and PV panels. The need for a fossil fuel free heat source was identified from the early stages of the project design, with geothermal piles and grounds - source heat-pumps used as the most appropriate alternative to fossil fuels.

As part of Queen’s commitment to becoming net zero by 2040, investment in low-carbon buildings with renewable energy sources is vital. The new Queen’s Business School Student hub is an important step to achieving net zero.



Jaqueline Kearns, Estates Manager

### ENHANCING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR RESEARCH AND TEACHING LABS

#### 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

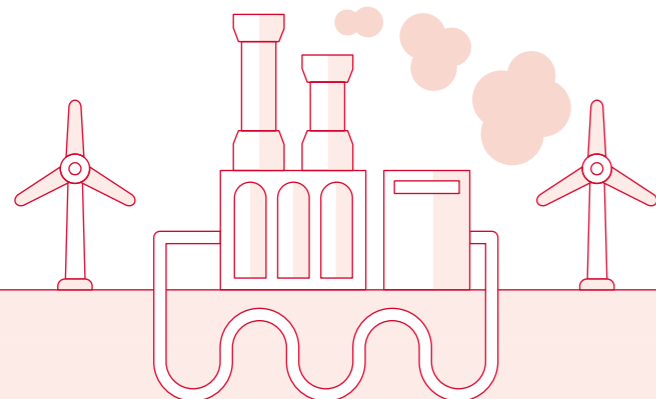
The Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) was successfully piloted within 12 labs across Queen’s in early 2022, resulting in a roll-out to a total of 31 labs by June 2023. LEAF provides a framework for labs to embed positive sustainability practices, decrease their carbon emissions, improving the sustainability and efficiency of their labs. Criteria focuses on energy, water, waste and engagement.

I have seen a great deal of change in how we work within labs over the past two decades. More recently, it’s been fantastic to be part of a shift in how laboratory-based research can contribute to addressing the climate and ecological emergencies through their science by taking part in LEAF.



Maria Rea, Patrick G Johnston Centre for Cancer Research

FIG. 02: POTENTIAL 60% REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS DUE TO GEOTHERMAL HEATING



60% REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS

FIG. 03: £54,000 INVESTED IN SUSTAINABLE LAB EQUIPMENT VIA THE LEAF PROGRAMME.

£54,000

INVESTED IN SUSTAINABLE LAB EQUIPMENT



### TRAVEL GREEN TO QUEEN'S VIA THE BIG LOOP BIKE HUB

#### 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

During 2022-2023 the University integrated several measures across campus to encourage staff and students to use active travel modes when travelling to and from the University. Staff and students can avail of 1,530 cycle parking stands and 14 shower and change locations across the University. Working in partnership with the Turnaround Project (a local social enterprise which supports individuals coming from the justice system) the University hosts a Big Loop Bike Hub where staff and students, can lease one of 30 bikes for the year, buy second-hand bikes and avail of discounted servicing options.

It is vital that Queen’s supports staff and students to travel sustainability into campus – we continue to do this where we can by providing infrastructure and incentives that encourage change while continuing to engage with government to advocate for better sustainable and active travel infrastructure.



John McCann, Estates Directorate

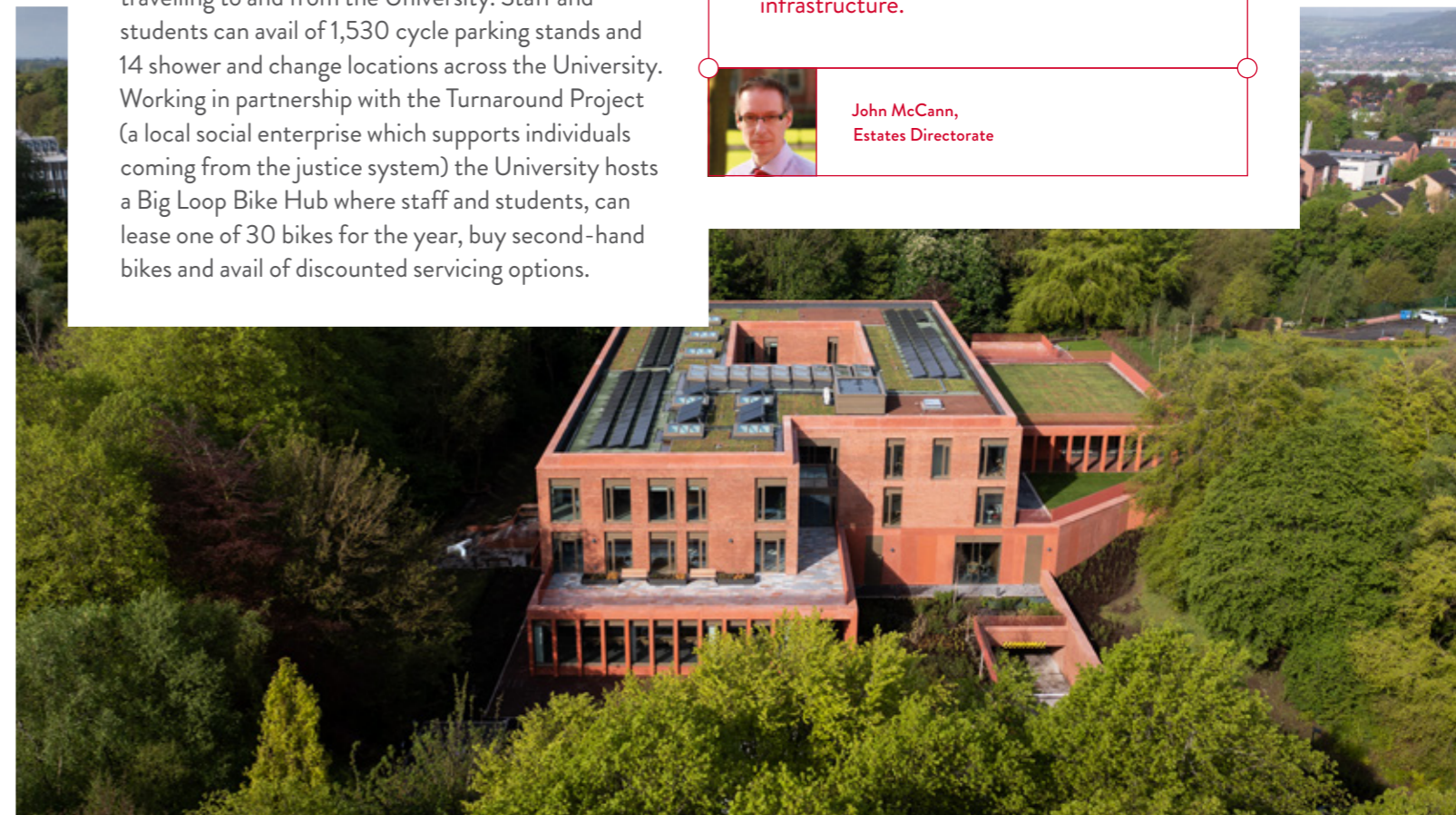


Image: Queen's Business School



### QUEEN'S 2GOCUP INITIATIVE

#### 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Campus Food and Drink launched their new waste reduction initiative alongside the Agreement 25 Conference in 2023, which was hosted to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. The '2GoCup' initiative provides all large-scale events within Queen's University Campus with reusable cups rather than disposable cups.

Launching their '2GoCup' initiative within the Agreement 25 Conference prevented the use of over 10,000 disposable cups.

A key priority for Campus Food and Drink is addressing single-use items used within our catering. The '2GoCup' initiative provides us with a great way to reduce single-use waste, whilst showcasing to our community that sustainability is a priority for us.



Gary Daly, Campus Food and Drink

### SOURCING OUR WATER SUSTAINABLY

#### 6 CLEAN WATER & SANITATION

In collaboration with NI Water, Queen's University established four active borewells for water supply within the campus. The borewells provide a more sustainable way to satisfy the water needs of our campus community. Compared to utility supply, our borewell water source is close to the site of consumption, meaning less water loss and reduced energy consumption as a result.

To enable us to reach net zero emissions by 2040 all the University's emissions need to be addressed, including our water supply. By proactively working with NI Water the University is investing in technology that limits emissions associated with water supply.



Anthony Schmidt, Estates Directorate

### TRANSFORMING GENDER EQUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

#### 5 GENDER EQUALITY

#### 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Queen's University Belfast was awarded the prestigious Gold Athena Swan Award. As a result, Queen's is the first university on the island of Ireland and only the second in the UK to achieve an institutional Gold Award for its work on improving gender equality. The University also holds 15 School Awards comprising three Gold, seven Silver and five Bronze. The Advance HE Athena Swan Charter is used internationally as a framework to support the advancement of gender equality within higher education and research. Queen's University Belfast has been a member of the Athena Swan Charter since its formation in 2005.

We are absolutely thrilled to become the first university on the island of Ireland and the second in the UK to achieve an institutional Athena Swan Gold Award. The wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda underpins everything that we do here at Queen's.



Professor Karen McCloskey, Director of Queen's Gender Initiative

Policy is contributing towards the University's journey to net-zero emissions.

As part of the policy, colleagues in Finance and DIS have been delivering a campaign to encourage staff and students to work digitally as much as possible and to adopt sustainable print behaviours, including minimising paper usage and consumable waste by delivering teaching and learning materials in digital form – an approach that enables students to access materials from any location and on a wide variety of devices.

'Our new Sustainable Print Policy and the associated Managed Print Service have reduced our impact on the environment while enabling staff and students to work smarter. Aligning with the ambitions of our Net Zero Plan, the Managed Print Service enables us to access real-time data that helps us to better understand printing behaviours and continuously identify and respond where support and changes can further enhance sustainable approaches and behaviours.'



Gillian Mayhew, Finance Directorate

FIG. 04: REDUCTION IN PRINTED MATERIALS SINCE 2019

65% REDUCTION IN PRINTED MATERIALS

PRINT FLEET DECLINED BY 88 DEVICES

REMOVAL OF 556 DESKTOP PRINTERS



### SUSTAINABLE PRINT POLICY

#### 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

In June 2022, Queen's launched a sustainable print policy to help limit printing and reduce the University's carbon footprint. With the Sustainable Development Goals – specifically 'responsible consumption' – at its core, the implementation of the Sustainable Print



04

# OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIP

## FIRST ALL-ISLAND SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**

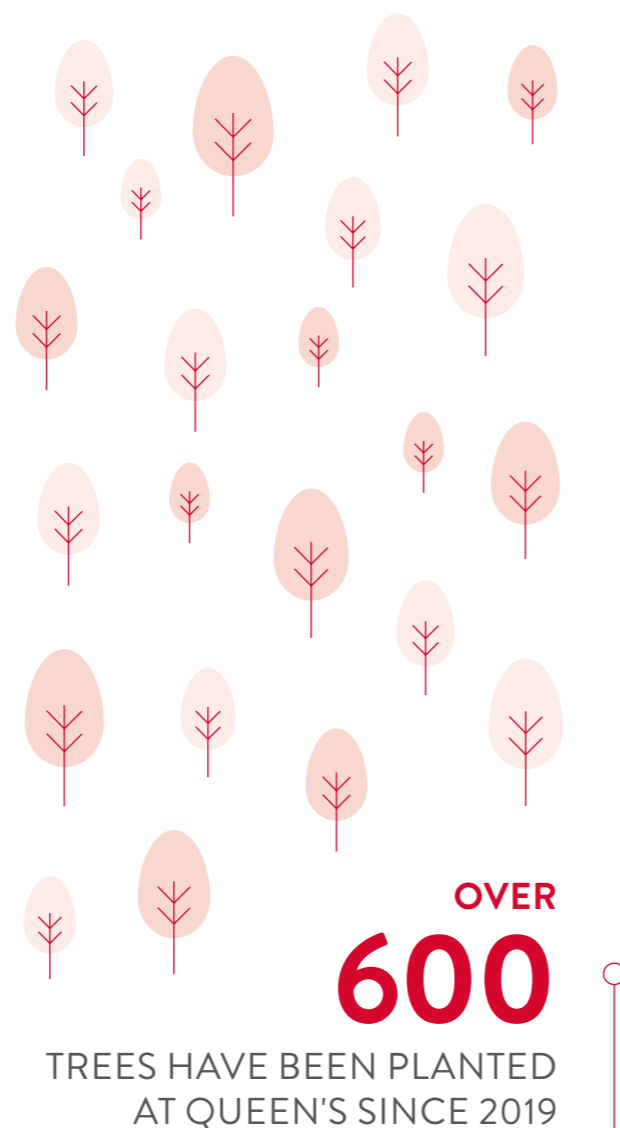
Queen's and University College Cork (UCC) have established Ireland's first all-island network dedicated to delivering on the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sustainable Development Solutions Network Ireland (SDSN Ireland) will work with local authorities, NGOs, civil society organisations and policymakers to bring the latest research and best practice to bear on producing solutions for the SDGs. It is the first time a university in Northern Ireland and in Ireland have formed a partnership to develop an all-island approach to the SDGs.

**///** To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to be collaborating with other universities to drive research and action around the 17 SDGs – which is why it is so important that Ireland's first all-island network has been established.



Professor Michael Alcorn, Chancellery

FIG. 05: OVER 600 TREES HAVE BEEN PLANTED AT QUEEN'S SINCE 2019 AS PART OF THE MILLION TREES FOR BELFAST INITIATIVE



## GREENING OUR CAMPUS VIA THE MILLION TREES FOR BELFAST INITIATIVE

**15 LIFE ON LAND**

As a key partner in the Million Trees for Belfast Initiative the Sustainability Team, Gardening Team, Volunteer SU and Community Engagement Team partnered with a local residential group, Sans Souci Residents Association, to plant 500 trees in Queen's Malone Playing Fields. The majority of saplings started life as acorns collected from Belvoir Forest and cared for by Sans Souci Residents and The Conservation Volunteers at Lennoxvale Tree Nursery. The nursery formed in 2019 on a vacant brown field site within Queen's campus.

**///** The Million Trees for Belfast Initiative is a fantastic project for the university to be involved in – we all have a part to play in ensuring Belfast is providing a home for nature, whilst ensuring our campus is resilient to climate change.



Paul Wallace, Queen's Head Gardener

## SHAPING TOMORROW'S NATURE-KEEPERS

**13 CLIMATE ACTION**

Queen's University, in collaboration with The Royal Society Partnership Grants, has assisted school children on a journey to learn about the natural world and how to look after it. Queen's Gardening Team and academics within the School of Biological Sciences, have been working with West Winds Primary School in Newtownards on biodiversity topics. This includes academics working with teachers to embed environmental topics within the curriculum. They then worked with Queen's Gardening Team to use this new knowledge to create a wildlife zone, containing a wildflower meadow and the small woodland.

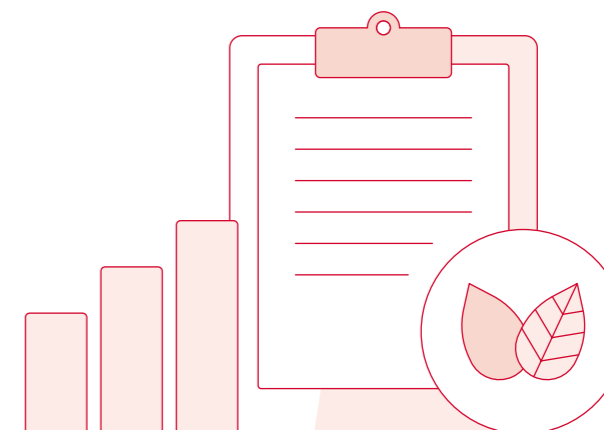
**///** Inspiring our young people to learn, and care, about our natural world is vital to ensuring it is valued and enhanced now and in the future. Educating our young people is vital to ensuring this happens.



Professor Mark Emmerson, School of Biological Sciences

FIG. 06: 150 STUDENTS WORKED ON BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS WITH QUEEN'S STAFF

**150**  
STUDENTS WORKED ON BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS





### QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY CLEANS UP THE STREETS OF SOUTH BELFAST

 15 LIFE ON LAND

In 2022-23, the University hosted its annual autumn and spring litter picks. The University worked in collaboration with Live Here Love Here, Orchardville charity and European Week for Waste Reduction campaign. This is the 10th year that students and staff have taken to the streets to support a cleaner environment.

 The litter-pick events are important to our Queen's community, as it is a way for staff and students to give back to our local community, whilst having a positive impact on our local environment. We are lucky to have staff, students and community members who want to get involved and act in any way they can to better our planet, which is very much in keeping with Queen's commitments to sustainability.



Jonny Baxter,  
Students' Union



Image: Annual Big Spring Clean, March 2023



# 05 ENGAGING OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ON SUSTAINABILITY

## A NET ZERO CONVERSATION

 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

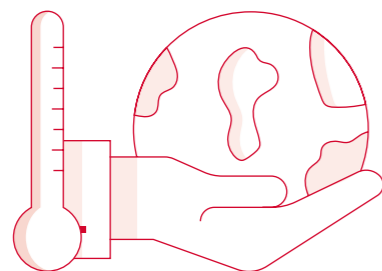
As part of Strategy 2030, Queen's University Belfast is committed to continuing on our journey towards reaching net zero emissions as soon as possible. To make sure the Net Zero Plan is ambitious and credible, the University launched an engagement campaign to ask Queen's community for their views, priorities, concerns and ideas for action. The Consultation highlighted that staff and students felt strongly that Queen's should play a leading role in tackling climate change by reducing its own carbon footprint. The views and ideas of the University community have been incorporated into the final Net Zero 2040 Plan.

**///** Achieving net zero emissions will require everyone across the University to get involved and take action - staff, students and our wider community. Ensuring that we continue to engage with our Queen's community will be critical. By engaging with our community, we will ensure that they are part of our journey to net zero emissions.



Sara Lynch, Estates Directorate

FIG. 07: 90% AGREED QUEEN'S SHOULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE



**90%**  
AGREED QUEEN'S SHOULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

## SUPPORTING OUR STAFF AND STUDENTS TO BRING THEIR GREEN IDEAS TO LIFE

 13 CLIMATE ACTION

Queen's Green Fund launched in 2019, empowering the Queen's community to create and deliver projects within their area that benefit the environment, Queen's University and our local community. Financial funding of up to £1,500 is available. To date 70 projects have been funded. Green Fund projects have included environmental projects that have enhanced the level of biodiversity found on campus, wellbeing projects aimed at tackling key issues within our community and a range of educational initiatives that aim to reinforce the importance of sustainability.

**///** The Sustainable Healthcare Development Group is a student team based within the School of Medicine, and School of Pharmacy. We work to make sustainable change within our schools and have been able to implement a number of projects by applying for money from Queen's Green Fund. Projects include hosting sustainable cookery classes in accommodation with our local council and sewing classes with a local charity – all of which aim to embed sustainable actions within our student population.



Mhairi Cowan (PHRC), School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences



Image: Queen's Art Society assisting with the Green Fund Project 'Pocket's of Green', June 2023



### TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

#### 1 NO POVERTY


In 2022 a support package of £7.69 million was created for students and staff facing the cost of living crisis. This included the creation of The Pantry, a free food re-fill station which has helped alleviate financial pressures for students. A first year Psychology student who visited the Pantry said, "I save around 30% off my weekly shop when I use the Pantry a couple of times a week – this is a great initiative."

The Pantry has also created more employment opportunities within the Students' Union. A final year Linguistics student commented: "I work in the Pantry so not only does it provide me with income, I also get my pasta and herbs every week!"

**//** We had heard devastating stories about students struggling to afford basic necessities. Though The Pantry's footfall speaks volumes about the continuing impact of the cost of living crisis on students, its introduction has provided significant relief to many when it comes to their food shop.

Additionally, we've also considered how to help our students with creating healthy and nutritious meals with items from the Pantry by creating a Pantry Recipe Book and providing cooking demos with local celebrity chef Suzie Lee.

We're proud that our advocacy on behalf of our students has resulted in the University generously funding this initiative for the past two years. Their ongoing support is appreciated and welcomed.



**Beth Elder,**  
Queen's Students' Union President

### RECOGNISING OUR HISTORY VIA THE AGREEMENT 25 CONFERENCE

#### 16 PEACE, JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS

The focus of the world was on Belfast as global political leaders past and present arrived in Belfast to mark the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in April 2023. Former President of the United States, President Bill Clinton, and the Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, Secretary Hillary R. Clinton, were among the global leaders who took part in the conference.

**//** This signature event to mark the anniversary of the Agreement provided an opportunity to reflect upon and recognise the achievements of 25 years ago, which has led to significant progress in Northern Ireland, delivering greater prosperity and a safer and more inclusive society. This event enabled us to look forward to how we address the major issues impacting society today so we can build on the current peace over the next 25 years.



**Professor Ian Greer,**  
Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University

### RESILIENCE AT QUEEN'S - MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

#### 3 GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week 2023, a selection of personalities and experts from the worlds of academia, sport, business and the media visited Queen's. Hosted at the Queen's Film Theatre by BBC Radio's Cate Conway, panel members shared their experiences of learning to deal with anxiety and pressure from the boxing ring to the boardroom.

Paralympian Gold Medallist Dr Michael McKillop, Kaffe O business owner and Transplant Games World Record holder Orla Smyth, retired Belfast Giants player Kevin Raine, former professional boxer Jamie Conlon, Chief Executive of Action Mental Health David Babington, and Dr Karen Galway, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queen's, all spoke on their experiences of building a resilient mindset.

**//** The University is committed to supporting and promoting the wellbeing of its campus community and the events this week were designed to provide some practical and professional advice and support to staff on matters relating to both physical and mental health, with a particular focus on anxiety and resilience.



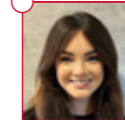
**Conor Curran,**  
People and Culture

### QUEEN'S ACCOMMODATION ALLOTMENT AND GARDENS

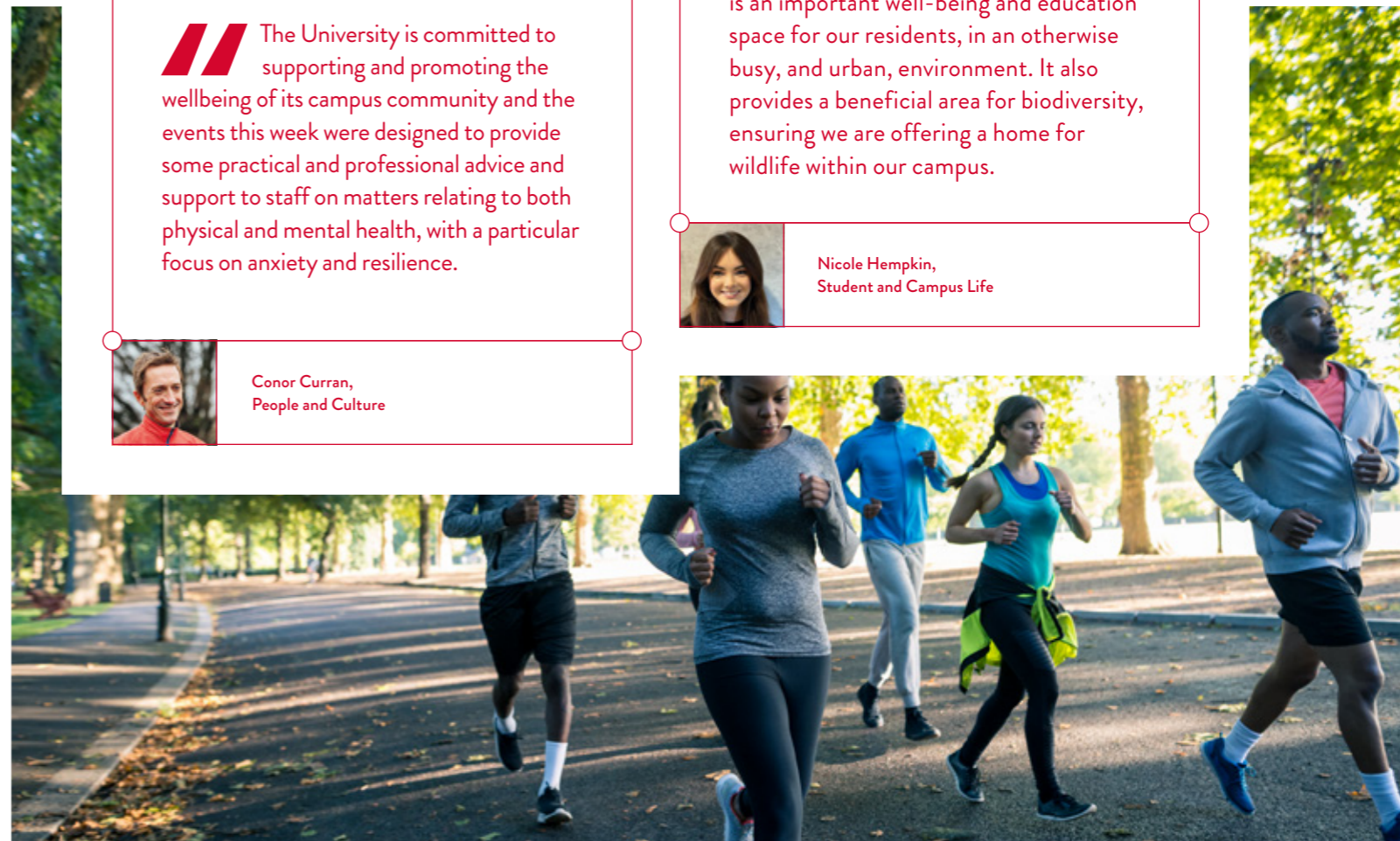
#### 2 ZERO HUNGER

The Residential Life Team, in collaboration with The Conservation Volunteers and the 'Green at Queen's' Student Society, established an allotment and community garden within Queen's largest accommodation site, Elms Village. Since its launch, the allotment has expanded to include 13 raised beds, a range of RSPB approved pollinator plants, a polytunnel, and an orchard comprised of apple, plum, and cherry trees. In 2022-23, our student allotment and garden continued to thrive with the Residential Life Team hosting a range of events, aimed at providing a wellbeing space for students to socialise within while establishing an understanding of where their food comes from and how to grow their own.

**//** The Community Garden and Allotment within Elms Village is an important well-being and education space for our residents, in an otherwise busy, and urban, environment. It also provides a beneficial area for biodiversity, ensuring we are offering a home for wildlife within our campus.



**Nicole Hempink,**  
Student and Campus Life





# PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The University has developed 16 key performance indicators (KPIs) to track our sustainability journey.

We have aligned our carbon emissions reporting with the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) developed by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

## ACHIEVEMENTS 2022 - 2023

- Green Flag Accreditation (5th year)
- Northern Ireland Benchmark Survey - Platinum
- Times Higher Education Impact Rankings - 85th / Top 6%
- University League / 2:1 Award Class
- QS Sustainability League - 108th / Top 10%
- Fairtrade Accredited
- Gold Cycle Friendly Employer
- ISO 14001 Certification Environmental Standard
- ISO 50001 Certification Energy Standard
- SDG Accord
- Planetary Health Report Card - B+
- Green Gown Awards - Shortlisted
- All-Ireland Sustainability Rewards - Finalist (Building Initiative of the Year)
- Business Energy Achievement Awards - Winner (Building Initiative of the Year)

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2022 - 23	2021 - 22	2018 - 19
Total Scope 1 & 2 Location-based carbon emissions - energy and fuel use (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	19,448	20,503	21,631
Total Scope 1 and 2 Market-based carbon emissions - energy and fuel use (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	13,967	16,387	21,631
Carbon emissions from water use (tCO <sub>2</sub> e) <sup>2</sup>	34	20	74
Total Scope 1 & 2 Location-based carbon emissions per FTE staff and student (tCO <sub>2</sub> e / FTE)	0.780	0.822	0.971
Total Scope 1 & 2 Market-based carbon emissions per FTE staff and student (tCO <sub>2</sub> e / FTE)	0.560	0.657	0.971
Total Scope 1 & 2 Location-based carbon emissions per total income (tCO <sub>2</sub> e / £0000)	41.64	46.81	59.26
Total Scope 1 & 2 Market-based carbon emissions per total income (tCO <sub>2</sub> e / £0000)	30.30	41.28	59.26
Scope 3 emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	73,167	69,169	81,962
Total water consumption (m <sup>3</sup> )	194,805	131,907	215,067
Waste diverted from landfill (%)	94.64	90.71	92.16
External Awards for Sustainability Initiatives	5	2	1
Modal split for commuting staff by single occupancy car journey (%)	44.0	30.6	30.6
Modal split for commuting staff by sustainable travel (%)	55.0	64.8	64.8
Modal split for commuting student by single occupancy car journey (%)	17.0	13.0	13.0
Modal split for commuting students by sustainable travel (%)	82.0	85.0	85.0
Number of staff and students who have completed Carbon Literacy Training	557	340	0



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