

Challenging Conventions Through Eco Thinking: Living Sustainably on Campus



How to challenge challenging conventions?

Wittingly or not, we live in a world of conventions which are established without us even realizing how they develop, yet our actions persistently perpetuate them. Many wasteful practices are not caused by malevolent thoughts but are a byproduct of our automatized actions. GUEST, or Glasgow University Environmental Sustainability Team, attempts to break through these paradigms in order to catalyze the growth of the culture of sustainability with the staff, students and local residents of Glasgow University Gilmorehill Campus and to encourage positive behaviour change towards improving the environmental practice and awareness of place and community.

GUEST challenges its own conventions!

Throughout the year one of the most significant feats of the team has been to revamp its own structure, mission and sharpen its values system – self-reflection and creative deconstruction from within are the cornerstones of our work. This had led to the production of the GUEST Manifesto for the future – a statement of the values that would guide the team beyond its current staff, the general aims it will pursue in the coming years and its face to the world of tomorrow.



GUEST 2013-2014

Luke Evens - Energy Conservation
Alistair Allan - Biodiversity
Jacqueline Stables - Sustainable Transport

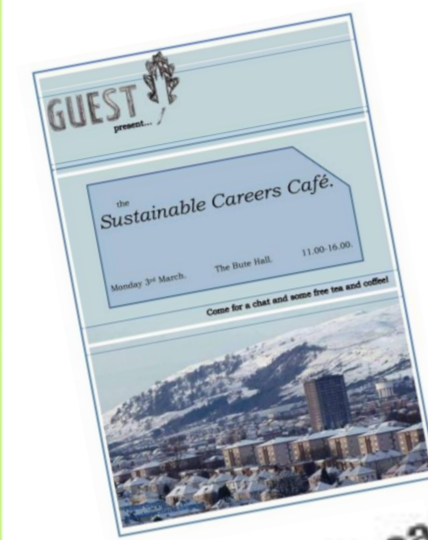
Katie Arthur - Events and Journalism
Djina Keric - Recycling
Giovanna Bisoni - Sustainable Food

Jessica Clark - Assistant Co-ordinator
Laura Allan - Assistant Co-ordinator
Roisin Lyle-Collins - Co-ordinator

Miriam Wilson - Willowbank Garden
Rasmus Randig - Sustainable Academia
Martin Dimitrov - Sustainable Academia



Glasgow University Environmental Sustainability Team is working towards improving the University's environmental performance and embedding sustainability in different areas of the University. The project started as a student initiative in 2012 and is now located within the Estates & Buildings Department reporting to the Carbon Management Committee. Currently, the team consists of 12 students in paid positions plus interns. Around 200 students stated interest in volunteering with GUEST. In 2012 GUEST had been presented as a case study for good practice on the Green League-website and has supported the University in rising up 47 places in the People and Planet Green League Table since 2012 (Green League, 2013).



'Students can be simultaneously members of staff and contribute to the changes within the institution'

- Combine Work and Study
- Gain valuable experience
- Develop skills through running their own projects
- Bring fresh perspective to the cause

'Students should shape the future of their university'



- if the university strives to become a genuine community it should treat students not as clients, but as stakeholders that ought to have their say in policy making decisions



'Multidisciplinary study and proactive engagement'



'Staff, Students and Teachers ought to come together to discuss, decide and act upon this future'

- Through the invitation of academic and public conversations the three parties understand each other, and their common goal of sustainable community building, better.
- Awareness ought to be maintained where it exists and raised - where it doesn't

A word from the interns:

'GUEST did not only help me put my skills and passion to good use, but also inspired me to become more confident and more creative. Due to this, I am now determined to bring a positive change to the world' - **Carmen Dutu**, Media and Communication Intern

'GUEST exposed me to a range of different people, helping to broaden my view on sustainability issues. By involving students, staff and the local community, I have developed vital networking skills but also the ability to realise that sustainability does affect everybody. The creativity, positivity and support that GUEST members display allowed me to realise the strength in collaborations and skill-sharing' - **Glen Gostlow**, Sustainable Transport Intern



The Eco Hub

The Eco Hub aims to be a dynamic welcoming environment shared by the whole university community at the Gilmorehill Campus. Its purpose will be to bring together all strands of environmental activism (and beyond!) on campus in order to create a space for exchange of ideas and learning skills for a sustainable and conscious life. The team is facilitating the formulation of the proposal, seeking advice and opinion from various stakeholders from the university community.

GUEST Projects

Sustainable Energy

Luke Evans, the energy sustainability promoter had engaged with various university, student and community bodies in order to elucidate the issues related to excessive use of energy. Throughout the year GUEST has supported the Climate Action society, helping to arrange film showings and talks that aimed to reach out to the university community and local residents to educate on environmental issues such as fracking and fossil fuel divestment by the university. Last, but not least, two members of GUEST trained as facilitators to lead Carbon Conversation Groups towards guiding the university community to lower their carbon footprint.

Recycling

Recycling promoter Djina Keric had been overseeing the introduction of the new recycling facilities within the catering outlets and other buildings of the university, communicating issues between GUEST, the student body and the administration responsible for the implementation of the project. Moreover, Djina spent considerable time supporting the implementation of the first internal resource redistribution network that seeks to coordinate recycling and reusing of furniture by different university bodies. She has been supported in this task by her intern Linda Powell.

Biodiversity

GUEST biodiversity officer Alistair Allen has been hosting work sessions at the Campus Wildlife Garden, collaborating with the Campus Biodiversity Group to update the Glasgow University Biodiversity Policy as well as investigating the possibility of campus allotments, roof top gardens and a campus beekeeping society.

Willowbank Garden

Miriam Wilson had been supporting the Willowbank Community Garden, who host events and work sessions on land adopted by the university from the council, over a year ago. Together they aim to encourage the local and university community to grow their own local organic food and improve the biodiversity of the area. Miriam has also hosted weekly work sessions on willow weaving, fruit tree maintenance and wood crafting sessions in collaboration with The Galgael Community. This all contributes to her focus on community engagement.

Sustainable Transport

The Sustainable Transport team launched a number of pilot projects throughout the year, including a bicycle users' group on campus that ran weekly events, including rides in and out of town, movie nights and discussion panels for the future of cycling on campus and in Glasgow. The Sustainable Transport promoter Jacqueline Stables and the intern Glen Gostlow also launched a safety cycling campaign and the first bicycle fair in the history of the university, where various local community cycling groups and businesses presented their products and services to members of the university.

Sustainable Food

The Sustainable Food position became a separate post for the first time this year in order to facilitate deeper engagement of the GUEST team with the sustainable food policy of the University. Promoter Giovanna Bisoni designed and carried out a survey amongst the student populace that attracted great attention and response, filling the gaps in our knowledge of the dietary preferences of Glasgow University students and how do they see them implemented in the catering facilities of the university.

Sustainable Academia

Throughout the duration of the Sustainable Academia Project Rasmus Randig and Martin Dimitrov worked towards the promotion of GUEST amongst members of the academic staff and researched the pathways towards inclusion of sustainability within the curriculum of the university. They researched ways of engaging more members of the student populace and staff in the sustainability network on campus and now represent GUEST at the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference, where they seek to establish useful contacts for the future of the team and make the case for embedding ecological thought within the curriculum of students from various disciplines.