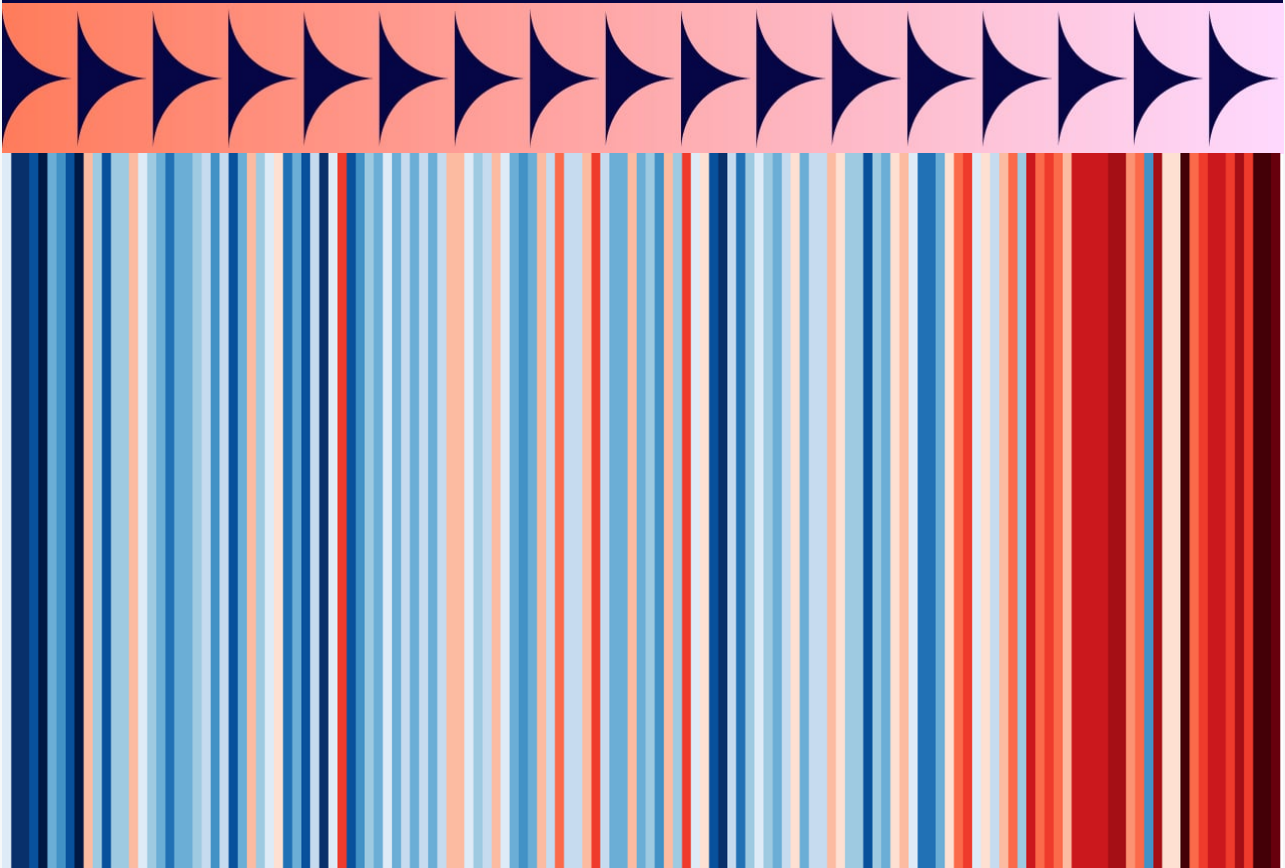


Welcome to this month's Sustainability Bulletin

June 2025



Whilst world events, reported in graphic detail in the media, create natural feelings of distress and outrage, it is important to keep empowered and to practice peace building in our spheres of influence whenever we can as individuals, in our families at home, at work and in our local communities. Goal 16 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals is 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions'. [Skills for peace](#) are based on love and include respect, understanding, compassion and inclusion. For me, peace is not just between different people, it is also between people and the other species with whom we share our beautiful planet, and peace is not just the absence of war and violence, which many of us are privileged to experience, it is about us all developing values which enable an appreciation of cultural diversity and social justice. That helps me to see excellent projects like the Reciprocal Mentoring scheme, and even our mandatory training (do check you are up-to date!), as building blocks towards peace in the world.

In the UK, we have reached the longest day of the year, and the Met Office has confirmed that 2025 is one of the hottest and sunniest years in [history](#), with coastal waters also being warmer than usual, and sadly a little more polluted than usual. The brilliant [Surfers Against Sewage have developed an app](#) to check water quality over 600 sites across the UK. The UN Ocean Conference has gained agreement from 50 (of the 60 countries required) to ratify the global treaty to protect 30% of the high seas by 2030. Gardeners will understand it is also one of the driest years since formal records started in 1836. [Rainwater harvesting](#) is becoming an essential part of any garden. Unfortunately, wildlife can't adapt as quickly to climatic changes. Whilst I felt lucky to be at an inspirational talk by our polar scientist Professor Mark Brandon, I was saddened to learn that whilst penguins are well-adapted to cold, harsh winters, they don't do well in the rain. Penguin chicks often don't survive the constant damp of a heating Antarctica. Mark has been collaborating with other researchers into a report for the [Environmental Audit Select Committee on The UK and the Antarctic Environment](#).

By focusing on our direct spheres of influence and making changes to align with our values, we can and do effect change. Every midsummer, you can help raise awareness of climate change and have conversations about the actions we can all take to reduce carbon emissions by participating in '[show your stripes](#)'. Created by climate scientist Professor Ed Hawkins at the University of Reading, each stripe represents one year. The colours transition from cool blues to warm reds to represent the increases in temperature seen throughout the past 150 years or more. This year the stripes were shown on the white cliffs of Dover! Above is the graphic for the UK and it inspires the Sustainability Office to keep on going!

With continued optimism,

Klaus-Dieter, Victoria and Gabriella

Dates for your green diary



Net Zero Week: Community Engagement and Net Zero – 8th July, 12-1pm

We are once again supporting the UK [Net Zero Week with a webinar](#) discussing

the crucial role community and stakeholder engagement has in achieving Net Zero. Community engagement harnesses local knowledge, fosters collaboration, and drives impactful change. However, it also presents challenges. Our webinar brings together experts who will discuss the role of community engagement in net zero transitions through innovative approaches for creating a sustainable future. [Register for this event here.](#)

Upcoming EAUC events

[EAUC](#) is the leading body for sustainability in the post-16 education sector in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The OU has an institutional membership which means that all staff and students can attend EAUC events and benefit from the resources on offer, or share our own resources with others (please let the Sustainability Office know first). If you would like to be part of this collaborative community to learn and exchange with your counterparts in other universities, please do [sign up here](#). If you have students who would find this useful, please let them know by [sharing this page with them](#).

- [EAUC Annual General Meeting](#), 15 July, 4-5pm, online
- [Midlands regional meeting](#), 1 July, 10am-2pm, hybrid.
- [North West England regional meeting](#), 2 July, 10am-12pm, online.
- [EAUC Scotland autumn forum - sustainable catering](#) - 25 September, 2-4pm, online.

News, resources & engagement opportunities



Annual Travel Fayre

The OU held the Milton Keynes campus annual Travel Fayre on 11th June, with 15 external parties, including travel providers, charities and local businesses running stalls and test drives during the day.

Thanks to all staff and students who attended, got their bikes repaired for free, tested e-bikes and e-scooters and took an electric vehicle for a test drive. For advice on sustainable travel across the nations visit [Travel Advice and Information | Estates](#) Our travel choices can affect our carbon emissions, and low carbon options like walking and cycling also keep us fit and healthy.

In case you missed it, you can still [watch the recording of our World Environment Day event held on 5th June](#). The session featured Jo Hand from Giki and Lorraine Skinner from our OU Travel Advice Team, who shared inspiring insights on sustainable travel.

People & Planet Assessment

[People & Planet's University League](#) is the only comprehensive and independent league table of UK universities ranked by environmental and ethical performance. It is compiled annually by the UK's largest student campaigning network, People & Planet.

The OU was awarded a 2:1 last year, ranked 62nd overall, an improvement on the previous year's performance (2:2, ranked 67th) and a 3rd class award three years ago (where the OU was ranked 116th)/

The People & Planet assessment for this year's ranking assessment starts 1 July. Please send to the [Sustainability Office](#) any new policy, link, or updates you have.

[Detailed feedback is available for individual departments on last year's assessment.](#)

"How can we mend holes, in skills, communities and clothing?"

Our very own Carbon Literacy Trainer, Ismay Mummery, OU PhD candidate, joined other amazing female scientists talking about their research as part of the Milton Keynes soap box science event over midsummer weekend. With a washing line of darned socks and hand stitched jeans, Ismay talked about the different strategies that could be used to increase mending across society. Discussions with visitors ranged from how to increase sewing skills in schools, where people had learned to sew and the impact of fast fashion on textile waste. If you want to learn more about mending, or to join a Carbon Literacy Training session, contact sustainability@open.ac.uk



World Green Roof Day

The OU hosted the [GRO](#) (Green Roof Organisation) world café event to mark World Green Roof Day on Thursday 5th June. The event was an opportunity for members of GRO to come together to share stories, discuss challenges and look to the future. Members include representatives from UK roofing industries specialising in Green, Blue and BioSolar roofs.

There were inspirational talks from speakers including Maggie Beckett, Milton Keynes Youth Mayor and the OU's Dr Jula Cooke and Dr Kadmiel Maseyk. The event was lead by Chris Bridgman, founder of green roof specialists Bridgman & Bridgman and vice-chair of the Green Roof Organisation (GRO). The event culminated in a rather rainy photo opportunity and a tour of the new [Stuart Hall green roof](#).

Help us share your positive news



HEDGEHOG FRIENDLY CAMPUS

SILVER AWARD



2024/25

2025 Hedgehog Friendly Campus awards - We are a Silver accredited institution!

Hedgehog Friendly Campus is a national award scheme designed to protect hedgehogs, enhance their habitat and create awareness, part-funded by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society. Teams consist of students and staff members who work towards making impactful changes for hedgehogs and other wildlife around their university, college, or school.

We are officially a [silver accredited institution with Hedgehog Friendly Campus!](#)
Thanks so much to you all for organising sessions, writing copy, filming videos and spreading the word about biodiversity and nature conservation.

Carbon Literacy Training

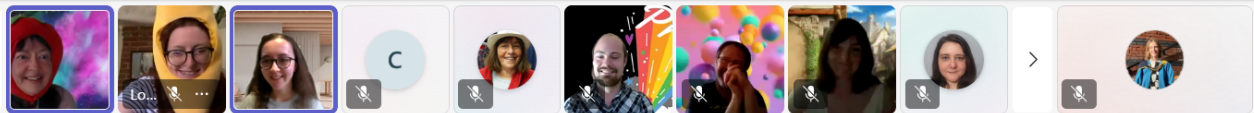
"My Carbon Literacy Training was a real eye-opener. The self-study in advance gave me confidence around the science that I had never looked into before and the group training was supportive and thought-provoking."

"The training helped me better understand the systemic nature of the climate crisis and inspired me to talk more openly about sustainability with friends and colleagues. I've also encouraged my workplace to consider more eco-friendly practices, such as reducing unnecessary printing and improving recycling efforts."

These are just two of the amazing pieces of feedback for [Carbon Literacy Training at the OU](#) from staff and students.

If you haven't completed your training yet, there are dates available throughout the year on [My Learning Centre](#). We recommend you speak to your manager about embedding your Carbon Literacy pledge in your CDSA objectives, so support progress on the institutional goal for sustainability.

If you manage a team, please do consider Carbon Literacy Training as part of professional development opportunities for your team. Or you can invite us to come and play the 'How Bad Are Bananas?' game at your team building events, team away days or other events.



Bananas vs cherry tomatoes



The results are in!

1kg of bananas

**1kg of vine cherry tomatoes ,
grown in the UK in March**



Leila.Laco

Carbon conversations with the 'How Bad Are Bananas?' game

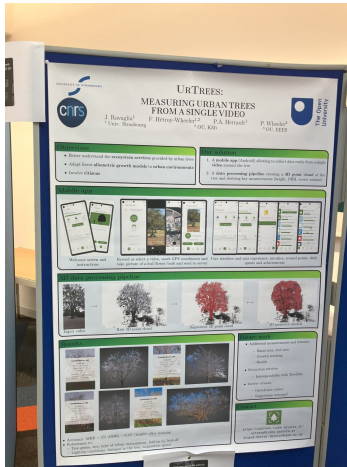
Above: The Open University Students Union team [playing the Bananas game during Great Big Green Week](#) this month with students - notice the tomato and

banana costumes worn by our Carbon Literacy facilitators Nichola and Lou – an optional extra!

Yes it's a fun game! It also reveals that we all already know quite a lot about the amount of carbon produced by everyday items and activities. That means we can all be part of the transition to a low carbon society. Book in our staff and student team to play the game with you – in person or face to face!

Swap Shop in Wales

Colleagues at the OU in Wales recently took part in a [swap shop event](#). Staff donated pre-loved books, hobby sets, clothes, or other small household items so they can be loved by somebody new. The event was organised by Wales colleagues Elese Williams, Becca Falvey, and Rosanna Lewis. If you would like to organise your own swap shop, just let us know. The Go Green Centre on Milton Keynes campus (open every Tuesday from 12–2pm) also has a permanent Swap Shop where you can bring and swap your items. Do pop in and see Jodi!



OU Research Festival Highlights

At the Research Festival held on 30th April–1st May, a wealth of innovative and impactful work were showcased. After much deliberation, The Best Poster was awarded to J. Ravaglia, Frank Hétroy-Wheeler, P.A. Herault, and Phil Wheeler for their compelling work titled *UrTrees: measuring urban trees from a single video*, and The Best Lightning Talk went to Dhouha Kbaier for her thought-provoking presentation, *Inclusive by Design: Rethinking AI for Environmental and Social Sustainability*. Congratulations to all the winners for their outstanding contributions!

Sustainability is Everyone's job



Become a 'How Bad Are Bananas?' game facilitator – fully funded training

The ['How Bad are Bananas?' game](#) is a fun and engaging way to promote and prompt discussion around climate impacts with any audience. Based on the book of the same name by Mike Berners-Lee, the game covers the climate change impact of a whole range of commodities, activities, and events – from bananas to wildfires.

The Sustainability Office trains facilitators for the game across the University, including all four nations. Due to its growing popularity, we are offering another round of fully-funded facilitator training so that we have more students and staff to run the game with teams across the university and local community groups and schools. If you are interested in becoming a facilitator, please contact the [Sustainability Office](#).

Get involved



Become an EAUC Member

To access resources and invites to regional meetings



How Bad Are Bananas?

Play this game at your next team away day or event



Sign up to Giki

Register with Giki and take 10 minutes to calculate your personal carbon footprint.



Carbon Literacy Training

Upskill, resell and make a pledge to take workplace action.



LinkedIn

Join The Open University's Sustainability LinkedIn Group.



Go Green

Join our Go Green network and workshops.



Responsible Futures

A framework to embed sustainability in the curriculum.



Warp-It

Save money and reuse OU resources with Warp-It internally, or by signing up local charities and schools.



Sustainability Home

Keep revisiting the Sustainability pages for more information or [contact us via email](#).

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