

**Biodiversity Community of Practice Virtual Meeting
29th January 2018**

Biodegradable packaging experiences; good and bad?

University of Warwick: Olleco apparently can take Vegware via AD. Oil goes to Olleco from whole site. Food waste collection began January 2018 with more places on campus - Arden and SU have been with Olleco for a while. Looking at Biobean for coffee.

Can vegware cups be used as plant pots to plant directly into the ground?

Kingston University: don't have the composting facilities to do it, but caterers didn't check that. Unfortunately even though there have been food collection points in the cafe's for a while, there still is contamination, the message doesn't seem to get through and people don't sort out recycling and food waste properly.

York St John: looked at biodegradable packaging but it needs to go in food waste bin. As not much food goes in food waste bin it would be confusing to put only certain packaging in food bin.

University of Oxford: all composted on site either in the park or away at a science park and then reused across site.

Swansea University: composting onsite but not biodegradable packaging.

**How are people managing their green grounds waste? Do they have dedicated compost piles?
How much of this goes back onto the grounds. Also, do they allow staff/students to take it home too?**

University of Warwick: Estates have a dedicated area conferences give away coffee grounds

Kingston University: composting only on one campus, so all of the other sites go to one site. Reuse everything, but don't give them off site, as there are invasive species on the sites, so not able to state that the compost was free of those species as it's just open air composting.

York St John: skip permanently onsite for Grounds waste which is collected for composting by Biffa.

Swansea University: Compost with 3 – 4 large bays, all recirculated on campus. Bay campus limited space.

**Innovative use of spaces – sharing new and interesting ideas around planting in limited spaces
(vertical planting, interesting use of planters, indoor spaces etc)**

University of Leeds: Site is on a urban campus. Their new Biodiversity Standard also considers Biophilia, indoor spaces, vertical planting and innovation. They have some edible projects including the Sustainable garden, Student's Union growing projects, and ideas to take away. They are a part of the Buglife 'Urban Buzz' Project and corporate members of the RSPB and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Keen to emphasise that low maintenance is really important for nature but difficult to



implement in reality. Car parking encroaching on Biodiversity through new projects, but offsets have included 'value' of the habitat to ensure a net positive impact, not just replacement. Grounds team becoming upskilled to answer biodiversity-related questions and small circular signage is used to show areas where no management is being done to improve biodiversity.

Action: MH / CM to circulate copy of signage

University of Oxford: Edible veg beds, limited outdoor space. Oxford Brookes run solitary bee research project in woodland nests with QR code.

York St John: struggle for space in central York so biodiversity efforts tend to focus on out of town site. Central campus has a few small simple measures e.g. bird boxes, bee hotels, very small wildlife garden. An idea is if space is limited to try to focus efforts on showing people what they can do at home e.g. an example domestic garden and things you can do in it to support wildlife. Use the space as educational given the limited scope for measures on site.

Swansea University: small biodiversity wall at Bay campus (coastal site), lots of gaps, good for biodiversity and innovative species. Worked with engineering department to install plastic modular sheets fastening onto the wall. Cardiff University run Pharmabees project, very early days at Swansea. Area left to grow but pathway mowed, success.

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/pharmacy-pharmaceutical-sciences/about-us/engagement/pharmabees>

University of Warwick: edible trail (early stages), public area at the moment and in the future H&S could become an issue. Allotment Society and Jam Grove (education area).

KCL: run into problems with the need for it to be 'neat' at our sportsgrounds. Our campuses are very urban so the sport grounds are the only larger green space.

Local networks – sharing ideas on how best to engage with their local networks (i.e. local councils etc.) to have a wider impact on local biodiversity

University of Warwick: holiday scheme taken to the allotment and explain about recycling, make newspaper plant pots with soil, seeds, and also natural drawings. Three shires orchard project - did (St Clements Day in November).

Birmingham there is a community orchards project so they are asking anyone with some free space to get in touch.

The rotary club are planning to plant a tree for each of their members this year.

Currently working on an edible trail but progress is slow due to the construction work on campus. Also have the issue with people wanting neat but our grounds team have found a good way of doing beautiful and 'untidy'. It is normally certain staff members that have the issues but grounds team able to explain.

Kingston University: built a network over a few years and help host the local quarterly biodiversity network meeting when possible. Good opportunity to get people networking and while not necessarily large numbers, useful tool to find out what is happening in the area and partnership working opportunities. It has led to a few long term projects at the University. Duke of Edinburgh students come in with one of the charities Kingston work with and agree that very young children



are more engaged than older ones. Issues around sports grounds and biodiversity, even with a BAP for the sports grounds and actions in place, it does tend to feel like an uphill strongly worded discussion between "neat" and biodiversity.

<http://kubiodiversity.blogspot.co.uk/2017/04/05-04-2017-kingston-universitys.htm>

University of Oxford: Shared hosting Green and Blue Network, general sustainability with broad remit.

Swansea University: host Biodiversity meeting. Occasional school visits and sessions. Health and Wellbeing School visit as part of rehab for brain injury patients.

University of Leeds: Onsite nursery, small children very keen and engaged. Helping Britain Blossom – Leeds an Orchard City.

Roundtable discussion

Tips on finding appropriate plants to plant into wildlife pond

<http://www.froglife.org/info-advice/just-add-water/>

There are also similar publications from ARC and freshwater habitats trust

The one thing that can draw in wildlife in small areas if you have the room for it, is a small pond. As even if you don't have the connectivity for amphibians, you can still get invertebrates and birds using the pond.

Projects where students help with wildlife surveys

RSPB, Big Butterfly Count, BioBlitz, One off surveys, Biology students link in for surveys (bats etc).

Inconsistent student engagement, issue for long term monitoring strategies.

External training opportunities on biodiversity for grounds team to attend

<http://events.cieem.net/Events/Event-Listing.aspx>

Habitat management courses.

Swansea University run a half day course for Grounds and Project Officers, twice a year. In house only as limited budget.