

**University of St Andrews Students' Association's**  
**Sustainability Policy (2019)**

- 1.1. This Policy applies to the operations and strategic direction of the University of St Andrews Students' Association (SA). It aims to guide decisions and action by providing an ethical standard and an empirical point of reference. It also provides structural and procedural suggestions for day-to-day operations and management in the Union so as to embed the principles laid out in this policy into the very ethos of the institution.
- 1.2. This policy is one which current students should be proud of, and which future students should benefit from. It will be available to all parties including the general public, and will be provided to all sabbaticals, staff, subcommittees and affiliated societies.
- 1.3. The SA Environment Committee is responsible for advising the Association President or management staff, where appropriate, as to how the policy may or may not be achieving its aims. The former is also responsible for collating ideas and suggestions from the student body as to how the SA can improve its policy.
- 1.4. The Association President is responsible for updating this policy every Spring and bringing a motion to Joint Council. Through this process, the advice of the SA Environment Committee and close consultation with permanent staff should inform any changes.
- 1.5. The SA Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the enactment and enforcement of the policy at a strategic level.
- 1.6. The next review shall take place at Joint Council in February 2020 and the following SA Board Meeting.

**2. Definitions**

- 2.1. Sustainability can be defined as meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the needs of future generations. For the purpose of this paper, sustainability can be divided into three subsets: economic, social, and environmental. These are interlinked not only by their contributions to sustainability, but also by the ethical foundation that must bind them.
- 2.2. In practical terms, economic relates to how investments and means of business have a wider impact on the choices available to future generations; social relates to the responsibility of individuals and institutions to be conscious of the impact their actions have with regard to society and the environment; and environmental relates to using resources wisely and with minimal waste.

**3. Policy Statement**

- 3.1. The Union has a duty to operate, invest, and conduct its general business in such a way that reflects the ethics, principles and worldview of the majority of the student body, as voted upon by its elected representatives.

- 3.2. The SA recognizes human-influenced climate change and resource depletion as two of the biggest challenges facing the current generation. We are committed to improving the Union's environmental performance as part of an effort to become more sustainable.
- 3.3. The SA supports the provision and promotion of wider choice in forms including, but not limited to, Fair Trade (as defined in the SA Fairtrade Policy, see appendix b.), vegetarian, and locally-sourced.

#### **4. Implementation**

- 4.1. The SA will actively engage with the University's Environment Team, relevant University units, hall reps, and relevant community groups with the view to bring about practical changes needed for the implementation of elements of this policy.
- 4.2. The Association President will convene a meeting of the Sustainability Policy Core Group every 3-4 weeks; membership will include the Association Environment Officer and their committee, relevant permanent Union staff, and those groups mentioned in 4.1. where relevant. This group will explore areas of collaboration and address areas for improvement. It will also be the forum in which the action log is regularly monitored.
- 4.3. An action plan for the Environment Committee, as well as for management staff and sabbatical officers, is integrated into the policy document (appendix a.). It will be monitored regularly and updated annually.
- 4.4. Within the Union, this policy will be actively promoted among student members and volunteers, as well as staff.
- 4.5. There must be a structural change to staff training such that the principles and practices embedded in this policy become part of daily operations as well as managerial oversight priorities.
- 4.6. Successful implementation of this policy requires a cultural change, not only among staff, but also among students. A culture of actively supporting the initiatives and principles laid out in this policy will be cultivated by the SA and Union, in collaboration with the wider community.

#### **5. Waste & Recycling**

- 5.1. The SA supports and promotes recycling. We are committed to achieving the best possible level of waste minimization.
- 5.2. In commercial venues, first preference is always given to reusable materials such as glass. Disposable crockery and cutlery are not used unless 100% biodegradable, compostable, or recyclable, except in exceptional circumstances.
  - 5.2.1. In commercial venues and at external events, when use of glass would pose a danger to customers and staff, preference is given to biodegradable plastic and polychrome as the alternate materials.
  - 5.2.2. The SA's subcommittees are not reimbursed for disposable crockery or cutlery which is not 100% biodegradable, compostable, or recyclable.

- 5.3. Electronic communication is encouraged as the preferable means of communication to that which uses paper resources.
- 5.4. All paper used internally is FSC certified, or similar, and is recyclable.
- 5.5. All student publications are recyclable (FSC accredited, or similar) and unused copies are recycled. Symbols/text on publications encourage students to recycle.
- 5.6. The use of double-sided printing and photocopying for internal administration is implemented as a standard. When purchasing printing equipment, preference is given to equipment that can handle double-sided printing.
- 5.7. All recyclable materials and food waste are disposed of responsibly where practically possible.
- 5.8. Awareness of recycling facilities in St Andrews, and in the Union building, is promoted through joint publications with University departments/groups and community groups.
- 5.9. A disposal point for batteries is provided in the Union building.
- 5.10. The staff kitchen abides by the same guidelines as do commercial venues (as outlined in this Policy).

## **6. Energy Efficiency & Water Conservation**

- 6.1. The SA endorses energy which comes from environmentally friendly sources.
- 6.2. The SA believes that water is a resource which should be conserved.
- 6.3. The SA shall continue to work with the University towards 100% green energy supply as possible, within reasonable constraints, or to otherwise minimize its energy expenditure.
- 6.4. All lights and computers within the Association building are switched off while the building is vacant, except when required for reasons of security. All existing light fittings and light bulbs are low energy.
- 6.5. Heating and cooling control systems are optimised and regulated to minimise excessive use of energy.
- 6.6. All new white goods purchased are checked for energy and water efficiency.

## **7. Catering & Procurement**

- 7.1. The SA's catering provides, and promotes to students, a range of sustainable foodstuffs. This includes, but is not limited to, Fair Trade, vegetarian, vegan, organic, and locally-sourced.
- 7.2. Where the Union sells ethical products, those products are given priority advertisement, shelf space and stocking wherever possible.

- 7.3. The SA actively promotes Fairtrade (in accordance with the SA Fairtrade Policy) in both cafes, the staff kitchen, and in all catering services.
- 7.4. The SA provides for those with religious, political and/or ethical dietary requirements in the Union, within reason
- 7.5. The Bar Manager and Catering Manager regularly check the statements from suppliers regarding their environmental and ethical procedures, certifications, and/or standards. These must be confirmed as being reputable standards before the Union enters into a business agreement with a supplier.
- 7.5.5. Meat and fish should be procured from sustainable sources which do not employ farming methods involving unnecessary animal cruelty. Certifications, such as Red Tractor Standard holders and Marine Stewardship Council, will be checked before a product is bought.
- 7.6. The SA actively promotes free tap water as a sustainable alternative to bottled water, and that where bottled water is available, it is British produced and bottled in recyclable materials.
- 7.7. Vegeware cups for hot drinks are provided in Rectors' Caf and Old Union Diner. Reusable cups for hot drinks are sold and promoted in Rectors' Caf .
- 7.8. All cleaning products are environmentally-friendly/biodegradable in addition to meeting COSSH requirements for staff safety.

## **8. Fiscal Practice**

- 8.1. The SA endeavors to be a leader in ethical fiscal practice.
- 8.2. The SA will not accept donations from companies who do not comply with the University's [Financial Operating Procedure Sustainable & Responsible Investing policy](#), as a gesture towards good practice, until the SA creates its own sustainable fiscal policy.

## **9. Travel**

- 9.1. The SA actively encourages environmentally-friendly travel options.
- 9.2. The SA actively engages with groups and business which supports cyclists and which offer valuable services to cyclists.
- 9.2. When travelling on SA-related business, sabbaticals, permanent staff and Association officers are encouraged to choose environmentally-friendly travel options, out-with exceptional circumstances. Video-conferencing is offered as an alternative to travel, where appropriate.
- 9.3. The SA encourages affiliated societies to use environmentally-friendly travel options such as E-car.

## **10. Wider Community and awareness**

- 10.1. As a socially responsible institution, the SA is created for and run by students, but is likewise a valuable contributor to the entire community.
- 10.2. The SA supports student-led initiatives and campaigns, upon the recommendation of the Environment Officer and with the leadership of the Association President.
- 10.3. The SA promotes sustainability initiatives, in line with this policy, to the wider community.
- 10.4. The SA encourages students to voice concerns and opinions to the Association Environment Officer and Committee.
- 10.5. The Environment Committee will use its mailing list, social media, and outreach to publicise changes which have been made in the Association.
- 10.6. The SA encourages the University's careers services to have substantial information and promotions regarding the pursuit of ethical and sustainability careers.