



## Balliol College Sustainability Strategy

### Foreword

Balliol College is a 760 year old institution but with its mind firmly on the future, in particular how to greatly reduce our carbon footprint and work to improve the biodiversity of its gardens and open spaces.

We formed the Climate and Biodiversity committee a year ago in 2022 and we have been working on looking at our outputs through monitoring our gas consumption, water use and waste produced so that we may measure our carbon emissions and set targets for reduction.

It is important to have a strategy to start to achieve this.

#### 1. Governance

The Climate and Biodiversity sub-committee reports termly to Executive Committee, which in turn reports to Governing Body. It is important that all facets of our community are included and engaged in efficiently moving through the action plan.

The members of the Committee:

Chair: Derek Moulton, Climate Fellow

James Kwan, Fellow

Finance Bursar, Fellow

Domestic Bursar, Fellow

Buildings Manager, Staff

Deputy Domestic Bursar, Staff

JCR Environmental Reps

MCR Environmental Reps

#### 2. Finances and Investments

Balliol College will continue to include sustainability in budget discussions to ensure that projects are properly considered in the budget round. Sustainability will also be a key decider in any future work we do around the college, in the same way that accessibility is. For example, if we are replacing heating systems, we will look at energy efficient and carbon neutral replacements. We will make sustainability one of the key considerations when any project is started and actively look for ways to include it in plans.

In 2020 the College, with the support of the JCR, started a divestment plan to reduce its Endowment's fossil fuel exposure (FFE) as far and as fast as was practicable. The College's investment managers abide by this policy and report on progress in their regular reports to the Finance Bursar and Investment Committee.

On an annual basis the Finance Bursar will report on fossil fuel exposure and ESG metrics to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee.

## Estate

Balliol College has a wide range of buildings that have changed and evolved over the last 760 years. With the exception of the Master's Field Buildings which has CHP (combined Heat and Power), all pre-date modern building regulations and they have inefficient heating, fabric and boiler solutions.

Whilst it would be lovely to change everything all at once, the action plan will outline the College's progress to changing these various areas and include work we have already started. It is worth noting that we are currently the second largest College for student rooms and so this will be a steady process. We have started by installing 100 eco-sync radiator valves and we are already seeing carbon reduction. A full report will be sent from the company and shared with the Climate and Biodiversity Committee. This scheme has received excellent support from the students which is key if we are continue to implement changes like this.

Whilst we make a plan to tackle all the radiators we have in all our buildings, including replacing them on main site, we will continue to look at other ways to decarbonise the buildings.

**Biodiversity** - The College took part in a Biodiversity study in 2021 the report can be read [here](https://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/balliol_college_dashboard.pdf):

[https://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/balliol\\_college\\_dashboard.pdf](https://www.balliol.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/balliol_college_dashboard.pdf)

This will allow us to continue to benchmark our current provision and look at ways of improving our Biodiversity. Work has already started with the Head Gardener to ensure that when we do new areas of planting, looking at the most biodiverse planting becomes the normal process.

We recently installed green roofs at the Master's Field site and we will be looking at other spaces where this might be possible.

## Catering and Events

Balliol is very lucky to have an Executive Chef who is keenly involved in food and sustainability. Food waste has been weighed for many years which adaptations to numbers and menu being made to reduce the waste. Vegan options have become ever more present and the College has been introducing more lunches and dinners where the vegetarian and vegan options outnumber the meat options.

The Executive Chef is also extremely interested in reducing the carbon impact of our food and has been working with researchers in the Department of Zoology to look at what we, as a College, would need to do to reduce our carbon in the kitchen.

Over the last year or so, beef has been dramatically reduced on the College menus and the use of plant based substitutes has also increased.

To continue to improve our carbon footprint in the kitchen, we need to do so as a community. We welcome feedback on the menu choices but also want to encourage engagement with the kitchen so we can share good ideas. We will continue to work with Zoology on developing a tool for our suppliers so that when we order we can easily see the impact the food we are ordering has on the carbon output. Sourcing food locally is not always the best way to reduce carbon and so we will continue to research this complex area.

### 3. Procurement and Resources

Buying goods and procuring services will have an impact on our carbon output and our biodiversity. Supply chains may be very difficult to unpack and may take time to

do so. Balliol is part of a Shared Procurement Service which uses University suppliers. The University regularly reviews its suppliers to meet a variety of criteria and sustainability is one of these.

We do have a large amount of parcels being delivered daily for students and the impact of many vans coming into the centre of town should be looked at and alternative solutions seriously considered. We should work with our suppliers and our College community to ensure we all receive the items we all need but we should actively encourage our suppliers and contractors to work to the same sustainable approach we are working to. We ourselves need to think about how we order goods, the packaging and the amount of deliveries.

#### 4. Transport and Travel

Academic staff, students, college staff and guests all contribute to travel and transport impact. Whilst we acknowledge that there is travel involved in academic research, teaching and our commercial business, it is imperative that we consider, as a College, how we can reduce unnecessary travel. There is lots of work going on in the University and Conference of Colleges that we can look to.

#### 5. Community

To achieve any of the above priorities, we must look to our community as it is the heart of everything we do as a college. A priority needs to focus on educating our community, making culture changes and empowering everyone in our community to engage in reducing our impact on the environment. The formation of the Climate and Biodiversity Committee is a good example of all facets of the Balliol community coming together, Fellow, Staff, JCR and MCR to work together to make positive changes and collate ideas and collaborate together.

This strategy will exist alongside the Balliol College Action Plan which will be the vehicle for showing the detailed work we will need to do, as a College, and a method for measuring our progress.

The Strategy and Action plan will be reviewed annually, first by the Climate and Biodiversity Committee and then signed off by Executive Committee. Progress on the action plan should also be reported to Governing Body but shared with the entire community to engage and keep momentum.