

MANSFIELD COLLEGE

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

(adopted by Governing Body in principle on 12 October 2022, subject to minor amendments)

OVERALL TARGET

MANSFIELD COLLEGE WILL BECOME NEUTRAL IN CARBON EMISSIONS AND ACHIEVE A NET GAIN IN BIODIVERSITY BY 2030. TO ACHIEVE THIS THE COLLEGE WILL PURSUE THE STRATEGY LAID OUT BELOW, ENSURING ALL COMMITMENTS ARE MET BY 2030.

KEY PRIORITY AREAS

1. BIODIVERSITY
2. ENERGY
3. BUILDINGS
4. RESOURCES
5. FOOD
6. TRAVEL
7. FINANCE
8. EDUCATION
9. FACILITATION

INTRODUCTION

Mansfield College takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and recognises the impact that even small organisations such as an Oxford college can have on environmental sustainability. The College has agreed an ambitious set of targets: to become carbon neutral and achieve a net gain in biodiversity by 2030.

For many years the College has pursued eco-friendly initiatives, including the introduction of energy-saving heating and electrical appliances, water-saving toilets, biodegradable catering supplies, meat-free Mondays, and garden renovations. We now seek to take these further by establishing a strategy to deliver on the above goals.

The College's Governing Body has already committed 'to run our college in an environmentally and financially sustainable and ethical way, and our operations and investments are undertaken with due consideration of and respect for good environmental and human rights standards.'¹

¹ Mansfield College, Oxford, *Mansfield College: Vision and Future Plan* (Oxford: 2020), p. 4.

Further to this, and at the request of the College's JCR and MCR in Hilary Term 2021, we have established a dedicated working group to develop and implement a comprehensive environmental sustainability strategy.

As a college, Mansfield always strives to pursue an inclusive and community-focused approach. The Environmental Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) meets regularly to collaborate, drawing on the wealth of expertise and experience within Mansfield and Oxford, and has a balanced membership of students, academics, and support staff. Recognising that it is impossible to separate environmental sustainability from social responsibility, the working group will ensure that it takes account of this when working towards its environment goals.

1. BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is affected by the College's direct actions, actions related to its supply chains, and the actions of its members while carrying out their work or studies. Though the College's estate is comparatively small, as an organisation with over 500 staff and students, Mansfield has a much greater impact on the decline in biodiversity outside of its estate.

The College is committed to increasing the biodiversity on its estate and as well as reversing losses resulting from its collective actions. All our biodiversity impacts need to be identified, negative impacts mitigated, and positive impacts enhanced, to achieve a net gain in biodiversity using the best available metrics.

The Oxford-developed Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy² will be used to address our impacts through these actions:

- i. Refrain – refrain from actions that damage biodiversity.
- ii. Reduce – reduce the damage our remaining actions create.
- iii. Restore – restore biodiversity that has been damaged.
- iv. Renew – renew and enhance nature.

This hierarchy means that the College's priority must be to avoid and then reduce its negative impacts, and where damage has been caused to create biodiversity enhancements on and off the estate.

As a first stage the College undertook a baseline audit of biodiversity on the College estate in 2021.³

Commitments

1. Increase biodiversity on the College estate and encourage native species.
2. Make gardening more sustainable by only using peat-free compost and replacing petrol-powered lawn mowers and tools with electric alternatives.
3. Reduce the damage to biodiversity caused by our direct and indirect actions.
4. Set a target of quantifiable native biodiversity net gain of 20% for all development projects, achieved and measured in accordance with industry-standard best practice.
5. Promote biodiversity through public engagement and strengthen the links between biodiversity and wellbeing.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual audit of proportion of College estate covered by: buildings; paving; mowed lawn; herbaceous borders and flower beds; hedges, shrubs and trees; ponds, wetlands, and water meadows; meadow, uncut grass, and wildflower beds (% , m², m² per college member)
- b. Annual audit of wild animals and native plant species on College estate.
- c. Annual audit of carbon stored in vegetation on College estate.
- d. Number of projects/initiatives undertaken in College and with external organisations and communities.

² Conservation Hierarchy, *The Mitigation and Conservation Hierarchy* (Oxford: 2019), <https://conservationhierarchy.org/>.

³ Conference of Colleges, *Conference of Colleges Sustainability Working Group Biodiversity Audit Results November 2021: Mansfield College* (Oxford: 2021), <https://www.mansfield.ox.ac.uk/sites/www.mansfield.ox.ac.uk/files/inline-files/Mansfield%20College%20Biodiversity%20Report%202021.pdf>.

1. ENERGY

The College is responsible for direct and indirect carbon emissions from the energy we consume. Our direct emissions (Scope 1) come from the use of natural gas to heat buildings and water. Our indirect emissions (Scope 2) are the result of all electricity used on site.

Mansfield must commit to purchase 100% of its renewable electricity from a trusted supplier, which is not reliant on the use of unreliable Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates.⁴ These certificates are responsible for considerable 'greenwashing' and mask the use of fossil fuel use in generating electricity. We must also go further than this by reducing and then eliminating our reliance on gas.

The College must eliminate carbon emissions from its energy usage by 2030. To do so, we will work to increase the energy efficiency of our estate and seek to replace gas boilers with renewable alternatives.

Additionally, the College must be conscious of and take actions that reduce the total amount of energy it uses.

Commitments

1. Ensure that all our electricity supply is always provided by genuinely renewable sources.
2. Seek to replace all gas boilers with renewable, non-fossil alternatives.
3. Invest in energy-efficient appliances and systems.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual audit of Scope 1 and 2 fossil fuel (kgCO₂e, kgCO₂e per college member)
- b. Annual audit of energy usage (kWh, kWh per college member).

⁴ Sarah Ingrams, 'Which? reveals new Eco Providers for energy', *Which?* (22 Oct 2021), <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/10/which-reveals-new-eco-providers-for-energy/>; 'Efforts to curb energy tariffs "greenwashing"', *BBC News* (15 August 2021), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58222808>; Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 'Government to tighten rules to stop "greenwashing" of electricity tariffs' (16 August 2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-tighten-rules-to-stop-greenwashing-of-electricity-tariffs>.

2. BUILDINGS

Buildings and construction are responsible for 39% of global carbon emissions, with 11% coming from construction and 28% from operational emissions.⁵

Construction also uses a large amount of resources, the extraction and manufacture of which can lead to a decline in biodiversity.

Mansfield will continue to work diligently to prioritise sustainability in its processes and use of resources when undertaking renovations and new construction projects such that it can strive to achieve the highest energy efficiency possible.

Commitments:

1. Follow Historic England and Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance guidelines to make our historic buildings as energy efficient and sustainable as possible.⁶
2. Work to make all post-1945 buildings on the College estate compliant with energy efficiency requirements in current Building Regulations.⁷
3. Whenever undertaking construction projects the College will adhere to RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge⁸ sustainable construction standards, which include:
 - i. Reducing operational energy demand by at least 60% from minimum Building Regulations standards.
 - ii. Reduce embodied carbon by at least 40% from minimum Building Regulations standards.
 - iii. Reduce potable water use by at least 40% from CIRIA benchmark/Building Regulation figures.
4. Obtain ISO 50001 accreditation for energy management systems in all future developments.⁹

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual assessment of energy efficiency of all existing buildings.
- b. Annual audit of works undertaken to improve energy efficiency of all existing buildings.
- c. Quarterly assessment of any ongoing building project to ensure compliance with RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge and ISO 50001 standards.

⁵ International Energy Agency, *2019 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction* (Paris: 2019), p. 12, https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/3da9daf9-ef75-4a37-b3da-a09224e299dc/2019_Global_Status_Report_for_Buildings_and_Construction.pdf.

⁶ Historic England, *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: How to Improve Energy Efficiency* (London: 2018), <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/heag094-how-to-improve-energy-efficiency/>; Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance, *Planning Responsible Retrofit of Traditional Buildings* (London: 2015), <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/planning-responsible-retrofit-of-traditional-buildings/responsible-retrofit-trad-bldgs/>.

⁷ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, *The Building Regulations 2010 - Conservation of Fuel and Power: Approved Document L, 2021 Edition* (London: 2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conservation-of-fuel-and-power-approved-document-l>.

⁸ Royal Institute of British Architects, *RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge, Version 2* (London: 2021), <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Climate-action/RIBA-2030-Climate-Challenge.pdf>.

⁹ International Organization for Standardization, *ISO 50001: Energy Management* (Geneva: 2018), <https://www.iso.org/iso-50001-energy-management.html>.

3. RESOURCES

Mansfield consumes numerous resources during its daily operation, all of which have an impact on the environment. This consumption can have a similar or a bigger impact on carbon emissions and biodiversity loss than our energy use.

The College already recycles a proportion of its waste and takes a cautious approach to purchasing or replacing goods. These efforts need to be expanded and our wider resource consumption investigated and reduced. Demand on resources such as water, plastics, and packaging should all be reduced, while the purchase of products, particularly IT devices should be monitored.

The University of Oxford's Environmental Sustainability team found that paper usage has a very large impact on carbon emissions and habitat loss and the College will reduce its consumption of paper to a minimum.

Commitments

1. Ensure domestic water appliances conserve as much water as possible and encourage the conservation of water by everyone in College.
2. Wherever possible avoid the use of paper and use digital alternatives when needed.
3. Encourage suppliers to use minimal packaging and reuse or recycle this whenever possible.
4. Facilitate the recycling of all papers, metal, glass, and plastic used in College, and encourage all members to recycle. Provide adequate recycling bins in offices and common spaces.
5. Avoid single-use products and packaging whenever possible. If used out of necessity, ensure only recyclable options are chosen. Single-use biodegradable products should not be used as a substitute.
6. When procuring goods, especially IT equipment, ensure as much as possible that products are sustainable and have not come from known sources of large habitat/forest destruction.
7. Reduce levels of electronic waste (e-waste) by avoiding duplication and unnecessary procurement of new devices and disposing of e-waste using an ethical recycling programme.
8. When purchasing equipment, invest in energy efficient, long-term solutions.
9. Encourage staff and students to reduce their consumption and to reuse or recycle whenever possible.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual water usage (m^3 , m^3 per college member).
- b. Annual paper usage (sheets/ m^2 purchased, sheets/ m^2 per college member).
- c. Annual quantity of refuse not recycled (kg/l, kg/l per college member).
- d. Annual single-use tableware usage (number of items, number per college member).

4. FOOD

Every week the College serves hundreds of meals to staff, students, and guests. The food we consume affects climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, river pollution, and water scarcity. Increasing food production is the leading cause of biodiversity loss and accounts for 25% of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁰ Research conducted at Oxford shows that the most effective way to reduce the climate impact of our diet is to consume less meat and dairy, and eat more plant-based foods instead.¹¹

There is currently no locally, nationally, or internationally agreed set of standards for sustainable food production, distribution, or labelling. This makes ensuring the College's food provision is environmentally sustainable more difficult but presents an opportunity for Mansfield to lead change in Oxford.

Commitments:

1. Continually monitor the best methodology and standards for ensuring College food suppliers are as environmentally sustainable as possible.
2. Promote the use of reusable cups and bottles, by providing a source(s) of filtered tap water and Mansfield branded reusable bottles and cups, and reducing the cost of takeaway beverages for those with a reusable cup.
3. Ensure all tea and coffee served by College is certified by a reputable organisation, in the first instance either Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance. ESWG will review the best certification in future.
4. Maintain meat-free Mondays throughout the year.
5. Encourage locally sourced and seasonal produce whenever possible.
6. Minimise food waste as much as possible from main kitchen and student kitchens.
7. Develop an action plan and policies to significantly reduce biodiversity and carbon impacts of our food and review this annually.
8. Encourage students to choose more sustainable food options and plant-based/vegetarian options.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual review of food sustainability action plan.
- b. Annual audit of reusable bottles and cups sold, and available water fountains.
- c. Annual audit of food miles.
- d. Annual audit of food waste (kg/l, kg/l per college member).
- e. Annual audit of meal options chosen (No., % of vegan, vegetarian and meat options chosen).
- f. Annual audit of meat consumed (kg, kg per college member).

¹⁰ Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser, 'Environmental Impacts of Food Production', *Our World in Data* (Oxford: 2020), <https://ourworldindata.org/food-ghg-emissions>.

¹¹ Michael Clark et al., 'Estimating the environmental impacts of 57,000 food products', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 119, No. 33 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.212058411>; Joseph Poore and Thomas Nemecek, 'Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers', *Science*, Vol. 360, No. 6392 (2018), <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6392/987>.

5. TRAVEL

Mansfield is the focus of a considerable amount of local, regional, national, and international travel. Every day, staff and students commute to and from Mansfield using various modes of transport. Staff and students undertake long-distance travel for meetings, conferences, research, education, outreach, events, and sports. Staff and students also undertake long-distance travel at the start and end of each term.

As the hub of all this travel, the College must endeavour to reduce the associated carbon emissions and establish systems and infrastructure to incentivise the use of sustainable modes of transport. Where possible, the College will also promote and facilitate not travelling.

Commitments:

1. Reduce carbon emissions from travel for commuting, meetings, conferences, research, education, outreach, events, and sports associated with the College.
2. Promote the use of public transport, walking, and cycling.
3. Enable cycling by providing adequate storage and establishing a 'Cycle to Work' salary sacrifice scheme.¹²
4. Maintain loan provision to employees to buy public transport season tickets and encourage uptake.¹³
5. Discourage commuting by car and limit parking space onsite. Provide facilities for electric car charging for those who must drive to work.
6. Encourage the use of 'Park and Ride' where other public transport alternatives are not available.
7. When travel by car is essential, encourage multi-purpose trips and vehicle sharing to reduce the number of vehicle-miles travelled per college member.
8. Encourage alternatives to international air travel and limit use of college funds for domestic air travel to exceptional circumstances.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual audit of miles travelled based on:
 - i. Purpose of travel (academic, business, commuting, etc.),
 - ii. Mode of transport, and
 - iii. Department (student, academic, operations, etc.).
- b. Annual audit of the number of:
 - i. Bikes and bike spaces on site,
 - ii. Carpark spaces,
 - iii. Electrical-vehicle chargers installed, and
 - iv. Campaigns on sustainable transport (and their impact).
- c. Annual review of subsidies and loans provided to cycle or use public transport.

¹² The University of Oxford has a scheme already in place, see <https://travel.admin.ox.ac.uk/bike/buy>.

¹³ The University of Oxford has a scheme already in place, see <https://travel.admin.ox.ac.uk/loan>.

6. FINANCE

Mansfield has substantial financial investments; 98% of the College's endowment is current held by Oxford University Endowment Management (OUem). This fund has recently placed restrictions on direct investment in fossil fuels, requiring its fund managers to divest from the fossil fuel industry. The College fully supports this decision and will push to continue divestment.

The remaining share of Mansfield's endowment is managed by CCLA, with these investments divided as follows: 52% COIF Charities Investment Fund, 17% COIF Charities Property Fund, and 31% COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund.¹⁴ The College also contributes to two pension schemes, Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) and Oxford Staff Pension Scheme (OSPS). In 2021 the pension contributions were split with 57% going into USS and 43% into OSPS. These funds have not fully divested from fossil fuel extraction, and there remains much to be done to improve their position regarding unsustainable deforestation (including by OUem).¹⁵

The College currently banks with HSBC, which has committed to becoming net zero in carbon emissions by 2030, though has not yet done so.¹⁶

Commitments

1. Ensure all investments are divested from industries directly responsible for fossil fuel extraction, or investment funds which invest primarily in such industries.
2. Ensure that all investments are divested from industries directly responsible for unsustainable deforestation, or investment funds which invest primarily in such industries.
3. Campaign to have all pension funds divest from industries directly responsible for fossil fuel extraction and unsustainable deforestation.
4. Ensure that Mansfield's entire portfolio of investments have net zero business plans aligning with the Paris Agreement, assessed using the Oxford Martin School Principles for Climate-Conscious Investment.¹⁷
5. All donations over £100,000 will be reviewed; where the body or individual offering funding has substantial assets in, or directly derived from, deforestation or fossil fuel extraction, these will be evaluated before accepting.

¹⁴ Currently, the COIF Charities Investment Fund has not divested from fossil fuels and it is unclear if the COIF Charities Property Fund had divested from fossil fuels. The COIF Charities Ethical Investment Fund excludes companies that derive more than 5% of their revenue from oil sands and coal extraction, and excludes companies that derive more than 10% of their revenue from oil and gas extraction.

¹⁵ A summary of each fund's current Environmental, Social, and Governance policy can be found here: OUem, *OUem ESG and TCFD Report 2020* (Oxford: 2020), https://www.ouem.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/OUem-ESG-and-TCFD-report-2020_FINAL.pdf; CCLA, *A Climate for Good Investment* (London: 2021), https://www.ccla.co.uk/sites/default/files/A_Climate_for_Good_Investment_0.pdf; Universities Superannuation Scheme, *Responsible Investment Report for the Period 2019/2020* (Liverpool: 2020), <https://www.uss.co.uk/-/media/project/ussmain/site/files/how-we-invest/responsible-investment-report-201920.pdf?rev=21de4b56a27c45a29f7fadc87f44a482&hash=D02FC66F5C19CB1FD60714AC5AC26A8F>; University of Oxford Staff Pension Scheme, *Summary: OSPS Responsible Investment and ESG Policy* (Oxford: 2021), <https://finance.admin.ox.ac.uk/files/riandesgpolicypdf>.

¹⁶ HSBC, 'Becoming a net zero bank' (London: 2021), <https://www.hsbc.com/who-we-are/our-climate-strategy/becoming-a-net-zero-bank>.

¹⁷ Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford, *Oxford Martin Principles for Climate-Conscious Investment* (Oxford: 2018), https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/briefings/Principles_For_Climate_Conscious_Investment_Feb_2018.pdf.

6. Mansfield will engage with its bank to ensure it aligns with the College's sustainability commitments, including having an adequate net zero plan which meets with the Paris Agreement, and if not, it will switch providers.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual audit of investment in funds divested from industries directly responsible for fossil fuel extraction (% of portfolio).
- b. Annual audit of investment in funds divested from industries directly responsible for unsustainable deforestation (% of portfolio).
- c. Annual audit of contributions to pensions divested from industries directly responsible for fossil fuel extraction (% of portfolio).
- d. Annual audit of contributions to pensions divested from industries directly responsible for unsustainable deforestation (% of portfolio).
- e. Annual audit of funding from companies or individuals with substantial assets in, or directly derived from deforestation or fossil fuel extraction (% of funding received).

7. EDUCATION

As an educational institution and landlord to students and workplace to staff, Mansfield College has the responsibility to raise environmental awareness and encourage behavioural change to minimise its environmental impact. This will be achieved through engagement and training programmes for first year students (led by JCR and MCR representatives in the ESWG for students), staff and student participation in its auditing, monitoring and reporting efforts (led by relevant departments in college and contributed to by members of ESWG, paid internships for students and external consultancies) and a public annual lecture.

Commitments:

1. Develop an environmental engagement programme for staff and students, this should include induction information for undergraduate and graduate students joining the college as a part of Freshers' Week.
2. The college will commit to hosting a special annual lecture on environmental sustainability.

Performance indicators:

- a. Sustainability campaigns (number conducted, length).
Student training programme (number of courses, attendance).

8. FACILITATION

To ensure that Mansfield achieves all of these aims the College must put in place the necessary structural and financial support. In 2021 the College established an Environmental Sustainability Working Group to develop and then lead implement a strategy for achieving its environmental targets.

The College will therefore build on existing measures to further embed environmental sustainability into its governance and decision-making structures and develop a system of reporting of carbon emissions and biodiversity impacts. It is also essential that the College make available the funding and resources needed, and undertakes the necessary financial planning to ensure targets are reached while maintaining financial sustainability.

Mansfield will always prioritise reducing its environmental impacts and will only undertake to offset these where no other options are feasible.

Commitments:

1. The Governing Body of the College will ensure the College reaches its environmental sustainability targets by 2030, and review progress annually.
2. An annual report will be written by ESWG detailing the progress made towards our targets, which will be presented to Governing Body and published on College website.
3. Establish and maintain a fund which will be ring fenced to facilitate environmental sustainability.
4. Environmental sustainability and related projects to become a significant part of the Development Office's fundraising priorities. The team to focus on raising funds for environmental projects, including major capital developments and improvements to the College estate.
5. Seek additional funding to finance environmental commitments and from non-philanthropic sources.
6. Ensure College departments set aside a proportion of their annual budget to deliver the relevant environmental sustainability goals. Departments will create processes to quantify and track their environmental impact to support reporting and performance indicators contained in this strategy.
7. Employ a member of staff to facilitate environmental sustainability.
8. Where there are no other feasible options Mansfield will consider offsetting its carbon emissions using the Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting.¹⁸
9. Encourage staff and students to contribute towards offsetting their emissions by paying into the College's environmental sustainability fund.

Performance indicators:

- a. Annual audit of funding received for environmental sustainability (No./% of total funding income).
- b. Annual audit of size and financial activity of College's environmental sustainability fund.
- c. Annual audit of number of staff employed on environmental sustainability projects.
- d. Annual audit of carbon offsetting.

¹⁸ Smith School of Enterprise and Environment, University of Oxford, *The Oxford Principles for Net Zero Aligned Carbon Offsetting* (Oxford: 2020), <https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/reports/Oxford-Offsetting-Principles-2020.pdf>.

