

Clare Environment Committee Annual Report 2013-14

May 2014

The Environment Committee was set up in Michaelmas Term 2011 and aims to bring together expertise, energy and ideas from staff, students and fellows to help reduce the College's environmental footprint. Progress in the Committee's third year, summarized here, has been rather mixed. We have maintained some important early achievements, and begun implementing several new energy-saving initiatives. These are only just underway - as reflected in Clare's disappointing performance in the recent CUECS Green League Table. However, Committee members have won two important University awards for their environmental work, confirming the quality of team we now have in place across key departments, and giving us confidence that next year will see significant further progress.

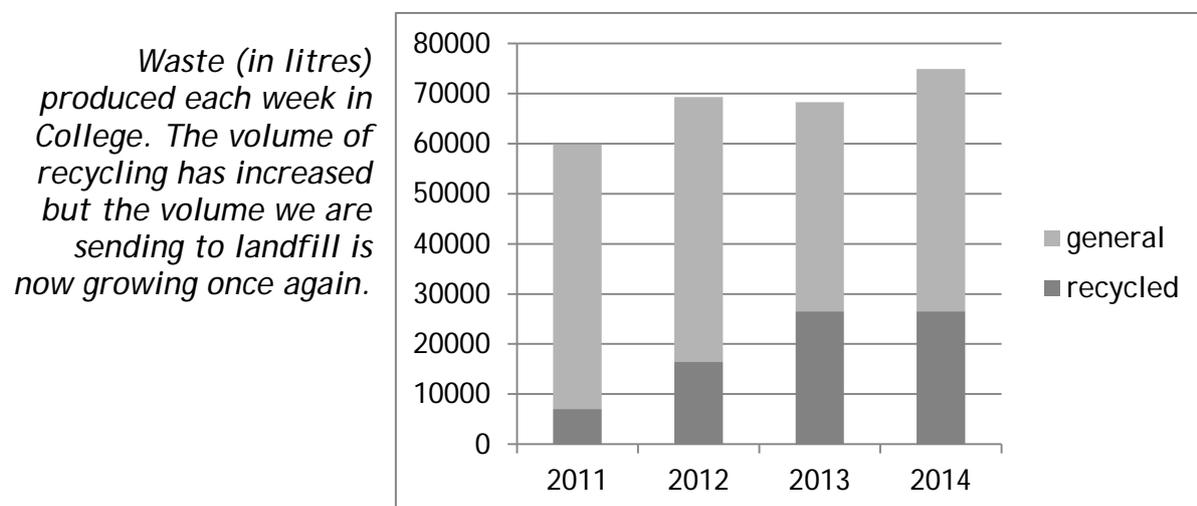
Energy

1. Buildings Manager Deborah Hoy and her team have carried out many projects to reduce energy use around the College estate - insulating two St Regis flats, 10 Castle Street, Castle House, White Lodge, Netherfield House and the valves in the main boiler rooms; replacing ageing boilers in Netherfield House and St Regis; installing programmable radiator valves in Ethelreda; and installing energy-efficient lighting in the kitchens, the Thirkill court staircases, and (thanks to Nigel Woodcock) the boat house.
2. An order has been placed for the first phase of Automatic Meter Readers (AMRs) - an essential part of being able to track patterns in our energy use and respond accordingly - with installation of 15 devices scheduled for the summer.
3. The new-build project at Newnham has been completed, and with a green roof, solar panels and state-of-the-art control systems is by far our most energy-efficient building to date. The first gas invoice for the site confirms this view.
4. However, these initiatives are only now beginning to bear fruit, and so in the latest CUECS Green League Table (based on data for 2012-13) we ranked a poor 18th out of 20 colleges for energy-based CO₂ emissions per person. On the positive side, we ranked 4th (out of 17 colleges) for the reduction in emissions achieved compared with the preceding year.
5. Our disappointing performance underscores the importance of increasing the scope and pace of our energy-saving activities. Thanks to the support of the Bursar and the Finance and Estates Committees Deborah has been able to commission work over the coming summer to improve optimisation of two of the main boilers in Memorial Court, which we believe will lead to significant savings, and is planning the rollout after this of 34 additional AMRs. Next year's refurbishment of Castlebrae will include installation of condensing boilers and greatly improved insulation. In response to complaints from students and staff about College being too hot, the practice of shutting down the heating to all the main buildings over the summer has been re-introduced. Staff Representative Sam Ludford has been working with the IT Department to test and help implement energy savings through

the use of timer plugs in offices (to cut overnight energy consumption) and through setting PCs to go into hibernation after short periods of inactivity. Last, incoming UCS Green Officer Jamie Osborn is working with Jackie Searle to try to introduce a staircase league table to encourage energy-saving behaviour among the students.

Accommodation

6. Accommodation Manager Jackie Searle and her team have maintained high levels of recycling over the year (with the College ranked first equal in the Green League table for access to recycling facilities). However the overall volume of waste we are producing continues to grow, with the proportion of it being recycled actually dropping slightly in 2013-14. Our waste is now enough to fill 1.6 Olympic swimming pools each year, and the cost of removing it has risen by 30% in the past 12 months alone.



7. To address these problems Jackie is increasing the frequency of recycling collections in Old Court and The Colony, re-examining where waste is generated in Old Court (which produces 60% of all waste), and working with Jamie Osborn on a possible staircase league table to incentivise students to recycle more.

8. The Red Bag collection scheme for unwanted clothes and electrical items has been extended over the course of the year and is reducing our use of skips as well as helping raise funds for British Heart Foundation.

9. Jackie is working with Sam Ludford to test energy-saving kettles and will start using them to replace existing student and staff equipment as it becomes unserviceable.

Catering

10. Excitingly, Catering Manager Lee Corke and his team won this year's Catering Managers Committee Environmental Award in recognition of the efforts they are undertaking within the Department.

11. Lee has again worked with UCS Green Officer Fingal Plumpton to put on Green Formal Halls. Uptake has been slightly disappointing, but incoming Green Officer Jamie Osborn is liaising with Homerton College over possible adoption next term of the model for its recent, highly successful Green Formal.

12. Consumption of meat and dairy products - which have a far greater environmental footprint than other food items - continues to be a concern. For the first time Lee has been able to put in place a system for tracking the College's meat purchases, which shows a potentially disturbing 21% increase in 2013-14 compared to the previous year. This may be explained by a growth in conference-related business - but to have a clearer understanding we need to track the total number of meals the College serves, as well as what it buys.

13. A water bottling machine has been installed in the kitchen, enabling Lee to provide still and sparkling water in our own, re-used bottles, thereby cutting waste and costs considerably.

STOP PRESS NEWS

14. While much remains to be done, a clear indication of the commitment of key staff and the potential of the systems we are now putting in place came with the tremendous and very recent news of the College's success in Green Impact - the University's environmental accreditation scheme. This is focused on the level of all-round engagement in improving environmental performance. The Clare team, led by Deborah Hoy, has succeeded in winning a Gold Award - a really impressive achievement, and remarkable given that this is their first application to the scheme. Deborah and her colleagues will collect their award at a ceremony on 18 June.

We thank the fellows, staff and students for their support. This will continue to be absolutely essential if we are to be able to build on this year's achievements and improve Clare's environmental performance significantly over the course of 2014-15.

Committee members, 2013-14

Andrew Balmford (Chair)

Will Cavert (Fellow)

Lee Corke (Catering Manager)

Deborah Hoy (Buildings Manager)

Sam Ludford (Staff Representative)

Mick Petty (Steward)

Fingal Plumpton (UCS Green Officer)

Jackie Searle (Accommodation Manager)

Clare Thacker (MCR Representative)

Nigel Woodcock (Fellow)