Environmental Policy

**Purpose**

St George’s Students’ Union is committed to developing a positive environmental image throughout the university and reducing its impact upon the environment. We aim to adopt and maintain a strong and positive environmental culture within the union, and to actively raise awareness of this among the student body. We want our ethos to be ubiquitous within the union and known by all students and staff of the university.

This policy has been designed in order to:

* identify current areas of improvement for the union with respect to environmental influence
* set achievable environmental objectives for the union
* allow students, members of the student union executive and future Environment and Ethics officers to be aware of and reach these objectives
* provide an easy way to regularly evaluate the recycling schemes within the union

**Union Beliefs**

Minimising one’s impact upon the environment is hugely important in the current times, particularly for large institutions. We recognise that our Union needs to make improvements in terms of our environmental performance - the way in which we source energy and materials, and how we use and dispose of these. As well as helping the environment, prolonged reductions in energy usage and waste will result in long lasting financial benefits for the Union.

As a Union we should:

* significantly improve our recycling schemes and create increased awareness of our impact upon the environment by holding more campaigns on topical issues throughout the University.
* strive towards achieving a Bronze award in the NUS Green Impact scheme within the next two years, and aspire to achieve a silver award in future years
* continue to work with the University to improve our People and Planet Green League score; we are currently ranked 119th of 143 and hold a third class award
* make improvements to energy consumption and recycling practices in Halls of Residence. These changes are achievable and the Student Union Environment and Ethics officers should work with the sabbatical officers and appropriate members of Estates and Facilities in order for this to be accomplished

**Union actions**

As a Union we will continue to:

* apply for grants to allow new ‘green’ initiatives to be started across the university
* hold and significantly raise awareness of a campaign to support the national Go Green Week each year
* recycle all paper, cardboard, plastic bottles, cans and glass within the Union and in Halls of Residence
* recycle printer cartridges in the Union and promote the recycling of students’ cartridges and old mobile phones
* encourage students and staff to switch off lights and other electrical equipment when they leave rooms in the Union
* have a university allotment where students and staff are encouraged to attend and help grow organic produce
* work towards gaining a Bronze award for the NUS Green Impact Scheme

As a Union we resolve to:

* begin to undertake a regular environmental audit in order to monitor our progress towards improved environmental and sustainability practices, and set new goals each year
* improve recycling of glass and cardboard in the Student Union bar
* improve recycling signage and bin placement so that recycling bins are used properly, both within the union and Halls of Residence
* encourage students living in Halls of Residence to reduce their energy consumption by switching off lights when leaving rooms
* inform all staff employed by the Students’ Union and members of the Student Union Executive of this policy and encourage them to follow our current and proposed actions
* perform a review of this policy at the end of each academic year. This is to be completed by the Student Union Environment and Ethics officers and VP Education and Welfare officer with the aim of improving our environmental actions and maintaining our efforts towards the NUS Green Impact Bronze award

Last updated: February 2014