**OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**

**Environmental Responsibility Policy,**

**2020-2023**

Oxford University Museum of Natural History is committed to environmental responsibility and seeks to monitor and minimise its environmental impact as much as practicably possible. As a department of the University of Oxford, we commit to working towards the institution-wide targets for net zero carbon emissions and biodiversity net gain by 2035 as detailed in the [University’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy](https://sustainability.admin.ox.ac.uk/environmental-sustainability-strategy).

To enable the development of this Policy and Implementation Plan, a working group was set up and an audit of Museum activity and a staff survey on travel, waste, resources, and energy use were conducted in February 2020. Taking information from this survey and through other staff consultation we have built a baseline of current activity and assessed areas for improvement.

We have identified five areas where we need to remediate our environmental impact: travel, energy use, food, resources and public engagement. In each of these areas, we have worked to pinpoint where action might be taken to improve our operational function with regard to sustainability. The resulting strategy suggests targets for changes during the period of the Museum’s new strategic plan (spring 2021 - summer 2023).

Whilst many of these aims involve better use of resources and sharing information and best practice across the Museum and across the Gardens, Libraries and Museums (GLAM), some may pose a financial challenge, and the Museum will seek sources of funding (GLAM, internal University and external) where necessary to implement actions.



**Sustainable Travel**

**The Museum will reduce staff travel for work purposes to reduce energy use, particularly emissions from aviation, and will encourage visitors to use sustainable transport when visiting the Museum.**

## Implement a policy for air, rail and other travel which incorporates a travel hierarchy for all staff travel (avoid travel by using remote working technologies; travel without flying; fly only when there are no alternatives, and offset these emissions at the Museum level initially and through the Oxford Sustainability Fund from 2022-23).

## Promote and invest in sustainable transport options and remote participation for Museum visitors.

## Promote and invest in sustainable commuting options for Museum staff.

## Switch to an electric vehicle.

 **Sustainable Energy Use**

**The Museum will identify areas of inefficient use of energy and work with the University Estates department and all Museum staff to reduce energy wastage where possible.**

1. Monitor annual on-site energy consumption and set targets to reduce it.
2. Create a building users’ guide with information on energy efficient features and strategies, and ensure new appliances are selected according to their energy efficiency.
3. Work with Estates Services to implement a comprehensive maintenance programme with a view to reducing energy consumption.
4. Retrofit lighting in display cases and public spaces with LEDs.
5. Build sustainable energy use into our plans about collections storage and display.

**Sustainable Food**

**The Museum will minimise the environmental impact of catering in the Museum (café, catering for in-house and external events, food products in shop) and limit food and packaging waste.**

## Commit to ordering only vegetarian/vegan catering for all in-house meetings and events, and encourage external hirers to consider plant-based catering.

1. Put environmental sustainability and responsible sourcing at the heart of decisions about café provision and catering, with an emphasis on reduced air miles, seasonality, organic, Fairtrade, vegetarian/ vegan food, and animal welfare.
2. Reduce food waste and single-use crockery and cutlery.
3. Ensure food products for sale in Museum shop are produced in line with University’s Sustainable Food Policy.

**Sustainable Resource Use**

**The Museum will ensure that environmental sustainability and the Museum’s impact on biodiversity is a primary consideration in purchasing decisions and resource use.**

1. Ensure that environmental impact is central to purchasing choices.
2. Continue to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible.
3. Make sustainable resource use a key consideration in all our core functions.
4. Put environmental sustainability and responsible sourcing at the heart of decisions about shop stock.
5. Work with Oxford University Parks Department to ensure that planting and care for external spaces will encourage biodiversity.

**Public Engagement**

**The Museum will enable its audiences to reflect and take action on the climate crisis, and human impact on the environment and biodiversity in an informed, evidence-based manner.**

## 1. Create permanent displays, temporary exhibitions and event programming which present and discuss science related to climate change, biodiversity loss, and human impact on the environment.

## 2. Make the Museum’s Environmental Responsibility Policy available through the Museum website, and promote relevant aspects of the public programme and permanent and temporary exhibitions on the Museum’s social media channels.

**Implementation**

This Environmental Responsibility Policy was agreed by the OUMNH Board of Visitors in July 2021. It should be read in conjunction with the Implementation Plan. Both Policy and Plan will be reviewed not later than July 2023.

Implementation will be overseen by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who will be advised by the Sustainability Working Group (SWG). The SWG will have representatives from the Research, Collections, Operations, and Public Engagement teams. It will meet at least every two months, and will report on progress to the extended Senior Leadership Team (SLT+) on a regular basis.

A representative of the working group will join the GLAM Sustainability Champions network to increase collaboration with other GLAM departments. The Museum will also engage with the University’s Green Impact programme, and will work towards a Green Impact Silver Award.

Staff will be encouraged to attend training on sustainability issues relating to their area of work, and sustainable working practices will be included in inductions and induction packs.