Website - UKSSN Operations Group

**LinkedIn** - (3) UK Schools Sustainability Network Operations Group | Groups | LinkedIn

Stories to spark conversation, fresh ideas for your climate action plan, signposts to support services, a wealth of CPD and events, and 🔖 🍾 ....grab yourself a 💩 and enjoy 💙.

'For the first time since record-keeping began, fires were the leading cause of rainforest loss, accounting for nearly half of all destruction in 2024. Those fires emitted 4.1bn tons of planet-warming greenhouse gases. Still, land clearing for agriculture, cattle farming and other causes rose by 14%, the sharpest increase in almost a decade.' (Associated Press)

♦ The surge in fires can be attributed to global heating. Forest loss in 2024 was the equivalent of 18 football fields a minute. ♦

## **Stories to share this week**

#### **Public Sector progress update**

We are halfway through 'the decade of delivery' and every sector is feeling the increasing need to meet their sustainability goals and reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero by 2050 (a legally binding target within the UK). The public sector – from local authorities and NHS trusts to educational institutions and central government departments – holds significant potential to drive change across services, estates, procurement processes as well as influence local communities.

While overall public sector GHG emissions are trending downward - largely through energy efficiency and investment in renewables - the pace must increase if our sector is set to meet its 2030 goals. The UK Climate Change Committee (CCC) has warned that current UK policies cover only a third of the emissions reductions needed to meet 2030 goals.

A recently published report has highlighted three areas that need more focus:

- Knowledge and Skills: Preparing our own workforce and the workforce of the
  future with the skills and mindset needed to effect sustainable change. Using public
  sector initiatives to support skills development and economy-wide green job
  creation.
- Circularity: To create a public sector that is truly sustainable requires a
  transformation in how resources are used and reused: a circular system that moves
  away from the 'take-make-dispose' model and actively reduces waste by keeping
  products and materials in use longer.

• **Purchasing**: Procurement is one of the most significant and influential elements of public work within the UK. Each year, £300bn is spent by public bodies on procurement of goods and services, representing around 33% of all public expenditure. Harnessing that spending power to drive sustainability within the sector is a key strategy on the road to 2030.

The full report can be found here - <u>Destination 2030: Public Sector</u>.

#### First detection of West Nile virus in UK mosquitoes

Vector-Borne RADAR | Mosquito-borne viral diseases of wild birds

A research programme by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has identified fragments of West Nile Virus (WNV) genetic material in mosquitoes collected in Britain for the first time.



West Nile Virus is a vector borne disease belonging to the Flaviviridae family, which also includes the viruses that cause dengue and yellow fever. It is usually found in birds and typically circulates through bird-biting mosquitoes. In rare cases mosquitoes can transmit the virus to humans or horses. The geographic range of West Nile Virus has expanded in recent years to more northerly and western regions of mainland Europe. The UKHSA has assessed the risk to the general public as very low but is issuing advice to healthcare professionals so that patients with encephalitis of unknown cause can be tested as a precaution through UKHSA's Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory.

As temperatures warm due to climate change, tick and mosquito species not currently native to the UK will begin to find the UK's climate more bearable making it easier for them to survive, reproduce and establish a local population. Whilst the health risk to the UK is currently considered to be low, the direction of travel means disease of this nature is likely to become a bigger problem in future.



Catering: Meat - the factsProcurement: Circularity

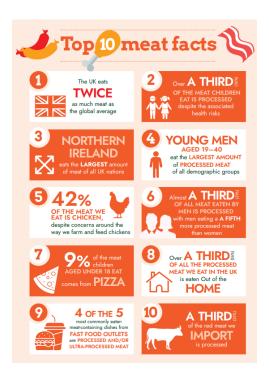
Water: 10 ways to cut your water usageNature: Education Nature Park update

It is half term this week, so the newsletter is a little shorter than usual. I hope there is still something that you find helpful to make more progress with your Climate Action Plan.

## 👸 Catering: Meat - The Facts 👸

#### **Meat Facts | Food Foundation**

Despite both the National Food Strategy and the Climate Change Committee recommending a reduction in meat consumption there is currently little action from either the Government or businesses in terms of supporting a shift towards more plant rich diets. The Food Foundation has published a new report with facts about meat and recommendations for organisations and policy makers.



Key recommendations that schools can make progress on now:

- I. Reducing processed meat
- 2. Disclosing data on the sale of plant vs. animal based protein (and set targets)
- 3. Making bean and whole plant foods more appealing
- 4. Promoting sustainable food choices <u>The Food Service Playbook for Promoting Sustainable Food Choices | World Resources Institute</u>

- 5. Pricing models that make plant-based choices cheaper than meat
- 6. Reformulating pre-prepared meals to reduce the percentage of meat
- 7. Using procurement as a vehicle to drive positive change from suppliers
- 8. Supporting horticulture and growing fruit, vegetables and beans

#### Plus:

Education Forum has published top-tips for cutting food waste and the carbon footprint of your food offering - <u>CATERING MONTH: How we're cutting food waste and carbon</u> emissions - Education Forum and Education Technology Forum

If you are attending the **ASCL Sustainability Conference** next week there is a terrific opportunity to hear from Proveg, Olio and HEART Academies trust about their work to reduce the environmental harm done by food served at school.

#### Procurement: Circularity

#### edie Explains: First Steps in the Circular Economy

Organisations face increasingly urgent pressures to change, adapt, and create more sustainable practices for their operations. There are many ways we can enact these changes, from focusing on internal practices, to investing in material efficiency and nature conservation. Unlike the traditional linear model of take-make-dispose, the circular economy is based on designing out waste, keeping materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. For organisations taking their first steps, this shift can seem complex. But with the right starting points, it can become a strategic advantage rather than a burden.

A new report - link above - looks at how circularity can be integrated into systems and strategies, starting with the first steps.

#### APPLYING THE 5R FRAMEWORK

The 5R framework builds on the 'waste hierarchy', a prioritised approach to managing waste which aims to create the most benefit from products while minimising waste generation. The framework is designed to prevent business waste proactively by emphasising better practices over worse.

- Refuse: Eliminate unnecessary materials or products upfront. (E.g. refuse single-use packaging where possible.)
- Reduce: Minimise material use through leaner designs or efficiency. (For example, using lighter-weight materials or cutting out non-essential components.)
- Reuse: Keep products in service longer. This includes reusing the same product (re-fill, re-sell, repurpose) or reusing packaging.
- Repurpose (or Repair/Share): Give items a second life in the same or a different form – repair products for continued use, donate or share goods, or repurpose byproducts into new products.
- Recycle: Only after all above should you recycle.
   Recover materials at end-of-life so they can re-enter the production cycle.

### Water: Reducing your water usage

#### 10 Innovative ways schools can slash water usage - Lets Go Zero

As climate change intensifies, every action to save water matters. Schools have a unique opportunity to lead in water conservation, not only by reducing their environmental impact but by teaching students sustainable habits for the future. Let's Go Zero has published 10 innovative strategies that can help school's minimise water usage while promoting eco-friendly practices. Make sure these are embedded into to your Climate Action Plan.

#### Plus:

With growing pressure on water supplies, learn more about why water management is a critical part of an effective Climate Action Plan: <u>Water Literacy | Accredited Learning Experience</u>

## 🔭 Nature: Update from the National Education Nature Park 🔭

#### **E-Newsletter Signup | Education Nature Park**

The May Education Nature Park has been published, once again packed with great advice and support. A few highlights:

- How to explore and map the habitats on your site. Read case studies on how schools have done it and catch up on habitat mapping webinars to hear more.
- Be a habitat hero and win prizes for your school.
- Ideas to change grey areas into green spaces.

Take part in a computing co-creation day (Friday 11th July).

Sign up to their newsletter to get all of the links (plus lots more).







### Sustainability Support Hub - Action for Climate by Sustainability Support for **Education**

Sustainability Support for Education are holding more Action for Climate webinars throughout June.

- Identify key actions for your plan
- Engage the right colleagues
- Access expert resources for successful implementation

#### National Education Nature Park - Home | Education Nature Park

Join the National Education Nature Park and explore the habitats in your school, nursery, or college site. Whether you are new to the programme or already involved, exploring local habitats is a fantastic way for students to connect with nature, develop essential skills and dive into scientific research. Register today and kickstart your adventure with our Habitat Heroes activity. Already involved? Time to map your site! Create a baseline for improving your outdoor spaces and track the difference you're making for both people and wildlife.

#### Let's Go Zero - Climate Action Advisors - Lets Go Zero

One simple step we can all take is to sign up and engage your local (& free!) LGZ Climate Advisor. Let's Go Zero are also offering Carbon Literacy courses, a key part of your CPD plan for climate action -

Carbon Literacy - Free Carbon Literacy training from Let's Go Zero

Change Agents UK also runs regular Carbon Literacy courses, a crucial step in everyone's Climate Action Plan - Change Agents UK Events - 7 Upcoming Activities and Tickets | Eventbrite

#### Climate Ambassadors - Contact us & get involved | Climate Ambassadors

The Minister for Early Years, Stephen Morgan MP, who leads on sustainability at the Department for Education, has become the UK's 1,000th Climate Ambassador 2. Minister Morgan said: "The Climate Ambassadors programme is a vital part of our strategy to empower schools and educators in tackling the climate crisis, and I'm proud to be joining over 1,000 volunteers to support schools in developing and delivering their climate action plans."

#### Count Your Carbon - Home - Count Your Carbon

Count Your Carbon is the nation's first free, full-scope carbon emissions calculator, built for - and in collaboration with - nurseries, schools and colleges.

It supports educational settings to calculate, understand, reduce and track your carbon emissions.

#### **PLUS:**

# Blue Marble (New) - <u>Sustainable schools & trusts - start today with a Climate</u> Action Plan - Blue Marble

Blue Marble recently released a new Climate Action Plan tool for schools. According to their website the CAP tool is free for schools, designed to quickly and easily create a plan that unlocks meaningful action.

#### Greener Schools Index - Greener Schools Index

The GSI is a free tool self-assessment tool designed to support all schools, however big or small, and at whatever stage they are on their net zero journey. The second phase of GSI is now open and will help you assess your current level of climate action and identify areas for further development. Give it a try...it is free and a particularly useful planning tool.

#### Salix - Salix Finance - Salixfinance.co.uk

Since its formation in 2004 up to 31 March 2023, Salix has helped public sector organisations commit to more than 22,000 projects by administering £3.3 billion of funding, with projects saving 1.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.



There is a multitude of CPD, training and networking opportunities between now and the summer break to support climate and biodiversity action in education. Below are just some of the highlights.

#### **Thoughtbox - Transforming Leadership (June 2025)**

#### **Leadership Application** — ThoughtBox Education

The Transforming Leadership Programme is a four-week (4x 2 hour) online course for education leaders to delve into the roots of our nested crises and explore our role in enabling healthier futures. This nature-led leadership programme is designed to support you to grow resilience as a leader and strengthen practical experience alongside a community of peers on a journey of transformation, together.



Weds 4th June, Thurs 12th June, Thurs 19th June, Thurs 26th June, 4 - 6pm BST

#### **Ⅲ** Plus...

Here are a just a few more events to look forward to over the summer term:

- ASCL Annual Sustainability Conference, Manchester (5<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- DSLS Climate and Nature in Education, Exeter (5<sup>th</sup> Jun 2025) email office@devonsls.co.uk
- Reading Climate Festival (University of Reading) Climate Action Planning
   https://tinyurl.com/ycrk9nf3 (17th June, 15.00-18.30)
- North Hampshire Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 9:30am – 12pm, The Hurst School, Baughurst, Tadley, RG26 5NL-Registration form: <u>Hampshire's Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop</u>
- South Hampshire Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 9:30am – 12pm Park Community School, Havant, PO9 4BU- Registration form: <u>Hampshire's Climate Action Planning in Education Workshop</u>
- London Schools Eco-Network 2025, Highgate School (25th June 2025)
- Zenergi Energy Management workshop (ISBL accredited), Leeds
   https://zenergi.co.uk/news/sustainability-lead-training-an-introduction-to-energy-and-carbon-management/ (25th June 2025) email Helen.burge@buoyantimpact.co.uk
   for free tickets

- North-West <u>Sustainability Learning Conference</u> (26<sup>th</sup> June 2025)
- Reimagine Places & Spaces, GovNews, London & Online Reimagine Places & Spaces: The Future of Modern Workplace (3rd July 2025)
- Northern Sustainability Summit, Manchester, (10<sup>th</sup> July 2025), all sectors



"The response to climate change and embedding changes into school and college life is a priority for many this year. The ASCL Sustainability Conference is returning and is taking place in Manchester on Thursday 5 June 2025. We are thrilled to announce Award Winning Engineer, Global Innovation and Sustainability Consultant, Yewande Akinola, as a keynote speaker. You will have the opportunity to attend some great workshop sessions for you to get practical takeaways to consider for your setting, and there will be a wonderful session delivered by students too! The full programme is now live on the website."

If you are planning an event let us know and we will share with colleagues in the network.

#### Plus...

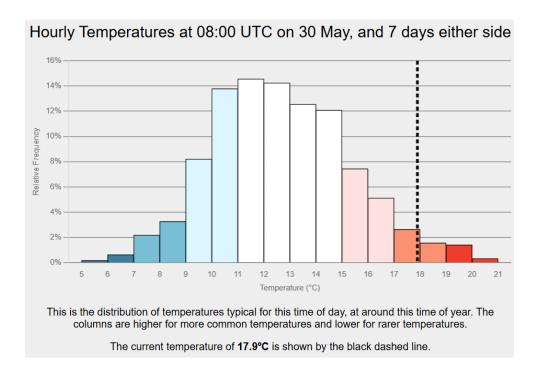
Don't forget there are other useful (& sometimes free) training opportunities to help progress your Climate Action Plan, including -

- Home Supply Chain Sustainability School
- Free Online Environmental Sustainability Training Course with Certificate
- IEMA Training
- 8-week, cohort-based programmes | Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL)

If you are aware of other high-quality courses please let us know and we will add to our growing list ...

# And finally....are you feeling hot? Is the UK hot right now?

'Is the UK hot right now?' is a new interactive website showing the UK temperature hourby-hour relative to what is 'normal', with normal being the average daily temperature between 1991 and 2020. Below is a chart showing **Bedford** today, compared to typical temperatures over the past 30 years -



To finish this week on a lighter note...a few years old but still very funny (and an illustration of how little has changed in half a decade)

- <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN8dLESkzWQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN8dLESkzWQ</a> 😂 😂





Have a great weekend 💙

#### Other recommended sources of advice and support

- DfE sustainability hub: <u>Sustainability Support for Education</u> (with updated features for 2025 and updates in LinkedIn
- 2. UKSSN: UKSSN Operations Group
- 3. Education Nature Park: Home | Education Nature Park
- 4. Climate Ambassadors: Climate Ambassadors: Turning Climate Ambition into Climate Action in Education | Climate Ambassadors
- 5. Let's Go Zero: UK Climate Change Let's Go Zero
- 6. EAUC: <u>The Platform Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, EAUC United Kingdom</u>
- 7. FED: FED | Climate Change
- 8. Good Estate Management for Schools Good estate management for schools Guidance GOV.UK
- 9. Sustainable Drainage (SUDS) Susdrain The community for sustainable drainage
- The Trust Network (TTN) <u>The Trust Network supporting good school estates &</u> facilities management
- 11. Salix Project delivery: support and guidance
- 12. Count Your Carbon (Eco Schools) Home Count Your Carbon

#### Other useful references

#### HM Government Net Zero Strategy (October 2021, page 29)

'Government is leading the way – embedding climate into our policy and spending decisions, increasing the transparency of our progress on climate goals, and providing funding to drive ambitious emissions reductions in schools and hospitals.'

 $\underline{https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6194dfa4d3bf7f0555071b1b/net-zero-strategy-\underline{beis.pdf}}$ 

## Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (April 2022)

Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK

#### **Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)**

<u>Environmental reporting guidelines: including Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements - GOV.UK</u>