

Sustainability and kindness: Our journey to Bedford Falls

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Sustainability and environmental impact.
How has it affected you?



My interest in sustainability intensified after my home flooded in 2021

There's nothing like standing in a river of poo in your kitchen to bring home how climate change is a thing.



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several slices of kiwi fruit. The slices are arranged in a slightly overlapping pattern, showing the vibrant green outer flesh, the white inner flesh, and the numerous small, dark, oval-shaped seeds. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the fruit.

James has worked closely with the University of West London Environmental services board for many years as a library services and Unison representative.

Sustainability: Definition?

The transition from needs to rights

The concept of sustainability includes the environment but also links this to the impact of Economic and Social harm.

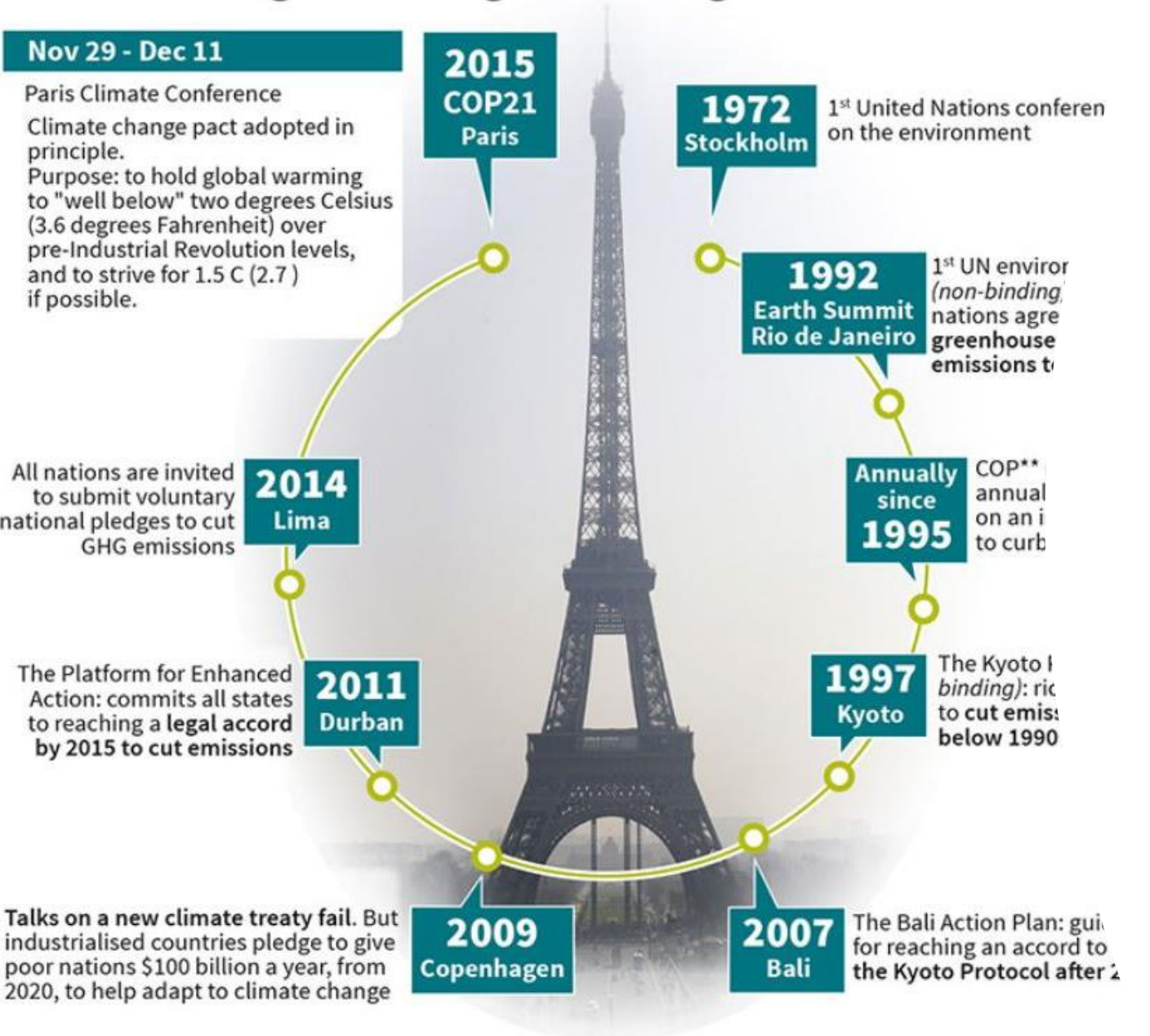
“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

(1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission)

"We recognize that poverty, environmental degradation, and population growth are inextricably related and that none of these fundamental problems can be successfully addressed in isolation. We will succeed or fail together."



Climate change: the long road to a global deal



Milestones in sustainability

- **1948: Declaration of Human rights**
- **1972: 1st United Nations conference on the Environment**
- **1992 1st UN Environment treaty (non binding)** industrialized nations agree to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels
- **1997 The Kyoto Protocol (legally binding)** Wealthy nations agree to cut emissions to below 1990 levels by 2012
- **2001 Under President Bush, US withdraws from Kyoto Protocol** declaring 'no interest' in implementation (source: Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2001/mar/29/globalwarming.usnews>)
- **2015: Paris Climate Conference.** The Climate change act adopted in principle to hold global emissions to 'well below' 2 degrees Celsius . UN 17 sustainability goals agreed by participating nations.

United Nations: 17 sustainable development goals



The United Nations 17 sustainable development goals

1. No poverty;
2. zero hunger;
3. good health and well-being;
4. quality education;
5. gender equality;
6. clean water and sanitation;
7. affordable and clean energy;
8. decent work and economic growth;
9. industry, innovation and infrastructure;
10. reduced inequalities;
11. sustainable cities and communities;
12. responsible consumption and production;
13. climate action;
14. Life below water;
15. life on land;
16. peace, justice, and strong institutions;
17. partnerships for the goals.



Inaction on UN SDG targets

"Scientists deliver final warning on climate crisis: Act now or it's too late"

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as reported in the Guardian 20/3/23

"Scientific Consensus: Earth's Climate Is Warming"

Nasa: Global Climate change 11/7/2019

UK government's Net Zero Strategy deemed 'unlawful'

"The High Court has this week ruled that the UK government's Net Zero Strategy is unlawful as it is in breach of the Climate Change Act."

Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 21/7/22

"If by 2030 we do not reach the Paris Agreement's targets, we are facing up to 2.7 degrees Celsius in global warming. This warming means far more erratic weather conditions and global temperature records being reached"



A not so wonderful life

Decades before the concept of 'multiverse' in Hollywood films, Frank Capra's classic 'It's a wonderful life' shows his hero George Bailey trapped in the dystopian future of a town called 'Pottersville'.

George's reaches a crisis when he realizes he helped bring about this future himself.

Can George escape to a different future – the peace of his hometown, Bedford Falls?



A small green seedling with two leaves is growing out of a crack in the ground. The ground is dry and cracked, with large, irregular polygonal sections of soil. The background is a blurred continuation of this cracked earth. The overall tone is somber and evocative, suggesting resilience in the face of adversity.

Is climate change our Pottersville?

The overwhelm

With so much inaction about sustainability and worrying news about climate change it is easy to feel hopeless. The coming future can feel very like Pottersville.

I was very inspired by Liz Power's excellent webinar recent webinar on behalf the BL living knowledge Sustainability group:

Sustainability actions for libraries and small organisations

Liz articulated exactly my sense of uncertainty in how the actions of anything (let alone a library!) could make any difference.

As Liz put it: 'Where do we even start?'





optimism

Start small.

Act without hope.

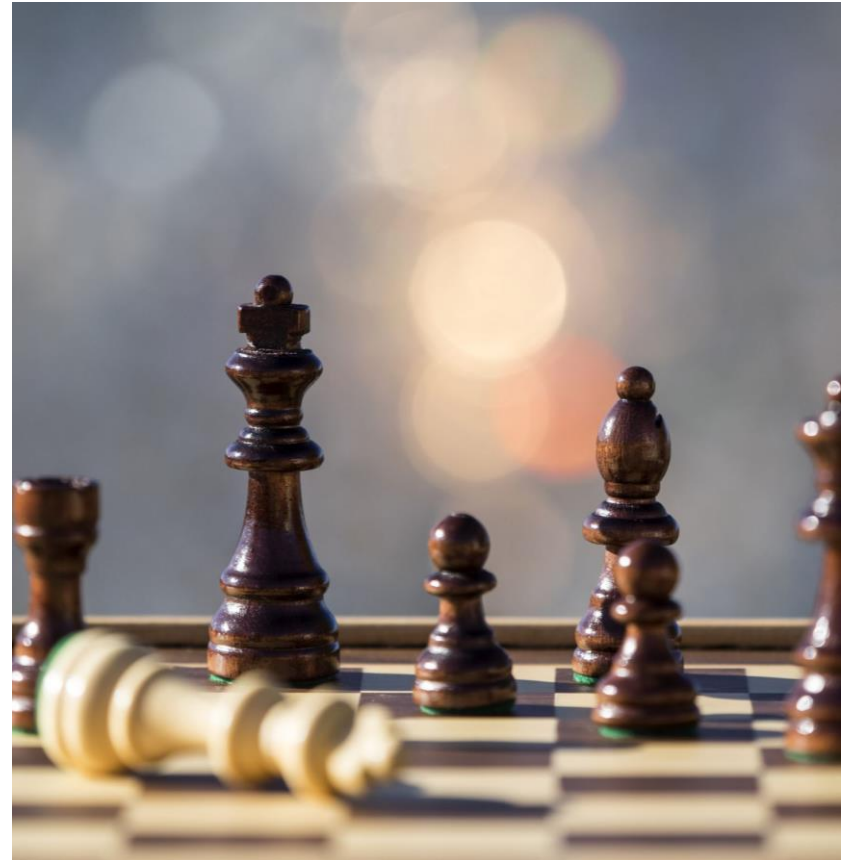
"When Descartes said, 'Conquer yourself rather than the world', what he meant was, at bottom, the same – that we should act without hope."

Jean Paul Sartre, 1946

Use the 'rolling balls' of initiatives or policies which already exist in your organization

- As Liz suggests, use the initiatives or policies already in motion in your organization, (what she terms the "rolling balls")
- to help your initiatives gain traction
- inform your advocacy
- Strengthen liaison

Re-evaluate. What actions might you already be doing already which are already sustainable?



Recent Sustainability Achievements

- Delivered HEFCE 2019/20 carbon reduction target
- Declared a Climate Emergency in 2020
- Net zero carbon target by 2030
- ISO14001 certified 'Platinum EcoCampus'
- United Nations Academic Impact
- Sustainable Restaurant Association and Peas Please Pledge
- LWARB and Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Direction of Travel
- Invested over £150m at our campuses including PSDS decarbonisation





So where does UWL library fit into this?

Sustainability: Past actions

UWL Library:

- Book rescuers
- Paperless Libguides
- Recycling library furniture

Databases – early adopters of the green choice

- Mintel: moving from print reports to electronic access was expensive because VAT was charged on the electronic version. We got round this by having print and single access online.
- With the change in the law in 2020 we no longer pay VAT on our Mintel subscription.





Sustainability: Future actions
Where are we going to?

Practical starting points

- Rolling balls – for large organisations what 'rolling balls' can the library be part of? Committees, boards, policy makers?
- The 'rolling ball' initiators will probably be keen to collaborate and support. Your small initiatives add to the data they need.
- Re-evaluate what you do. Librarians are already sustainable 'early adopters'! Borrowing book model. (recycling) Free access (Equity) liaison (partnership)
- Evaluation and easy wins. What are we already doing that we can re-evaluate from a sustainable angle? What are the easy wins we can do now at low or no cost?





Library Sustainability Group

Open to all members of library services interested/supportive in this work.

Group meets every 3 months in similar cycle to with existing 'rolling balls' of Environmental review board and Sustainability to foster liaison and communication cross groups.



Successful lobbying for a new Eco fiction and Film club resources

- We have successfully lobbied for a new Eco Fiction collection
- 'Into film' film club

Greening the curriculum: liaison and resources support

- Intersectionality: Business, SHSS, Law and LSFMD
- Modules developed on the sustainable curriculum 2023-2024
- Eco Fiction collection
- Eco film collection
- LGBTQ Well being fiction collection

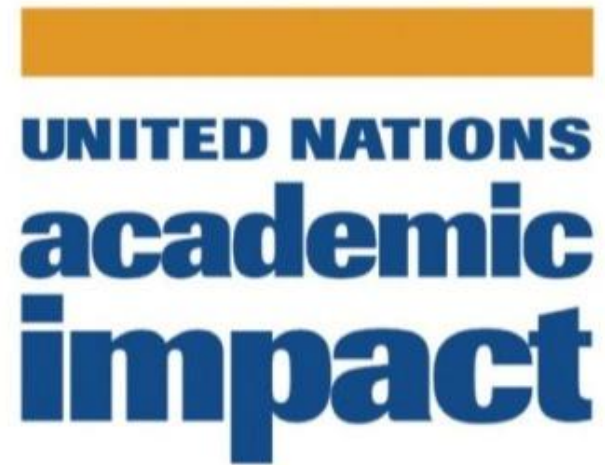




The bigger academic picture

United Nations academic impact

Education for sustainable development



United Nations academic impact

In May 2021, UWL signed up and became a member of the [United Nations Academic Impact \(UNAI\)](#). The UNAI is a vast network of more than 1400 institutions in more than 145 countries, an initiative of the Outreach Division of the United Nations Department of Global Communications. UNAI aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations in supporting and contributing, through research and education, to the realisation of the organisation's goals and mandates, namely through undertaking activities related to the ten UNAI Principles.

QAA (Quality assurance agency for HE)



2021 Produced the Education for Sustainable Development Guidance (ESD) "To support all staff involved in curriculum design to incorporate ESD into their courses"

- [ps://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/education-for-sustainable-development](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/education-for-sustainable-development)

A timely opportunity....

For librarians to embed information literacy in this context.





Well being initiatives:
Low cost and
environmentally friendly

- ***Nearby Green Spaces (Reading to be included)**
- **Need a study break? Green spaces to walk to from Paul Hamlyn library**
- *** Warwick road to Walpole park - 10 minutes.**
- ***Warwick road to Ealing Green - 10 minutes**
- ***Warwick road to Lammas park - 10 minutes via Beaconsfield road**
- ***The 'park route' green walk Library to Paragon campus. via Lammas park and Blondin park - 30 minutes.**

Kindness and well being: resource curation

UWL Spotify playlist for study - University of west London Public playlist

Meditation: YouTube

Headspace: 10 minute meditation to reframe stress (You tube)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sG7DBA-mgFY>

Headspace: 10-minute meditation to decompress mind and body (You tube)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHkXvPq2pQE>

Guided meditation (Professor Mark Williams)
<https://youtu.be/CVW IE1nsKE>

Linked in (Audio)

How do I turn the volume down on my anxiety?
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/good-anxiety-harnessing-its-power-for-good-book-bite/how-do-i-turn-the-volume-down-on-my-anxiety?autoplay=true&u=56747433>

Banish your inner critic to unleash creativity (linked in Learning course)
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/banish-your-inner-critic-to-unleash-creativity-3/imagine-trusting-your-ideas-and-feeling-great-about-what-you-create?autoplay=true&u=56747433>





“Strange, isn’t it?
Each life touches so
many other lives”



Through
liaison



Support and funding



And advocacy

Leading to.....



Collaboration
and
empowerment



We're all on a sustainability journey.
What has yours been? And where will it take you?



Any questions?

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