



# Sustainable Events Guide

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# ABOUT THE GUIDE

## About this guide

This guide offers advice to event organisers to plan sustainable and successful events, within our venue, or at other venues in order to minimise the impact of such events on the environment.



## Who is this guide for?

This guide can be used by anyone holding an event in our venue, or by students hosting events externally. However, the guide is widely applicable and can be extended to anyone who wishes to use it!

## How to use this guide?

When planning, running, and evaluating an event, this guide can be used to assist with making your event more sustainable.

If you don't have much time to make your event sustainable, try using the Sustainable Events Checklists for your event. Alternatively, if you have plenty of time, go through the whole guide to see how you can embed sustainability into your event.



# SUSTAINABILITY AT WINCHESTER

At Winchester Student Union we believe that we should treat the world around us with care and respect, and that our global peers should be shown empathy and understanding in both business and personal communication and transactions.

With this in mind, we want to commit to being more sustainable - both in the actions we take and the words we say! Part of this includes informing students (our members) about sustainable practices and ways in which they can incorporate sustainability into their everyday lives.

We know a lot of students enjoy running events on campus, usually as part of a society or for their course. We hope that this guide can be a useful tool when planning these events, so its easier and more accessible to be sustainable!



# PLANNING AND MATERIALS

## Planning an event: things to consider



# PLANNING AND MATERIALS



## Introduction

When planning your event there are lots of things to consider. Amongst all these, it's important to consider how your planning can incorporate sustainable practices to make your event better for the environment.

### Before your event

**Management:** You may wish to nominate a member of your team to be in charge of sustainability. Choose a 'Sustainability Lead' to ensure your event is as sustainable as possible, and they will help keep things on track. Or have a 'Waste Coordinator' to ensure all waste is disposed of properly.

**Advertising:** Consider using less printed media for your event! Remove paper registration and instead use sites like Facebook to spread awareness and keep a record of interested attendees. If you have to advertise on paper - why not print re-usable flyers that can be used to advertise other events? Print double sided and make sure not to over-print materials!

### Review your options!

Trying to incorporate sustainability into any event is tough, so make sure you take your time!

Chat with your team-members or friends about your options, communicate frequently about expectations, and don't worry if you can't make your event 100% sustainable.

Take a look at our Sustainable Event Checklists for small actions you can take to make your event more sustainable. You don't have to complete them all - even doing one is helping the planet!

# PLANNING AND MATERIALS

## During your event

**Location:** Could you meet digitally, instead of in-person? This could help save fuel emissions and eliminate the running costs of the venue you're meeting in.



**Freebies:** Assess the need for handouts or brochures! Over 60% of them are thrown away, so if you are handing them out, ensure that you've only ordered for the number of attendees, and hand them out on arrival to avoid duplication.

## After your event

**Waste:** Ensure someone is around to oversee waste disposal. Make sure materials are recycled or re-used if possible!

**Materials:** Save reusable materials - either for another event or for charity.

**Evaluation:** Evaluate your event. What sustainable practices went well and what could be improved?



# PLANNING AND MATERIALS

## Freebie Purchasing Guide

It can be tempting to purchase lots of freebies and give these out to guests! However, freebies should be sources sustainably and should avoid being single-use!

### If you're on the fence about purchasing freebies...

- Do you really need to hand out freebies? Will they increase people's attendance or enjoyment of the event, will they last beyond the event?
- Are they essential to your aims or goals for the event - if not, why do you need them?
- Are there alternatives that would work well? To attract people could you invest more in advertisement?



### If you've decided you need freebies, consider the following:

- Avoid plastics! Can you find freebies made from sustainable or recycled material?
- Are your freebies actually useful - will people get a lot out of them or are they just there for show?
- Will you have a way of collecting unused freebies after the event?
- Does everyone need a freebie? Could you buy a limited supply and offer them out, rather than giving everyone one automatically?
- Don't overbuy! Most people might end up throwing them away anyway.



# FOOD AND DRINK

## Introduction

You may wish to provide food or drinks to your event attendees - that's a great idea! Providing refreshments at events can improve the satisfaction of guests, and can be especially helpful at longer or more formal events. With this in mind, here are some considerations to make when catering your event.



## Before your event

**Demand:** Do you really need to provide food?

**Facilities:** Make sure that the venue has the correct facilities (e.g., bins) for guests to sort their waste. Make sure these are clearly labelled so recyclables don't get contaminated!

**Drinks:** Could guests to bring their own refillable cups, straws, or bottles?

**Procurement:** Try to shop locally where you can, don't ship items a long way. Try to ensure your food is ethically sourced through certifications such as Fairtrade or B-Corp.

Reducing the amount of meat you provide can lower your carbon footprint.

**Plan:** How much food and drinks will you need, try not to over-cater the event, but if you do, make sure you have a plan in place for any leftover food. This could be organising for the catering company to collect uneaten food, a takeaway option for guests, donating the food, or composting the food.

# FOOD AND DRINK

## During your event

**Be inclusive:** Try to provide something for everyone. Always provide drinking water, and try to provide juice and decaff options when serving tea and coffee. If providing food, try and have options for vegans, vegetarians and take into consideration guests' religious dietary requirements and potential intolerance.

**Refill stations:** Try and provide a map to bottle refill stations to guests who may be unfamiliar with the venue.

**Cutlery/glassware:** Provide reusable cups, plates, and cutlery where possible. If you have to use disposable cutlery, aim to use recyclable material and avoid single-use plastics!

**Food:** Try and have high food purchasing standards. For example:

- Produce is local and/or seasonal.
- Produce is organic.
- 75% of food is vegan/vegetarian.
- All fish is MSC certified
- All eggs are free-range or freedom food.
- Meat is free-range or freedom food.



## After your event

**Leftovers:** Try and donate any leftover food to foodbanks - but always consider the health and safety implications. Food that isn't individually packaged should not be donated, so choose an alternative solution such as composting or recyclable takeaway boxes.

# TRAVEL AND VENUE

## Introduction

Whether you're hosting your event on campus, or beyond, it's important to consider how guest will get to your venue, and the venue itself. Ensuring that your venue can facilitate sustainable practice is important, and so is extending sustainable practice beyond the event itself - to include the methods of transport used to attend the event.

## Before your event

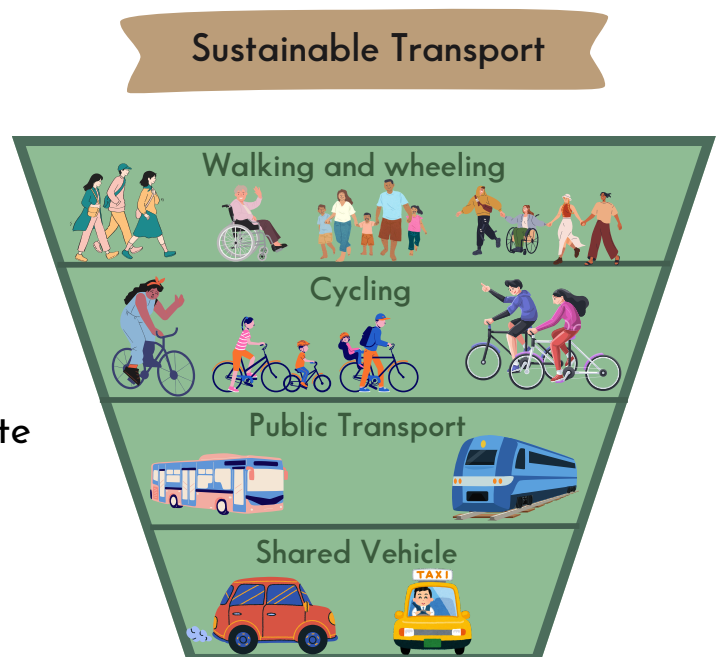
**Venue:** Does the venue have good public transport links? If not, could you host the venue somewhere that does?

**Decorations:** Have you purchased re-usable decor that could be used for other events?

**Advertisement:** Could the event literature promote walking or cycling, or have a map to public transport around the venue?

**Travel:** Reduce the number of people travelling - could you invite the speaker/event leader to campus or a central location to reduce the travel required for guests?

**Timing:** Does your event finish late in the evening or run past when public transport operates?



# TRAVEL AND VENUE

## During your event

**Additional spaces:** Could you provide additional spaces for prayer, breastfeeding, and quiet zones - particularly for longer events or conferences.

**Waste:** Are recycling and non-recycling bins clearly labelled? Are there enough bins?

**Printing:** Reduce printing to save energy and resources, including programmes or leaflets.



## After your event

**Lights:** Switch off any lights, heaters, PCs, printers, and any other equipment when it's not in use.

**Travelling home:** For more informal, social events, is everyone getting home safely? Could you encourage people to carpool/taxi home together if it's late at night or dark.



**Waste:** Ensure you leave the venue clean and tidy, recycling waste where possible.

# CHECKLISTS

These sustainable checklists are a quick and useful way to ensure that your event is as sustainable as possible. You don't have to complete every suggestion, but aiming to tick off a few will go a long way!

The suggestions get more advanced as the checklist progresses, so don't worry if you aren't able to complete them all. These checklists are handy if you don't have lots of time to make your event sustainable

These checklists are not exhaustive, and you may wish to implement further actions that are not mentioned on the checklist, or in this guide. Hopefully this checklist is a good starting point, and will help you take small (or large) steps to make your event more sustainable.

## Sustainable Event Checklists



Promotion  
and  
Materials



Food and  
Drink



Travel and  
Venue

# Sustainable Event Checklist

Event Name and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This checklist can be a helpful tool to see what you can do to make your event more sustainable. Use this checklist to see how many suggestions you can achieve! Not all will be applicable, just see how many you can do.

Is an in-person event necessary?	
Are physical promotional materials necessary?	
Have you made use of social media to spread the word about the event?	
Have your promotional materials been designed to be reused, recycled, or composted?	
Are you providing freebies, are these necessary or can you reduce the waste created by them?	
Have attendees been asked to bring their own resources (pens, paper, etc...)	
Could you use digital screens to display promotional material?	
Could you use promotional materials from a previous event?	
Have you engaged with suppliers to reduce packaging and manage waste efficiently?	
Have any materials been produced ethically?	
Will event evaluation be completed electronically?	
Have you asked guests to tick to request copies of programmes, flyers, etc...	
Are printed materials double sided and available online?	
Could you invite or work with local partners, faculties, or teams?	

# Sustainable Event Checklist

Event Name and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This checklist can be a helpful tool to see what you can do to make your event more sustainable. Use this checklist to see how many suggestions you can achieve! Not all will be applicable, just see how many you can do.

Is food and drink necessary for your event?	
Have you asked guests if they require food and drink?	
Will you ask people to bring their own food and drink?	
Will you ask people to bring their own reusable water bottles, cutlery or cups?	
Are hot drinks served in urns or other decanter vessels?	
Is the milk, sugar, etc.... in vessels rather than plastic packets?	
Is the food from local producers?	
Does the food have sustainability accreditations such as Fairtrade, organic, and B-Corp.	
Are there waste management plans for leftover packaging and food waste?	
Have you provided reusable or compostable crockery/cutlery?	
Will water refill stations be available for guests and are these made visible?	
Have you got processes in place to track the amount of food consumed and leftover?	
Is the default food option plant-based?	
Will the venue provide culturally inclusive food and drink suitable for people of all faiths?	

# Sustainable Event Checklist

Event Name and Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This checklist can be a helpful tool to see what you can do to make your event more sustainable. Use this checklist to see how many suggestions you can achieve! Not all will be applicable, just see how many you can do.

Is the venue accessible for wheelchair users?	
Is the venue and appropriate size for the number of guests attending?	
Does the venue have suitable waste management facilities?	
Does the venue make use of energy saving equipment?	
Is the venue in an area that may disturb biodiversity from noise or light pollution?	
Does the venue have motion sensors for lights and reminders to turn lights off?	
Does the venue have a quiet room, prayer room and/or breastfeeding space?	
Can the venue be accessed using public transport?	
Are there secure facilities for e-bikes, scooters including charging stations?	
Are there safe public footpaths for guests to walk to and from the venue at nighttime?	
Will you share information on public transport and active travel for guests ahead of the event?	
Will you collect feedback on travel facilities for the event?	
Are guests encouraged to use public transport or cycle?	
Will you ask guests to indicate how they travelled so you can create a carbon footprint for their travel and set a target for reduction for your next event?	



# USEFUL CONTACTS/LINKS

## Winchester Student Union

**Enquiries** - [student.union@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:student.union@winchester.ac.uk)

**Sustainability** - <https://www.winchesterstudents.co.uk/sustainability>



## University of Winchester

**Sustainable Campus and Community** - <https://www.winchester.ac.uk/About-Us/Sustainable-Campus-and-Community/>

**Environment Team** - [environment@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:environment@winchester.ac.uk)



## Hampshire County Council

**Smart Living** - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/smartliving>

**What to do with household waste** -

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/whattodowithwaste>

## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

**SDGs** - <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

## People & Planet

**How sustainable is your University?** -

<https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>

If you have any comments, thoughts, or suggestions for this Sustainable Events Guide or have any further ideas on how we can improve our sustainability work - please get in touch at [student.union@winchester.ac.uk](mailto:student.union@winchester.ac.uk)