

# University of Galway Sustainability Newsletter

Edition 1, Academic Year 25/26

Welcome to the first edition of the University of Galway Sustainability Office Newsletter, showcasing the people, projects and partnerships advancing sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our campus and beyond. As a core University value and as an SDG Ambassador, we are committed to embedding sustainability across teaching, research, operations and engagement, working of *Galway, for the world*.

This newsletter offers a snapshot of sustainability activity during Semester 1, Academic Year 2025–26, with a particular focus on initiatives supported through the Community University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP). It highlights selected examples of collaborative work led by the Sustainability Office and partners across the University and wider community, and invites staff, students and partners to join us as we learn, live and lead towards a more sustainable future.



*Celebrating 10 years of CUSP, Members of the Community University Sustainability Partnership. Photo Credit: Aengus Mc Mahon*

## SDG Week 2025: Local Action, Global Change

SDG Week 2025 took place from 20–27 September at University of Galway, celebrating the theme *Local Action, Global Change*. A diverse programme of events engaged staff, students and the wider community in supporting the SDGs and highlighting our role as a National SDG Ambassador. Highlights included the inaugural Run into SDG Week, the Green Flag Raising Ceremony, student-led activities, research showcases and a Community Climate Assembly. Campus-wide consultation sessions also informed the development of the University's next Sustainability Strategy (2026–2030).



*Raising of our third Green Flag during SDG Week 2025: From left, University of Galway's: Richard Manton, Director of Sustainability; Professor Becky Whay, Deputy President and Registrar; Michelle O'Dowd Lohan, Sustainability Officer; Dr Colin Lawton, Ryan Institute; and Molly Hickey, CUSP member, University of Galway Student's Union. An Taisce: Tracey Lydon and Valentina Stampa. Photo credit: Aengus McMahon.*

## Community Climate Assembly

The Community Climate Assembly 2025 was held on 27 September at University of Galway, bringing together community groups, researchers, organisations and businesses committed to climate action. The half-day event featured themed discussions on water, mobility, food, wellbeing and nature, with community speakers sharing local success stories. An exhibition space and informal networking supported knowledge exchange, while an optional campus sustainability tour highlighted climate action in practice. The Community Climate Assembly was organised in collaboration with Aerogen, Atlantic Technological University, Corrib Beo, Galway City Community Network, Galway City Council, Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board,

Galway Science and Technology Festival, Galway Volunteer Centre, Tuath Terryland Forest Park and University of Galway, demonstrating the strength of partnership in advancing climate action at community level.



*Participating in the Community Climate Assembly: From left: Niall Ó Brolcháin, University of Galway; Cllr. Mike Cubbard, Mayor of the City of Galway; Amber and Gemma Cunningham-Moorat, Youth Climate Assembly; Dr Richard Manton, University of Galway; Brendan Smith, Tuath Terryland Forest Park; Prof. Becky Whay, University of Galway Deputy President & Registrar. Photo credit: Aengus McMahon.*

## **Sustainability Engagement Fund - Peace**

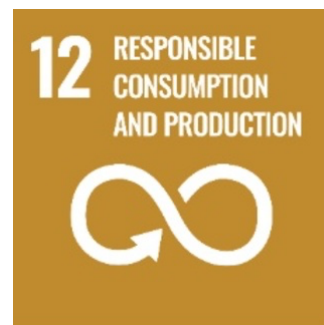
The Sustainability Engagement Fund 2025/26 supports initiatives aligned with the University of Galway Sustainability Strategy and our role as a National SDG Ambassador, with funding streams focused on Peace (SDG 16) and Green Labs (SDG12). **Peace awardees** are Sophie Sweeney and Anita Ferrara (College of Business, Public Policy & Law), Sarah Jenkins (College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies), and Hugh Gately (Literary and Debating Society & College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies).





## **Sustainability Engagement Fund - Green labs**

**Green Labs awardees** are Claire Masterson, Coralie Mureau, Niall Belton and Oliver Carroll (College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences), and Kiruba Nedounsejian, Indu Patwal and Darragh Mullins (College of Science & Engineering). Following discussions at the Green Labs Sustainability Engagement Fund launch, the Sustainability Office is now convening a Green Labs Forum on a regular basis. The forum provides a space to share ideas, experiences and best practice in sustainable laboratory operations. The next Green Labs Forum will take place on Tuesday 17 February 2026, 12.00–13.00 in the Biomedical Science Building Seminar Room.



## **Sustainability Schools Roadshow**

The Sustainability Office, in partnership with CELT and the Community Engagement Manager, has been delivering a Sustainability Schools Roadshow across the University. These visits to School Board meetings provide opportunities to share current sustainability initiatives and gather feedback from academic staff. To date, the roadshow has visited 13 Schools, supporting dialogue on embedding sustainability within teaching, research and engagement. Further visits are planned.

## **Waterway Project**

The Waterway Project is an EU funded climate initiative led by Galway City Council that explores how Galway's canals can generate renewable energy through small scale hydropower. The project aims to support local climate action while creating opportunities for skills development, innovation and community engagement. University of Galway is a core partner, contributing research, education and training through a Living Lab approach that supports upskilling in green technologies and shares learning with other European cities.



*Members of the EU Urban Innovative Actions (EUI) Waterways Project partnership at the project's first meeting, hosted by Galway City Council*

## **Submission to Ireland's Third National Implementation Plan for the SDGs**

As a National SDG Ambassador, University of Galway has made a formal submission to Ireland's Third National Implementation Plan for the SDGs. Led by the Community University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP), the submission highlights the role of higher education institutions as key partners in delivering national and global sustainability objectives, reinforcing the University's commitment to sustainable development in Ireland and beyond.



## **Student engagement on sustainability**

Student engagement remains a central part of the Sustainability Office's work across the University. Building on our student presentations during Orientation and International Student Orientation, we continue to engage with students through Climate Crew, master's programmes, student societies and visits to Colleges and Schools. These sessions raise awareness of CUSP, the Sustainability Strategy working groups and the



Sustainability Champion Digital Badge, while highlighting the many ways students can get involved and play an active role in the University of Galway's sustainability journey.

## Innovate4Sustainability Hackathon

The Innovate4Sustainability Hackathon took place on 12 November 2025 at PorterShed a Dó, Galway. Students from across disciplines collaborated to develop innovative responses to sustainability challenges. Delivered by University of Galway IdeasLab, Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and with support from the Higher Education Authority, the event showcased strong student creativity, collaboration and problem-solving, highlighting the value of experiential learning in developing future sustainability leaders.



## Climathon

Climathon Galway 2025 took place on 24 October at University of Galway, hosted by the Ryan Institute in partnership with the PorterShed and Galway City Council. Celebrating 10 years of Climathon Galway, the event doubled in capacity and included a poster showcase. The event highlighted the power of place-based innovation, bringing together students, researchers, entrepreneurs and the city to co-create practical climate solutions for Galway. Congratulations to winners Trade Tribe and runners-up Grá Greens, with all teams demonstrating strong innovation and collaboration.



## Campus Wellness and the importance of connection

Sustainability Office staff member Lorraine Leahy took part in the Campus Wellness 200k Walking Challenge and entered the accompanying photo competition. From 45 entries, her photograph, *The importance of connection, three colleagues enjoying the autumn leaves and a sense of Fun* was selected as the overall winner by a panel of four judges. Congratulations to Lorraine on this well-deserved recognition celebrating connection, wellbeing and community.





*From left, Emily Reilly, Research Office, Lorraine Leahy, Sustainability Office, Louise Nelson, Bioresource Unit. Photo Credit: Lorriane Leahy*

## **Introducing our Sustainability Interns 25-26**



### **Diníon**

Hi, my name is Diníon and I am in fourth year Physics. As a Sustainability Intern, I work to support sustainability initiatives with a strong focus on student engagement across the university. I've been involved in spaces such as CUSP, where I've shared ideas about student engagement to drive meaningful progress. I've also supported engagement activities during SDG Week, promoting the Sustainability Champion Digital Badge. Through sustainability exhibition stands at both the September student orientation and January international student orientation, I've enjoyed connecting with students and encouraging participation in sustainability initiatives. Alongside this, I've worked to support updates to the Green

Labs list. I've also been involved with the Women in STEM Society, which supports conversations around gender equality.



## Hugh

Hi! My name is Hugh, I'm a fourth year Creative Writing student. I became involved with the Sustainability Office through my work with the Literary & Debating Society. Since becoming Sustainability Intern, I have focused on large-scale events promoting diplomacy (in line with SDG 16) and platforming voices in the university and its communities on sustainability-related issues. This has included the UG Model United Nations, which welcomes over 200 delegates across two 3-day conferences in Semester 2, as well as a rights-focused panel discussion and AI-themed debates. My plans as Sustainability Intern for Semester 2 include a Model European Parliament with ELSA and Feminist Societies, a debate between political party societies with Politics Society, and a University Forum platforming the voices of the student community before the University's governing authorities and offices, as I continue to concern myself with sustainability-related pursuits of democratisation and platforming.

## Did you know?

At University of Galway, you can earn a **Sustainability Champion Digital Badge** by getting hands-on with sustainability on campus. The badge recognises students who take sustainability action; whether that's getting involved in CUSP working groups, the SU Climate Crew, sustainability-focused societies, or earning a Student Sustainability Leadership Award. To achieve it, you simply complete a short introduction to sustainability, take part in activities, and submit a brief reflection. It's a simple way to showcase your sustainability leadership on your CV, LinkedIn or digital portfolio while making a real impact. Find out more [here](#).

## Want to find out more?

Stay connected with the University of Galway Sustainability Office on **Instagram** (@uniofgalwaysustainability) and **LinkedIn** (University of Galway Sustainability Office), or visit our **Sustainability Website** ([www.universityofgalway.ie/sustainability](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/sustainability))



If you're interested in sustainability events, initiatives, or opportunities to get involved, please **e-mail** the Sustainability Office at [sustainability@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:sustainability@universityofgalway.ie)