



## Spotlight On Waste Month – November 2018

*The University’s waste from a single year weighs as much as the London Eye.*  
Let’s tackle this by **rethinking waste** this November.

During Spotlight on Waste Month, the University of Cambridge Environment & Energy section are running a ‘4 week challenge’: to record, reduce, reuse and upcycle.

In this document we’ve set out some simple ways you can improve your performance, engage your colleagues and have some fun along the way! We’d love to hear how you get on - send us your pictures or write-ups detailing activities you take to [environment@admin.ac.ac.uk](mailto:environment@admin.ac.ac.uk) or post on social media and tag us!

### Contents:

Week 1 (5th – 9th Nov): Record .....	2
Week 2 (12th– 16th Nov): Reduce .....	3
Week 3 (19 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov): Reuse .....	4
Week 4 (26 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov): Upcycle .....	5





## Week 1 (5th – 9th Nov): Record

As the old adage goes “you cannot manage what you can’t measure”. Over the course of the first week, we recommend you get to grips with the challenge that is ahead of you. This could include:

- Carrying out a simple check of office **waste collection infrastructure** and procedures. You can refer to the checklist on page 3 of the [Waste & Recycling Guidance](#) for this!
- Undertaking a **waste audit** following this [guidance](#) or doing a site collection (see what the Philosophy department did below)
- Collecting the empty boxes of printing paper or the amount of disposable cups your department throws away in a month and **displaying the waste** in your department (see what Obs & Gynae Department did below).
- Requesting data on your building or site’s **waste performance** from the [Environment & Energy section](#). Thanks to the University’s new waste contract, it’s now possible to receive weights and proportions of waste by site, on a monthly basis. This data gives a great benchmark for comparing performance over time!
- Conducting a **stock inventory**. University departments are encouraged by the Safety Office to adopt Chemical Inventories, with a preferred system now available for use. Stock inventories of more common day-to-day items such as stationary can also help to keep track of use and purchases.

### **Case study: Picking up the pieces at Philosophy**

In summer 2017, the Faculty of Philosophy walked their site and did a “[picking up the pieces](#)” challenge. What they found in just one hour (pictured) was astonishing; single use plastics, old plastic ties, a fruit container and much more, strewn across a small area. All were plastics that will not degrade for hundreds of years. If you would like to ‘pick up the pieces’ with your colleagues over a lunch time, be sure to take appropriate safety precautions (gloves etc!) and once your collection has been completed lay the waste out and share a photo your findings on social media and tag us. Using the waste you’ve collected to create a message can also be pretty powerful!



### **Case study: Farewell to the disposable cup at Obstetrics and Gynaecology!**

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology gently nudged their colleagues towards reusable cups last year when they pinned the number of disposable cups that had been used in the department in the previous weeks to the staff notice board. Seeing the sheer number of cups that could not be recycled caused many staff to shift to a reusable alternative. Each member of staff now has a Keepcup and no disposable cups are disposed of in the department.





## Week 2 (12th– 16th Nov): Reduce

Reducing, preventing or minimising waste are the top priorities on the [waste hierarchy](#) but often we only focus on recycling. Reducing what we consume is the most effective way to avoid creating waste. Activities this week could include:

- Taking a **plastic-free or paper-free challenge** in your department! Can you go for a whole week without using (or disposing of!) one particular material? This can be a great way to raise awareness of the challenges of waste minimisation, but can also help identify alternatives to common disposable items.
- Taking the **#OneLess pledge** [here](#) to pledge your support to eliminating single use plastics, and single use plastic water bottles in particular.
- Holding a **stationary amnesty**, asking staff to return unused or unwanted stationary, to ensure that new ones aren't ordered unnecessarily. This can be as simple as having a well-signposted table or box in a visible area!
- Contacting a supplier to your building or department, to see if they operate any **'take-back' schemes for used items or packaging**. Several University departments have had success in contacting their suppliers to ask about dealing with certain waste streams. This has led to the use of printer cartridge recycling and pipette rack take-back schemes – is there a scheme like this where you work?
- Reviewing **purchasing criteria**, taking into account sustainable procurement options. Guidance on this is available on the [Environment & Energy website](#).
- Reducing your **food waste** by planning your meals, buying only what you need, storing correctly, cooking the right amount, and loving your leftovers.

### **Case study: Re-using pipette racks in BioPath**

In the BioPath Stores based on the Old Addenbrookes site, staff have worked with one supplier, STARLAB, to set up a collection scheme for used pipette tip boxes. Rather than boxes being disposed of to recycling bins where they risk not being properly recycled due to contamination or other issues, the BioPath stores collect the STARLAB items, and the supplier make regular collections to ensure that the items are recycled into new items.

### **GET GREEN WITH STARLAB**

*by reducing and recycling your plastic laboratory waste!*



#### **How to RECYCLE with STARLAB**

- Remove any autoclave tape and decontaminate as necessary
- Take your recycling to the collection crate at BioPath Stores
- And STARLAB will collect and recycle!



STARLAB (UK) LTD, 4 TANNERS DRIVE, BLAKELANDS, MELTON KEEYNS, MK34 5NA  
Tel: 01908 283800 Fax: 01908 283802 [info@starlab.co.uk](mailto:info@starlab.co.uk) [www.starlab.co.uk](http://www.starlab.co.uk)



## Week 3 (19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov): Reuse

Use items as much as possible to avoid unnecessary disposal! If it is no longer needed in your own building or department, there may be others in the University that could use it. Luckily, there are several ways to encourage reuse, including:

- [Warplt](#), the University's free online sharing platform, allows unwanted but usable items to be publicised across the University to see if others might want them. If awareness of **Warplt** is low in your department you could request [Warplt posters](#) or business cards from the Environment & Energy section!
- The University's [Equipment Sharing Programme](#) allows scientific and other **equipment to be shared** between departments and individuals. Items are listed on a University database which is available to all staff.
- For unused, obsolete or even broken equipment taking up valuable lab space, **UniGreenScheme** offers a removal and resale service. They work directly with you to collect, store and sell your unwanted equipment, and they return a share of the profits. It's a flexible service, ranging from one or two pieces of equipment through to full lab clearances. Find out more: [www.unigreenscheme.co.uk/](http://www.unigreenscheme.co.uk/)
- Get **reusable items** including:
  - A **KeepCup** from any [University Catering Centre outlets](#) and even some Colleges! With your KeepCup you'll get discounts at ALL University Cafes and other cafes such as Pret, Costa and Starbucks!
  - A **reusable water bottle**, and make a pledge to refill with the [#OneLessCambridge](#) campaign.
  - Reusable shopping bags and fruit and veg bags.
- **Donate old items to a charity shop**. You could organise a charity collection in your College or Department. For example, St. John's and Trinity Colleges both have permanent British Heart Foundation collection points. There are also numerous [charity shops in Cambridge](#), so find your nearest one and lengthen the lifetime of your belongings.
- Many Colleges and departments have organised reuse events such as **clothes swaps** (like Lucy Cavendish in 2018 – see below). Clothes manufacturing has been identified as one of the most [polluting industries](#) and “fast fashion” also has ramifications for workers' rights. For the clothes we have that we no longer want, give them a second life through a clothes swap? Pick a date, find a venue and ask staff to bring along their clothes in the morning. It may be best to arrange clothes by size. A chance to get a new garment and to extend the life of an item that would have been disposed of; win, win! Please contact [Environment and Energy](#) if you need clothes rails or mirrors.
- The Environment and Energy Section will organise a trip to Scrapstore, an initiative from Cambridge City Council which turns wastes into art and design materials. [Contact us](#) if you are interested in attending.

### **Case study: Clothes Swap at Lucy Cavendish**

In 2018, Lucy Cavendish College organised a clothes swap where students and staff swapped unwanted clothes for new ones. You can find new clothes and give your old ones a new home; it's a win-win!





## Week 4 (26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> Nov): Upcycle

Throughout this week we encourage you to **stop before you shop** and go circular! Can you fix, rent, lease, borrow, share or buy second hand? There are plenty of ways to do this:

- On **November 17<sup>th</sup>**, [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#) and [Circular Cambridge](#) are organising a **Sustainable Fashion Festival** with a full day celebrating sustainable fashion. Featuring a giant clothes swap party, sewing themed Repair Café, sewing skillshares, hands-on upcycling and arts workshops, talks, innovators and sellers stalls, an interactive fashion show, DIY cosmetics workshops and more.
- Organise your own upcycling workshop as a creative way to take something considered waste and repurpose it - turn old tins into plant pots, old picture frame into an earring holder... For example, Greenwich House are organising a Christmas handmade fair this year!
- Organise a **book swap station** to give old books a new home.
- On **November 23<sup>rd</sup>**, Black Friday, the Environment and Energy team are flexing their craft skills, and all staff and students are invited. Come along to [17 Mill Lane](#) to make Christmas decorations from waste materials. We will also have a Clothes Swap. Bring along your unwanted, clean clothes and we will help you to find a new home for it.
- Set up a pen collection point with the help of the [University Counselling Service](#). Funds raised from collected pens go to a local charity providing counselling to young people.

### Case study: E&E Repair Café

In May 2018, the E&E team organised a repair café, which we will be repeating this November 2018! Over 30 items were either repaired or assessed and hundreds of conversations about how to reduce waste! [Cambridge Carbon Footprint](#) run Repair Cafes throughout the year.





## Apply for a waste micro-grant

Do you have an idea which will reduce waste or improve recycling in your department but you need funding to make it happen?

The Environment and Energy section are offering a number of micro-grants up to the value of £250 for departmental waste projects which can be proven to reduce waste, improve recycling or change behaviours.

Applicants can match fund project costs with departmental funds.

To apply for this funding download and complete [this form](#) by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Grant applicants will be informed of the decision in the first week of December.

## Sharing what you have learned

Across the month, we would love to hear from you. Show us what you have done. You can tag us on social media at [@CUEnvironment](#) on Facebook, [@CambridgeSust](#) on Twitter and [@CambridgeSust](#) on Instagram.

If you have learning which might be of interest to other EECs or Green Impact teams, [please email](#) and we can share your story in the Bi-weekly Newsletter.

