

Go Green Week Blog

Go Green Week, organised by your Guild, took place from 28th February – 4th March. You may have seen some of our activities taking place around campus, or maybe you got involved with the Sustainability Showcase in the forum or with the Be the Change workshops? Our aim in holding this event was to raise awareness of the climate crisis and how we can all individually and collectively come together to be more sustainable. Your Guild was supported in this by the University, Be the Change society and representatives of our Student Sustainability Alliance.

Three major wins from the week:

- Releasing and sending an [Open Letter](#) to the University with 5 demands for a more sustainable campus. This letter was created by members of Be the Change society in partnership with your Guild.
- The University lowering its net zero target from 2050 to 2030 at our panel event with representatives from the University and student body.
- Getting more of the university community thinking about sustainability in their day-to-day lives.

It was great to meet everyone who got involved with Go Green Week. Thanks for taking part in our Go Green Week Challenges; we hope that it was a good demonstration of how easy it is to incorporate sustainable actions into your day to day life. As a reminder, we challenged you to: participate in Meat Free Monday; visit a charity shop; pick up litter; spend time in nature; use a reusable water bottle or coffee cup.

We also held a Sustainability Showcase in the Forum on Wednesday, with stands and representatives from your Guild, Be the Change, the Careers Zone, University waste department and the Eat and Shop department. We asked you “what is your biggest priority for a sustainable campus?” with the response options of ‘reducing or eliminating the use of single use plastic packaging in our campus shops and cafes’, ‘energy efficiency of campus buildings’, and ‘variety and quality of plant-based options in our campus food outlets’. Your biggest priority for a sustainable campus was single use plastic, with over 50% of the vote.

Your Guild supported Be the Change’s [Open Letter](#) to the University, which contains five demands including accelerating Exeter’s net zero target to 2030, and actively encouraging sustainable food systems in campus outlets and accommodation. In response at our panel event on Friday, the University announced that it was bringing forward its 2050 net zero target to 2030. The panel event was chaired by your Guild President, Lily Margaroli, and included Janice Kay, Peter Cox and Andy Seaman from the University as well as Emma de Saram and Beth Lewis from Be the Change society. The panel discussed whether the University was sticking to its targets, if its plans went far enough, what more the University can do to be a true leader in the climate emergency and much more.

Three takeaways from the panel:

- *“We’ve got the academia, we’ve got the true work going on so let’s translate that so when you walk through all the different campuses we have, you can see we are committed to this at the top level.”* Lily, Guild President
- *“It is really important to reach out to groups like the Exeter Decolonising Network, the LGBTQ+ Network because we know the effects of the climate crisis do disproportionately affect marginalised groups. Those groups need to have a seat at the table. As we’re going about our solutions we need to think about this in an intersectional way and make that visible.”* Emma de Saram, Be the Change member
- *“The thing about climate policy in general, globally and at university is that we are quite good at setting targets. We’re not yet very good at meeting them. So let’s make sure that when we set targets we intend to meet them.”* Prof Peter Cox, Professor of Climate System Dynamics

Following the panel event, your Guild President relaunched the Student Sustainability Alliance (SSA). The SSA will be a group of students who come together to discuss ideas about how the student body can work to tackle climate change. An initial priority will be holding the University accountable over its newly announced net zero 2030 target. The Student Sustainability Alliance’s first meeting will take place on 26th March. The SSA welcomes anyone, whether you are Exeter’s answer to Greta or you’ve never got involved with climate action. If you would be interested in getting involved please contact us at campaigns@exeterguild.com.

Three things we’re doing (and you should too!) to keep up the momentum from Go Green Week:

- Writing to our local MP to ask them to take more action on climate change (more on this [here](#))
- Incorporating Meat Free Monday into our weekly meals (we love that it helps your wallet as well as the environment)
- Bringing a reusable water bottle everywhere with us