



Edinburgh College  
**Students'**  
**Association**



# Go Green

**Low Carbon Travel CCF Project**

2018 - 2020      Final Report

# Starting Point

From April 2018 to March 2020, Edinburgh College Students's Association ran a sustainable travel project funded by the Climate Challenge Fund. This report summarises our activities and achievements upon its completion

## How did the project come about?

The idea for this project was developed as a partnership between Edinburgh College Students' Association (ECSA), Edinburgh College's Sustainability Team, and the Edinburgh College Development Trust. The College's sustainability team approached the Students' Association as they were seeking ways to increase the capacity for sustainability work at the College, and wanted to know if students were reporting any issues to ECSA that a CCF project might help with.

Through ECSA's Class Rep system, students had repeatedly highlighted travel as a major issue; the travel methods available to students, and the associated costs, were perceived to be a barrier to students' ability to remain in education. Furthermore, we knew from our Welcome Week 2017 travel survey that levels of driving amongst students were high, and levels of active travel were low. Only 10.6% of students walked or cycled, whilst over 20% used cars. Over two thirds of students relied on public transport for their travel.

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It was therefore clear that campaigns and activities that supported students to travel more sustainably would be highly beneficial. This would have the direct effect of reducing students' carbon emissions – but we were equally interested in the knock-on benefits of improved health and well-being, and reduced travel costs, that are associated with active travel and public transport. We were also aware that many of the students who drive might find it difficult to switch (due to caring responsibilities or living in

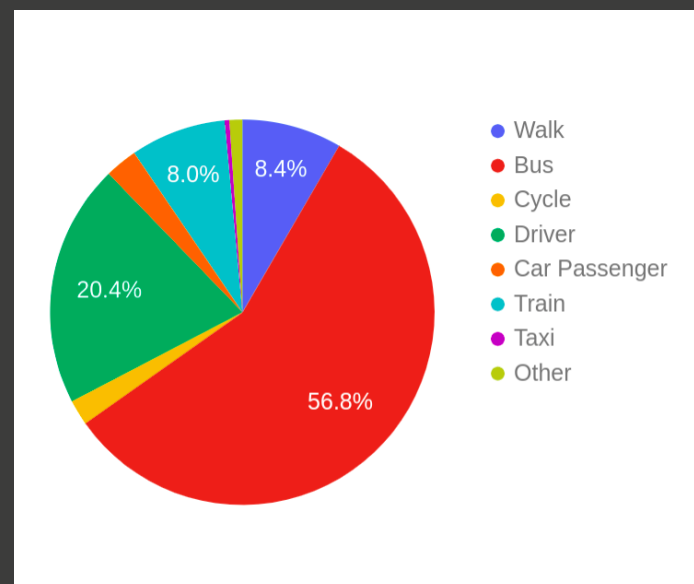
remote locations). As such we also decided to support these students to drive more fuel efficiently and to make it easier to share lifts - again reducing costs as well as carbon emissions. Based on all of these factors, we successfully applied to the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) to run a two year project to focus on these aims. The Development Trust helped write our funding application, as their Manager had previous experience of working on a CCF project. This project ran from July 2018 to March 2020. It was led by two full-time Low Carbon Travel Officers (Alex Luetchford & Claire Furniss), and also provided 8 students (4 per year, 1 per campus) with paid employment experience by offering internships to assist with project admin and delivery.

## About our organisation and our community

Edinburgh College Students' Association exists to represent and advance the interests of our members: the c.27,000 students of Edinburgh College. We are a separate registered charity, independent of the college. However, we work closely together in order to ensure our members' needs are met.

The community context we are working in is quite unique for a CCF project. We are the first college students' association to receive CCF funding, and our student community is more diverse than most university student bodies and the general Edinburgh population.

## Student travel at Edinburgh College, 2017/18:



## Student demographics

- Our students are all ages, from school-leavers to adult-returners; over a third of our students are older than 24.
- 17% are Black/Minority Ethnicity, compared to 8% in Edinburgh.
- Almost 10% of our students are from the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland (SIMD10 areas), and more than half come from the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods.
- 76% of our students are studying at Further Education level, and 24% at Higher Education level.



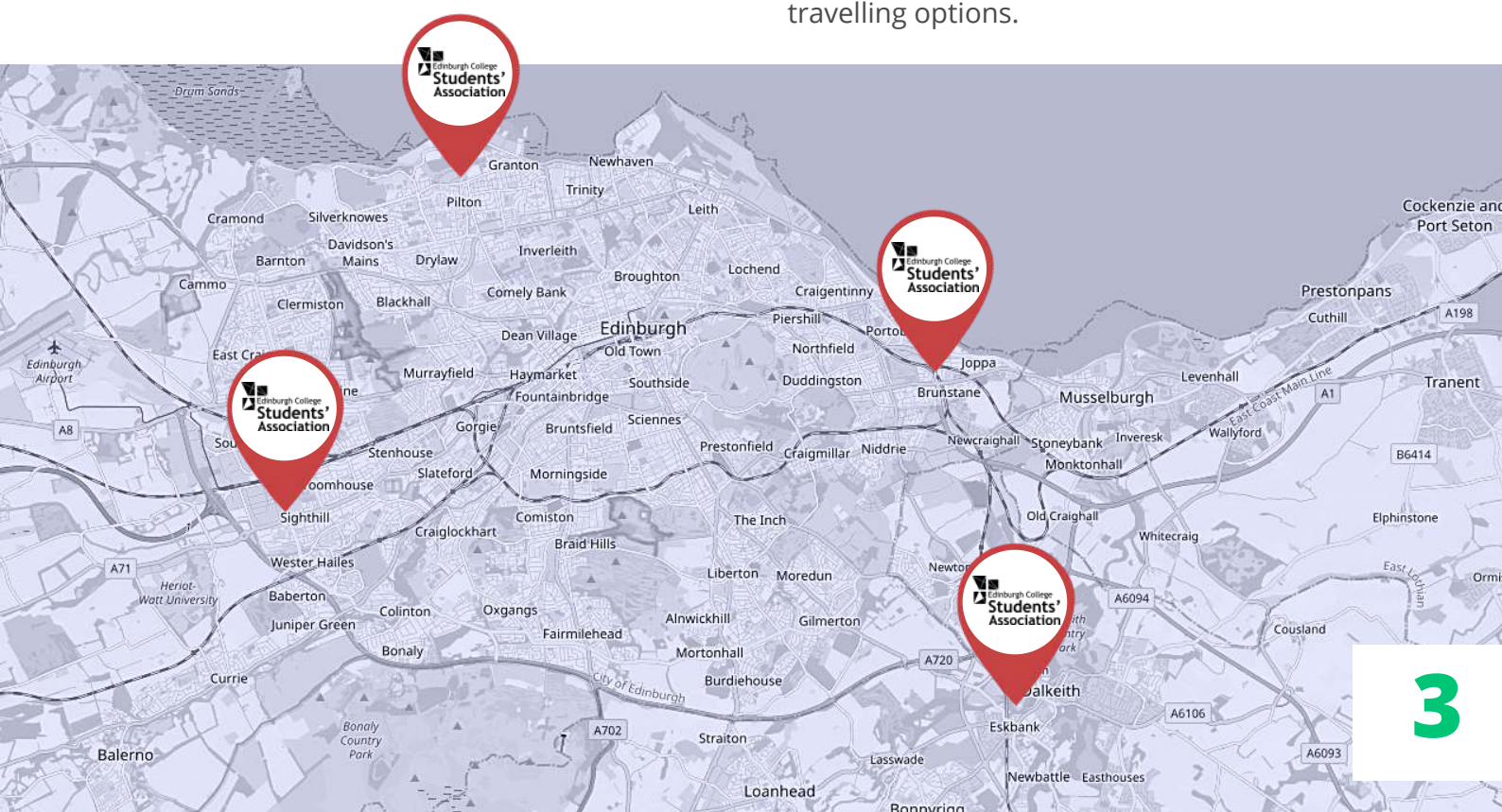
As the only College in Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh College attracts students from a wide range of backgrounds for a variety of reasons. Some come to qualify in order to work in a specific industry (e.g. vehicle maintenance or hairdressing), whilst others wish to continue their education outside the school environment. We also have lots of mature students who have returned to education to retrain in another profession, as well as part-time and evening students.

The diverse demographics of our community mean that our students have highly varying needs when it comes to travel. Some have caring responsibilities and come to college after dropping off their children at school/childcare. At a university, most students would usually live in a shared student flat within walking distance from their campus. Most of our students live in their family home - either with their parents, or as parents themselves.

According to our travel survey data, the median distance travelled by students was 4.9 miles in 2019/20 - a distance many

people would not consider walkable (or for some, even cycleable). The college serves a large geographic area, and students travel from as far as the southern Scottish Borders, Fife, and Dunbar.

Edinburgh College is spread over four different campuses, which all vary in the size of the student body and the courses offered. Because not all campuses teach the same courses, students don't necessarily travel to the campus nearest their home postcode. Throughout the course of the project, we have researched public transport connectivity, and uncovered blackspots in the city that are poorly connected to the campuses. This issue has been raised with Lothian Buses and we have been working with members of the college's senior management, who are committed to taking this further. The identification of these gaps in transport networks available for getting to our campuses highlights how beneficial this project has been for raising awareness at the college of issues students face when travelling options.





# HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

## CARBON SAVINGS

The project will lead to a lifetime saving of 1009 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e - almost 2.5 times more than our the initial target

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Over 1200 students participated in the the project:

- 250 students increased how much they walked or cycled.
- Over 250 people signed up for our new liftsharing website.
- 28 people were trained in fuel efficient driving techniques.

## CLIMATE LITERACY

More than 100 students took part in climate literacy workshops. 54% said this increased their knowledge of climate change.

## A MORE AMBITIOUS SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

We successfully pushed for Edinburgh College to commit to becoming carbon-neutral by 2030.

## MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

- We provided free bus tickets for 46 students with additional support needs. This enabled field trips to take place that otherwise wouldn't have, and increased their confidence in using public transport.
- We hosted 8 clothes swaps with Granton Goes Greener.
- New bike hire stations at Sighthill and Milton Road campuses.
- 15 trees were planted by students at Granton campus.

# Outcomes

Our project had five target outcomes. This section summarises our achievements for each one.

## Outcome 1: Fuel Efficient Driving

### ***Outcome exceeded***

We have run 6 days of fuel-efficient driver training, which saw 28 people undergo training on how to drive in a more fuel-efficient way. This has resulted in a project carbon saving of 29.8tCO<sub>2</sub>e, which will lead to a lifetime carbon reduction of 89.3tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

Our target carbon reduction for this outcome was set at 19.22tCO<sub>2</sub>e, so we are happy to report that this outcome's target has been exceeded.

Initially, we had planned to deliver training through the use of a driving simulator at freshers' events and at other times in the academic year. However, we soon discovered that this simulator had been retired by the Energy Saving Trust, so we instead organised for students to take part in one-on-one driving lessons. Due to the costs and time required to do this, it meant that fewer people were actively engaged in this outcome than originally planned: 28 instead of 80. However, the quality of this interaction is likely to have been much higher - it is reasonable to assume that the participants who took part in the in-person training will see a greater increase in their

fuel efficiency than if they had just learnt through a driving simulator.

Furthermore, we also added a page of fuel-efficient driving tips to the ECSA website, so that students could learn how to make these savings if they didn't have time to take part in a training session. This will also help those students who do drive, but don't drive their car to college. We know from our website analytics that we have had 201 unique hits on this page, which has allowed us to reach more students than anticipated.

## Outcome 2: Active Travel

### ***Outcome met***

Our carbon reduction target for outcomes 2, 3, and 4 (those that led to our community travelling less or differently) was 118.52tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Through our activities, we ended up with a project saving of 291.4tCO<sub>2</sub>e for these changes. Although some of our participants are difficult to attribute to one specific outcome (e.g. people who used the travel planning tool we supplied), we know we have had at least 254 participants who have directly made a change to active travel. A major part of our work in the early days of the project was

creating a new travel information hub on our website. This had over 1,300 unique visitors over the course of the project, and 129 people read the section on active travel. This information was then included on the College website itself (whereas previously only basic information was provided), so will have been read by more people there too - especially as this information is now included in the student induction process. A summary of our other activities involving active travel can be found in the next section of the report.

### **Outcome 3: Liftsharing**

#### ***Outcome met***

Our initial target for this outcome was for 40 students to start sharing a lift to College. By becoming a corporate member of Liftshare.com we were able to offer a bespoke Liftsharing platform to our students, which led to 252 people signing up to share a lift to College (some have since left - we currently have 220 signed-up members). 186 of these 220 members have added a journey available for sharing to the platform. This included 164 requests for a lift, and 76 offers of a lift (members can add as many journeys to their profile as required, hence the difference in these figures compared to the total number of members with a journey). The platform provides a function whereby members can click to confirm they have started sharing a journey. Only 4 members have actually done this. However, it is likely that many more users than this have found other people to share with through the platform, but then haven't actually confirmed this.

We know from the platform's monitoring dashboard that 20 users have messaged someone else to request a lift, and 14 of those received a reply. This suggests that more than the 4 who have confirmed as such may have started sharing a journey directly because of this new platform. We also know of several students who started liftsharing with classmates after taking part in our activities, even though they didn't use the new liftsharing platform.

### **Outcome 4: Public Transport**

#### ***Outcome exceed***

As previously stated, we surpassed our carbon reduction target for travelling less and differently by 172.88 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. From our participant tracker, we know that at least 123 students made the change to public transport. Most of these cases were moves away from car journeys, and some more were made through moves to more sustainable forms of public transport (e.g. getting a tram instead of bus). It is understandable that these numbers are lower than those for our active travel and liftshare outcomes, as a very high proportion of our students already use public transport to get to college (see the travel summary reports included in the appendices to this report). However, in light of this we still had 205 unique visitors to the public transport page on our website, which offers information on local buses, trams, and train connections.



## Outcome 5: Climate Change Awareness

### **Outcome exceeded**

We received feedback from 38 of the 104 students who took part in our classroom workshops. This was collected via a short survey, completed at the start and end of each class. We asked participants to rate their current knowledge of climate change, and the relevance they thought it had to their subject area. They were then asked the same questions again after the session to see if there were any changes. On average 54% of these students felt their climate change knowledge increased through the sessions, and 43% felt that climate change was more relevant to their subject area after the session. In the feedback form, we also asked for any further comments students had about the sessions; here are two highlights:

*"Great fun, I am going to do more to help the environment"*

*"Absolutely fantastic workshop! Very informative, just wish we had more time"*

We are glad that these workshops not only helped us raise awareness of climate change, but also allowed us to highlight to students how it is relevant to their subject area, and how personal lifestyle decisions (such as travel method) can have an impact.

Throughout all of our campaigns, we made sure to highlight the range of benefits

sustainable lifestyle changes can have for individuals and the planet. These were messages that we included in our online communications, as well as at our physical stalls on campuses. We found stalls to be a great conversation starter with students and staff members for raising awareness of what we were doing in the project, as well as for finding out what they were doing in other areas of sustainability at the College. The contact we got with members of staff through stalls was also incredibly valuable for forming links that led to collaboration on class time activities and the provision of bus tickets for vulnerable student travel.

Besides these stalls, the main way we communicated with our students about the project was through posters and news articles on our website. Both these methods will have increased awareness of climate change amongst our students, although quantifying that impact is difficult to do. All our posters were designed along a consistent branding theme, to increase awareness of the project as well as the Climate Challenge Fund itself. Other than posters for specific events, we also produced some posters that focused on raising awareness of sustainability issues more generally - for example, one of our student interns designed a poster series looking at how to have a more sustainable Christmas. Over the course of the project we published 21 news articles about our activities on our website, which received a total of 1,646 unique views.



# Activities & Climate Literacy

This section provides more detail on the specific activities we ran throughout the project.

## **New Year Travel Pledge**

During both years of the project, we have run a New Year Travel Pledge challenge for students to take part in. This asked them to pledge to travel to college by a more sustainable method, and if they did they received a reward. This campaign focused on the idea of switching to sustainable travel to benefit your health and finances in the new year. In January 2019 we had 46 sign ups, and in 2020 22 students signed up. In both years, the greatest number of students signed up to switch to active travel, followed by public transport, and then liftsharing. After a few weeks, we sent a follow-up survey to find out if students had stuck to the pledge they made – if they had, they received a prize worth approximately £10.

## **Spring Travel Challenge**

We also ran a Spring Travel Challenge during both years of the project. This

followed a similar format to the New Year Pledge – with students who signed up and made a change being rewarded with a prize worth £10. Year 1 saw 31 students sign up, along with 17 in Year 2. In conjunction with this, we also had a Walking Challenge running for students to sign up to. If required, they were loaned a step counter, and they then kept track of their steps each day. At the end of each of the two weeks of the Challenge, students were asked to submit their step counts in a Google Form. The person with the highest average daily step count at each campus won a Fitbit as a prize. These walking competitions received a similar number of entrants as the spring travel challenges.

## **Green Student of the Year Award**

At the end of both years of the project we asked for nominations from students for a 'Green Student of the Year' award. The aim

was to recognise, highlight, and reward students' efforts to become more sustainable in their daily lives and travel. We received 22 nominations over the two years. The entries we received had some great examples of Edinburgh College students taking climate action. It was very reassuring to hear how members of our community had taken the message of the project to heart! Here are some of the best quotes from the nominations we received:

*"This year, as part of starting at the college, I re-evaluated my life priorities and the ways I want to act in the best interests of my health, the health of the planet, and the best interests of our communities... After driving in for the first three days of college, and finding it annoying, dirty, expensive and unhappy, I decided to cycle, and I never stopped... I just want to say thanks for the opportunity to share this stuff and to be part of a Student Association that takes these things seriously and acts to encourage positive change. Nice one."*

*"I walk to the bus then get the bus to the train station then get the bus from the train station to the campus. My commute is as green as I can make it... I have made sure to not take the easy route to college by getting my mum to take me part or all the way!"*

*"I always use the bus to get to college despite being able to drive, as it's a short and frequent journey I make, I really care about the environment and believe sharing transport is an important way to do our bit for the planet."*

*"The first time I rode my bike to college I discovered Edinburgh's bike paths, and I fell in love with the city again. It's incredible how this city keeps surprising me... My choices to help the environment are long term decisions... I am planning to go to uni next year and the first thing I did was to check how long it would take me to go by bike. 32 minute's ride beside the canal - amazing!"*

*"[this student] cycles everyday to college, she is always encouraging the students in our class to cycle to work and for fun. She has been successful in getting me to cycle for the first time in over a decade, which is testament to her infectious attitude and passion for getting people cycling."*



Joseph & Gemma, our winner and runner up from the 2018/19 Green Student Awards.

## Fuel-Efficient Driver Training

As previously mentioned, 28 people were trained to drive in a more fuel-efficient way through 6 days of fuel-efficient driver training. In the project application it was assumed that this outcome would be delivered by supplying a fuel-efficient driving simulator, most likely to be used at Freshers events. However, we were unable to find a simulator that was available to book, so we changed our approach to book driving instructors who were able to offer in-car training. This approach allowed students to go out in their own car with a trained instructor, who let them drive how they normally would around a set loop, before giving them tips on how to drive in a more fuel-efficient way for the second loop. After all sessions we asked for feedback from participants, through which all said they enjoyed the session, found it useful, and would recommend it to a friend.

## Class Workshops

We delivered workshops in classes for over 100 students, which increased their carbon literacy and awareness of how sustainability is relevant to their subject. These workshops were run in classes as varied as Sociology, Vehicle Maintenance, and Musical Theatre. They covered the basics of climate change science, and looked at how personal choices can have an impact on this. We also tailored the workshops to the specific subject areas; for example, we held a debate on electric vehicles in the vehicle maintenance classes and did improvisation activities on imagining a carbon-neutral future in the theatre class.

After these sessions, the students were asked to complete feedback forms. Through these 54% of students said their knowledge of climate change had increased after the workshop, and 43% increased the rating they gave for how relevant it is to their curriculum. Two thirds of these students said they had not studied climate change or sustainability as part of their course before.

## Registration Week

During both years of the project, we were able to inform students about our project through the College's Welcome Week/Registration Week (it was rebranded after Year 1). ECSA gets a 20 minute slot with classes to tell students about our organisation and services, help them log onto the college computer system, and to get them to fill in a quick survey about their interests for the year. We included a small travel section in the presentation, so that students knew about our project and what it could offer them. We also added questions on travel to the survey, and asked if they were interested in any of the events we had planned (e.g. fuel-efficient driver training; cycle training). This allowed us to target the marketing of our activities' throughout the project. Over the two years this survey received over 7000 responses. Both years we produced a report summarising the findings of the transport survey - these have been included as an appendix to this report.

## Freshers' Week

Every year, ECSA hosts the College's Freshers events. Each campus has a day of stalls including internal College groups and external organisations. We held a Go Green



stall during both years, and also invited local and national sustainability organisations along. At our stall we offered students travel information and advice (including walking and cycling maps, cycling freebies, and reusable water bottles), and also had a fun smoothie bike to engage students with. We also handed flyers out so students could get more information about the project, and any other events we had coming up.



### Cycle Training

Alex, one of our project staff, is a Cycling Scotland qualified cycle trainer, which meant we were able to offer students the opportunity to participate in cycle training. Our first attempt at providing this was in the form of a group session in October 2018. Unfortunately these weren't attended by any students, so we decided to change our approach and offer students 1:1 training sessions instead. This led to a student based at Milton Road campus having 6 sessions of training with Alex, which he gave the following feedback on:

*"So far, Cycle Training has been a great experience for me and has helped in me*

*becoming more confident in my abilities on the road. Alex has been a great teacher and introduces me to new techniques at a simple pace. Since then, I've been cycling to college and other parts of Edinburgh more often!"*



We continued to advertise the opportunity of free cycle training consistently, and had several students get in touch to express interest, but unfortunately for various reasons no further sessions took place.

### Tree Planting

We identified an opportunity to receive a batch of free trees from the Woodland Trust, so that we could run a tree planting event. The College Estates team were able to identify a plot at Granton campus where these could be planted, so we organised for this to take place on Tuesday 26th March 2019. During the advertisement of this event, a lecturer in our Access & Continuing Education (ACE) team reached out to see if we would be able to do a similar event with one of her classes. This was supported by our funding for accompanying vulnerable students to use public transport, as we were able to supply bus tickets for this class to get the direct bus between Milton Road (their campus of study) and Granton. Over these two days of planting, we were able to engage with 15 students and let them know



about the environmental benefits of planting trees for carbon emissions and biodiversity.



More recently, we have been working with the College's Community Gardens Coordinator to organise a public

consultation about a new green space for Edinburgh College on a larger scale. We are hosting this on our website, and circulating it within the College, as well as to the surrounding community. This will see an area that was previously an overflow car park become a parkland area.

### Working with vulnerable students

In our original application we said we would pair vulnerable students (for example, those with learning difficulties) up with volunteers to accompany them on public transport. We faced some hurdles at the start of the project once it became clear that this was not viable, due to safeguarding issues. Instead, we decided to work with the ACE department, who would be more suitably qualified.

We then offered lecturers in the ACE department the use of pre-paid bus tickets for trips they would like to take with their classes. We supplied 163 bus tickets to 5 different lecturers, who were then enabled to take their classes on trips to places such as Edinburgh Castle and the National Art Gallery. Two of these lecturers got back in touch with us recently with the following feedback:

*"We wouldn't have been able to go without them as it would have cost too much so thank you very much."*

*"The bus tickets have been a fantastic resource and have made a real difference in the scope of activities that we can access with our students. Many of our students come from homes where finances are limited and extra*



*trips into Edinburgh or elsewhere can prove very difficult to fund and an added barrier... A tangible by-product of these trips is the confidence gained in both planning travel and using transport to access activities - this is student-led and staff supported. These skills are key for independence and employability as it is adapting to new environments outside of College or home and this can be a real challenge for many of our students. In having access to travel cards, we have been able to remove a financial barrier which has allowed the students to access meaningful and transferable learning experiences and this has been most apparent in bringing the learning to life in our Travel and Tourism and Skills for Customer Care units."*

### Global Youth Strike

We promoted the Global Youth Climate Strike on the 20th September 2019 as an opportunity for students to take climate action and learn more about climate change. Working with teaching union representatives, we received a commitment from the college that students who attended would be marked in registers as "engaged in external learning". Importantly, this ensured that students were not penalised in either their academic record or

bursary payments. We organised a meet-up point for Edinburgh College students who wanted to attend the Edinburgh protest together, and one of our staff members attended as a point of contact and oversee our students safety. We had 20 students come along to our meeting point, and it is likely more attended the protest but not were part of our group.

### World Mental Health Day



For World Mental Health day (10th October 2019) we ran stalls to encourage students to travel in ways that can be beneficial for their mental health, whilst also benefiting the environment. Our key messages were surrounding the proven health and mental well-being benefits of travelling actively, and the benefits of public transport for having time to relax with a book/podcast/music. On the stalls we also gave out some well-being packs, which contained an NHS mental health booklet, a tulip bulb with directions on planting, and a small bar of fairtrade chocolate. This offered a good opportunity to highlight benefits of sustainable travel methods to students, whilst making links to other things that can be beneficial for the environment.





## Clothing Swaps with Granton Goes Greener



At the start of the project, we looked into the other CCF projects being delivered near our campuses. We therefore had Granton Goes Greener and Edinburgh Tool Library at our Granton Fresher's event in the first year of our project. The clothing rail that Granton Goes Greener brought with them was so successful with our students that we invited them back for more regular events. We were able to form a partnership agreement with them, which saw them hosting a Clothing Swap fortnightly at Granton campus. Over 8 events, there was around 93kg of clothing taken by students, and 35kg given back to Granton Goes Greener.



## Sustainable Travel Breakfast with Greening Gorebridge

While looking into other CCF projects, we also contacted Greening Gorebridge as they work close to our Midlothian campus. As well as coming to our Fresher's event, we also hosted a station breakfast together at Midlothian campus. This rewarded students who had travelled to college by active travel or public transport, by providing them with a breakfast item. Approximately 50 students engaged with this event, which is a high number in comparison to what is usually expected from events at this campus.



# Learning & Reflection

This section lays out challenges and learning points from our project.

## ***Challenges***

### **Working within the College setting**

A key challenge that we have faced during this project has related to the College timetable. Both Low Carbon Travel Officers started their contracts at the beginning of July 2018, while students were off campus for the summer holidays. Although this meant there was no contact time with the target community until mid-August, it was beneficial in that we could more easily plan for the year ahead. The same approach applied to student holidays in October, Christmas and Easter - where we took time to review progress, make plans for the next block, and schedule any useful meetings with members of staff who could support the project.

Another more challenging element to this project has been working across multiple sites, at opposite ends of the city. This meant that any campaign we were running required events and stalls to be replicated at all four campuses. This proved to be problematic, as different campuses often had varying levels of student engagement

with certain event types, and it also effectively quadrupled the time and staff energy needed to launch a campaign. We therefore made it as easy as possible to sign up to our activities through our website. These were circulated on our mailing lists, as well as on the ECSA and Edinburgh College social media channels. Where possible we also tried to get these opportunities included in staff and student newsletters, which led to staff in the College's Communications department creating internal and external news articles about our work. We know that these communications led to students signing up, as we always had more entries than we got solely on our stalls. Another benefit of reaching our target community this way was that it better suits part-time students, who are less frequently on campus for physical events - in the 2018-19 academic year, part-time student numbers overtook full-time students for the first time, so this approach makes more sense on reflection.

Working across four sites also impacted our staff capacity. In our original bid, we had split the responsibility for each of the campuses between two full-time Low Carbon Travel Officers. However, once events started taking place we quickly realised that these would run best with both members of staff on campus together. Furthermore, our staff's differences in skills and experience meant that there were occasions when it was more suitable for one staff member to attend meetings at a campus that wasn't directly 'their responsibility'. We therefore ended up shifting our division of work away from specific campuses towards a system where decisions were made based on expertise (in consultation with one-another).

## Staff absences

Unfortunately, the main staff member responsible for Sustainability at Edinburgh College was on long-term sick leave for the majority of this project. At the beginning of the project, we managed to get a good idea of the different initiatives he had worked on across the College, and were able to brainstorm with him about potential project activities. However, once he was no longer working, we had to work more autonomously than was initially planned - especially as he was meant to be a member of the project Steering Group. As this was a dynamic situation with no defined end date, there was a lag between him leaving and other members of staff taking on some of his responsibilities. This led to some hurdles at the start of the project; there were occasionally issues in College operations that affected our project, such as the lack of clarity on locker access for

cyclists. However, once one of the College's Estates Services Managers took on responsibility for the the sustainability workload, he was incredibly helpful to us and the project. He also helped tie our project into other sustainability work at the College, which allowed us to develop stronger links with members of the College Senior Management Team.

During the course of the project, the College's Development Trust went through some major structural and personnel changes. This has made having regular steering group meetings more challenging. To mitigate the impacts of this, we have had more regular catch-ups with our Director, Al Wilson, who has helped us form new ideas and made sure that progress was being made.

## Fuel-efficient driver training

As we had to change our approach on fuel-efficient driving from the original bid, it took us some time to run our first fuel-efficient driver training day. This was partly due to one of the most local trainers to us having no appropriate availability for us. We therefore ended up booking our first sessions through Roadwise Driver Training CIC, who are based in Aberdeen. We appreciated that they are a Community Interest Company, as this aligns itself well with the ethos we wanted to support. Accessing these sessions was primarily made possible through the Home Energy Scotland subsidy, which halved the cost of training. However, this was removed at the end of the 2018-19 financial year, so we



therefore had to do another review of trainers who could offer these sessions at a lower cost in the project's second year. This led to us using ProDrive Driver Training in Year 2 of the project.

One of the main issues we have had in relation to fuel-efficient training has been getting follow-up data from participants. Before the training day we would send out an email to get necessary data for the Carbon Reporter. If students didn't fill this out before their session, we were able to get them to fill this in on the day. However, when we sent out a follow-up survey a few weeks after each training day, we found it difficult to chase up the many participants who didn't respond. Although we managed to get a 25% sample rate for this outcome, we would have ideally liked to get more responses to get a better idea of how these sessions impacted carbon emissions.

## Liftshare

We faced some challenges whilst trying to encourage students to liftshare to College. Although we had a wealth of data from our Welcome Week survey to suggest a good number of students (around 20%) would be interested in sharing a lift to College, we felt it wouldn't be appropriate for us to directly link students due to data protection, safety, and liability concerns. We therefore looked into other options for delivering this outcome, and discovered Liftshare.com. Although we decided on using their services in around November 2019, our site wasn't live until the start of May 2019. This was in large part due to this being a collaborative effort between us, the College's Estates team, and the Development Trust Manager.

As Liftshare.com provides their service for a minimum of two years, we had to ensure that the College was happy to pay the second years' license fee after our project was complete. We then received information about the Paths for All 'Smarter Choices Smarter Places' grant, which could offer us 50% match funding. We therefore liaised with the Development Trust Manager to help us with this funding application to make this option more affordable. Although this was a time consuming process, we are very happy that this ended in a successful bid for match-funding, and the development of a Liftshare platform that will be available to students after our project has been completed.

## Event timings

A challenge we regularly faced related to the timing of planned events. At the start of the project, we arranged meetings for the Sustainability Club at all four campuses. These were scheduled at a time that straddled both main lunch hours, in the hope that students could drop in and out when suited them. Unfortunately, there were very few attendees at these meetings, although there was an apparent interest in our Facebook events and Welcome Week data. Low numbers were seen again during our film screening events a few weeks later, which were organised to tie into Scotland's Climate Week. After these two lunchtime activities weren't well attended, we reconsidered ways we could engage with students that didn't involve being in a specific place at a specific time. This review is what led to our change in approach towards working with lecturers in class-times, and campaigns that could be signed

up to and administered through our website and in-person stalls. We were therefore still able to have face-to-face contact with some students, whilst offering an alternative to those who weren't able to commit to set times.

The challenge of getting students to show up to a set location at a specific time was also apparent in our travel drop-ins. As this was something written into our application, we were keen to get drop in times up and running as soon as possible once students were on campus in September 2018. We planned these around the times that we had our assistants in the offices with us, so they could get experience of planning travel with students. Unfortunately over the two years, we only had four students show up to the office for travel planning support, with a further two emailing instead. This low level of engagement brought us back to our funding application, which had included the idea of a 'greener routes to campus mobile friendly map'. We found out that Liftshare.com offered a personalised travel planning tool (myPTP) that we could include in our membership. We embedded this into both the ECSA and College websites before the start of the academic year 2019-20, and this was highlighted to students in communications and at our Registration Weeks. Since this platform launched, 378 travel plans have been created - which supports our assumption that students found it easier to do this online in their own time, opposed to coming to our offices to get a similar service.

## Best Practice

### Event timings

After reviewing our approach to student engagement once we realised that set event times and locations weren't working, we decided to use incentives to encourage engagement with our project. The first key event we used this in was our New Year Pledge campaign in January 2019 - where students could choose a prize worth approximately £10 if they signed up to change their travel, and succeeded in sticking to this. We had 46 students sign up to this campaign - a significant amount more than we had through previous events - so the use of incentives was added to how we ran events and campaigns going forward. We made sure these prizes reinforced the messaging of the project - examples included vouchers for local bike shops, zero-waste toiletry hampers, and vegetarian cookbooks. Everyone loves free things!

### Collaborating with other organisations

Working with external organisations has created a lot of new opportunities for our students that we couldn't have provided by ourselves. We are extremely grateful to the external organisations we worked with during this project. Our first key events (Freshers Week 2018) were attended by three local CCF projects - Granton Goes Greener, Edinburgh Tool Library, and Greening Gorebridge. They were able to discuss their projects with our student community, whilst also communicating how their activities related to climate change

mitigation. This left us more time to focus on our travel-specific outcomes, and was also a lovely way to meet some of the CCF community. Through the success of their clothing swap at this event, we were also able to form a partnership agreement with Granton Goes Greener for the rest of the academic year 2018-19. This led to 8 further clothes swap events taking place at our Granton campus, which were run by the Granton Goes Greener team. Through these events 93kg of clothes were given out to our community, and they gave 35kg back. It was so encouraging to see the level of engagement they got with our students, with many faces showing up consistently throughout the year.



We also had continued contact with Greening Gorebridge, as we ran a sustainable travel breakfast with them at Eskbank station in October 2018. Through this we were able to engage with 50 students at our Midlothian campus, who were offered a free breakfast item if they had used public transport or active travel to get to College that day. They also attended our Freshers event in 2019, and were a great help to our planning of a community fridge for our next project.

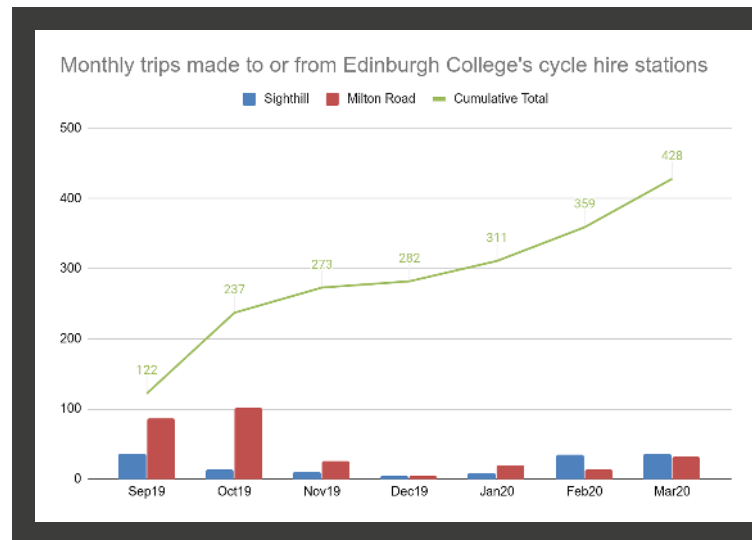


During the first year of this project, the College also had a Campus Cycling Officer (Jen Murray), funded by Cycling Scotland. We worked closely with her on a number of events that linked with our own work. One such event was the tying together of our Spring Travel Challenge launch with an Adaptive Bikes workshop Jen organised. We wanted to run these two initiatives in conjunction with each other, so that there was a greater physical presence on campus to attract students to come and see what we were doing. We also planned lunchtime bike rides and litter picking sessions together, although attendance was low due to our previous discussion of event timings over lunch breaks.

We were also fortunate to receive tree saplings from the Woodland Trust through their 'Free Trees for Schools & Communities' scheme in March 2019. These were the trees we used in our tree planting event, which allowed students to actively engage in the planting process whilst learning about the benefits trees have to ecosystems and biodiversity. We will apply to the Woodland Trust again as part of our plans to create a new greenspace at Milton Road.

Throughout the project, we also worked with the City of Edinburgh Council a number of times. This collaboration came through their 'Be Bright be Seen' campaigns in Autumn each year, as well as through interactions with Serco (their contractor for the city's bike hire scheme). Through our engagement with their 'Be Bright Be Seen' campaign, we received a generous supply of high visibility items and bike lights. We were able to give these out at joint events with the Council team, as well as afterwards

from our offices and stalls. Our project staff were instrumental in securing the installation of hire points for the city bike hire scheme at our Milton Road and Sighthill campuses. Since they were installed in August 2019, these hire points have been used 428 times.



## Inform strategies

As previously mentioned, we were involved in the production of a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy for the College, which will run from 2019-2024. We feel that aligning this strategy with ambitious sustainability targets was an incredibly important part of our work, as this will continue to set the tone for work in the College far beyond the lifetime of this project. This work will therefore be discussed in more detail in the Sustainable Legacy section on page 27. It is included in this section to highlight the importance of taking opportunities to influence your stakeholders long-term planning, which can leave a strong legacy after a CCF project has finished.

## **Ensure travel information is up-to-date, and provide multiple avenues for accessing it**

An immediate area for improvement we identified was updating and increasing the travel information on ECSA and Edinburgh College's websites. These were very bare-bones when we started, but they have been improved to include comprehensive travel information and advice on travelling sustainably. We also built a new travel mapping service (as planned in our initial application) into these pages. To avoid reinventing the wheel, we researched organisations that provided this service, and found that Liftshare.com offers one called 'myPTP'. We therefore included this in our membership package with Liftshare.com, so that this bespoke travel mapping tool could be embedded on the ECSA and College websites.

We were also able to include this information and travel tool in the College's 'Keep Warm' email to new students. These are a stream of induction emails all new students receive before starting their course. Being involved with this process was highly beneficial, as we were able to direct new students to our travel support page (with the myPTP widget) before they had even come to campus. As this platform prioritises more sustainable travel options for shorter journeys, we are confident that this had an impact on students' choices of travel modes for getting to campus. This highlights how embedding your project into systems that every member of a community must interact with is a good way of catching

their attention. As mentioned previously, we were also heavily involved in the college's Welcome Week induction process which meant we could talk about the project to thousands of students and capture baseline data.

One learning point we have taken from writing this report is the number of students who approached us at our stalls to talk about their travel, but didn't actually sign up to the activity we were promoting. These haven't then been formally recorded as participants, as we never had a consistent way of recording these valuable interactions. We would recommend other projects consider how to best record all kinds of interactions that occur with their community at an earlier point, so they don't miss out on reporting these participants.

# Finance & Administration

## Staff training

Through this project, we were able to provide training to a number of staff members. These training sessions ranged from Carbon Literacy for Communities (undertaken by four members of staff), through to 'Report Writing' and 'Promoting Sustainability through Powerful Communications'. The staff members involved were provided invaluable experiences to learn transferable skills that were extremely beneficial to the project, as well as for going forward into their future careers.

## Finances

Overall, we felt the project finances were split well between required headings. The main areas of change were surrounding salary changes that came from the College's annual review, and the National Joint Negotiations Committee.

## Admin

Having two members of full-time staff working on the project significantly increased our capacity to be involved in wider College sustainability work. Examples of these have been discussed throughout, including involvement with the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2019-24, Sustainable Education steering group, and joint events with the Campus Cycling Officer and Community Gardens Coordinator.

We found the project progress reports to be a valuable resource for regularly reviewing our work, and for helping to compile this report. The report template was clear to use, and helped us to be critical of areas of our work that weren't delivering the results we desired. It was also greatly beneficial to attend the Data Collection training session at the start of the project, to develop our skills of using the Carbon Reporter.



# Sustainable Legacy

## Adapting our plans

In our initial bid, the key areas for sustainable legacy were envisioned to surround the Sustainability Club, travel planning in Class Rep training, and the potential to continue a travel challenge after the project was completed.

However, we have found that these have changed fairly significantly through the course of the project. One reason for this is the difficulty we have found with setting up a lasting, student-led 'society' in the College context. We attempted this at different times of the year, through multiple different approaches, but are yet to find a solution that could lead to a reasonable expectation that this will continue after the project without staff support. Due to time constraints for fitting travel planning into Class Rep training, this didn't end up taking place. To replace this, we instead provided project updates in all Class Rep Conferences throughout the year (16 per year - 4 at each campus), so they were aware of what events and activities we had coming up.

In light of the above challenges, we made sure to find other avenues for this project to have a lasting legacy at Edinburgh College.

## A more ambitious college

One approach for this that we are especially proud of is our involvement with creating the College's new 'Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2019-24'. Our project staff were invited along to the preliminary meetings of the steering group for this strategy, and we made it clear that we wanted to see more ambition from the College than was outlined in the first draft of the strategy. This led to a strategy that we believe is far more promising for steering the College towards greater sustainability measures over the coming years. In particular, Edinburgh College has now set a target of becoming carbon-neutral by 2030. The chair of this group (the College's Head of Communications, Policy and Research, and Secretary to the Board of Management) has been incredibly supportive of our project, and gave the following feedback about our involvement with the Strategy:

*"ECSA's Go Green Project has been, and currently is, engaged in the delivery of these objectives [from the Environmental Sustainability Strategy], in partnership with College staff and students. The expertise and commitment of project staff has been outstanding in this regard, demonstrating*

*leadership amongst the college staff and student community. Also, their ability to produce high quality data on a range of environmental sustainability issues has been of vital importance, and has helped shape the College's approach across many key issues."*

As well as being heavily involved with developing the Environmental Sustainability Strategy, we have also been invited to the College's Sustainable Education steering group. Although these meetings have only started meeting more consistently in the past six months, there were promising discussions about the introduction of a sustainability module for staff on the College intranet. We feel that we were able to make positive suggestions for the platform, as well as offering to send the classroom activities we have worked on in the past two years to be included. This will mean that these resources can continue to be used well past the lifetime of this project.

## A greener campus

Another strand of the project that has led to further project legacy was our tree planting event. This allowed us to plant 15 trees on an unused patch of grass behind our Granton campus car park. These trees will be there for years to come, and will offer a lasting visual impact of this project.

Our close partnership work with the College has also allowed us to set up our bespoke Liftshare.com site. As we were able to provide data from our Welcome Week to show the student demand for this service, we were able to receive match-funding from Paths for All's Smarter Choices Smarter Places (SCSP) grant to match our CCF funding for this service. As the SCSP

funding was only for one year, we were then able to gain support from the College to pay the second year licence fee for this platform. This will therefore be on offer to students after this project is complete. As membership numbers have grown well over this first year, the College is also planning to install Liftshare parking bays in our car parks. We expect that these spaces will raise the visibility of liftsharing, and will offer a further incentive for students and staff to reduce single-occupancy car usage.

As previously mentioned, we have also done a considerable amount of work to offer useful and up-to-date travel information for our students. This has been achieved through updating the ECSA and College websites, adding the myPTP widget to both sites, and producing a transport information email that will be sent to all new students, before they start their course. These resources will continue to be available after the project is completed, so that students can continue to benefit from this information.

# Summation

It has been a real privilege to witness the growth of our sustainability activities over the past few years at ECSA and this end of project report details the sheer volume of work that has gone into that.

As the Association Director, I have been involved since the early discussions on a potential CCF application way back in 2017 and it is a very proud moment to reflect on the progress we have made since then as we come to the end of our Go Green Project.

On the most basic level, we have met or exceeded all of our original objectives that we were funded to pursue. More importantly, though, the CCF funding has allowed us to set the agenda for the wider College community and push for more ambitious targets over the coming years. Our full-time project staff, Claire & Alex, have made an incredible impact on the Association and the wider College, providing much needed expertise and passion in equal measure to ensure the success of the project.

College students are often the forgotten demographic in the education sector, despite there being almost a quarter of a million of them in Scotland. As the only Scottish College Students' Association to receive CCF funding directly, we are proud to lead the way in climate change awareness - providing our students with real, tangible ways for them to change their

own behaviours, as well as influence those around them as they enter industry, raise families, and become leaders in their own communities.

Without the funding from the Climate Challenge Fund, we would never have been able to make the required impact at a local level for this climate emergency, but with it, we have put ourselves in a position where we can continue to positively influence students and local decision-makers for years to come.



**Al Wilson | ECSA Director**

