

Information of the work of the Eco Council

In October 2022 we wrote: Currently, the Eco Council is made up of 45 members but is growing; particularly as there are some initiatives which are forthcoming which will help to further raise the profile of the Eco Council still further. These members do not always attend each and every meeting but there is a substantial “hard core” of members that contribute to everything and give a lot to Green issues. Our main student lead (yr13) has been involved for many years (and all through the Covid years!).

Recently, our biggest achievement is that we have been accredited with our Green Flag Award for the College once again. This has been a great accomplishment and more fully recognises the entire approach that the College make towards green issues.

Many of our College community clearly care about the environment but can't contribute totally to the Eco Council meetings. This is reflected in the proactive way that we have been able to resume recycling paper and card more effectively; especially reflected in the numbers of departments involved and wanting to be involved. Ideas are shared on an *ad hoc* basis sometimes e.g. passing in the corridor or an email which shows the commitment and awareness of the College as a whole too. Many ideas become real initiatives that are followed through. For example, we are able to more fully encourage the “seconds” uniforms heavily via assemblies and raising awareness of Sustainable Fashion as a whole; many people, including staff, will share when something is from a pre-loved collection. This is an area which is growing all the time. Initially, it was reflected through our student-lead securing second place in the Catenian Public Speaking Competition with Sustainable Fashion as the theme of her talk (and her winnings were donated to the work of the Eco Council). She then led Eco Council talks on the subject to a very wide audience, but this grew wider through whole school assemblies. It is an initiative continued through our College supporting Oxfam's Second Hand September initiative and details of this are shared through our College.

We litter pick as an entire College. This is extended outside the College grounds now, using our Sixth Form. This means that we can help to ensure our local area is also litter free – as often as we can.

The Eco Noticeboard has recently been moved to a more prominent site which means it is updated more regularly too. News of the Eco Council work is shared here and through the newsletter primarily but also through social media posts. There is also an Environmentally Friendly Achievement Point which helps to encourage the students to get involved when they may otherwise be reluctant. This was particularly evident when at the Staff vs. Sixth Form football match when we were litter picking and volunteers got involved too.

We work closely with Geography and Science (in the main); identifying opportunities that are very closely involved with them as a Subject. For instance, we were working on securing a Water Aid Speaker which was initially targeted for these subjects. However, this was broadened and incorporated as part of a PSHCE day to enable all our College community benefit from resources (sadly no speaker was free for us).

In addition, there has been tree planting as part of Science. This included receiving donated saplings and planting them around our College site. We are also trying to raise awareness of the harm of balloons and glitter to marine life. This is something we have raised with Science to tackle together.

We are working on a monitor system for lights and SMARTboards to be turned off – in the meantime an encouraging message is sent by IT – simple but effective. This is a work in progress. However, we always will take part in the Switch Off Fortnight initiative too. We also share graphs of the usage of electricity and gas; by use and cost. These are evident on the noticeboard and make bleak reading.

Although as part of a College-wide initiative we are also keen on raising awareness of Fairtrade products. This has been run via Chaplaincy (in the main) with the Fairtrade Fortnight. This continues this year for a couple of days.

Our student-lead is currently in the process of raising awareness of how supportive our canteen facility, are in supporting Eco initiatives too. These include, our starting a meat free menu one day a week. This currently coincides with the Catholic practice of abstaining from meat on a Friday. There is a hope that this will be extended to a Monday; which is common throughout other communities. It is an area which is gaining support across our younger students especially.

In addition, we and canteen are working on making our canteen plastic free. With this in mind, in the past, we have campaigned for reusable bottles and competitions over the summer holidays to reduce plastic. This was both fun and engaging the students' households in changing their buying practices. This is an initiative which has also been carried out this summer and we await news of the most "green" form (or student).

The farm offers a great opportunity to raise awareness of the implications of Caring for our Common Home too; the teaching from Pope Francis encyclical, *Laudato Si*. This is also something the canteen have identified as an area they can support as some of the fruit "waste" to our reptiles. In respect of *Laudato Si*, a movement is under way which is training people (like me) to become *Laudato Si* Animators; bringing to life the teachings and sharing these through actions. This is a 4-module course which leads to commitments to a personal ecological conversion. The resources that are already forthcoming from these are very powerful and already being shared.

Across our wider community, over the past years, we have also been proactive in trying to encourage cycle lanes. This has involved working with the local MPs. This hasn't come to anything....yet! but is an initiative we pursue regularly. We are also, generally, seeking to reduce the number of car journeys made by turning to public transport, bike, etc. this is an ongoing initiative working with other environmental groups locally to help get this moving more effectively. However, from a staff perspective, we are currently identifying areas we can reduce single person car journeys and canvassing opinion of a Car Share.

In addition, before Covid we met the Macctastic group of students each month – known as Eco Youth. Although this took a hit due to Covid there were TEAMS meetings which continued during lockdown but since returning have not been picked up again due to the Eco Youth key players leaving for new futures but sadly not having the ability to support



new, young students at that time. However, the contacts with Macctastic remain and initiatives are still being shared. These include, for instance, the Bic pen recycling scheme; operated from Tytherington School. Money raised across Macclesfield from broken pens and related stationery are collected and recycled. Bic pay money for these and Tytherington use these funds to donate to the Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary in Borneo.

We also support the appeal for 20s Plenty in our local area. Most recently the Dane Moss petition has also been shared across the College community to influence decision makers to not build across a valuable peat site. In addition, a guest-speaker is being scheduled to help us cut down on packaging from a local business, Scoop and Scales.

Exciting opportunities for students to be involved in an Eco-Art Competition are also coming up; helping to share “green” ideas by designing our tired containers. This is being supported by Astra Zeneca and will be rolled out in September and October.

We have supported school strikes for climate action in the past and continue to be active with using our voice for the commitments of COP26 to be met as we approach COP27. This means we will be participating in the Walk2COP27; miles walked, cycled, ran will be recorded and for every kilometre a tree is planted.



The Eco Council is a dynamic and driven group; we pray it is enough!

Finally, our Eco Code for this year was an acronym of SHINE (key to our College) and produced as part of a competition won by (then) year 8 student.

S - single use plastic doesn't need to be used

H - help clean up litter

I - it's important to reuse

N - need to recycle

E - everyone needs to help make the earth a better place

Update from February Half Term 2023

We are pleased to say that an initiative to reduce single use plastic has been launched in College via the Canteen and the use of a flavoured drinks machine is currently on a trial and we are all keen to see the results.

Also, work has been ongoing to link with Macclesfield Secondary Schools – to reignite contacts and enthusiasm. This has led to a great surge in action culminating in an Eco Showcase at Tytherington School in June. We have also reached out to the schools in our Trust and are endeavouring to make progress on a “plastic project”. This has begun by sharing the ideas of the Kids Against Plastic Campaign, Common Seas and Plastic Clever Schools.

Laudato Si Lent has been a great initiative and shared with the College via the newsletter, as well as the schools in our Trust.