Sustainability Policy

1 Introduction
Liverpool Guild of Students is a Students’ Union devoted to the educational interests and welfare of its members and is responsible for running the ‘Guild’ building, which includes a coffee shop, convenience store, bars and state of the art events venue. We recognise and act upon our corporate social and environmental responsibilities and place this at the heart of our strategic planning. We are committed to demonstrating leadership in ethical, environmental and financial sustainability, by minimising the social and environmental impact of our activities through continuous improvements, and always aiming for best practice.

We have identified, as part of our participation in NUS’ environmental accreditation programme - Green Impact Students Unions, how our activities impact society and the environment. We work with our stakeholders to improve our ethical and environmental performance and have gained Green Impact Gold or Excellent standard since 2010 and we will continue to improve our Green Impact score year on year. We will adopt the highest ethical and environmental standards in all areas of operation, meeting and exceeding all relevant legislative requirements.

2 Climate Change and Biodiversity
We recognise that climate change and biodiversity are interconnected. We will minimise and, where practicable, prevent greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants, including noise pollution, from our operations and activities.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, both within the Guild building and with projects across campus. Our biodiversity projects include the Guild roof garden (where we also keep bees), the green wall in Guild Walk and the CTL permaculture garden. We will work collaboratively with the University to identify other sites, on and off-campus, which can be developed to increase biodiversity and promote food growth.

3 Energy
We will take the following measures to reduce our energy consumption:

- Switch off lights and equipment when leaving rooms.
- Switch off our computers, including screens, when not in use for more than an hour
- Portable heaters are banned within the Guild.
- Choose energy efficient products when purchasing new items.
- Measure energy consumption and identify areas where savings can be made
- Encouraging use of stairs rather than taking the lift.
- Restricting the use of individual fans in the office to exceptional circumstances e.g. health and safety requirement.
### 4 Waste and recycling

In order to reduce our environmental impact, and adhere to waste management legislation, we prioritise the following action of waste:

- **Prevent and reduce.** We are committed to reduce our paper usage, use recycled paper and only print when essential. We have banned plastic bags in our retail shop, and we work with suppliers and partners to reduce packaging on products including use of plastic bags at events. We will reduce plastic straw use by giving them out on request only.
- **Reuse.** We donate items for reuse to reuse schemes. We support our societies in redistributing safe unwanted food to other consumers. At the end of each year, we collect items for reuse from students’ halls through our Leave Liverpool Tidy programme.
- **Recycle.** We aim to segregate our waste streams into:
  - dry mixed recycling (DMR) to include mainly paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and cups plus additional items agreed with our waste contractor. We will avoid the use of black straws in the bars as black plastics are not currently recycled.
  - glass bottles for recycling
  - contaminated and uncontaminated food waste. Where possible we aim to recycle or compost all food waste.
  - The residual waste (General Waste) is collected for energy generation.

We will work with our waste management provider to measure our waste and agree yearly targets for reduction of waste sent for incineration (energy generation).

We will inform students and staff of our waste procedures and our progress regarding waste reduction.

### 5 Water

As an organisation we recognise that we are responsible for the health and wellbeing of our students, and that free and easy access to clean water should always be promoted and maintained:

- We will provide drinking water fountains for use by our members.
- We discourage the use of bottled water and only sell ethically accredited bottled water.
- Drinking water for meetings and events should be provided in jugs or in bottles filled from the tap.
- We promote the sale well-priced and fully recyclable reusable flasks.
- We seek to minimise our consumption by reducing our use of water and installing water saving devices where possible.

### 6 Procurement

We recognise our responsibility to carry out procurement activities in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. We will strive to reduce the environmental, economic, social and ethical impact of our procurement activities. We aim to treat our suppliers fairly and objectively at all times, and work with them to support improvements in their social and ethical practices.

Before each purchase, we will question the need for new items - Do we really need it? Could we use fewer? Can it be borrowed, shared, rented or the need satisfied in another way? We will provide guidance and relevant product information to staff members to allow them to select sustainable products and services.

#### 6.1 Purchasing

To enable appropriate/ethical purchasing decisions to be made, we will:

- Ensure that the sustainability criteria below are included in specifications to suppliers and used in the award of contract.
- Consider whole life costs and not just initial purchase price when assessing product suitability and in the award of contracts.
- Work together for our procurement needs (benefitting from membership of sustainable purchasing consortia where appropriate) to obtain better deals from suppliers, control expenditure and prevent over procurement.
• Work with contractors to ensure that they remain compliant with legal requirements and our environmental policies.
• On a regular basis, and at least annually, review and improve our knowledge of socially and environmentally responsible supply chain management practices.
• Educate, train and encourage all employees to review their consumption of goods and services in order to reduce usage where possible and develop business cases based on sustainable principles.
• Ensure that energy-efficiency is stated as a requirement for all refit tenders and suppliers are encouraged to submit offers for environmentally friendly alternatives.

6.2 Sustainability criteria
In order to procure the most sustainable products and services, we will:

• Give preference to:
  o suppliers who are ISO14001 certified
  o products and services that can be manufactured, used, and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Such products will be accredited through schemes such as ‘Fairtrade’, ‘Ethical Company’ etc.
  o local products, trades people and contractors to support the local economy and reduce delivery distance and transport emissions.
  o low energy products
• Use an ISO 14001 certified printing company or local supplier who uses certified paper and vegetable inks.
• Not use PVC materials for banners.
• Choose corrugated plastic board over foam-core for signs.
• Actively source timber products from certified sustainable sources when planning refits and/or new furniture.
• Encourage our suppliers to reduce or use more environmentally friendly packaging wherever possible.
• Purchase white goods in compliance with the University of Liverpool Purchasing Policy (‘A’ or ‘AA’ rating where possible but as a minimum rated ‘B’).

7 Transport
To reduce our carbon footprint, we will avoid unnecessary travel where possible, e.g. using webinars, Skype and teleconferences. When travel is unavoidable, we promote the use of sustainable transport - our expenses policy caps mileage payments to the standard-class rail fare and we pay a mileage rate for cyclists. We will promote walking and cycling to our students and staff and we avoid (and also encourage students to avoid) the use of domestic air travel.

8 Financial
We will always strive be as financially sustainable as possible. In doing so we will endeavour to source all supplies of financial products and services such as auditors, banking and insurance services from organisations that can show the same commitment to sustainability as ourselves and also, if relevant, who have an ethical investment policy.

As far as is practically possible financial records will be maintained electronically rather than printing hard paper copies.
9 Working collaboratively
We understand that working collaboratively, and exchanging ideas and practices, benefits all parties involved in the promotion of sustainability.

We will:

- Work with the University of Liverpool towards a phased alignment with their Environmental Management System
- Work with NUS and community organisations, including schools, where possible
- Take all suitable opportunities to encourage our partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their own ethical and environmental performance
- Encourage student and staff initiatives to promote pro-sustainability behaviours through recognising achievements through awards such as the Green Guild Flag and Guild Spirit.

10 Communicating our Policy
We believe that communication is essential in promoting awareness and understanding of sustainability issues amongst students, staff and visitors and we will communicate this policy and our sustainability work to all University of Liverpool students and Liverpool Guild staff.

We aim to be a catalyst of sustainability and extend the principles of sustainable development further than the Guild itself by embedding education for sustainable development in the University’s curriculum, working with local schools and organisations to promote best practice, and causing positive behavioural change through programmes such as Student Switch Off. We will promote student volunteering in all of these programmes and provide opportunities for volunteering within the Guild through areas such as the roof gardens, green wall and the CTL garden.