**Biodiversity Policy**

**Vision**

Our vision is to be a species and habitat rich campus supporting biodiversity to thrive by enhancing the quality, extent and management of green spaces across our University estate.

The University of Liverpool Estates are extremely diverse, comprising a main campus in the heart of urban Liverpool, sub-urban satellite campus locations and rural sites on the Wirral incorporating a Botanic Garden, a farm and farmland. This means that the University’s Estates support a wide variety of habitats and ecological diversity, including built urban environments, amenity land, woodlands, pastures and agricultural land, formally landscaped grounds and a Botanic Garden. The estates are therefore significant assets and their ecological value provides unique opportunities for social, environmental, visual, educational and recreational use.

The University’s Estate already provides opportunities for local wildlife, including protected species such as badgers, barn owls and great crested newts. However it is recognised that there is a need to explicitly measure and monitor species, both flora and fauna, to ensure there is a continued and active management plan to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the estate.

**University City Campus**

The University Estates incorporate an area of approximately 88 hectares in and around Liverpool City, including the main campus at the heart of the University and its life. Although situated in a mainly urban environment the University recognises that these urban campus locations have high potential to support wildlife, and the educational and well-being value that would arise from this. There is an opportunity to significantly increase the ecological value of the city centre campus through the development of species rich habitats that link with and support other green spaces as they are developed across the city.

**Ness Botanic Garden**

Ness Botanic Garden is approximately 25 hectares in size and attracts over 100,000 visitors per year; making it a major tourist attraction in the Merseyside and Cheshire areas. Ness is situated on the Wirral Peninsula, approximately 1 km from the Dee Estuary which has been designated as SSSI/SAC/RAMSAR and is of particular importance for wetland and shorebirds.

Owned and managed by the University of Liverpool, science and research are major components of the work carried out in the gardens. As a botanic garden, plant conservation, and research work linked to understanding plants are also vitally important to Ness, and there are a large number of important and rare plants in the gardens.

Approximately 10,000 types (taxa) of plants can be found in the gardens, ranging from the beautiful and awe-inspiring, to the rare and interesting. The plants are broadly split into two types: a horticultural collection, and an academic collection of plants that have research interest. The horticultural collection includes some of the most impressive and most beautiful plants to be found in gardens. The academic plant collections are important in addressing pressing societal questions, including how climate change affects wild plants and the functioning of ecosystems, what biodiversity is, and how it can be valuable to people.

Ness has a well-established and popular primary school visit programme, seeing an increasing number of school visits annually and has recently received the Growing Schools Garden Award in recognition for the quality of facilities.

There are also 7,000 members of the Friends of Ness Gardens and over 200 volunteers working regularly in the gardens.

**Agricultural Land**

The University owns two large working farms, located at our Leahurst campus in Cheshire, which are fantastic teaching resources for our veterinary students and provide state-of-the-art models for managing sheep, beef herds, pigs and horses.

Woodpark Farm is a working dairy farm covering 200 acres whereas Ness Heath Farm provides 100 acres of pasture, with room for 470 February lambing ewes, a pedigree herd of 15 Gloucester Old Spot pigs and a small pedigree herd of 20 Hereford cows. The pastures, grasslands, hedgerows and woodlands on this farmland support a wide diversity of plants and animals.

**Commitment**

The University is committed to:

* Contributing towards the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular with respect to this policy:
  + SDG 14 Life Below Water
  + SDG 15 Life on Land.
  + SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing

* Working with internal and external stakeholders including the Guild of Students, to enhance biodiversity on campus.
* Complying with all UK and EU legislation regarding biodiversity.
* Developing a University of Liverpool Biodiversity Action Plan that sets out a clear and achievable plan to increase biodiversity and environmental net gain. This includes regular surveys to measure and monitor progress.
* Ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems associated with the university.
* Identifying, monitoring and protecting any IUCN Red Listed species and national conservation list species with habitats in areas affected by the operation of the university.
* Reducing the impact of alien species on campus.
* Preventing and reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities.
* Minimising physical, chemical and/or biological alterations of related aquatic ecosystems.
* Ensuring that green spaces are developed in accordance with biodiversity design principles and provide well-being spaces as well as educational and volunteering opportunities.
* Ensuring that we work with our partners to enhance biodiversity across the Liverpool City Region.

**Implementation**

The policy applies to the operations and activities of all departments within the University, the Guild of Students and University owned Commercial Facilities as well as to contractors and out-sourced services. The responsibilities and arrangements for practical steps arising out of this policy are laid out in the Sustainability Strategy and will be monitored by the Biodiversity Action Group. This policy forms part of our Environmental Management System ISO14001:2015.

To ensure that the policy is kept up-to-date, and reflects national policies and strategies, it will be reviewed annually.

**Approved by**: Syd Cottle

Director of Estates Management

Chair of the Sustainability Working Groups Chair’s Group

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