

Wilson's School

ENVIRONMENT



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Welcome to the first issue of the environment newsletter, put together by the Eco-Committee. We have been hard at work since the start of term taking action to improve the school's environmental sustainability, and in this newsletter you can learn all about our work and some of the environmental issues in the world today.

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Aariv Johar

Proofread by Oscar Wong

Designed & compiled by Jamie Shaw

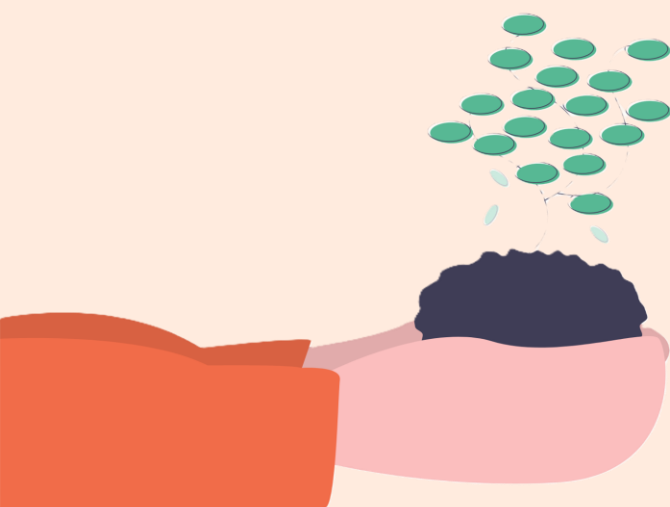


IMAGE CREDITS: undraw.co



About the Eco-Committee and the Eco-Schools Green Flag award

Oscar Wong

The Eco-Committee is a group of teachers and students who meet regularly to try and improve the school's actions towards the environment. This is a daunting task and can feel very overwhelming and challenging, but is nevertheless exciting!

Making meaningful change is often slow and involves lots of small actions adding up over time. However, the students on the Eco-Committee are dedicated and passionate, ready not only to strive for environmental change themselves, but to encourage the rest of the school to get involved as well.

To have realistic, measurable goals for the Eco-Committee, we are working towards gaining an Eco-Schools Green Flag for the school. This is an accreditation that will recognise and reward the positive environmental actions by the school.

Since the concept of helping the environment can be very broad, the award presents ten different areas:

Biodiversity	Marine
Energy	School Grounds
Global Citizenship	Transport
Healthy Living	Waste
Litter	Water

We have to have actions towards at least three of the topics to achieve the Green Flag.

To make the process simpler and help us structure our actions, the award is broken up into seven steps:

Step 1: Eco-Committee

Step 2: Environmental Review

Step 3: Action Plan

Step 4: Curriculum Links

Step 5: Informing and Involving

Step 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

Step 7: Eco-Code

We have already formed the Eco-Committee, and have, together, carried out an Environmental Review. This gives a baseline to measure our actions against in the coming years, and forms a survey of the school's current actions towards the environment, letting us spot areas for improvement and inspire new ideas.

After reflecting on the Review individually, we then completed the Environmental Review together. Our findings include:

- The school already has a good emphasis on Global Citizenship, although actions related to environmental issues could be improved.
- Transport was the best-ranked category!
- The areas for development were Biodiversity, Healthy Living, Litter and Marine



IMAGE CREDITS: undraw.co



IMAGE CREDITS: Wikipedia

The Eco-Schools Green Flag.

In response to this Environmental Review, we formed an Action Plan, with ideas on what we could do for the rest of the year. Some ideas include forming a gardening club and starting a space to grow vegetables on site, and making posters to hang around the school, encouraging environmentally friendly behaviour. There will be more events and actions coming soon, which we hope you will get involved with.

If you have time to give feedback on this newsletter or want to send us your ideas, please fill out this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/W4djwtMSSR7izGzj7>

This Past Month in the Environment

Vihaan Srivastava



IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

Hello and welcome to the first of what will be many articles by me on ‘This Past Month in the Environment’. I took inspiration from the series on YouTube called ‘This past week in Theme Parks’ by a popular theme park content creator.

First, the biggest advancement that has been made in the environment in September is the UN’s updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell urged over 200 countries to submit an updated NDC by the end September. These are national pledges under the Paris Agreement (an international agreement on climate change) to reduce or manage Greenhouse gas emissions by 2035.

Now you may be wondering, ‘How will the UN make sure that none of these countries cheat their promises?’. To do that, they will be conducting assessments of a country’s progress, which will be evaluated at the COP30 summit in Brazil in November. I will evaluate it myself in an upcoming issue of ‘This Past Month in the Environment’!

Now let us move on to the advancements we have made in the Wilson’s community! To begin, our environmental committee has developed an action plan for the Green Flag Award. We have plans to create a garden somewhere in the school grounds. As shown in many mental health studies, gardening is very relaxing and highly beneficial for you.

IMAGE CREDITS:
iwmf.org



I hope that you will take the opportunity to undertake some gardening. Although the Astros may be calling your name, or you really want to play basketball in the playground, instead take the time to nurture the environment through some mindful gardening.

Gardening



IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

A group of Year 10s including myself and Oscar (the Environment Prefect) gave an assembly to Year 9 about what we do here at the Eco Committee. We plan on giving assemblies to Year 7 and Year 8 after half term. On top of this, we will plan a house competition to keep our school environment a greener one. Maybe we could also get a few more house points on the tally for Greencoat (this is my little nudge to all Greencoatians to be the most active in these house events)!

However, ultimately, the aim of the Eco-Committee is not to make you participate in these events just for points, but rather for the cause. This environment is ours and we must take care of it. Imagine a world where all the trees are gone; the fresh smell of wet grass on a rainy morning no longer there to greet you; no more kayaking or hiking or playing football on the field. If we don't act fast, this could be a new reality.

With Christmas on its way, think about what you will do to enjoy the festive season. Instead of using a cheap, plastic Christmas tree, buy a real one from one of the garden centres in Wallington. Making your own decorations out of scrap paper or old plastic bottles would be a fun family activity and a great way of protecting the world we live in. If we don't act now, then who will? Remember the school's motto: *Non Sibi Sed Omnibus*. Not for oneself but for all.

Until next time.

Our Marine Environments

Nikhil Nibu



IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

Our marine environments are globally vital ecosystems, allowing diverse habitats and unique species like dolphins to thrive. Some marine environments include seagrass meadows, estuaries and seabeds. However, it is predicted that, by 2050, our marine environments will have more pieces of plastic than fish.

Here are some more problems in our marine environments.

Ocean Acidification

When the ocean absorbs carbon dioxide, the ocean becomes more acidic. This can be because of industrial processes, transportation and energy. The impacts it can have include weakening the ability for creatures like oysters and clams to form their shells. As well as this, larvae (immature forms) of various species such as fish and sea urchins are extremely vulnerable at this stage as it can hinder their development and survival. This may mean the decline or extinction of numerous marine species.



IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

Plastic pollution

When plastic reaches the ocean, marine wildlife can be harmed by ingesting or being entangled in plastic. This can be caused by not throwing away plastic and so it ends up in the sea. If the creature ingests plastic, it can block and fill its digestive tracts, leading to starvation or malnutrition. Moreover, large pieces of plastic can damage coral reefs and other vital marine habitats.

What we can do to help

Here are 5 easy tips to protect marine environments:

- Try and cut carbon dioxide emissions by using public transport.
- Join or organise beach clean-ups to remove plastics and debris.
- Carry reusable plastic materials.
- Ensure you are recycling correctly to prevent plastic reaching the ocean.
- Make good choices about the products you buy to avoid those with harmful chemicals or pollutants.

FUNFACTS

ABOUT OUR MARINE ENVIRONMENTS

More than 90% of all species dwell in our oceans.

The world's largest mountain range, the global mid-ocean ridge system, lies underwater.

The Great Barrier Reef is the largest living structure in the world.

We have explored less than 10% of the deep ocean.

The Greenland shark can live for over 250 years.

How to Reduce Energy Consumption this Autumn

Kaan Cortuk

As the cold times of the year approach, we need to be conscious of our energy consumption each day and be aware of what we can do to save as much energy as possible. It is often forgotten that, in order to contribute (as we all should), we can carry out simple actions which require hardly any time or effort.

For example, when the temperatures start to drop, we can save considerable energy by resisting the temptation to turn the heat to maximum; instead, we can wear additional layers and open curtains to allow sunlight to enter, maximising the sun's benefit.

Whilst it is inevitable that we have to switch on lights more often as darkness swallows our days earlier, this only means that we have to be even more careful and make sure that we do not forget to switch them off when not needed.

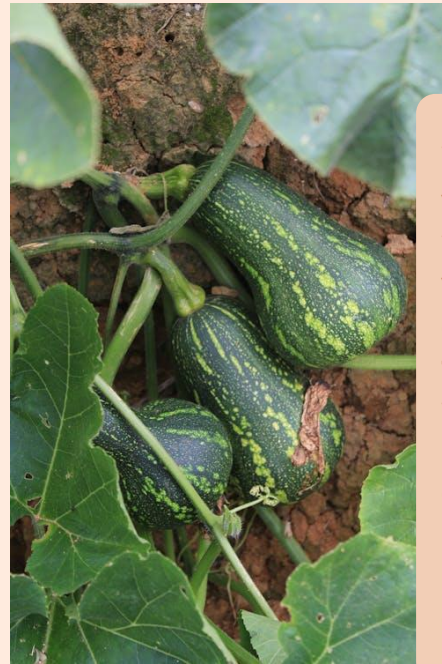


IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

Why not plant your own vegetables in your garden and cook meals with them? Doing so would not only help to address climate change, but would also reduce your carbon footprint!

We can contribute to this effort by simply enjoying nature around us and spending some time outdoors, whether this be cycling instead of driving or following your hidden passion of gardening. There's no shortage of things to do: you could even design a birdhouse for a family of swallows!



IMAGE CREDITS: Pexels

Why Do Bees Matter?

Bees may be small, but their impact is huge. They pollinate the plants that feed us, support wildlife, and keep ecosystems balanced. Without bees, we would struggle to survive.



Bees are essential for the health of our planet. By pollinating fruits, vegetables, and flowers, they ensure that plants can reproduce and produce the food we eat.



One bee can visit thousands of flowers in a day, spreading pollen and helping plants grow.



Without bees, our world would look very different. Many fruits, vegetables, and nuts would become rare or even disappear, making food more expensive and less diverse. Flowers and plants would struggle to reproduce, affecting entire ecosystems and the animals that rely on them.

We can all take steps to protect bees and support their survival. When gardening, avoiding harmful pesticides helps keep them safe. Even small actions, like leaving parts of your garden wild or building a bee hotel, can make a big difference for these amazing insects.

Fun Facts:

1/3 of the food we eat is dependent on bees

Over 20,000 species of bees exist worldwide

Bumblebees experience a decline of 40% every single year



Get Involved with your Local Environment!

Aariv Johar

Supporting your local environment is one of the best ways to encourage eco-friendly behaviour within the community and create a more sustainable society.

There are a plethora of events, meet-ups and workshops in and around Sutton. It would be excellent if we could see more Wilson's School students, parents or staff at these events. If you do attend, please do let us know about your experience, and you may well be featured in the next issue!

They carry out practical action such as conducting ecological surveys and ensuring that animal habitats are of an adequate standard.



Volunteer

One of the groups related to the environment is the Sutton Nature Conservation Volunteers. They are a non-profit organisation dedicated to “promoting the value of nature sites and other green spaces around the borough”, and “encouraging and enabling people to take an active role in assisting with their [green spaces’] maintenance and protection.”

Another group is the Sutton Community Environment Champions, who “support environmental activity in the borough and help you find ways to reduce your carbon footprint”. They launched in November of 2021, and host collaborative events and aim to connect residents, in order for people to come together and foster change within the community.

Volunteering is integral to the success of these groups, and it embodies the school motto of “Non sibi sed omnibus”!

The Environment

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