

Environment &  
Sustainability Report  
2024/2025



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## 1.0 Introduction

Over the past year, the University of Northampton has worked to implement a variety of initiatives aimed to conserve energy, reduce waste, preserve biodiversity and educate our community on the importance of sustainable practices.

This Environment and Sustainability Report 2024/2025 provides a comprehensive overview of our achievements, challenges and the strategic projects we have undertaken to integrate sustainability into every facet of university life. This report highlights performance against associated targets set for the academic year and compliments our Environmental Management System (EMS) manual, which gives further details of targets and achievements across a 12-month certification period.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

*“The University of Northampton has continued to make meaningful progress toward its sustainability goals over 2024/2025, strengthening our commitment to responsible resource management and environmental improvement. This year’s report highlights reductions in electricity and water use, improved performance of our biomass system, and continued growth in low-carbon heat generation. Engagement initiatives across the University have helped embed sustainable behaviours, supporting wider reductions in waste and carbon emissions.*

*While challenges remain—particularly around meeting more ambitious long-term targets—we are building strong foundations for future progress. Our work this year reinforces our role as a civic institution committed to environmental leadership and continuous improvement. I want to extend my thanks to colleagues, students, and partners whose efforts have helped drive this important agenda forward.”*

**Becky Bradshaw**

Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer



# 3.0 Key Achievements in 2024-2025



## ENERGY & CARBON

We have met our annual targets in electricity reduction, water reduction and biomass boiler management.

Our focus in the upcoming academic year will be to continue this trajectory and look at re-baselining so that we can use a more unified approach. With accurate data now available after the issues have been resolved from the past 4 academic years, we will also be using our iiE carbon calculator for more accurate and consistent reporting.



## WASTE

By installing the EvoVend machine, we have been able to encourage staff, students and visitors to recycle in this interactive way that allows rewards for participants such as vouchers and cash draws.

Our focus in the upcoming year is to tailor these rewards to be UON specific and decrease recycling contamination rates in Halls.



## BIODIVERSITY

With our Biodiversity Net Gains baseline set and our Preliminary Ecological Appraisal carried out, we can now focus on developing a Biodiversity action plan, look to work with the wider community on social impact projects and nurture our own wildlife such as the Small Flowered Catchfly.



## ENGAGEMENT

Engagement has increased significantly this year, with our social media channels averaging 24,000 views. The team also hosted four placement students and delivered five major events focused on water, waste, and biodiversity.

We have successfully created the Environment & Sustainability e-learning module for staff, as well as attended monthly induction presentations for new starters.

We will now focus on expanding the above module to students and offering our events and work experience opportunities to both internal and external students.



# 4.0 Progress to Date

## 4.1 Electricity, Gas & Biomass

### Scopes 1 & 2



UON consumed 8,915,410 kWh of electricity during this Academic Year (Aug24 – Jul25). This is a 4% reduction on the previous year's consumption and achieves the 2% annual reduction target for electricity.

Electricity Transmission & Distribution (T&D) losses associated with the efficiency of the grid have reduced by 2% from the previous year, which is associated with the reduction in electricity consumed by UON. Currently, UON does not have a target specific to T&D losses; however, this will be addressed as part of the improvements in our management of scope 3 emissions.

The annual reduction target for gas consumption is 5% and this was achieved with a total of 10,137,409kWh being used. The achievement was due to the improved operational effectiveness of the biomass boiler. With an effective third party management & monitoring plan now firmly in place, we can expect to see a continued decline in gas consumption.

The University's biomass boiler has generated 2,120,454 kWh of low-carbon heat energy from August to July inclusive. This is a 15% increase in the kWh generated by the biomass during the previous year.

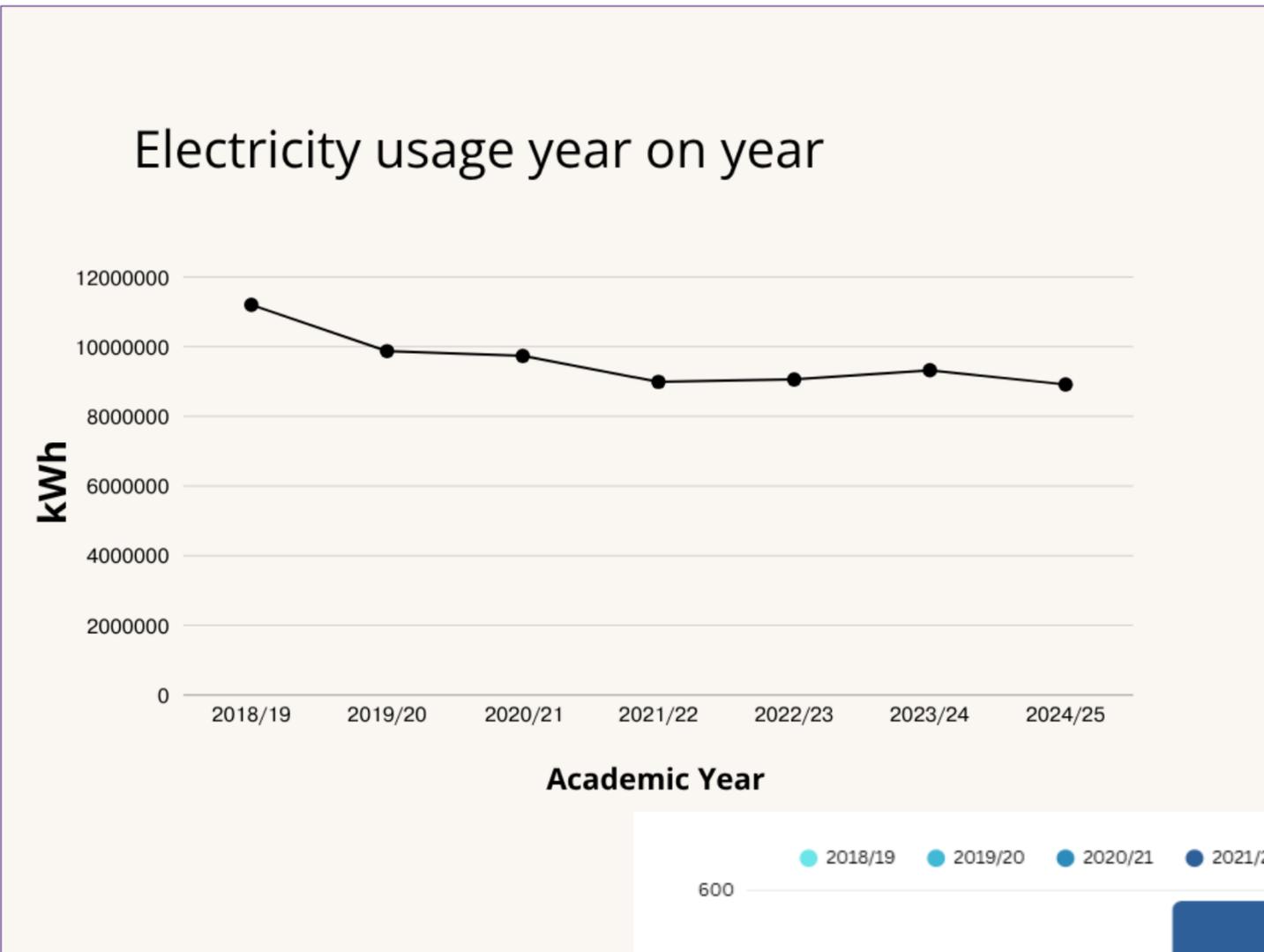
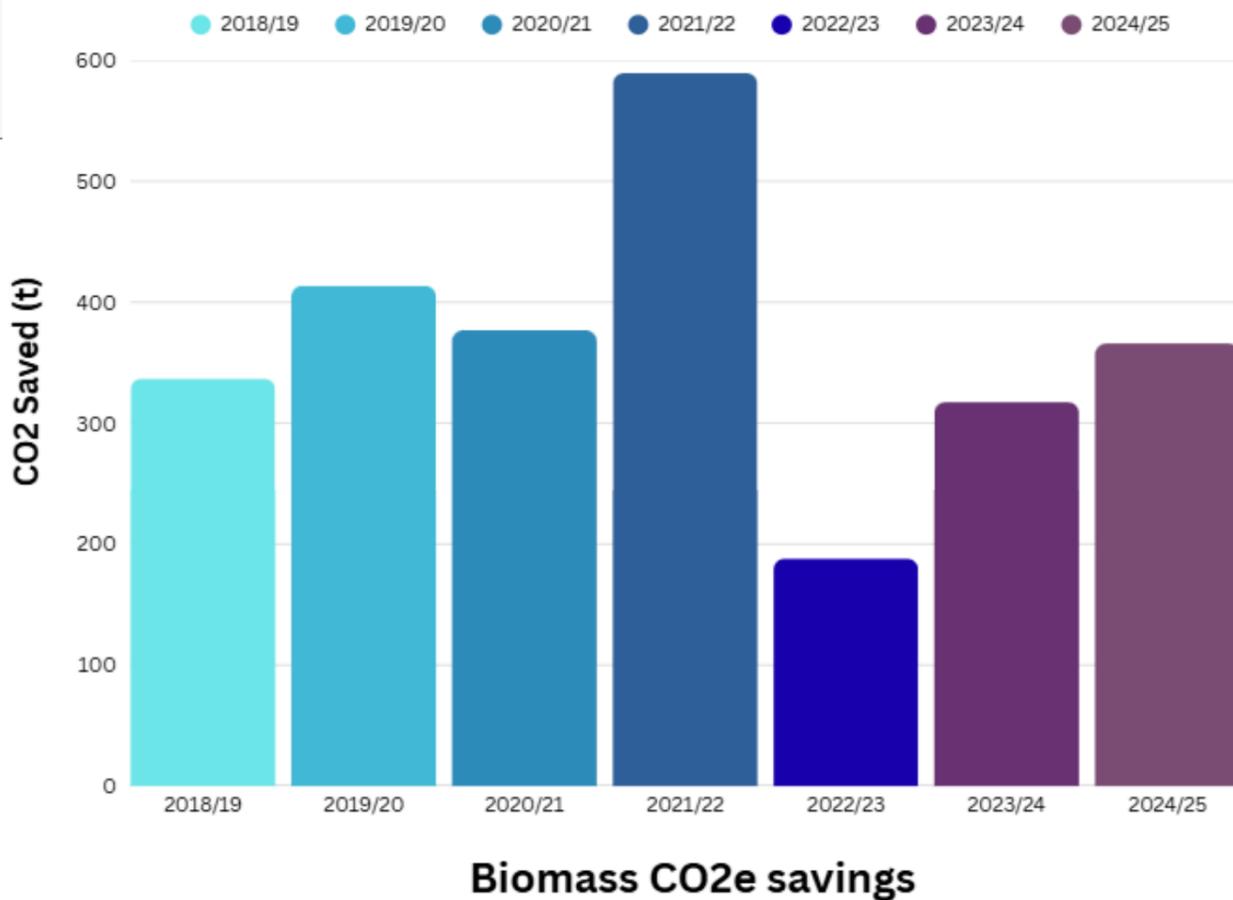


Figure 1. Electricity consumption across all estates



Figure 2. CO2 saved through Biomass



# 4.2 Water



## Scope 3

Water consumption for the academic year is 102,128 M<sup>3</sup>, a reduction of 8% on the previous year, far exceeding the annual target of 1%. Whilst the target has been exceeded, the work to drive efficiencies through operational process improvements and staff, student & contractor behaviour change will continue.

We had two water awareness events this academic year where Anglian Water came to Waterside Campus with their Community Hub van and spoke to staff and students about water consumption, how to dispose of items correctly without causing drain issues as well as Hey Girls giving out packs of sustainable period products. 200 Hey Girls Sustainable Period Packs were given away alongside Anglian Water's Just Bin It Campaign information and other reusable products such as washable make up remover cloths.



Figure 4. Anglian Water & Hey Girls

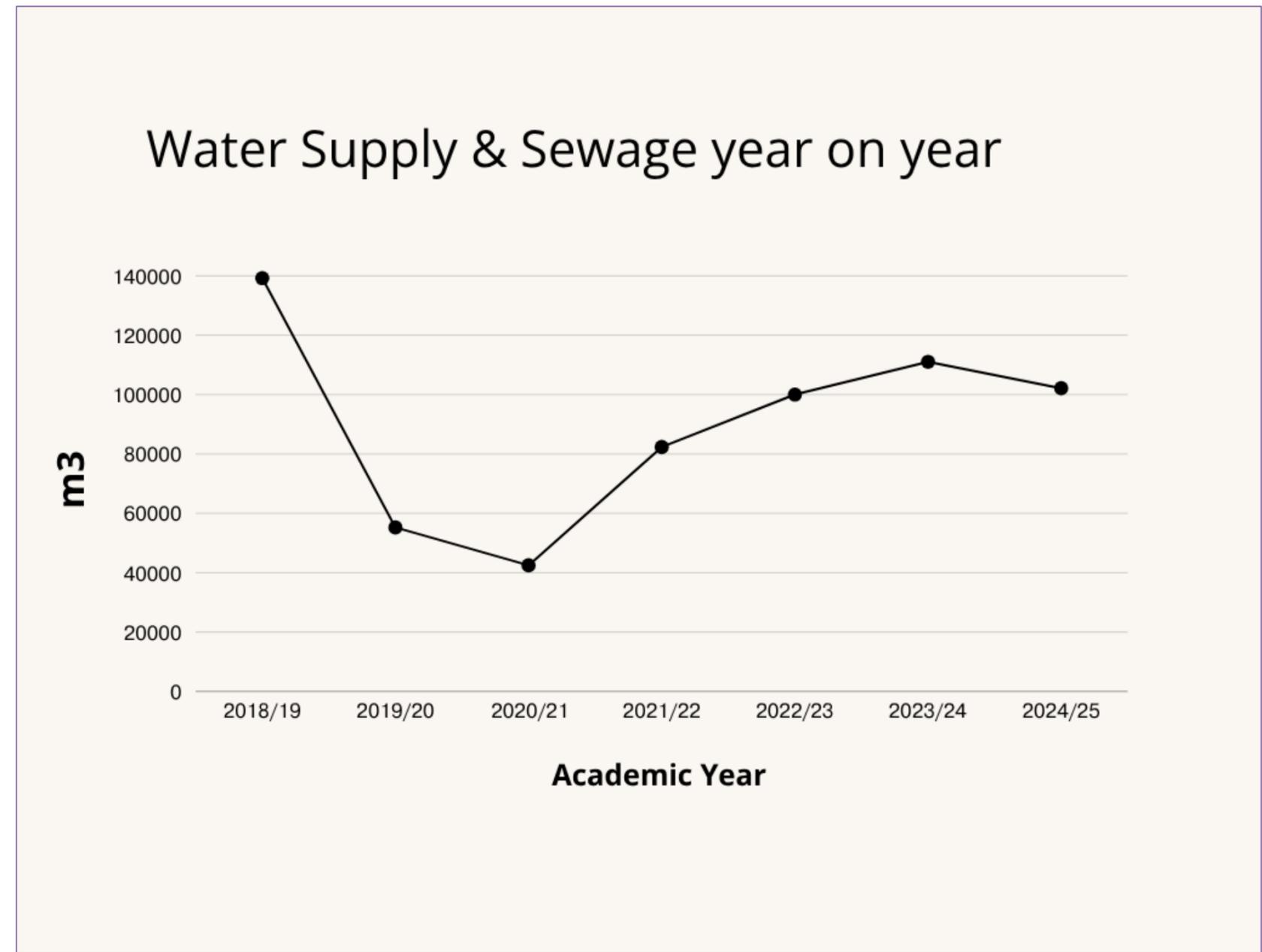


Figure 3. Water consumption and sewerage year on year graph



# 4.3. Waste

## Scope 3

We have seen a reduction in our waste emissions for 24/25 totalling 3.38 (t)CO2e, a 70% reduction compared to baseline year 18/19. However, our overall waste consumption has risen since last academic year, especially in Residential areas which has increased by 64 tonnes. A focus on waste reduction in accommodation will need to take place in 25/26.

We installed a EcoVend Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) at the Waterside Market Place and this has had a steady flow of users with 1657 items being deposited between installing in March and August 2025. This included 1337 PET plastic items and 238 aluminium cans..

There has been a keen focus on utilising services such as Anglo Recycling and Children’s Air Ambulance charity over Move Out Weekend, saving 3518kg of textiles from landfill.

Suez attended many events throughout the year and supported staff and students with litter picks, awareness campaign of the waste hierarchy and duty of care site audits.

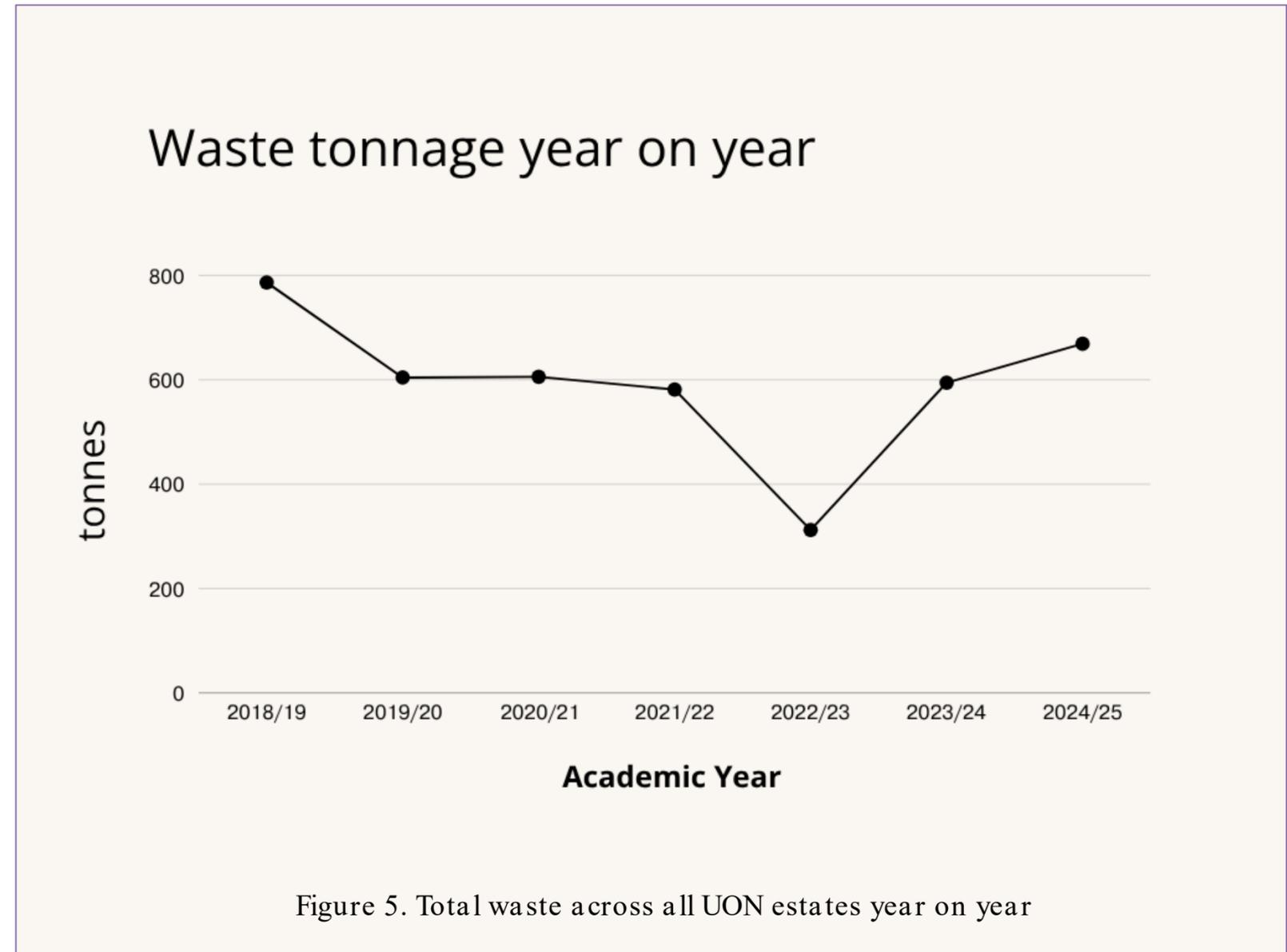


Figure 5. Total waste across all UON estates year on year



Figure 6. Certificate of disposal



Figure 7: The Great British Spring Clean

### 4.3.1. Recycling rates

The overall recycling rate for all buildings in 2024/25 is 52%, which is a 3% decrease compared to the previous academic year. Our goal was to improve recycling by 5%, so we did not meet our target.



Figure 9. Waste Hierarchy

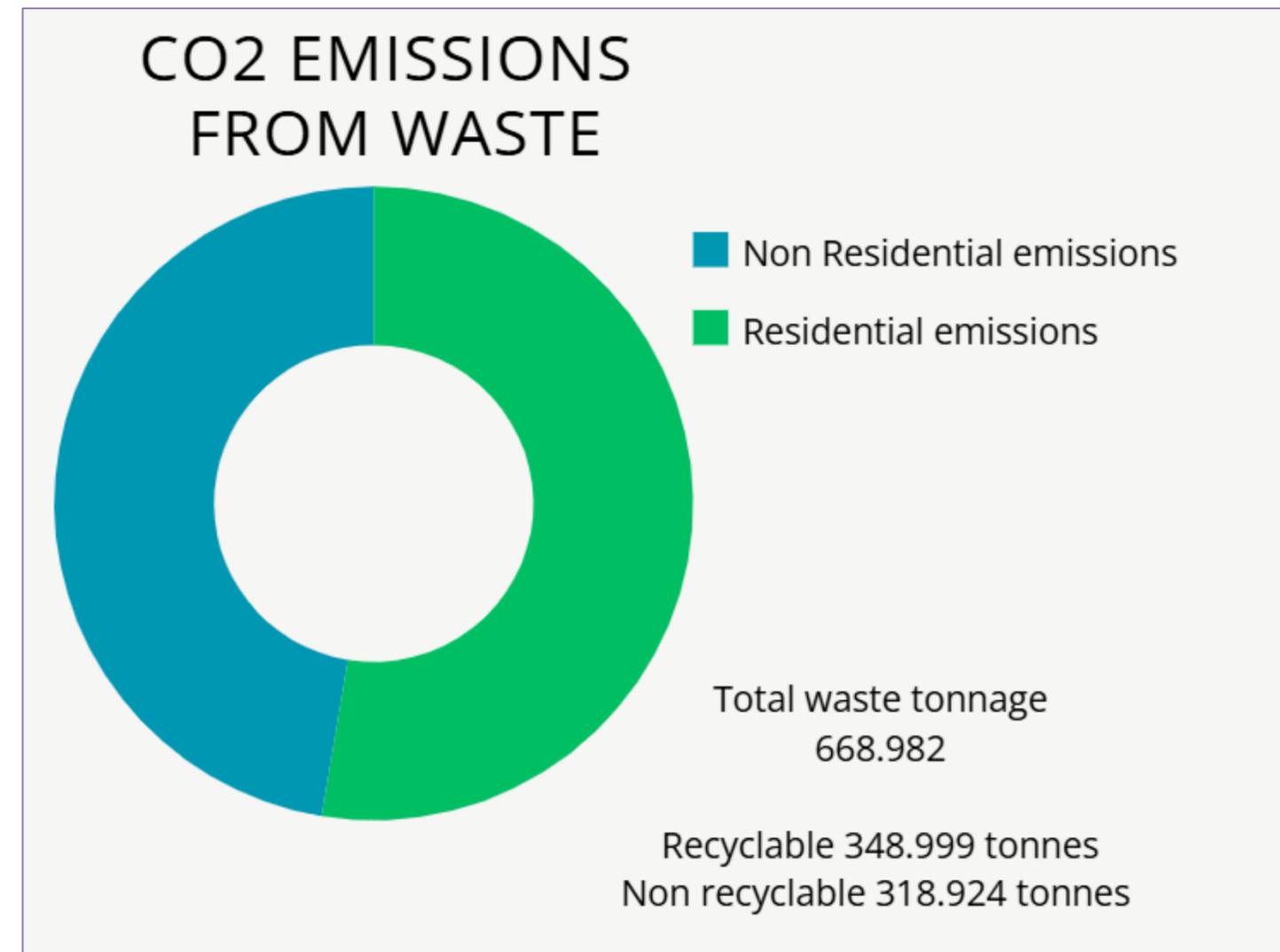


Figure 8. CO2 emissions from waste pie chart

We have held campaigns with Suez to introduce staff and students to our waste hierarchy which prioritises avoiding waste all together.

However, we must raise efforts for the next upcoming year, especially within the residential buildings. Behavioural campaigns and targeted communications are required to engage students in waste segregation and recycling to support an increase in the % of recyclable material captured.

## 4.4 Carbon Footprint Calculations

The methods of calculation used by UON follows GHG Protocol Guidance of both Market-based and Location-based calculations.

- **Location-based reporting** calculates emissions based on the average emissions generated by the local power grid and uses the DEFRA conversion factors to formulate the footprint.
- **Market-based reporting** calculates emissions from the specific electricity the university has chosen to purchase. This reflects sustainable procurement decisions, such as the EDF Zero Carbon for Business Tariff, currently purchased via the Universities membership to TEC (The Energy Consortium).

Prior to 2023/24 the university has only reported location-based emissions. We transitioned to zero carbon power using EDF Zero Carbon for Business in October 2022.

The GHG Protocol recommends to use both Location and Market-based calculations for reporting, therefore both methods are included in End of Year Reporting from academic year 2024/25.



# 4.5 Carbon Footprint Reporting



Reporting continues to evolve year on year with additional resources / items being added into the scope categories.

- **Scope 1:** Direct emissions from Gas, Biomass, Fuel for Fleet and Refrigerants
- **Scope 2:** Indirect emissions from purchased electricity
- **Scope 3:** Emissions from activities related to services or goods purchased including Water, Waste and Business Travel

**CO<sub>2</sub>e (t) 2024/25**  
 • **Location-based: 4,076.27 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**  
 • **Market-based: 2,230.27 tCO<sub>2</sub>e**

Using the location-based reporting for comparison, emissions have decreased 14% from the previous year.

Market based emissions have reduced 20% from the previous year.

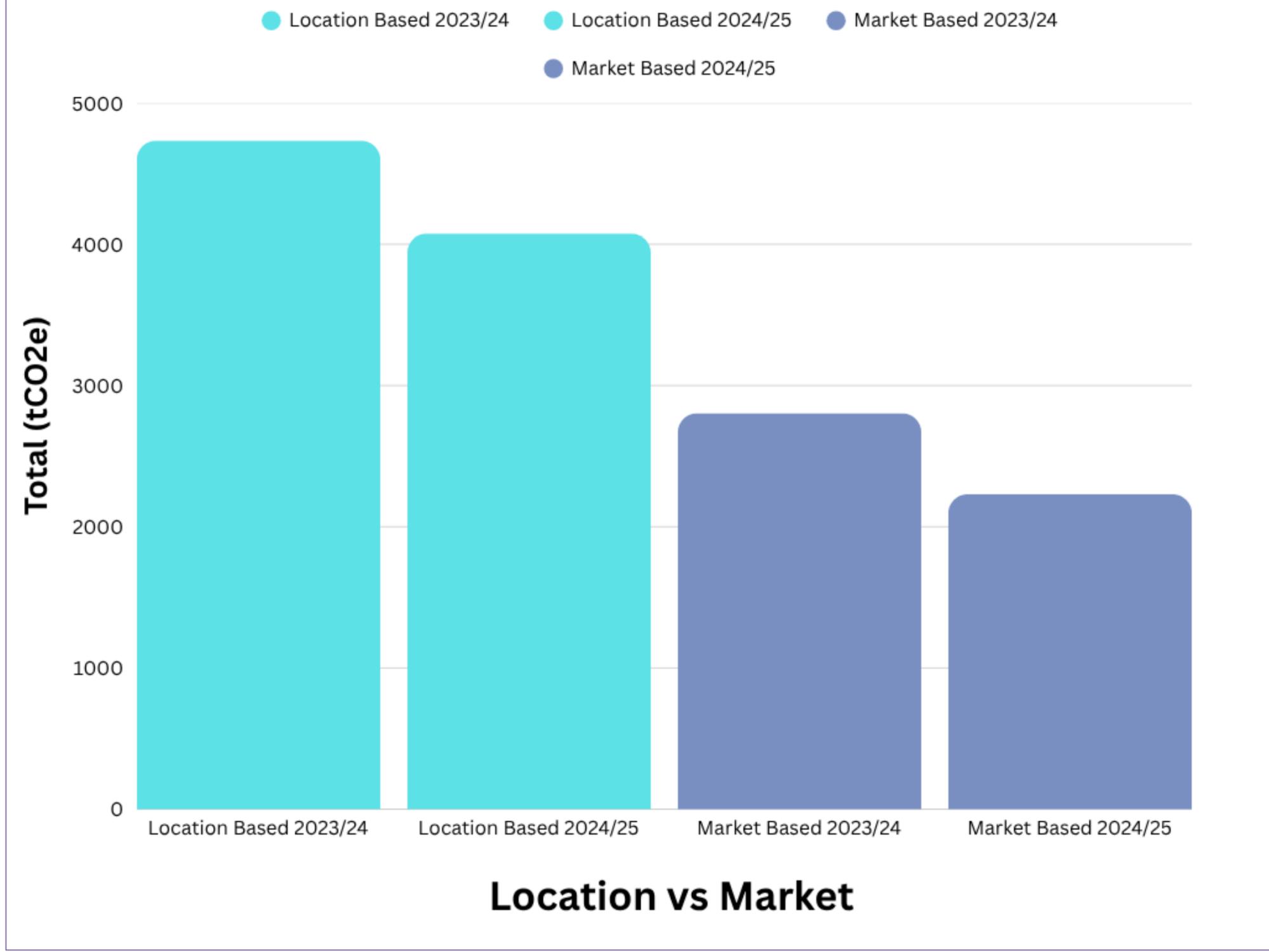


Figure 10: Annual Carbon Footprint.



## 4.6. Sustainable Travel

Bus, Voi and Oyster usage remains steady with promotional free rides for anyone who completes the Voi safety training. In April 2025 we partnered with West Northants Council and The Saints for the Women's Rugby Tour and there 'Give It a Try' pledge to increase bus use around the town.

We also gained valuable data from the Sustainability Survey on how people travel to and from site. Over all staff and students produced 313.1255 of kg CO2e in Scope 3 emissions commuting to and from campus'. This figure is calculated from the Sustainability Survey responses for anyone who stated they drive Single Occupancy or Car Share and based on the miles from their home address. This figure is difficult to compare year on year as the number of responses to the survey differ.

A total of 15 abandoned bikes were donated to ReCirculate, a charity who gives bikes to HMPs for prisoners to learn bike skills and then the bikes are given for free to NHS workers. In the new academic year, we shall concentrate on St Johns Hall and Innovation Centre and investigate donations to Delapre for their own Dr Bike initiative.

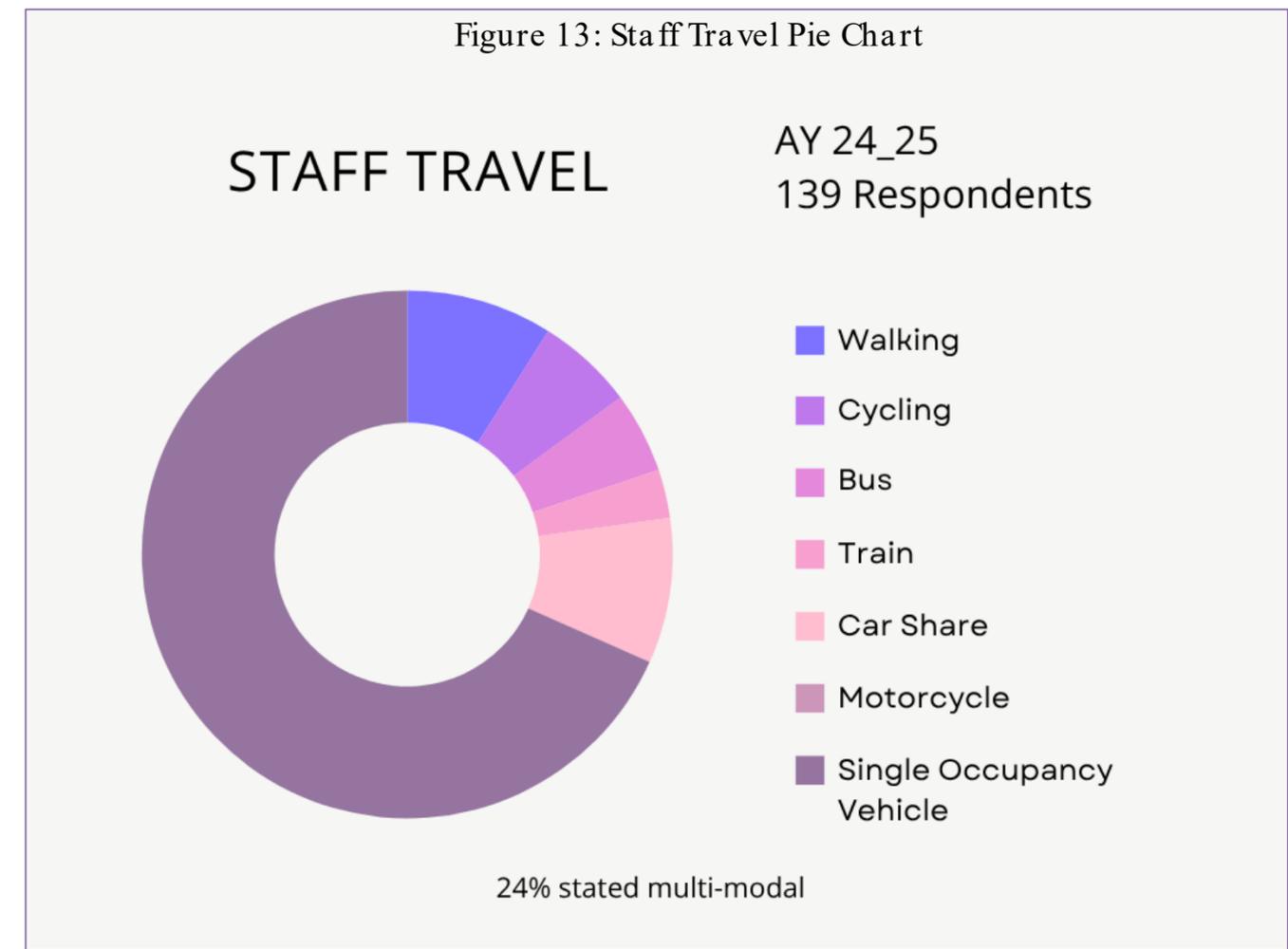


Figure 14: 'Give It a Try'

# 4.7 Ecology and Biodiversity

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out to identify the current biodiversity baseline for 3 sites – Waterside, Gallagher Fields & Scholars Green – noting their constraints and opportunities as well as a Biodiversity Net Gain baseline calculation. In summary, it has been assumed no habitats at the sites are of strategic significance. However, this gives us a good starting platform to build and improve year on year in line with our targets.

### Waterside

One species, hoary plantain are ‘near threatened’ in the red list and was noted from the sight, present in the grassland north of the River Nene. This is a perennial flowering plant known for culinary properties as well as it’s ecological value. It is recommended that ecological enhancements are carried out such as on-going maintenance of wildflower grassland, provision of bat and bird boxes, pond creation and habitat piles.

### Gallagher Fields

A large area of scrub habitat passed all 5 condition assessment criteria indicating Good condition. A square of grassland passed 4 out of 6 conditions and is in Moderate condition. A native hedgerow passed all conditions barring one - >90%of the hedgerow being free from non-native species as they were present - therefore it is in Good condition. It is recommended that ecological enhancements are carried out such as on-going maintenance of grassland and scrub habitats, pond creation and habitat piles.

### Scholars Green

Native hedgerow is in Moderate condition. Pyramidal Orchid was noted during the habitat survey. Whilst this plant is not specially protected, it is a charismatic species likely to be of value and is protected against uprooting without permission from landowner. It is recommended that ecological enhancements are carried out such as ongoing management of grassland habitats, provision of bat and bird boxes, pond creation and habitat piles.

**Baseline Biodiversity Units**  
Waterside  
48.82 biodiversity units  
  
Gallagher Fields  
3.48 biodiversity units and 1.57 for hedgerows  
  
Scholars Green  
8.31 biodiversity units and 0.42 for hedgerows



# 4.8 Engagement



**ANNUAL TARGET ACHIEVED**



## Staff Induction

The team were approached by Jim Atkinson to collaboratively devise an e-learning course for all staff after our Environment Advisors began to attend new starter orientation meetings in April 2025. This induction course would cover topics such as electricity usage, waste streams, the future of AI, how UON is reducing its carbon footprint and what we expect from our staff to help nurture a greener campus. The e-learning course went live in October 2025 and stats will be recorded in the 2025/2026 report.

## Sustainability Champions

The Sustainability Champions scheme was revitalized into a more informal group for interested staff and students. In previous years we found that members were not keen on attending regular meetings, so instead the format was changed to more of a mailing list of events that staff & students could use to keep up to date with events and attend at their leisure. This has a very positive response and to date we have 197 members signed up.

In May 2025, we had our most successful event yet – No Mow May post decorating. Our Sustainability Champions also completed the Sustainability Survey and attending a litter pick for the Great British Spring Clean.



Figure 15: One of the No Mow May posts decorated by staff & students

## 4.8 Environment and Sustainability Accreditations 2024 – 2025



# 5.0 Future Goals, Targets and Key Performance Indicators

Action Plan	Overall Target	Annual Target(s)	Measure
1: Electricity	Consumption not to exceed 2018/19 levels by more than 2%	2% Reduction (vs previous year)	Overall consumption of electricity monitored through the University's sub-metering system and monthly utility invoicing.  DEFRA emissions factors applied to calculate carbon emissions.
2: Gas & Biomass	Gas Consumption not to exceed 2018/19 levels by more than 5%	2 % Reduction (vs previous year)	Overall consumption of gas monitored through the University's sub-metering system and monthly utility invoicing.  DEFRA emissions factors applied to calculate carbon emissions.
3: Water	Consumption (Supply and Waste) not to exceed 2018/19 levels by more than 1%	1 % Reduction (vs previous year) in consumption across all existing buildings	Overall consumption of water monitored through the University's sub-metering system and monthly utility invoicing.  DEFRA emissions factors applied to calculate carbon emissions.
4: Biomass	To provide 85 % of total Heat Supply of Waterside Campus	10% increase in usage vs previous year.	% of biomass kWh produced vs gas kWh Waterside Campus only % of biomass kWh produced vs previous year
5: Carbon Management	Net Zero Carbon Scope 1&2&3 2050	60% reduction in carbon emissions from 18/19 Baseline	Approval of the Carbon Management Plan  Carbon Footprint Calculation of Total Co2e produced across the estate



Action Plan	Overall Target	Annual Target(s)	Measure
6a. Waste – Recorded as General	Reduce total waste recorded as general to 23kg or less per Student FTE by 2030	2 kg reduction (vs previous year) in the total waste recorded as general per Student FTE	Measured through the annual Student FTE Normalisation Factor:  Waste recorded as general (all sites) / Student FTE x 1000 = Kg waste per Student FTE Measured using the data from all waste management contractors including Suez and Stericycle reports and Waste Transfer Notes.
6b: Waste – Recyclable Material	70% of total waste produced recorded as recyclable material	5% Increase in recycling rate	Measured using the data from all waste management contractors including Suez, Stericycle and Cawleys monthly reports and Waste Transfer Notes.  Periodic visual waste audits measuring % of waste streams captured in all bin types.
6c: Waste - Food	5% reduction in food waste produced from non-residential areas by 2030 – compared to baseline	2% reduction in food waste collected vs previous year	Food waste measured for all Non-residential buildings across all sites including satellite sites (Podiatry, Development Hub, Innovation Centre, Resource Centre).  Data collated using the Suez monthly waste report.  Periodic visual waste audits measuring % of waste streams captured in all bin types.
7: Travel – Sustainable Modes	Sustainable travel – increase sustainable modes of travel for staff and commuting students by 1% year on year.	1% increase for sustainable travel.	Comparison of student and staff travel modes against previous surveys.
8: Biodiversity	To support our local biodiversity across all campus sites.	To survey and establish our Biodiversity Net Gains	Methods of monitoring will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Professional /expert surveys</li> <li>•Staff and student engagement and observations thorough established projects and societies i.e. Sustainability Champions, No Mow May, BioBlitz</li> <li>•Wildlife camera Footage</li> <li>•Student projects associated with course work / dissertations.</li> </ul> Data collected will be collated and stored in a central repository to be determined as part of the initial phase of the implementation of the MPB.



# 6.0. Conclusion



The University of Northampton's Environment & Sustainability Report 2024/2025 reflects the progress being made towards ensuring the Environmental and Operational management of our estate aligns with global sustainability goals.

We aim to implement cutting-edge technologies and practices where possible, that not only reduce our carbon footprint but also serve as a model for other institutions and local businesses. In addition, our commitment to education and outreach will expand, providing more opportunities for students and staff to engage in sustainability projects, workshops, and research.

Our data collation, analysis and reporting continues to evolve year on year. As we move forward, we continue to enhance our monitoring and reporting systems to ensure transparency and accountability in our progress. Regular updates will be shared with all stakeholders, allowing us to celebrate our successes, contribute to the UON strategic decision-making process and ensure we continue to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Ultimately, our vision is to create a resilient and sustainable campus that not only meets current needs but also sets a precedent for future generations. Together, we aim to make a significant impact on our environment and inspire broader change within our communities and beyond.

# 7.0. Acknowledgments

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The Environment  
and Sustainability  
Team

**HOLLIE DARBY**  
Environment Advisor

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University  
Leadership Team

**BECKY BRADSHAW**  
Chief Operating Officer

**TRACEY RUSSELL**  
Director of Estates and  
Campus Services

**TOM ANDREWS**  
Head of Hard and  
Infrastructure Services

---

Writers

**HOLLIE DARBY**  
Environment Advisor