



Selwyn College Cambridge

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

This policy was approved as CP 2026/076 on 14 July 2026.

Selwyn College recognises its role in matters of sustainability in the following ways:

1. To **minimise the harmful impact** of the College's operations on a day to day basis, and to evolve continuous plans to reduce that impact further.
2. To **recognise the ability of Selwynites to influence** both the College and other organisations, now and in the future, in their responses to environmental issues, and to define a "challenging but achievable" standard of response to those issues as a benchmark, and to demonstrate those standards clearly in and around College.
3. To **meet or exceed all applicable standards** in law or regulation.

The responsibilities in this document are to be shared between staff, students and Fellows. It is recommended that sustainability matters should be reviewed at minimum annually on College committees dealing with operational matters, to ensure its principles are appropriately considered in all areas of decision making. It is recognised that there are three levels at which the College can influence sustainability in decision making.

1. Through actions the College owns and controls entirely – such as building refurbishments.
2. Through actions where the College can facilitate members' own sustainable choices – such as meat free alternatives in College dining, opportunities to recycle, ways to reduce energy consumption, ways to reduce water use toilets etc.
3. Through education, where members and staff can share knowledge on the impact and importance of those sustainable choices – such as the impact of air vs train travel, or the carbon saving from small reductions in ambient temperatures.

For clarity, this document does not address the investment policies for the College's Endowment, which are overseen separately by the Investment Committee.

To minimise its environmental impact Selwyn will seek to:

- 1. Reduce waste creation: “Reduce, reuse, recycle” – importantly, in that order.**
- 2. Reduce energy consumption; especially of energy derived from fossil fuels**
- 3. Ensure that purchases and estates developments are sustainable**
- 4. Review use of transport: reducing petrol and diesel fuel use**
- 5. Review use of water: minimising consumption**
- 6. Review use of chemical pollutants: minimising use**

More detail on each area is given below.

1. Reduce waste creation: “Reduce, reuse, recycle” – importantly, in that order.

Selwyn commits to:

- a. Clearly communicate locations and responsibilities for recycling through an accessible recycling policy, publicized to students on arrival at the College in Freshers’ week and around the College on signage.
- b. Seek to communicate the environmental benefits of communal eating in College Hall, in terms of reduction of food waste, and reduction in energy cost through mass production. Record food waste and seek to reduce its volume.
- c. Seek to reduce the absolute amount of waste produced from College catering, offices and residential accommodation through careful planning of consumption.
- d. Make full use of all known recycling facilities provided by Cambridge City Council and private suppliers.
- e. Seek to compost, or cause to be composted, all appropriate organic and green waste produced from the College’s main kitchens and College gardens, and support student-led food waste composting.
- f. Recycle or safely dispose of white goods, computing equipment and electrical appliances. Seek to support a culture of “if not broken, don’t replace” for equipment and furniture generally.
- g. Facilitate the use of reusable resources and containers and avoid unnecessary packaging or transported weight where possible, with a focus on catering provision and options for canteen “takeaway” services, and purchase recycled resources where suitable and available.
- h. Encourage students, Fellows and staff responsible for specific arrangements for College led events, such as the SnowBall and bops, to include a sustainability role on their committees. Seek to ensure all student-run events are aware of the support available from student Green Officers during their event planning, to apply the “reduce, reuse, recycle” principle and avoid reliance on disposables.

2. Reduce energy consumption, especially of energy derived from fossil fuels.

Selwyn commits to:

- a. Encourage staff, students and conference guests to save energy through visible reminders, incentives and information to increase awareness, and through implementing heating and lighting controls as properties are refurbished, that respond to presence detection where appropriate.
- b. Support renewable and carbon neutral electricity options on the Collegiate energy-purchasing consortium, with the long term aim of supplying all College properties with electricity that can be attributed to renewable and carbon-neutral sources, where this is possible considering financial constraints.
- c. Support a shift to use electricity as a power source over gas or oil over time, paired with heat recovery and other evolving technologies, recognising efficient delivery of electrical heat can to some extent offset higher pricing, subject to the affordability of any individual scheme.
- d. Periodically review opportunities for on-site micro-generation of renewable electricity, especially during major capital projects, and seek to maintain such systems effectively once put in place, subject to the cost efficiency of any individual scheme. Actively seek donor funding for such schemes.
- e. Where metering permits, periodically monitor college energy consumption by property to identify high energy use properties or areas and set appropriate targets to improve them. Not every property has its own meter and such measures will be by supply point or sub-meter.
- f. Seek to ensure appropriate insulation is in place throughout the Estate, including but not limited to roof spaces, windows and walls. It is recognised that this may be in tension with the requirements of the College's heritage properties and cannot be an absolute target.
- g. Give preference wherever possible to the most energy efficient and environmentally sound appliances available, such as LED lighting. Seek to ensure any user can easily access controls information paired with information on the environmental cost of use.

3. Ensure that purchases and estates developments are environmentally sound.

Selwyn aims to:

- a. Seek and act upon professional advice to minimise the adverse environmental impact of new developments or refurbishments and where possible match best practice. This may include any or all of heating and water systems, space for recycling and waste management, and the use of recycled and/or sustainable construction materials.

- b. Purchase efficient and environmentally sound appliances at each point of replacement purchase. Consider whether drying facilities, including outside washing lines, can be provided without the need for heated tumble dryers in any new development or refurbishment.
- c. Seek to purchase food that has been produced and delivered with minimal impact on the environment, this includes buying plant-based, seasonally, locally, and sustainably-sourced food wherever possible. Fair trade and other markers of sustainable purchasing should be sought where appropriate, and the consortium purchasing through the Colleges' Catering Management Committee should be supported in order to reduce delivery journeys.
- d. Seek to reduce the consumption of foods with the highest environmental and disease footprints. Seek to increase the availability of plant-based meal options and provide options for plant-based oil spreads and milk wherever possible, and; promote plant-based meals through high quality menu design and behavioural nudges such as choice architecture, defaults, and labels.
- e. Seek to purchase through schemes indicating the highest standards of animal welfare.

4. Review use of transport: reducing petrol and diesel fuel use. Selwyn commits to:

- a. Make available information about bicycle and pedestrian routes, public transport services and car share schemes to staff, students and Fellows.
- b. Aim to publicise information indicating the carbon cost of flying, and to provide IT and AV facilities capable of supporting remote meetings or interviews with overseas applicants or colleagues.
- c. Aim to provide facilities and, if appropriate, training to encourage bicycle use among college staff, students and Fellows.
- d. Consider the use of electric vehicles if appropriate and cost effective for College needs, as vehicles reach end-of-life.
- e. Reduce the proportion of travel on College business carried out in private transport through education as to alternative means of reaching destinations and seek to eliminate unnecessary use of college vehicles, in line with the College's sustainable travel policy (published separately).

5. Review use of water: Minimising consumption. Selwyn commits to:

- a. Encourage a decrease in water usage among staff, students and conference guests through provision of showers rather than baths across the majority of the residential estate, and the use of low-volume flush options for toilets.
- b. Repair sources of water leakage, such as dripping taps as quickly as possible.
- c. Install appliances which reduce water consumption, with a focus on washing machines and dishwashers with a default economy setting.

- d. Seek to use rainwater collection from guttering to water gardens where practicable and simple to enact, over time.

6. Review use of chemical pollutants: Minimising use. Selwyn commits to:

- a. Seek to support awareness and/or provision as appropriate of eco-friendly washing up liquid and soaps in all communal gyp and bathroom facilities.
- b. Seek to support awareness and provision of eco-friendly sanitary products cost effectively for those that wish to use them.
- c. Ensure that, as far as practicable, all cleaning products used by college staff have a minimal detrimental impact on the environment, ie are biodegradable and non-toxic.
- d. Seek to minimise the use of fertilisers and pesticides in college grounds, opting for the use of compost produced on site wherever possible.

The College is committed to enforcing the principles expressed in this Policy across its many and varied activities. Where possible measurable targets will be set against the objectives detailed above, and a cyclical process of review by relevant Committees will apply. Examples might include consideration of the ratio of recycled to general waste collections at Steward's and/or Operations Committees, review of the total kWh consumption annually of the College both before and after major refurbishment projects.