



Finalist's case study

Walsall College Sustainability Champion - Staff Gail Houghton

About the project

Summary

I have an extra-curricular role with a responsibility to engage students to a wide range of opportunities. Developing a growing space has enabled me to raise both sustainability awareness and development

Project partners

The NUS have been an enabling & supportive partner & it was the Student EATS project that created a sustainability agenda.

The results

The problem

Walsall College is located in the town centre, surrounded by manufacturing units with poor soil and a history of Japanese knotweed. There are no land based courses delivered at Walsall College which has meant that we have started from scratch.

The approach

To promote environmental & sustainable opportunities across College using a wide network of organisations

Our goals

To introduce & integrate environmental awareness & sustainability to students & staff

Obstacles and solutions

Challenging site & limited staff skills	Engaged across College to enlist support; convinced the College to fund staff to RHS Level 2 in Horticulture
Poor growing conditions	Built raised beds, purchased a poly tunnel & found a source of free horse manure
No curriculum land based courses	Promoted and supported a range of environmental projects to students and staff through the Student Union. Convinced the College to fund staff to RHS Level 2
Limited budget	Applied for grants from the NUS, Lloyds MfL, Local Authority, Wilkinson's & Greggs. Joined the RHS campaign for school gardening for resource support. Emailing staff for unwanted garden items generated donations of pots, slabs, birdbath, a shed, seeds & horse manure



Profile

- FE College
- 5622 FE students
- 276 HE students
- 650 staff
- Urban



Green Gown
Awards 2016



Dissemination
supported by:



Finalist's case study

Performance and results

- Recognition by other organisations including RHS & NUS Green Impact
- 123 students engaged with Fairtrade, 77 students took part in recycling wool for dementia project, 50 students raised funds for Newlife by upcycling & selling accessories, 100 Supported Learning students volunteered in the Student EATS garden
- Featured in NUS A-Z of sustainability case study
- Achieved NUS Green Impact Gold Award & FE Union of the Year
- Yearly submission & judging in the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Britain in Bloom has seen a steady improvement & recent achievement to Level 4
- Awarded a Greggs Foundation grant to pursue community environmental improvement
- Completed RHS Horticulture Level 2

The future

Lessons learned

Network, ask for help and have fun

Sharing your project

YouTube links of our videos have travelled far and wide.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5FZs9jxbh0c&feature=em-share_video_user

<http://youtu.be/8lmKzlBcy-I>

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

We were awarded a Green Gown award in 2013 for 'Staff and Student Engagement'. This was the first sustainability award ever for Walsall College and enabled us to gain both recognition & credibility. To be awarded personal acknowledgement is a fantastic opportunity to reflect on what can be achieved.

Further information

Email; ghoughton@walsallcollege.ac.uk

www.walsallcollege.ac.uk