

## Declaration of climate emergency

Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) hereby declares a climate emergency. This decision was made following a motion passed at the Student Council in October 2019. A declaration of climate emergency is a first step to acknowledge the situation but action must follow.

According to the latest International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, we have 12 years to limit the effects of climate change before we reach a point of no return. This is an issue which concerns everyone, on a local, national and international level.

Declaring a climate emergency acknowledges the concerns of many students, who are worried about what the future holds for them. The Student Council demanded that AUSA and the University declare a climate emergency. The last year saw the rise of the school strikes movement in Aberdeen, the ongoing work of several societies on campus ranging from beach cleans, tree planting events, talks and workshops to raise awareness and practically tackle the climate crisis. We have seen student-led initiatives such as Swap Shop, VegBag and the newFoodsharing Hub helping make a change in people's daily lives by reducing waste, purchasing local and organic fruit and vegetables and distributing food surplus among the local community. It leaves no doubt that there is a strong will coming from students to be part of the solution. Therefore, AUSA wants to support the efforts already made by many students at the University and will be working to be more sustainable in its operation and values. AUSA is in the process of training all its staff members in carbon literacy, has been delivering a 2-year sustainable project which finishes in April 2020 and has secured funding for a new staff post of Sustainability Officer which will start in April. However, we as an organisation are aware that there is more to be done.

Accordingly, AUSA will be working on raising awareness of the environmental impact of meat as a result of a motion driven forward by the Student Council, it will continue to campaign for a full divestment pledge from the University and will form a climate crisis policy and review the current Environmental Policy according to the severity of the situation. There is an urgent need to put more resources and time towards sustainability and tackling this issue. AUSA will work to create a Climate Crisis Working Group in partnership with the University to oversee climate crisis policies in both organisations and make sure the policy is delivered.

Amongst other aims, the policy will aim to commit to carbon neutrality by 2025, specify actions to address the harmful effect that international travel, meat and fossil fuels have on the environment and make changes to our current operations. Moving away from disposable cutlery and crockery, limiting air business travel, promoting and supporting sustainable behaviours will all be a part of our work. Taking solid actions to cut emissions and pollution is an important engagement to save the future.

AUSA has been mandated to lobby the University of Aberdeen to follow us in the above decision. Sabbatical Officers are already in the process of talking to the University management and continue to push for action by the University.