

## **BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (BAP)**

Goldsmiths recognises the value of biodiversity and its contribution to the quality of our environment and life both locally and globally. The College is committed to retaining and enhancing the green spaces, trees and wildlife habitats on campus. Good environmental practice is an integral part of the College's Environment and Sustainability Policy 2009 as stated in objectives:

- 15 Preserve and protect natural habitats and biodiversity on Goldsmiths land;
- 16 Maintain campus open spaces, gardens and sports grounds using environmentally sound methods and materials.

### **1 BAP Objectives**

The purpose of this Biodiversity Action Plan is to:

1. Promote and implement biodiversity and sustainable grounds management (including good organic practice);
2. Raise awareness of biodiversity conservation issues and best practice amongst students and staff;
3. Facilitate both formal and informal learning about nature conservation including the contribution of flora and fauna on campus;
4. Help students and staff benefit from the enhanced natural health of the campus grounds, thereby contributing towards their well-being and enjoyment of their immediate environment;
5. Promote and create biodiversity features in the design of new buildings and through the management of existing buildings;
6. Create new partnerships with the London Swifts Organisations and relevant biodiversity networks as well as within the College and with the local community;
7. Increase awareness of the value of railside habitats to biodiversity within Lewisham;
8. Facilitate and maintain interest in and implementation of College environmental and sustainability policies;
9. Promote environmental awareness and personal responsibility amongst graduates and College leavers to the benefit of their professional lives and futures;
10. Demonstrate Goldsmiths' green credentials by compliance with Planning Policy Guidance: Nature Conservation, 1994 (PPG9) and promote interest in improving the local environment;
11. Contribute towards relevant local and regional Biodiversity Action Plans and open space strategy objectives.
12. Use rainwater harvesting and groundwater whenever possible for watering campus green spaces.

## 2 Management Principles

Even in our urban environment, trees, shrubs, lawns, flowers, soil and water provide key habitats for wildlife and different species of plants provide nectar and sources of food.

- i) Include biodiversity actions in the Estates Department's environmental management agenda and reporting.
- ii) Incorporate biodiversity protection and enhancement in the planning process, contracts for the building design and landscaping proposals of any development.
- iii) Identify and monitor the ecological condition of the main habitats on campus and sports-grounds
- iv) Enhance the ecological value of informal grassland areas, scrub and other habitats.
- v) Maintain and enhance the nature conservation value of trees on campus.
- vi) Implement the recommendations of the Ecological Survey and Land Use and Ecology BREEAM Assessment October 2008, and landscaping proposals prepared for the New Academic Building by the Landscape Science Consultancy.
- vii) Involve staff and students in keeping the campus litter-free and maintaining wildlife habitats.
- viii) Identify potential areas for implementing strategies that incorporate composting and small-scale food growing or bee-keeping.

## 3 Context

### *(i) Policy and legislation*

UK Biodiversity Action Policy - This is the government's response to the Convention on Biodiversity(CBD) signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biodiversity resources and endorses a detailed plan to protect them. It includes the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats.

London Biodiversity Action Plan – Contains 26 action plans for habitats and species that are important in London, delivered under the auspices of the London Biodiversity Partnership (currently chaired by the GLA and administered by Natural England). There are two relevant action plans; Parks & Urban Greenspaces, and Woodlands.

LB Lewisham BAP - The Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership works with the Council to protect, conserve and enhance the variety of wildlife species and habitats in Lewisham. This identifies the Forest Hill to New Cross Gate railway cutting as a site of Metropolitan Importance (M122) and both New Cross and New Cross Gate railsides (LeBII150) as of Borough Importance: Grade II for nature conservation.

Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Section 40 obliges all public bodies to “have regard for biodiversity in the exercise of their functions”. Public bodies should strive to lessen their impact on biodiversity, manage their buildings and estate to enhance biodiversity and raise awareness of biodiversity amongst staff and service users.

See: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/pa-guid-english.pdf>

The London Biodiversity Partnership Guide:

<http://legacy.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/environment/dutybound.pdf>

EAUC Practical Guide to Biodiversity on Campus - contains comprehensive information on the legal position regarding environmental law in relation to biodiversity:

[www.eauc.org.uk/biodiversity](http://www.eauc.org.uk/biodiversity)

Up to date legislation for UK legislation can be found at: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/netregs](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/netregs) and on the Office of Public Sector Information website:

[www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

## **(ii) Ecological context**

Goldsmiths now stands near the foot of the land rising away from the flood plain of the Thames, which at one time formed the northern limits of the Great North Wood. Indeed, an outlying fragment Hatcham Wood dominated the area, before slowly succumbing to agriculture (e.g. Plow'd Garlick Hill) and then development after the cutting of the London & Croyden Railway (1838-40) through what had become Telegraph Hill, to the west of the College. This created what is now known as New Cross Gate Cutting, the northern-most part of railway linesides stretching south to Forest Hill identified as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

## **4 Partnerships**

Goldsmiths intends to work with experts within LB Lewisham's GreenScene, London Wildlife Trust, Lewisham Biodiversity Partnership and South London Permaculture.

## **5 College Campus**

Goldsmiths is an urban campus located in New Cross on the Lewisham Way. It is bounded to the west by the New Cross Gate railway sidelines. It covers 8.83 hectares which includes green open spaces on the backfield and the grounds of Loring Hall, St James and the rear of the Ben Pimlott Building. There are 8.5 ha (21 acres) of sportsground at Foots Cray.

## **6 Biodiversity Management Plan**

The College grounds and playing fields are managed by the Head Gardener and two Grounds Maintenance Staff. Their work also includes the maintenance and improvement of trees, hedgerows and habitat availability. Some actions outlined below, for example habitat and species surveys, will require the input of specialists.

- Carry out a Phase 1 survey of the College campus to identify its habitats and species with recommendations for management.
- Consider bat survey (to guide future management of trees and buildings).
- Implement actions recommended in the Tree Health & Safety Survey 2009 by

Oakwood Tree Consultants Ltd. including crown reduction, balancing, crown reduction and removal of dead or dying trees, but ensuring that this minimises impacts on biodiversity, and that a dead wood resource is maintained.

- Safeguard nesting and roosting sites for different bird species (identified through survey) and incorporate swift boxes in the walls of new buildings and bat boxes in suitable locations adjacent to the railway cutting perimeters of the campus.
- Plant additional native trees (listed below), particularly species (marked with\*) which provide the best food sources for birds and animals:

Betula pendula: silver birch  
Prunus avium\*: bird cherry  
Carpinus betulus: hornbeam  
Pyrus communis: wild pear  
Corylus avellana\*: common hazel  
Quercus rubra\*: red oak  
Quercus petraea: sessile oak  
Crataegus monogyna\*: hawthorn  
Fraxinus excelsior: ash  
Sorbus aucuparia\*: rowan  
Ilex aquifolium\*: European holly  
Taxus baccata: English yew  
Malus sylvestris\*: crabapple  
Tilia cordata: lime/linden  
Populus tremula\*: common aspen

Newly planted trees require staking to support the trunks and watering critically in dry periods between April and end of July for the first two years, though this can be reduced by mulching.

- Plant native shrubs which attract wildlife and provide a food source particularly Lepidoptera - moths and butterflies:

Cornus sanguinea: common dogwood  
Ribes nigrum: blackcurrant  
Erica vulgaris: common heather  
Syringa vulgaris: common lilac  
Hedera helix: common ivy  
Ulex europaeus: common gorse  
Lavandula: lavender  
Viburnum lantana: wayfaring tree

These shrubs will require watering but only minimum pruning whilst establishing themselves, apart from dead-heading lavender and clearing paths. Mulching the borders with 7.5cm of bark, topped-up tri-annually, will minimise the need for weeding and watering.

- Plant forms of undergrowth to encourage small mammals, birds and insects. Somewhere safe to breed and shelter and somewhere to forage throughout the year are fundamental to wildlife. Hedges and well-developed thorny shrub beds provide good nesting sites.
- Naturalise the top bank by planting native British bluebells, alliums (wild garlic, *Allium ursinum*), camassi snowdrops, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, red campion

Selene dioica, and native wildflowers sourced from accredited suppliers. Feed after flowering if required and trim down bulbs when leaves turn brown.

- Protect the wildlife corridor provided by the railway embankment and provide approved access from the College campus to the nature reserve managed by the London Wildlife Trust.
- Reduce invasive plant species particularly woody nightshade, Japanese knotweed and convolvulus bindweed.
- Discourage potential pest or problem species (e.g. rats) through appropriate measures such as no feeding stations;
- Include plants which encourage butterflies and bees in formal flower beds.
- Sow wild flower seeds from legally collected seed.
- Leave dead wood logs to provide habitats for a variety of insects, bees, wasps and stag beetles.
- Reduce or eliminate use of chemical herbicides and fertilisers.
- Produce mulch and compost by shredding tree and shrub waste.
- Supervise annual green gyms to clear grassland and planting beds of litter and weeds.
- Protect biodiversity and tree roots from construction damage by providing exclusion zones.
- Survey, monitor and report annually on biodiversity management and protection.

*Approved by the Chair of Council  
on behalf of Council, Autumn term 2010*