

Sustainability



What is sustainability?

Simply put, ‘sustainability’ can be summed up as ‘living on the planet as if we mean to stay here.’ Achieving sustainable development requires a holistic approach, bringing together environmental, social, economic and cultural factors to ensure the long-term maintenance and wellbeing of both people and planet. Sustainability relates to many topics relevant to the natural environment, including climate change, energy use and renewables, outdoor access and impact, waste management, transport, pollution, food, biodiversity, and health.

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are world intentions agreed by the United Nations in 2015. World leaders have committed to 17 Global Goals that aim to make our planet fair, healthy and sustainable by 2030. Each country - its government, businesses, civil society and citizens - is finding a way to work towards meeting them to build a better future for everyone. Sustainable Development Goals 1-10 relate to inclusiveness, humanitarian, social and people problems, Goals 11-15 to ecological issues and sustainable systems, and Goals 16-17 to spiritual and ethical partnerships.

Learning for Sustainability is an educational approach encouraging us to learn to live within the environmental limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable and peaceful society. It is essential for the wellbeing of all and is an international priority (UNESCO, 2013). In Scotland, [Learning for Sustainability](#) is a government-endorsed entitlement for all learners, offering a framework to help embed global citizenship, children’s rights, sustainable development education and outdoor learning approaches.

“Crucially many of the actions needed to prevent and prepare for environmental breakdown can improve economic and social outcomes, creating a fairer society.” [IPPR Report](#), Feb 19

Sustainability and the John Muir Award

At the heart of sustainable development is restoring balance between people and planet, allowing nature and communities to flourish for the benefit of all. Central to the John Muir Trust's work is an ambition to inspire people to enjoy, connect with and care for wild places. Direct nature connection experiences create diverse opportunities to explore sustainability issues, from considering our behaviour and human impacts on nature in our local communities and favourite wild places, to engaging with 'bigger-than-self' national and global issues.

Protecting, repairing and restoring ecological systems has a significant part to play in mitigating climate change impacts, including helping reduce carbon emissions, improve natural flood defences and build more resilient communities. The John Muir Award's Conserve Challenge promotes simple concepts of personal responsibility and making a difference which can be used to explore what sustainability means - individually and collectively - in ways that are relevant and meaningful to participants.

By connecting with and enjoying nature, people are more likely to care for it. Through John Muir Award participation:

- **Everyone makes a difference** - each participant takes practical action to conserve wild places, from litter picks to tree planting, citizen science surveys to climate campaigning, pollinator-friendly gardening to path restoration, and more...
- **Everyone connects with nature** - people get to know what biodiversity is, why it matters and how it supports us, and discover first-hand how nature connection supports our health and wellbeing.
- **Enjoying our natural world is at its heart** - we want people to feel part of nature, to experience a sense of awe and wonder, to be positive and share what they love about the outdoors.
- **Minimising impacts on wild places is encouraged and integrated** - involvement prompts consideration of our behaviour and sustainable choices we can make through how we travel, eat, camp and enjoy nature.
- **We're all part of something bigger** - by taking action, standing up for and caring for wild places, every participant is a voice for a nature and a part of the change towards a more sustainable world.
- **John Muir's life, beliefs and legacy offer inspiration** - what is important to you and your community, and how can you make a difference?

Values and sustainability

Research has identified cultural values - our 'guiding principles' - as one of the driving forces of people's motivation to engage with 'bigger-than-self' sustainability themes.

Nature experiences can impact on our values, reinforcing concern for issues such as biodiversity and climate change. Participation in the John Muir Award can create opportunities to discuss values, stimulating conversation about how wild places make us feel and our attitudes towards nature and the outdoors.

Useful websites

[Global Goals for Sustainable Development](#) - a platform sharing resources, campaigns and examples to help people communicate and take action on the Goals. Find tailored content for each individual goal, including examples from around the world, and visit the [World's Largest Lesson](#) for a range of education resources including short films, games lesson plans and more.

[Good Life Goals](#) - to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, action is needed on global, national and local scales. These resources, flashcards and animations aim to help people understand how they can take personal action in their day-to-day lives through lifestyle and behavioural changes.

[Eco-Schools](#) - global environmental awareness programme

[Signposts for Global Citizenship](#) - sustainability resources

[Rights Respecting Schools Award](#) - putting child rights into practice

[Sustainability and Environmental Education](#) - resources, training events

Achieving all of the Goals is essential to delivering a sustainable future, and all can be woven into activities, conversations and initiatives undertaken through a John Muir Award. We've taken the ecological-orientated Goals 11-15 as a starting point, signposting to just some of the fantastic ideas, actions, resources and initiatives that are helping people take action for a more balanced, happier and healthier world. It's by no means an exhaustive list. Why not consider how your local community is taking action or start a campaign of your own?

Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities and communities for all

[Sustrans](#) - encouraging active travel

[Campaign for Better Transport](#) - campaigning for sustainable transport

[Energy Saving Trust](#) - advice for home, school and work

[Resources for Rethinking](#) - classroom resources and tools

[The Happy Planet Index](#) - global sustainable wellbeing data



Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Sustainable economies, lifestyles, resource use, waste management

[Keep Britain Tidy](#) - Litter, recycling, spring clean campaigns - (England),

[keepscotlandbeautiful.org](#) (Scotland), [keepwalestidy.cymru](#) (Wales)

[Litter Knowledge Network](#) - research and advice on litter prevention

[WWF Footprint Calculator](#) - measure your personal impact

[Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) - circular economy resources

[The Story of Stuff](#) - films, campaigns and talking points

[Plastics challenge](#) - An exciting challenge for pupils aged 8-14 years to develop solutions to the problems caused by plastic waste globally

[Fairtrade Foundation](#) - includes Fairtrade Schools resources



[Soil Association](#) - planet-friendly food and farming campaigns

[Countryside Classroom](#) - connecting schools with food, farming and nature

Goal 13: Climate Action

Acting now to combat climate change and mitigate its impacts

[Earth Day Network](#) - annually day to mobilise people to protect the planet

[Young Reporters for the Environment](#) - international platform for young people

[Campaign against Climate Change](#) - schools resources

[The Climate Coalition](#) - #ShowTheLove campaign

[Oxfam Education](#) - sustainability and climate change resources

[Friends of the Earth](#) - climate change campaigns and solutions

[NASA Global Climate Change](#) - data, resources and solutions

[Nature's Calendar](#) - track climate change impacts on local wildlife

Goal 14: Life below water

Marine habitats, reducing pollution, sustainable use of ocean resources

[World Oceans Day](#) - campaign and resources

[Marine Conservation Society](#) - campaigns and resources

[Nurdle Hunt](#) - reducing marine plastic pollution

[Take 3 for the sea](#) - marine litter campaign

[#2minutebeachclean](#) - find a beach clean

[Blue Planet Live](#) - plastics and sustainability films

[Surfers Against Sewage](#) - plastic pollution and climate change resources

[Common Seas](#) - ocean plastics education resources

[The Big Seaweed Search](#) - monitor climate change impacts on the seashore

Goal 15: Life on Land

Protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems, promoting biodiversity

[National Biodiversity Network](#) - partnership resource of biodiversity information

[Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) - reversing the decline in freshwater biodiversity

[STEM Learning](#) - biodiversity and species extinction resources

[OPAL Surveys](#) - species and habitats surveys

[Scistarter](#) - searchable citizen science portal

[Keep Scotland Beautiful](#) - biodiversity resources

[Garden Organic](#) - resources for schools

[Leave No Trace](#) - help reduce your impacts when in the outdoors

[Biodiversity & Climate Change Education Park](#) - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park resource

