

Getting started – they did!

Case studies from a range of workplaces where Prospect members have been or are currently involved in making their workplaces environmentally sustainable.

They reflect a range of member initiatives and journeys towards low-carbon, energy efficient workplaces.



More resources: <https://library.prospect.org.uk/browse/topic/environment>

Get involved: environment@prospect.org.uk

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PROSPECT MEMBER CASE STUDIES

More than Dinosaurs: Getting started at the Natural History Museum

The Branch Committee identified an enthusiastic young member and Branch Committee member who was keen to bring his science and environment knowledge into the workplace - thereby contributing more to Prospect's activities in the museum.

The complexity of the Museum buildings and working conditions posed a challenge. At the same time the museum was investigating how to reduce their carbon footprint and progress sustainability ambitions led by the Director of the museum.



Organisational change and restructuring

Various discussions were held with the Branch Committee, the Negotiating Officer and the Environment Representative to establish the best way forward - meeting the needs of the organisation whilst upholding the integrity of trade union values by being the voice of the members in a transition phase of organisational change and restructuring.

Working in partnership

The Committee was introduced to a programme run by the National Union of Students (NUS) called Green Impacts. This followed with joint Prospect and NUS presentations to the Facilities, Environment and Communications teams. With the support of the Branch Chair, the Environment Representative successfully negotiated an agreement with management to enter into a three year tri-partite project using the NUS model.

Participatory approach

The NUS Green Impact model focuses on behaviour change through competition with an element of fun but highly dependent on staff buy-in and participation. The model also includes working with local University students trained in environmental auditing and assigned to teams at the museum. They encourage and support staff to achieve the goals and conduct audits against the set objectives.

Working with the Representative, Environment Officer and the NUS, an assessment of the entire museum was undertaken. This included the extensive laboratories, administrative offices, exhibition (public areas) and grounds. Once the assessment was completed, the following implementation process took place:

- A dedicated on-line workbook was created containing all the objectives and goals for various teams to strive for and achieve in order to reduce the environmental impact. Not only does it include the various targets for departments to achieve but also how each department will be assessed and audited.
- A "soft launch" was agreed to. The rationale was to grow the project organically through word of mouth to overcome the barrier of reluctance to take on new ideas and schemes - especially when there's a perception of "extra" work.
- The Branch Committee played a role in getting the ball rolling by encouraging Prospect members to be the "green champions" for their departments.

Battle of the buildings (energy efficiency): Devonport Royal Dockyard

The lead Environment Representative, Richard Cooper, initiated a pilot “lights off” scheme in the building where he works. This led to a broader campaign involving site management and more people.

Switch-off:

Due to employees concerns over being left in the dark there was reluctance to switch lights off. To address this concern a survey of the buildings’ lighting was conducted to identify rooms where this risk was credible.

The survey of the building identified risk areas. The light switches in those areas were coloured red indicating they were allowed to stay on. Everyone in the building was fully briefed on both the survey and the colour code for light switches. As a result of this employee consultation to address concerns and then the communication of changes, there has been a considerable reduction in energy usage.

Battle of the buildings:

On the same site the Environmental Representatives came up with and developed an idea for the company to make a donation to local charities based on a % of the total energy reduction saving. The charitable incentive was developed to raise awareness of energy savings but also to get broad buy-in and participation from staff.

They worked with the Company to reduce the business overall ‘energy baseload’. The baseload was the amount of energy being used per day when the business had the Christmas shutdown.

The campaign focussed on reducing electricity consumption of and in buildings around the site. This campaign not only raised awareness and reduced consumption - the winning building chose to donate their £300 winnings to the Erme Valley Riding School for the Disabled (RDA).



To embed the importance of reducing energy consumption and encourage behavioural change across the site the group of Environment Representatives have also:

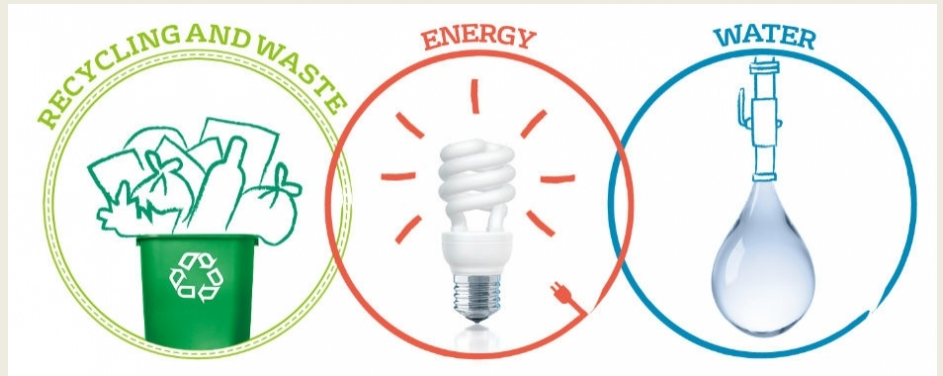
- facilitated visits to a new energy from waste plant producing electricity for the site
- Participated in the Company Environment Committee
- Advocated for a joint Management and Prospect charter on climate change

Richard has subsequently participated in the TUC delegation to the Paris climate talks. He presented at a workshop organised by the ITUC to share on how trade union members are engaging in their workplaces and advocating for a voice in Company plans and activities.

Environmental impact: BT, Adastral Park (Ipswich)

Union members at British Telecom have been actively involved over a number of years in the “greening” of Adastral Park - BT's research and development headquarters near Ipswich. The park is home to 3,500 BT staff plus 500 non-BT employees and houses more than 30 companies.

The main goal was to involve the workforce in reducing the Park's environmental impact, initially by engaging staff in site-wide carbon impact assessments covering energy, water and waste.



Consultations between onsite Prospect, CWU reps, senior management and the TUC led to a union environment day and workshop being arranged in November 2009. The union environment day included:

- the Energy Saving Trust's 'energy doctor' for one-to-one advice;
- trying out a driving simulator to practice eco-driving techniques; and
- a range of Union stands providing further green advice, books, plus an energy efficient light bulb and energy meter try-it-before-you-buy-it service.

Two key suggestions arising from the day were to formalise the environmental agenda, boosting frontline employee involvement by setting up an environmental forum, and also to increase employee ownership through greater union participation. Various consultation meetings were held to establish the role of the union green reps and the contribution they would make to the sites carbon reduction plan.

Water, public transport and ethical investments

The Prospect representative, Andrew Cassy, has become the official site-wide sustainability champion on behalf of senior managers. Some of the work undertaken by the Union environment forum includes:

- Replacing 59 bottled water units with plumbed-in tap water chillers, avoiding the need to produce, deliver, store and lift more than 3,500 18 litre water bottles a year.
- Participated in site-wide carbon impact assessments covering energy, water and waste.
- Secured public transport to the site and presented on this work at a [European trade union workshop](#) on Workers Involvement in Putting Urban Sustainable Mobility into Practice.
- Currently participating in a “share action” initiative investigating ethical investments with the pension fund.



Pedal power & carbon footprint: National Library of Scotland

Tom Proudfoot, Branch Environment Representative and participant in the TUC's Greening the workplace project played a pivotal role in getting the library to establish a carbon management plan and agree to a 30% reduction in its carbon emissions by 2015.

Shrinking the carbon footprint

The [Carbon Management Plan](#) committed the organisation to a target of reducing CO2 by 30% by 2014/15 and underpins potential financial savings of around £620k over the course of the project and £160k annual recurring savings thereafter.

The library reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 43% from 2008-09 baseline levels. Energy consumption has been reduced by 40%.

The 2015 to 2020 strategy includes an ambition to reduce the local and global environmental impact of consumption and production. Within this plan there have been targeted activities; including:

- The introduction of a comprehensive recycling scheme, incorporating 18 different waste streams. Food waste is composted, working alongside a local social enterprise scheme; craft materials are sent for re-use to another social enterprise; and used Perspex is being returned to the manufacturer to be made into new Perspex;
- A survey and quiz was issued to staff early in the initial project. This aimed at identifying energy waste, find out what motivates staff to save energy and gauge staff knowledge on energy use and energy costs at the library. Staff now have online access to see the hourly energy consumption on a building to building basis.
- The next campaign focused on behavioural change with the launch of an 'I'm Switching Off' campaign, a green suggestions staff email address and environmental newsletter.

Pedal power

Tom has also been working hard to encourage colleagues to get on their bikes. He helped organise a "Dr Bike" session in 2014, run by the Bike Station, a Scottish organisation that provides a range of services for employers to promote cycling and sustainable transport. Over a dozen bikes were given the once over and advice handed out, with one bike declared a death-trap.

It was all made possible by a grant from Cycling Scotland, along with donations from Prospect, Sustrans, Edinburgh City Council and the Bike Station. Tom sent out 40 packs to members of the NLS bike users' group.

As part of his work to encourage colleagues to go green, he has also:

- linked up NLS's Health at Work group with an "active travel" representative from the cycling campaign group Sustrans
- raised a number of issues with management about additional storage and parking
- brought up the question of interest free travel loans for buses and trains.

There is now also a community toolbox at the library for staff who need to make emergency bike repairs.



Sustainable procurement and CSR agreement: SRUC

Clive Davey, branch secretary of SAC (Now SRUC). The initial work started as the college was developing their CSR policy. With the consent of the Branch, Clive contributed to the consultation on the college's new CSR policy. This led to an agreement whereby Prospect is an official stakeholder in the CSR process.

The agenda within the SRUC Branch has developed over time through:

- Raising awareness with members at Branch meetings and special events;
- Holding workshops to establish priorities and opportunities;
- Keeping abreast of what the organisation is required to do, but also feeding into new initiatives and activities;
- Recruiting specialist representatives who have an interest in sustainability and arranging for them to attend Prospect training; and
- Negotiating with management for Prospect members to be part of the organisations sustainability structures.

Subsequently, with various Branch Committee interventions, environmental and social sustainability have been brought together as a Branch agenda item. Two environment representatives have been recruited, trained and participate as members on the environment committee.

The range of success within SRUC includes:

- Implementation of an ethical procurement policy for the IT department;
- All refreshment-dispensing machines on SRUC's three campuses are FairTrade machines;
- Contributed to the consultation on the college's new CSR policy with an agreement – with Prospect an official stakeholder in the CSR process;
- Led arguments against cutting funding for crop research;
- Secured Prospect representation on the environment committee overseeing all campus's environmental impact.



Flexible working & smart offices: The Department of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS)

Adrian Bond, Branch Environment Representative, is part of BIS's Green Guardian internal sustainability network. Adrian contributes by arranging displays during climate week, encouraging Green Guardian network activities and provides internal staff blogs on environmental and sustainability issues, such as 'How green is home working?'

The energy efficiency and carbon reduction strategy is part of the overall Greening Government Commitments and the department's specific plans include:

- Move all staff to more energy-efficient buildings,
- Install voltage reduction equipment,
- Have core hours for heating and cooling,
- Change the server room cooling temperatures,
- Turn computers and monitors off properly during prolonged absences, and
- Find energy inefficient behaviour and promote good practice.

At 1 Victoria Street office timers were installed on lifts with reduced lift access at weekend & evenings. A partial shutdown of lifts over the 2015 Christmas period saved 64 tonnes of CO2 and cash savings of

Energy consumption and CO2 emissions data for 1 Victoria Street are published online at <https://savenergyonline.stark.co.uk/government/bis.aspx>

Flexible working and business continuity

BIS's move to real 'flexible working' started at an initial significant cost, partly driven by the 2012 Olympic Games. BIS saw the instruction that came from the centre of Government that a large proportion of Civil Servants were to work from home to relieve pressures on the transport system as an opportunity to expand secure home working.

This capability not only helped BIS reduce public transport use in 2012, it allowed more flexible working and improved Business Continuity: the impacts of snow, travel disruption and holiday season chaos were significantly reduced, enabling the target driven and fast turnaround business areas to continue, whatever the weather!

Two years on and BIS decided to take the leap (partnering with the FCO) to go completely IT 'flexible' with laptops that can log-on to the BIS network anywhere in the UK as standard.

In 2015 BIS were also the first department to explore moving from flexible working to a strategic approach to smarter working, publishing a report in March which reflected an online survey and face to face interviews with every team in BIS. It was clear that a commitment to maintaining service levels, staff needed maximum flexibility with internal and external networks of excellence under constant appraisal and development.

These moves continue to reduce reliance on transport, allows more flexible use of the building's resources as well as personal benefits.

Smarter Offices

Printing was one of the Department's and Green Guardian network's first challenges. Old printers were replaced with smarter token activated printers that only print when you are physically present, reducing unwanted and forgotten printing. Meetings are becoming increasingly paperless as the laptops have proven to be truly un-plug and go!

RAISING AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Thermal imaging: Defence sector Branch

The Environment Representative in conjunction with the Branch Organiser from a Prospect's defence sector Branch, set up an onsite lunch hour gathering and ran a recruitment stall. Sheila's intention was to raise awareness of home heat loss and invited both members and non-members to the event.

Invites were sent to all Prospect members via the Representative network.

The substance of the talk was about a project, using a borrowed thermal imaging camera from the local council, to take pictures of a hundred homes in a village west of Basingstoke. He also spoke about building regulations and the effects of various measures (double glazing, loft insulation and so on) on house heating and heating bills.

Thermal imaging is a useful tool to be able to visualise and identify energy loss but it also helps to identify problem areas that can't be seen by the naked eye, facilitate repairs quickly thereby saving money on energy costs.

In an industrial or workplace setting thermal imaging minimises down time, repair time, labour costs and disturbance of occupant and can provide verification of a job well done.



Thermal imaging of the houses of parliament

Fruity Friday (waste and consumption): AMEC Energy

Will Aicken, a Prospect Rep at the AMEC office at Winfrith, Dorset took part in a Fruity Friday event in 2014. Organised nationally, the theme of the event was to promote healthy eating and lifestyles through the consumption of fruit and fruit based drinks, and in the process raise funds for a worthy charity, the World Cancer Research Fund.



So for a day, all staff were encouraged to part with their calorific and salt laden cakes and crisps and bring in a selection of fruit and healthy drinks to be sold during a bring and buy sale. Items on sale ranged from the familiar apples and bananas to more exotic lychee and kumquats.

And in the spirit of Fruity Friday, staff were encouraged to wear yellow for the day (hi-viz vests did not qualify!)

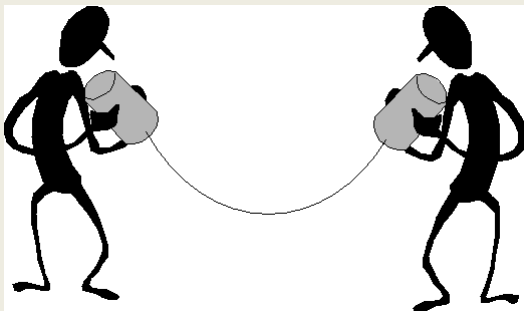
In total, staff raised a grand total of £166. Plans are now afoot to make a wide selection of fruit available for purchase daily in the office tea-bar, in response to a recent staff survey.

Let's Talk lunchtime debate: BT call centre in Leicester

The 'Let's Talk' event was organised between BT, the CWU and Prospect unions with the aim of getting employees to share their views about sustainability.

People liked seeing that it was a joint event with union colleagues and despite the restriction of a busy call centre environment the debate was well attended.

At the end of the session most agreed the event was a good use of their time. Participants quickly demonstrated very strong sustainability knowledge (more than anticipated) and a keenness to learn more during the debate.



The session was led by a sustainability advisor from Ashridge Business School and also included a video, and activities designed to ensure people had fun.

Lunch was also provided as the workers were giving up their lunch break to be there.

Feedback from the event showed that by the end of it, participants felt they had a stronger grasp of the wider issues around sustainability, and about their own responsibility towards the environment.

PROSPECT BRANCH'S: other reports

The union effect (including EDF energy & Defra)

This [report presents the experiences of six organisations](#) which have made a serious effort to lessen the impact of their operations on the environment and, in particular, to reduce their carbon footprint. It looks at the measurable progress that has been made, and the role of unions in that progress.

TUC 2010 green workplaces project report (including BT, National Library of Scotland, National Museum of Liverpool and United Utilities)

The [outcomes and lessons learned](#) from the TUC's 'greening the workplace project' documents the role of Union members initiating work in their workplaces. The project was funded by the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF) through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (formerly Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform).

LRD report: Green Unions at Work 2012 (including Prospect references)

Over 1,300 green reps replied to a [survey of green workplaces](#) carried out by the Labour Research Department. The report provides excellent data and case studies on Union activity with employers around climate change, energy efficiency, homeworking, travel and transport, best measures to green the workplace and the economy & environmental commitments.

Prospect members from all sectors contributed to this survey with information on workplace environment related activity. Some are on management initiatives, individual activity and multi-union programs. The range and scope of activity included in the 60 page booklet, listed below with the workplace and page reference, includes:

- Health and Safety Laboratory (heating controls #11)
- Countryside Council of Wales (energy supplier #11)
- Office of National Statistics (water usage & waterless urinals #12)
- Scottish National Heritage (travel policies and climate change #16)
- Utilities company (travel – staff shuttle bus #20)
- Central government (behavioural change & recycling arrangements #22)
- Nuclear Decommissioning (energy savings and bonus scheme #23)
- National Library of Wales (disaster emergency planning #27)
- BT (green procurement & electric vehicles #28 & #35)
- Dounreay Site Restoration resource (management policy on reskilling #55)



Getting started as an Environment Representative

Who can be a Prospect environment (sustainability) representative?

The short answer is anyone keen enough! Prospect has identified three broad categories of workplace engagement that takes into consideration personal and professional interest for formal and informal activity.

What can a union environment representative do?

Just as unions and employers work together to improve health and safety in the workplace, environment representatives are elected to champion environmental issues in the workplace.

In broad terms, the environment representative will be the trade union voice acting as a conduit between management and members with the aim of raising awareness and participating in initiatives that may include:

- Reducing energy consumption and increase energy efficiency with the aim of reducing carbon emissions;
- Using available resources to reduce air, land, water and noise pollution;
- Promoting a mixed transport policy that promotes clean car technology, public transport, cycling and walking;
- Supporting the protection, development and/or regeneration of the natural environmental;
- Working together to avoid identify future climate adaptation and/or mitigation initiatives;
- Encouraging positive behaviours to minimise consumption, optimise resources, source materials sustainably and responsibly dispose of waste.

Activity in formal organisational structures:

- Participate in Corporate environmental/sustainable networks and committee;
- Participate in monitoring environmental performance over and above the Company's legal and regulatory obligations including auditing and verification for certification reporting purposes.

Activity in less formal structures:

- Encourage positive behaviours that support environmental objectives, share information and best practice through the Prospect member communication systems;
- Encourage and contribute to a sustainable procurement policy;
- Be consulted on matters relating to issues which may materially affect employees. (For example, significant changes in working practices, training requirements, introduction of new technology and processes);
- Participate in consultations on sustainability plans, initiatives and policies including matters arising on climate readiness, mitigation and adaptation plans;
- Where appropriate challenge, monitor and advance environmental considerations and solutions.

Entry points, next steps and activity for Environment Representatives

The important consideration here is flexibility with gradual growth into the role. There are essentially two routes into becoming active in the workplace. One is when a member has a personal interest in environmental sustainability and is keen to do something at work.

The second is where the Branch recruits a member/s to be the Prospect voice, representing members, in growing corporate sustainability activity related to mandatory reporting on environmental performance on carbon emission reduction.

| Entry level | First steps | Next steps | Possible activity |
|--|--|---|--|
| Individual member with personal interest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Branch Committee of interest • Access Prospect materials or training • Introduction to the Branch Committee • Environment Representative status updated on the Prospect membership system <p>Taking it further</p> <p>Consider a more formal agreement with the employer. This could be in the form of a charter or reps agreement that reflects the commitment to addresses climate change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop interest are for workplace activity (for eg, biodiversity, cycling to work or waste reduction) • Identify possible partners (for eg, community groups or charities) • Research your organisations' policy or ambition for the area of interest (ie do they have a policy or published ambition for that element) • Identify and meet responsible person or department in the organisation. • Present and agree possible activity or support for initiative or activity. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate details and outcomes to Prospect members • Arrange lunch time events on topics of interest or local initiatives • Include in Branch newsletters or e-branch • Feedback to the Branch Committee • Circulate Prospect information on campaigns, events and briefings to members <p>Taking it further</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow a network of activists in the workplace or • Contribute to established staff networks • Contribute to Prospect policy or calls for consultation |

| Entry level | First steps | Next steps | Possible activity |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Branch elected member</p> <p>Where there is a formal sustainability or environment structure including staff "green champion" type networks</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify member/s interested in the role • Access Prospect materials or training • Environment Representative status updated on the Prospect membership system • Introduction to the Branch Committee & members • Confirm appointment with Management | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Familiarise yourself with environment and energy management standards & objectives of the Organisation 2. Meet with Management 3. Present benefits of Prospect engagement 4. Agree a common agenda 5. Negotiate for a formal agreement with the employer – this could be in the form of a representative agreement or a charter that reflects the acknowledgement of the role and the commitment to address climate change 6. Agree a Prospect seat on any established committee or forum 7. Participate in future meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor walking on informal audits • Agree mechanism for staff reporting • Environment auditing for formal sustainability or annual reports • Validate reports for Assurance purposes • Initiate, encourage or participate in staff surveys and consultations relating to energy efficiency, lighting, heating, ventilation and changing work patterns to reduce carbon emissions. • Support theme days (Water week, climate change week) • Communicate details and outcomes to Prospect members • Include in Branch newsletters or e-branch • Feedback to the Branch Committee • Circulate Prospect information on campaigns, events and briefings to members |
| <p>Branch elected member</p> <p>Where there is NO established corporate structure</p> | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify management person or department responsible for environment related work (for eg Estates managers) 2. Research environment policy, standards and sector specific codes of practice, initiatives and networks. 3. Discuss and share ideas with the Branch Committee and other members <p>Once agreement is reached to establish a group/forum/committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a Prospect seat on any established committee or forum • Develop a group terms of reference • Agree a common agenda and time line | <p>Taking it further</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow a network of activists in the workplace or • Contribute to established staff networks • Contribute to Prospect policy and calls for consultation |

