



NATURE POSITIVE
UNIVERSITIES

STUDENT ACTION: SETTING UP A NATURE SOCIETY



UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON
**ECOSYSTEM
RESTORATION**
2021-2030

Establishing a student-led Hedgehog Society at University of Reading, UK



“I hadn’t envisioned founding and running a student society. However, after a lecture on the plight of UK mammals, a friend and I were compelled to do something which led to us co-founding the Hedgehog Society. It has been a whirlwind 16 months but we are extremely proud of all that we have achieved to date and the society continues”

Steps along the way:



Starting a society at university is a great way to follow your passion and to share it with like-minded people. Although it might seem daunting, you're more likely to be successful in your actions and reap other benefits if you're part of a team. It can also help you develop your skills while being part of something bigger than yourself.

1

Make sure you set out your aims, have an idea of the activities you will run and plan how you will fundraise and promote the events you will organise. You will also need the support of **approximately 10-20 people** (depending on the minimum number of people required for a university society. Check with your Students' Union or university administration).

2

Next, you will need a solid team behind you. Most universities you will require your society to have a **president, welfare officer, secretary and treasurer**. In addition, consider possible staff contacts you can enlist to help give advice and support you on your journey.

3

Think of ways to **draw the attention of students**. Ensure you keep the momentum going after the first few weeks to maintain interest and increase engagement. Constantly keep a look out for relevant bigger university events, you can get involved with to promote your society's activities.

4

You may want to **create a mailing list** to invite people to events or start a chat on social media. I would recommend you have a few alternative options to cover people's different preferences.

5

Have procedures in place well in advance for **handing over the baton** to the next committee – and make arrangements to remain in contact if the new team have any questions.

Examples of our activities:

After forming the Hedgehog Society we got involved in a variety of activities:



Organising events

The society has run 28 events for society members covering a wide range of activities including craft sessions, nature photography, and poster-making sessions.



Joining university-wide events

We have taken part in several university-wide events including the Sustainability Summit, Green Festival and Community Festival.



Wildlife recording

As well as social activities, we also ran activities to help people take practical action such as hazard auditing, footprint tunnel surveys, camera trapping and we now have 3 hedgehog houses on campus.



Clean up events

We ran 4 on-campus litter picks and for one we had 19 people turn up which was the biggest turnout for any on-campus litter pick!

Top tips and successes:



We were always keen to collaborate with others and have run joint events with the Hiking, Birds and Zoology Societies, Green Volunteers and Berks & South Bucks Bat Group. I also regularly sought advice from other established external local environmental groups, so don't be afraid to ask questions, people are often happy to help.



Since we started, we now have a growing team of over 70 members and we emphasised students do not need a specific degree/background to get involved. We have fundraised over £1100 to maintain the society's activities so think creatively how you can do this.



In 2023, we were grateful to receive 'Best New Society.' And in 2024, we were grateful to receive 'Best Sustainability Initiative.'



It is my strong belief that "great things are never done by one person. They are done by a team of people."

Time to get started!

Nature Positive Universities would love to hear how you get on if you decide to start your own nature group on your campus! Please don't hesitate to share your journey and ask for advice along the way.



You can contact us through the Nature Positive Universities website www.naturepositiveuniversities.net or via email on emily.stott@biology.ox.ac.uk



You can also contact Ramandeep directly via email on Ramandeepnijjar@outlook.com or connect with her on LinkedIn.

We also encourage you to share your actions for nature on social media with the #GenerationRestoration and tag us with:



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