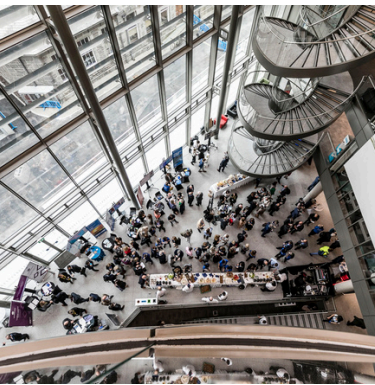




Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

GREEN EVENTS PLAN



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INTRODUCTION

Vision

We will be a university, a place and a community where climate change and biodiversity loss are addressed in a holistic, integrated and health-focused way to protect and restore our planetary home for future generations

Our Commitment

Trinity has pledged to:

- Achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040
- Become Nature Positive by 2030
- Improve physical and mental health across our community by 2030

Mission

To tackle climate and biodiversity challenges for a healthy planet and healthy people through our educational programmes, our research and innovation, and our day-to-day operations, both within Trinity and in partnership with external collaborators and communities.

Our mission statement communicates how we are going to achieve these ambitious targets, not only as individuals, but by creating a community of people who collaborate, support and inspire others to take the lead and get things done. Trinity recognises that tackling the small day-to-day operational challenges can often lead to larger cultural and structural changes which enable us to meet our challenging targets.

CONTEXT



Trinity is a place of learning and research; however, it is also a place where hundreds of events take place throughout the year. These range from academic seminars and staff gatherings to large-scale public events like the Trinity Summer Series and Trinity Ball. Events are organized by a broad cross-section of college staff, students, specialized teams in the Commercial Revenue Unit, Trinity Development and Alumni and the Provost's Office.

This strategy was shaped through collaboration with event organizers across the college who are already advancing sustainability in practice. We would like to thank the following people for their contributions:

- Emma Mooney, Trinity Business School
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- Ali Hartney, Trinity Development and Alumni
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- Moira O'Brien, Trinity Catering
- Dearbhla Mac Fadden, Trinity Commercial Services

WHY ORGANISE A SUSTAINABLE EVENT?



Events are a great way to build a community, they are a way to bring people together to share knowledge and ideas, collaborate on a research project, learn about a new topic or just an opportunity to be entertained with friends. Some events are also a way for Trinity to raise much needed finances to ensure that the college can deliver excellence in education and research. However, we know that events, like many things we do in our daily lives and operations, can also have negative impacts and therefore Trinity is committed to addressing the key issues to improve our sustainability performance.

Delivering a sustainable event has many benefits such as:

- **Demonstrate Commitment:** Reassure staff, students, and guests that sustainability is core to Trinity's ethos.
- **Strengthen Reputation:** Position Trinity as a leading sustainable university.
- **Raise Awareness & Inspire Action:** Show attendees how we walk the talk on sustainability.
- **Lead by Example:** Influence suppliers and partners to improve sustainability standards across the supply chain.
- **Reduce Costs:** Minimise overspending on catering, energy, waste management, and single-use items.
- **Cut Waste:** Tackle avoidable waste like excess food, plastic cups, printed materials, and promotional giveaways.
- **Litter Free Campus:** Eliminate single-use items to reduce litter and maintain a clean campus environment.
- **Reduce Carbon Emissions:** Play our part in tackling the current global climate challenge.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?



The working group events team undertook a deep dive into current practices when organising and delivering events on campus to assess the **quick wins** and **structural changes** required to make events more sustainable.

The main problems and solutions can be summarised as:

Problem 1: Use of Single Use Items

Core Issue: The overuse of single use items including disposable cups, plastic bottles of water, paper plates, compostable cutlery etc are still used on campus.

Hiring ceramic and other reusable cups/plates/glasses from external providers is expensive and generates GHG emissions from transport.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline from
1.1 Disposable Ban	Ban non-recyclable cups; phase out all disposables campus-wide.	All teams	Dec 2026
1.2 Monitoring plastic use	Measure single use plastic in Trinity Catering outlets, non-Trinity on campus facilities, and from preferred suppliers. Investigate cost & GHG implications of replacing single use with glass, metal and ceramic.	Trinity Sustainability	Jul 2026
1.3 Plastic Use	Phase out the use and sale of single use plastics on campus by 2027.	All teams	Dec 2027
1.4 Reusable Items	Provide ceramic cups/plates/glasses with all Trinity food orders or water in non-plastic containers (recyclable glass bottles/cans or cartons). Replace disposable plastic cups with reusable cups in the Pavilion Bar. Review 2GoCup scheme to assess its impact.	Trinity Catering Pavilion Bar Trinity Sustainability	Dec 2026
1.5 Oversupply	Reduce the oversupply of coffee stirrers and sugar sachets. Inform caterers when orders are being placed.	All teams	Ongoing
1.6 Order Reduction	Assess if tea/coffee is required for all internal meetings. Promote the 'bring your own cup' initiative to reduce the need for ceramic or disposable cups and promote the purchase of tea/coffee canisters for hosting small internal meetings where appropriate. Support other food options for meetings i.e. fruit.	All teams	Ongoing
1.7 Procurement	Work with external suppliers to reduce the cost of hiring ceramic cups/plates/glasses. Investigate alternative reusable options that are less costly for customers and suppliers (i.e. stackable etc).	Procurement	Dec 2026
1.8 Cost-Benefit Analysis	Investigate the long-term savings versus upfront investment of a college run internal hire service for kitchenware rental (ceramic plates, cups, reusable water glasses) with delivery, cleaning, and pickup.	Trinity Sustainability	Dec 2026
1.9 Infrastructure Support	Equip satellite units with dishwashers and sustainable kitchen supplies, where possible. Equip catering teams with compostable bins for large events.	Satellite Units	Ongoing

Problem 2: Food Waste

Core Issue: Excess food leads to waste and missed redistribution opportunities.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
2.1 Order Reduction	Work with staff organising events, and arrange training sessions, to set out the ideal/benchmark food orders per person per meeting. This will reduce over-ordering and potential food wastage.	Trinity Sustainability	Ongoing
2.2 Portion Strategy	Work with providers to review portion sizes to reduce food waste.	All teams	Ongoing
2.3 Redistribution Network	Partner with groups (e.g., FoodCloud, Too Good To Go) and adhere to hygiene protocols for donation. Caterers should provide compostable packaging which can be used for redistribution. Develop a protocol to ensure adherence to food safety.	All teams/catering	Ongoing
2.4 Food Waste	Locally monitor food waste at each event and keep an account to inform future decisions. Student Ambassadors could be a way in which to monitor food waste.	All teams	Ongoing
2.5 Food Waste Tech	Use tools like Positive Carbon to track and reduce food waste for larger events.	Trinity Catering	Ongoing
2.6 Campus Composting	Develop a composting facility for event waste; support landscaping/biodiversity projects.	Estates & Facilities	Dec 2026
2.7 Policy Shift	Encourage sustainable options (reduced packaging, locally produced, portion appropriate options) for internal meetings to reduce waste.	All teams	Ongoing

Problem 3: Food Type and Provenance

Core Issue: Lack of seasonal, local, vegetarian and vegan food choices with a lack of transparency about food provenance.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
3.1 Vegetarian/Vegan Default	Adopt a “vegetarian by default” policy with opt-in for meat.	All teams	Sep 2026
3.2 Supplier Engagement	Work with current and new local suppliers to offer seasonal locally sourced produce as well as organic, plant-based options where possible. Procurement to ensure new suppliers (from 2029) align with these requirements.	Procurement	Ongoing
3.3 Transparent Communication	Clearly state sustainability policy and Green Event Guidelines on event invites.	All teams	May 2026
3.4 Menu Design	Collaborate with internal and external caterers to ensure low-carbon, Irish-sourced meals. Provide examples of low carbon meal options.	All teams	May 2026
3.5 Food Plan	Align with the new Food Plan to increase the availability of local, seasonal and nutritious meals.	Healthy Trinity & Trinity Sustainability	Ongoing

Problem 4: Plastic Bottled Water

Core Issue: High reliance on single-use bottles and low access to filtered water

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
4.1 Ban Bottled Water	Prohibit single-use plastic water bottles in event procurement.	All teams	Jun 2026
4.2 Promotion Campaign	Provide a fund for departments to buy glass bottles/jugs and glasses for events that they fill. Encourage “bring your own bottle” and improve signage for refill stations.	Trinity Sustainability	Sep 2026
4.3 Filtered Water Stations	Advertise the location of existing water stations with better mapping, wayfinding and QR codes.	All teams and Trinity Sustainability	Ongoing
4.4 New Water Stations	Undertake a study to identify where additional stations are required and install more across campus.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
4.5 Free water	Provide free tap water at all catering events where possible.	All teams	Ongoing
4.6 Evaluate Alternatives	Use filtered jugs or cartons of water, only if necessary.	All teams	Ongoing

Problem 5: Campus Deliveries

Core Issue: Vehicles entering college to deliver catering leading to congestion and GHG emissions.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
5.1 Food Miles	Reduce food miles by selecting internal catering or catering providers that are within a 10-15km distance.	All teams	Ongoing
5.2 Internal Catering:	Liaise with Trinity catering to ensure sandwiches are locally produced or sourced within the greater Dublin area.	Trinity Sustainability	Sep 2026
5.3 Consolidation:	Coordinate with the Sustainable Travel Officer to limit delivery windows.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
5.4 Last-Mile Innovation:	Assess the effectiveness of using cargo bikes or EVs for campus deliveries. Work with catering team to test this approach.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
5.5 Threshold System:	Try to only use external caterers for larger events (+50 participants) for events within the College Green campus.	All teams	2026
5.6 Green Procurement:	Amend procurement policies and contracts to prioritise suppliers from 2027 to focus on reduced distances, zero emissions vehicles, and consolidated deliveries.	Procurement & Sustainable Travel Officer	Ongoing

Problem 6: College-Wide Standardisation

Core Issue: Inconsistent sustainability practices across departments.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
6.1 Green Events Checklist	Co-develop a campus-wide checklist, supported by Guidelines.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
6.2 Green Events Guidelines	Host the Green Events Guidelines on Trinity's sustainability & event websites. Investigate the need for a Green Events Charter for events teams.	Trinity Sustainability	Jun 2026
6.3 Sustainability Event Working Group	The Green Events Working group will drive the initial implementation of this action plan for a period of 12 months feeding into the main Sustainability Management Working Group	All teams	Jun 2026
6.4 Auditing & Compliance:	Investigate the need for Green Ambassadors to monitor progress and support events teams.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
6.5 Certification	Aim for ISO 20121 (Event Sustainability Standard)	Trinity Events	2027

Problem 7: Transport to College Green Campus

Core Issue: Lack of information about sustainable transport options to College Green including the availability of secure bike parking on campus.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
7.1 Bike Infrastructure	Advertise the location of secure, covered bike shelters on event websites and guides.	Trinity Sustainability and Healthy Trinity	Ongoing
7.2 New Infrastructure	Install secure bike shelters at key locations i.e. Lincoln Gate. Investigate the need for covered bike shelters.	Trinity Sustainability & Estates and Facilities	Ongoing
7.3 Transport Comms	Include clear public transport, cycling, walking and wheeling info in event invites. Ensure guests take a sustainability-first approach to travel choices.	All teams	Ongoing
7.4 Security Measures	Provide high-quality locks and safety education in partnership with DCC. Investigate the need for CCTV to reduce theft.	Trinity Sustainability	2026
7.5 Campus Travel Plan	Align with the new Campus Travel Plan which supports sustainable and active travel.	All teams	Ongoing

Problem 8: Events Organised by External Groups and Companies

Core Issue: Events organised by external groups and companies may not adhere to the same sustainability criteria as internal events. These events can range from international conferences to large music concerts and the Trinity Ball.

SOLUTIONS AND ACTIONS

Solution	Action	Person/Team Responsible	Timeline
8.1 Procurement	Develop sustainability criteria for all tenders relating to large conferences, music events and the Trinity Ball. Ensure prioritisation of external event organisations with transparent, effective and deliverable sustainability policies.	Procurement/CRU/Trinity Sustainability	Sep 2026
8.2 Communication	Communicate with all staff (academic & professional) who organise conferences to inform them about how to make their events more sustainable.	Trinity Sustainability and All teams	Jun 2026
8.3 Sustainable Guidance for large events	Develop sustainable event guidance which can be shared with large event organisers.	Green events working group	Ongoing
8.4 Implementation	Support event organisers to implement the sustainable event guidelines by offering solutions to behavioural and infrastructural barriers.	Trinity Sustainability	Ongoing
8.5 Monitoring & Reporting	Report on events on a regular basis to ensure compliance with the new green events plan.	Trinity Sustainability	Ongoing
8.6 Energy	Ensure maximum efficiency of large-scale outdoor events by energy planning and mapping. Seek an alternative energy source or fuel to diesel-powered generators.	Trinity Events & procurement	Ongoing

CONCLUSION



By addressing key issues relating to greening events on Trinity's campus such as single-use waste, food sourcing, transport, and event standardisation, the college is setting a clear path toward its wider sustainability goals: achieving Net Zero by 2040, becoming Nature Positive by 2030, and enhancing the wellbeing of its community.

This plan recognises that meaningful change happens through collaboration, innovation, and leadership at every level, from individual event organisers to institutional decision-makers.

By implementing these actions and embracing a culture of shared responsibility, Trinity will not only reduce the environmental footprint of its events but also inspire others, within and beyond the university, to take tangible steps toward a greener, healthier, and more sustainable future.