



Green Balls

A Brief Guide

Oxford Balls are decadent events, so will inevitably have a significant environmental impact. However, with very little work, this impact can be substantially reduced. Here are a few ideas to get you going. The ones marked with a ❖ will give a great return for the minimal effort involved.

*Details correct as of June 2010. Contact the current OUSU Environment and Ethics Committee (eeandecommittee@ousu.org) for updated information, and to let them know of your successes so that they can let future ball committees know. Companies listed are examples, and do not represent recommendations of the authors or OUSU. **Please don't print this** unless you have to, and then recycle it afterwards ☺*

Organisation

- Start **planning early**, with green aspects in mind. It's a lot harder to bring them in after you've started planning than right at the start.
- Pass a **JCR motion** to ensure a proportion of the ball budget is specifically allocated to green projects. In June 2010, Jesus and Somerville JCRs both passed a motion supporting the allocation of 0.5% of the ball budget (i.e. around £500) to green activities. As ball committees can sometimes be autonomous of the JCR, you might need to put through a motion that mandates the JCR Committee Executive to take the proposals to the next ball committee, as happened at the Somerville meeting.
- ❖ Ensure you have at least one '**Environment Rep**' on your ball committee. If this is not the college Environment Rep(s), keep in contact with them too.

Publicity

- ❖ **Avoid printing flyers**, which only get binned anyway. Best stick to electronic publicity e.g. ensuring you have a good website, branding Facebook photos of launch events with your logo. Also, use a bit of ingenuity. The St. Hugh's Ball 2010, for example, hid keys to their 'Secret Garden' Ball around Oxford – easy, cheap publicity that got people talking!
- For unavoidable printing, use green companies that will use **recycled paper** and **vegetable inks**, like Oxford GreenPrint (<http://www.oxfordgreenprint.com/index.htm> 01865 742276), Mobius Green Print (<http://www.mobiusgreenprint.com/>) or Seacourt (<http://www.seacourt.net/>). Contact the OUSU E&E Sustainable Events officer for more specific information about these companies (whose email address you can find at <http://ee.ousu.org/>).
- Make the green aspect of your ball a **key selling point**. If you're doing a particularly green ball, get in touch with the E&E committee (eeandecommittee@ousu.org) who'd be keen to help out and spread the word...

Reduce Waste

The first step should always be to limit the production of waste as much as possible, before you even think about recycling! Before you buy anything, think about how you could get the same effect with less waste. For example:

- ❖ Have lots of **finger food** with minimal packaging, rather than handing out individual portions on plates/in trays, or use **rented glassware** instead of disposable plastic stuff.

Recycling

- Try to source materials (glass, plastics, paper) that can be **recycled easily**. Plastic-covered paper plates are hard to recycle. Stick to using just one type (number) of plastic if possible.
- The council is starting to take **food waste** (as of Summer 2010). See if they can help you out: get in touch directly or speak to the Environment and Ethics committee (eandecommittee@ousu.org).
- The **council** also offers **recycling services** at events. The cost depends on a variety of factors (length of ball, numbers needed etc). It is worth working with your Domestic Bursar when you are planning the event to ensure there is enough time to organise the additional recycling. Then contact the trade department at the County Council for an individual quote depending on the specific requirements, again as far in advance as possible (at the time of writing, the council recycling team seem to be quite slow at responding)! Email: tradewaste@oxford.gov.uk, Tel number: 01865 252908. The student liaison officer at the Council is Maria Warner (mwarner@oxford.gov.uk).
- However, sometimes it is easiest to hire a **professional recycling company**. Have a look at Grundon <http://www.grundon.com/>, More-bins <http://www.more-bins.co.uk/> and Veolia Environmental Services (<http://www.veoliaenvironmentalservices.co.uk/index.asp>). The more you pay, the better service you get, with people to man the recycling bins, for example. This initial cost will save you money on your cleaning bills in the end. Contact the OUSU E&E Sustainable Events officer for more details of these three companies (again, their email address can be found through <http://ee.ousu.org/>).
- **Sorting recycling** is difficult. You'll need clearly labelled bins, and ideally people to man the bins. Perhaps the bins could be marked on your ball map, or devote a page to recycling on your website or in your ball guide.

Food

- ❖ Try and source locally: that's the merchant and the food itself. For example, could you get local real ales instead of European lagers, or use the English vodka company Chase Vodka (<http://www.chasedistillery.co.uk/>)?
- Think seasonality. Check out www.eatseasonably.co.uk to check out what will be in season during your ball.

Entertainment

- ❖ Ask your production company if they can provide you with lower-power (LED) lights, which will save energy without compromising on performance. Often they will do this for free if they already have the equipment.
- Make sure any timber used in constructions is FSC certified.

Transport

- ❖ Can you provide green transport to the ball? Can you hire rickshaws (do a deal with someone like www.oxoncarts.co.uk) or even buy a couple of second-hand ones yourself?

Finances

- Invest in an environmentally and ethically sound bank, like the Co-op.
- Carbon offsetting is a possibility, for the emissions that are inevitable with a big event like an Oxford ball. Just be careful it doesn't turn into an excuse to avoid being green elsewhere!
- Be (as) selective (as you can afford to be) with your sponsors. Check out their eco-credentials before accepting their offer. Hopefully your green efforts will attract green sponsors anyway.

Other useful websites:

- <http://www.sthughsball.com/?v=old> The 2010 St Hugh's Secret Garden Ball made an extra special effort to be green, in particular signing up to the 10:10 campaign to cut their emissions relative to their last ball.
- <http://ee.ousu.org/> The OUSU Environment and Ethics Committee website, with key current contacts.

Jesus College JCR Motion. Passed Summer 2010

This JCR notes:

- i) Somerville JCR meeting
- ii) Somerville Jesus Ball 2010
- iii) Waste
- iv) c. £1,500
- v) c. £110,000

The JCR further notes:

- vi) That this motion is also being proposed at the next i).
- vii) That the ii) was a fantastic event and that all the organisers should feel proud of the good job they did.
- viii) Huge amounts of iii), however, were produced at the event, and that last minute financial constraints prevented an effective recycling infrastructure being put into place.
- ix) Around iv) of the total budget for the 2010 ball (v) was allocated directly to waste¹ – a very small proportion. However, much more (unpaid) cleaning work was put in by bar staff and the ball committee!
- x) Companies such as 'Grundon' and 'More-bins' offer recycling services for events that range in price from £400 to £1000, whereby they provide the bins (and, for the higher costs, people to man them), oversee the recycling system during the event and remove all of their waste the next day, significantly reducing the work required by the ball committee for clean-up.

The JCR therefore proposes:

- To ensure that a minimum of 0.5% of the overall ball budget is put aside *specifically for the recycling* of waste materials. At the very minimum, this should include glass, which is easy to sort.
- To always have at least one Environment Rep on future ball committees, whose job is to reduce the environmental impact of the ball in as many ways as possible.

Proposed by: Joe Bloggs

Seconded by: A.N. Other

¹ (£700 to the removal of general waste, £450 to staff cleaning up during the ball and £300 to scouts cleaning indoor areas; figures very approximate)

Somerville College JCR Motion. Passed Summer 2010

The JCR notes:

- That this motion is also being proposed at the next Jesus JCR meeting.
- That the Somerville-Jesus Ball 2010 was an excellent event and that all the organisers should feel proud of the good job they did.
- Huge amounts of waste, however, were produced at the event, and that last minute financial constraints prevented an effective recycling infrastructure being put into place.
- Around £1500 of the total budget for the 2010 ball (c. £110,000) was allocated to waste (£700 to the removal of general waste, £450 for staff cleaning up during the ball and £300 to scouts cleaning indoor areas). This was not a massive proportion of the overall budget (c. 1.4%), but in terms of the effort put in by the ball committee, the cleanup was a massive consideration. However, much more (unpaid) cleaning work was put in by bar staff and the ball committee.
- Companies such as Grundons and More-bins offer recycling services for events that range in price from £400 to £1000, whereby they provide the bins (and, for the higher costs, provide the people to man them), oversee the recycling system during the event and remove all of their waste the next day, significantly reducing the work required by the ball for clean-up.

The JCR believes:

- With a budget of around £110,000, there should always be enough money to ensure that not all of the waste produced will go straight into general waste, and that at the very least there should be an effective recycling system for glass waste, which is fairly easy to sort.
- With a member on ball committees whose job it is specifically to consider how the ball could be greener, it would make the other members' lives easier and would demonstrate that responsibility and fun can go hand in hand.

The JCR resolves

- **To mandate the JCR Committee Executive to go to the next ball committee with the following guidelines:**
 1. To always have at least one Environment Rep on future ball committees to make the event greener. This role should not necessarily come under the remit of the JCR / MCR environment reps, although they would be allowed to volunteer for the role.
 2. To ensure that a minimum of 0.5% of the overall ball budget (c. £550 of a £110,000 budget) is put aside *specifically for the recycling of waste materials*.
- To change the constitution to ensure that the above suggestions will always be put forward.