EXETER COLLEGE OXFORD

Annual Sustainability Report 2024-2025

Introduction

Exeter is committed to creating a sustainable future by setting ambitious evidence-based goals to reduce our carbon emissions and become a nature-positive institution[1] . We aim to improve the environmental performance of our historic buildings while transforming our operations to reflect these values. We are committed to collaborating across the collegiate University and beyond to share, develop, and implement best practices in environmental sustainability. In doing so, we will demonstrate Exeter's commitment to the environment and biodiversity, setting a new standard for sustainability in higher education.

In 2019 the college set up a Sustainability Working Group to consider policies and initiatives that could make the College's operations more sustainable. This Working Group has since been made a College committee, formally incorporating it into the College's structure of governance. In recognition of the importance of this work, Exeter decided to employ a Sustainability Coordinator jointly with Lincoln and Corpus Christi Colleges in 2022. In October 2024, Exeter's Sustainability Committee developed SMART sustainability targets for the academic year 2024-2025.

This third Annual Sustainability Report outlines the progress against those targets. Each target is coded according to whether it is on track or has been achieved (green), whether further work is required on this target (orange) or whether it has not been achieved (red). Overall, most targets have been achieved but there are still improvements to be made, and a few targets will be carried over to the 2025-2026 SMART sustainability targets.

Achieved

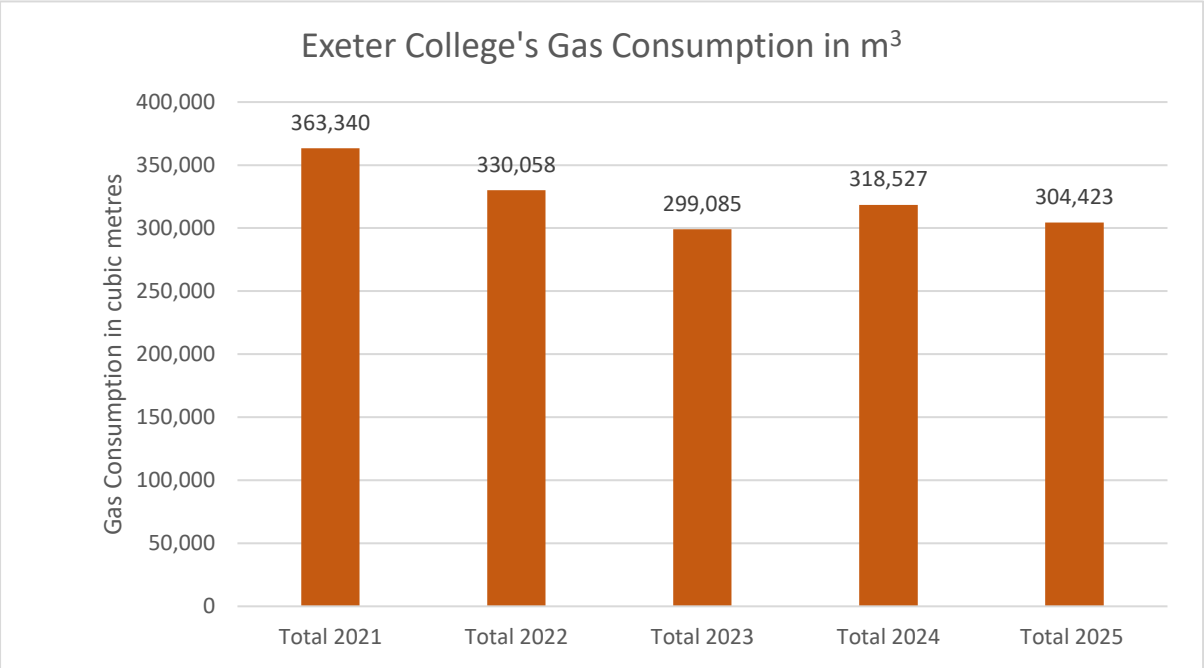
Further Work Required

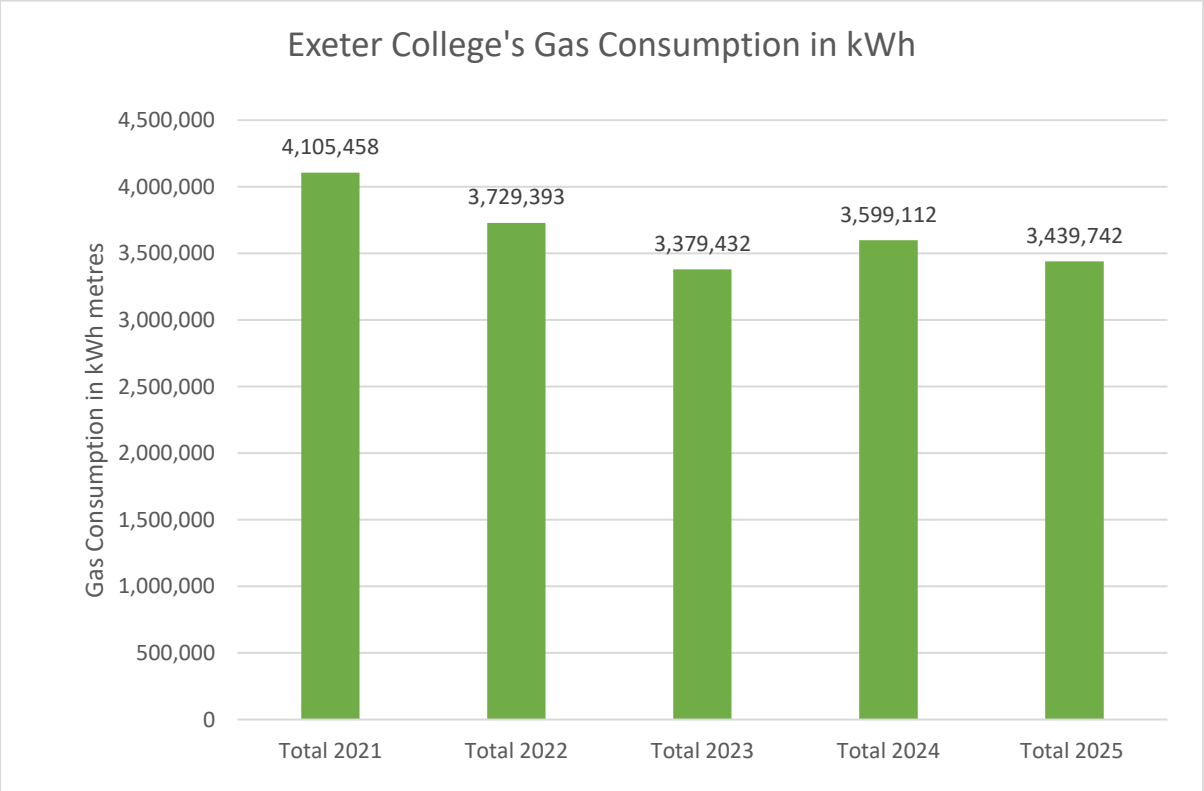
Not achieved

[1] Carbon emissions refers to our Scope 1 and 2 emissions which we publish on a yearly basis. We will continue to gather data to determine our Scope 3 emissions (including air travel) whilst actively aiming to reduce all scopes across our operations.

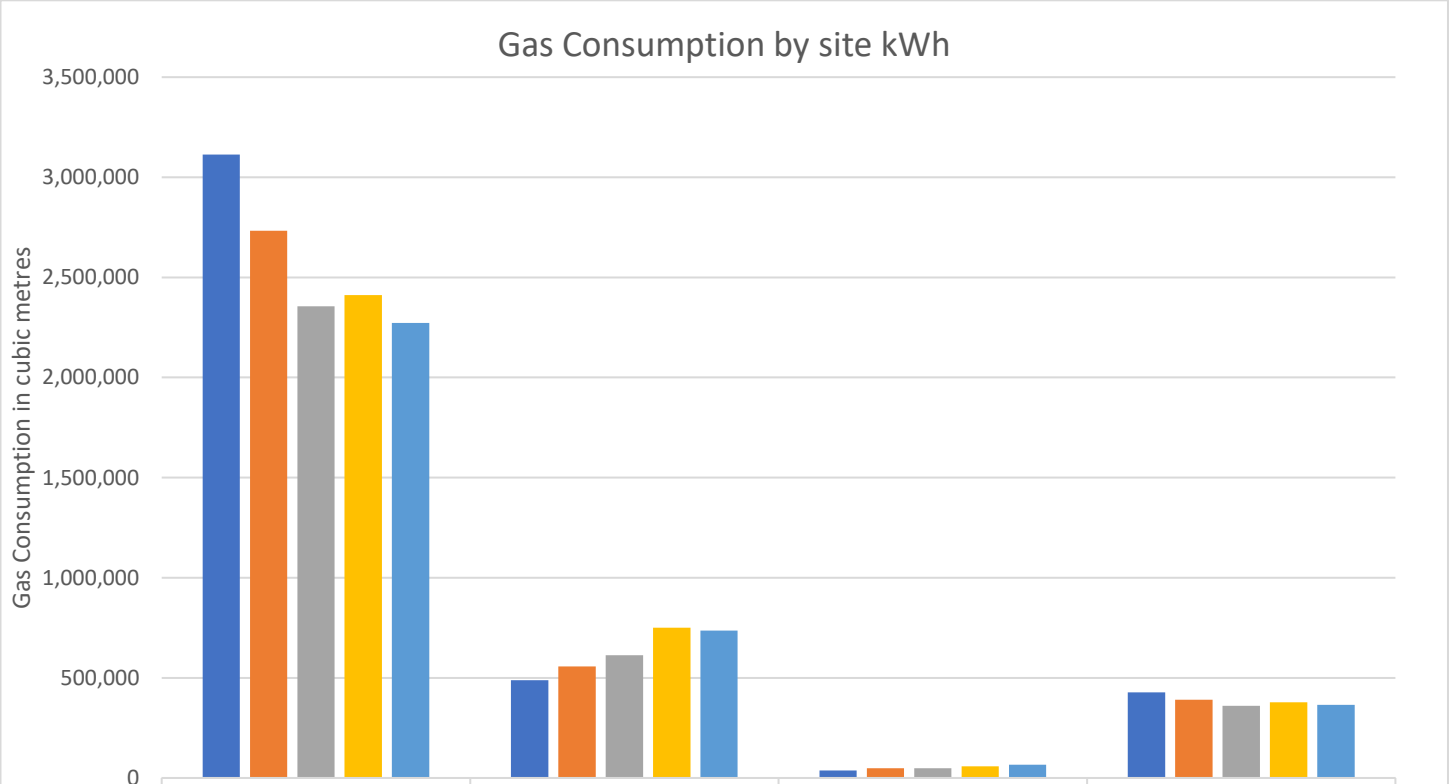
Energy and water savings

Reducing gas consumption: Achieved





Exeter College has reduced its gas consumption by 17.08% since 2019. As visible in the graph above the College's gas consumption was 304,423m3 in the 2024-25 academic year[2] displaying in a reduction of 2% from 2023-24 consumption. The College has successfully met the target that 2024-2025 gas consumption would be lower than the 2023-24 consumption. It is worth noting that the above graphs are not normalised for annual variations in temperature or occupancy.



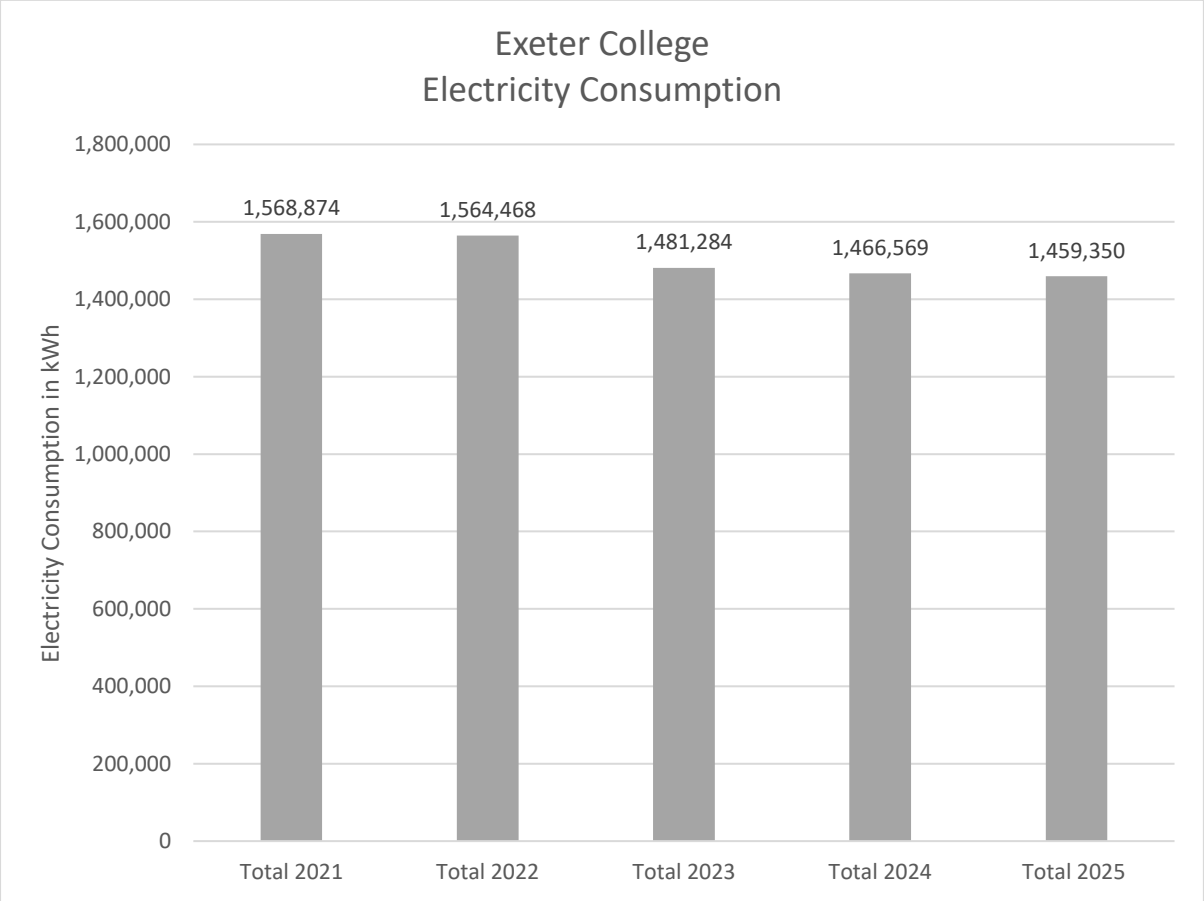
	Turl Street	Cohen Quad	Abingdon Road	Iffley Road
2021	3,113,284	488,567	37,691	427,947
2022	2,732,884	556,374	49,186	390,950
2023	2,356,197	613,401	49,050	360,784
2024	2,411,157	751,059	58,304	378,592
2025	2,272,273	736,144	66,891	364,434

The reduction in gas use was driven mostly by improvements in our heating system in Turl Street from October 2022 onwards. The increased consumption at Cohen Quad in 2024 and 2025 is due to a malfunction in the solar array used to pre-heat the hot water supply. The location of this piece of equipment is such that makes repairs difficult, however we are looking to resolve this issue in 2025-26. The increase in gas consumption in the Abingdon Road properties relates to individual household operation of the boiler in those properties. We have sent out site specific heating instructions to all students and have liaised with the landlord of the property to install heating controls, to help manage this rise in gas consumption.

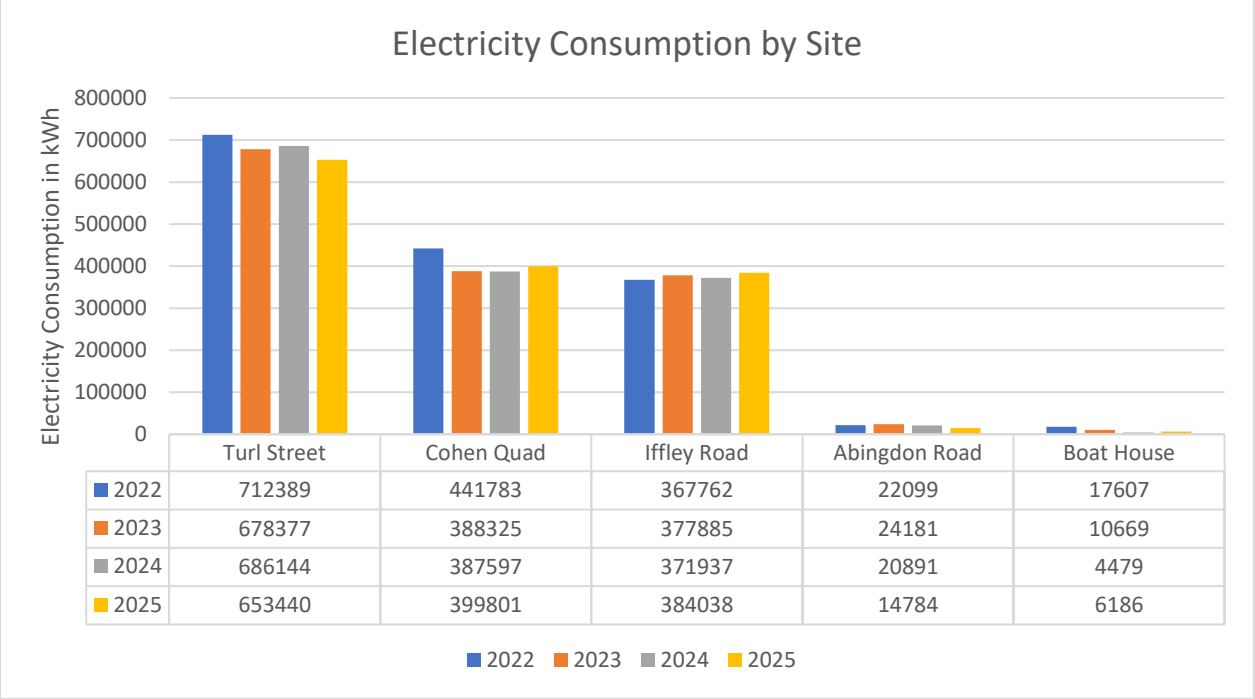
Overall: The gas reduction target to be no higher than 23/24 has been achieved.

[2] The reporting period for 2025 covers data collected in the financial / academic year (1st August 2024 – 31st July 2025). In previous years the data collected is for the calendar year period (1st January – 31st December).

Reducing electricity consumption by 5%: **Achieved**



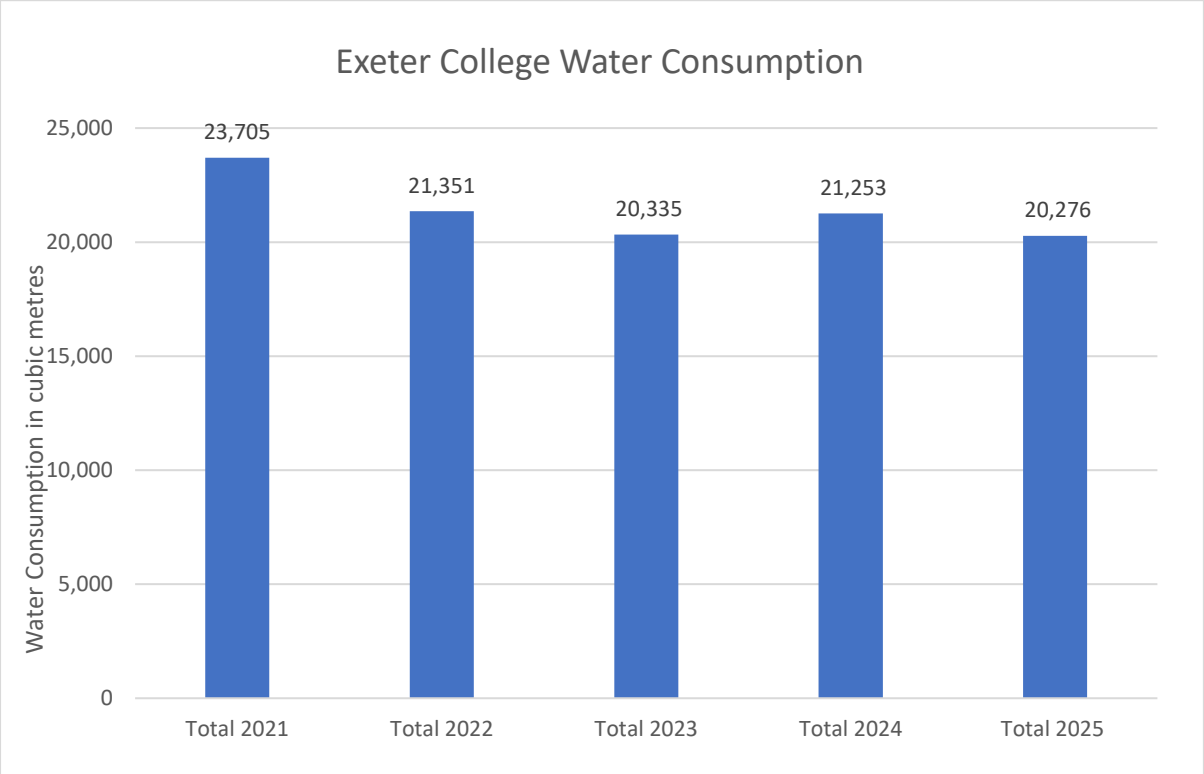
Exeter College has reduced electricity consumption by 6.71% since 2022. As visible in the graph above the College's electricity consumption was 1,459,350 kwh in the 2024-25 academic year, displaying a 5.8% decrease from the 2023-24 academic year. The College has successfully met the target that 2024-2025 electricity consumption would be 5% lower than the 2023-24 consumption.



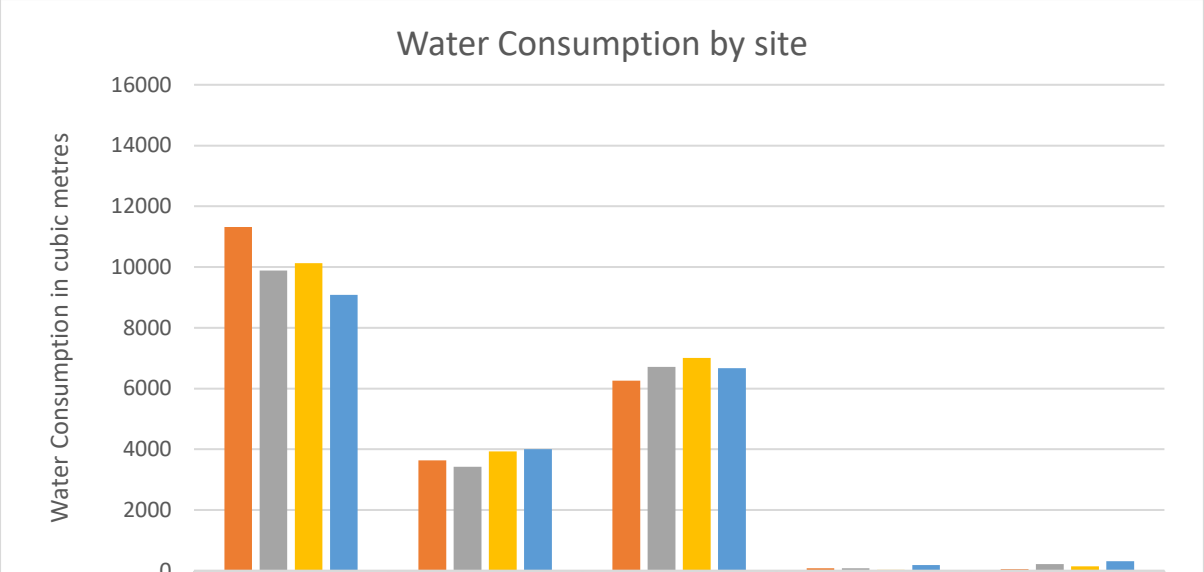
	Turl Street	Cohen Quad	Iffley Road	Abingdon Road	Boat House
2022	712389	441783	367762	22099	17607
2023	678377	388325	377885	24181	10669
2024	686144	387597	371937	20891	4479
2025	653440	399801	384038	14784	6186

The reduction in electricity use was driven mostly by the 32,705-kWh reduction in electricity consumption observed at Turl Street. The Boat House has seen an increase in electricity consumption in the 2024-25 year, but this can be attributed to the refurbishment and increased use.

Reducing water consumption: Achieved



Exeter College has reduced its water consumption on its metered sites by 14.5% since 2021.
Water consumption was 20,785 cubic metres in 2023-24 and dropped down to 20,276 cubic meters in 2024-25, which is a reduction of 2.4%.



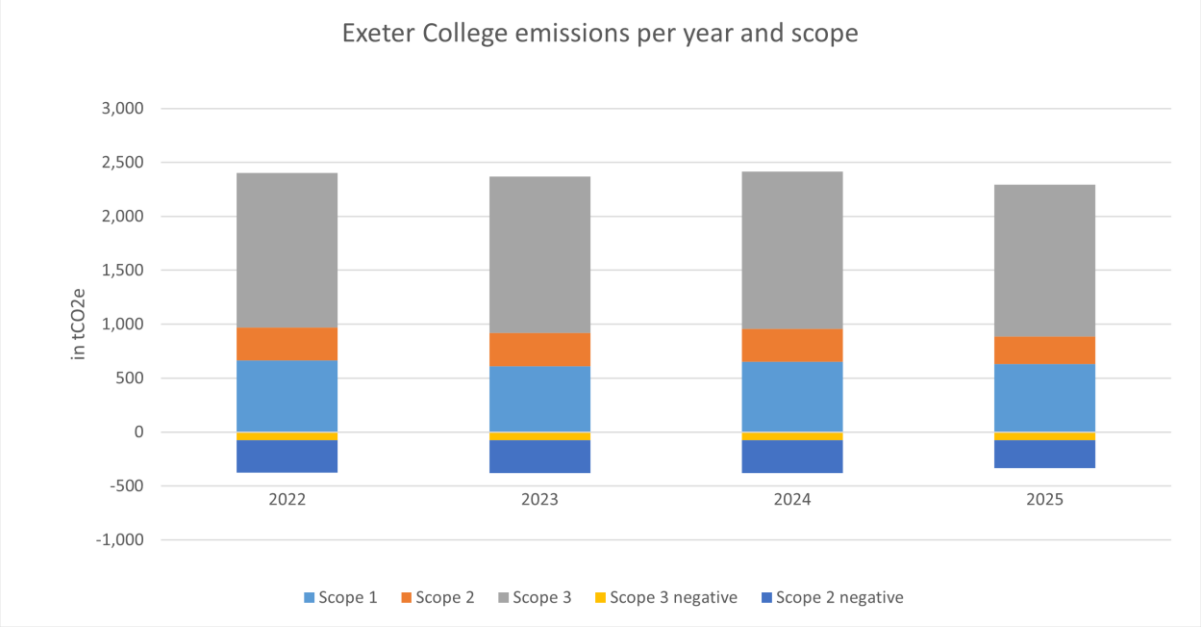
	Turl Street	Cohen Quad	Iffley Road	Frieze Farm	Sports Ground
2022	11316	3640	6255	88	52
2023	9887	3426	6717	83	222
2024	10131	3935	7006	29	152
2025	9088	4004	6673	193	318

The reduction can be witnessed at both the Turl Street and Iffley Road sites, with an increase observed at Cohen Quad, Frieze Farm and the Sports Ground.

Overall: All Energy and Water Savings Targets for the 2024/25 academic year have been achieved.

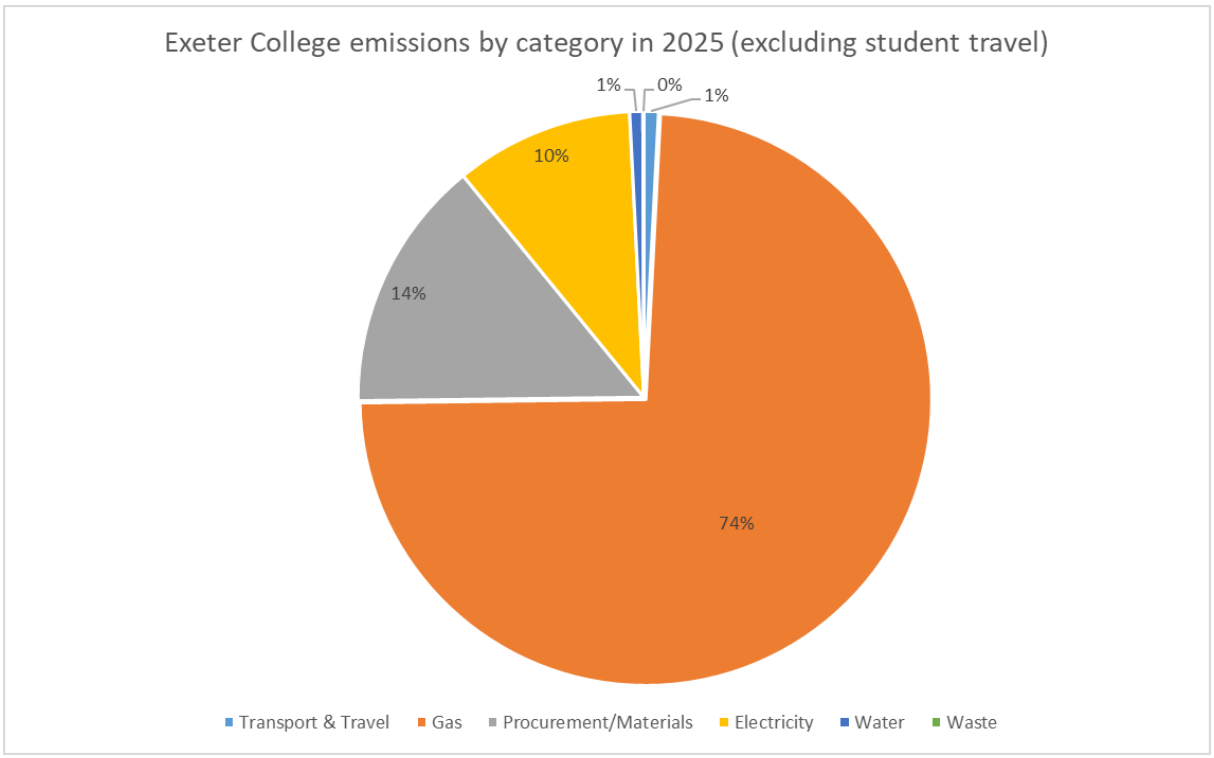
Emissions reductions

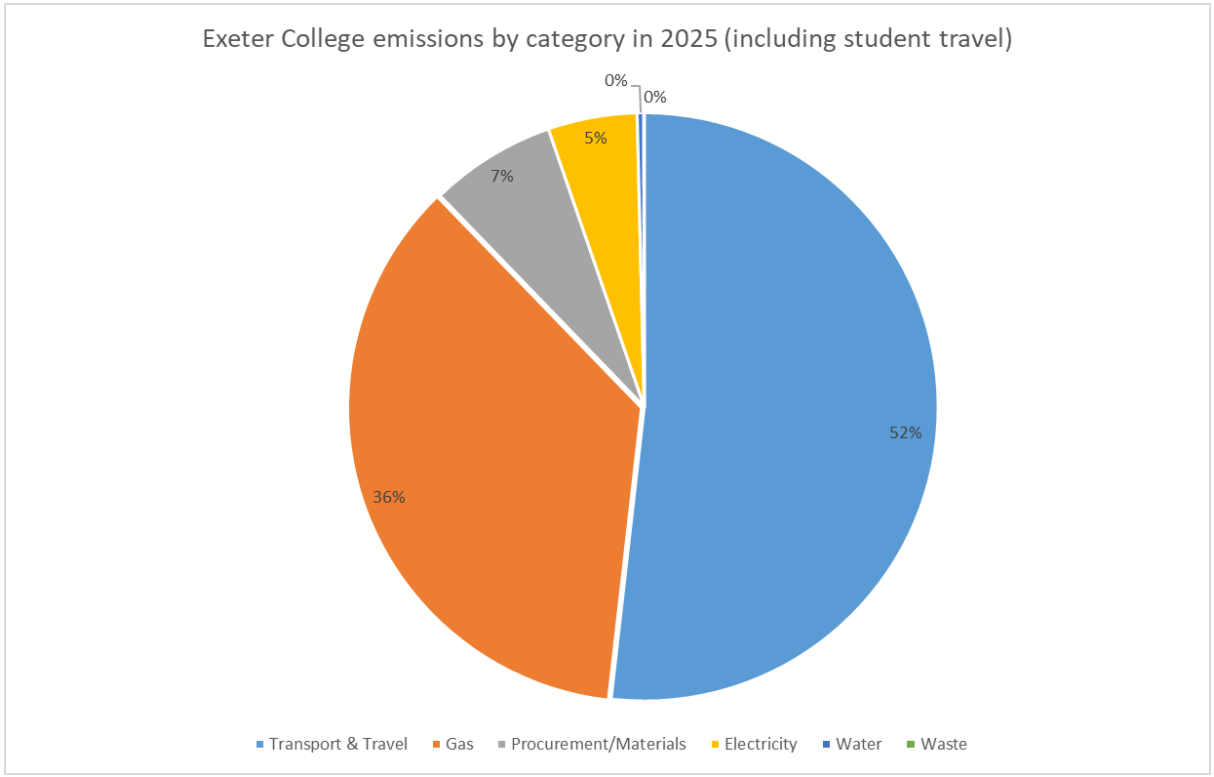
On track



The graph above shows our currently estimated emissions since 2022 by scope. Our Scope 1 direct emissions were 629 tonnes Carbon Dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) in the 2025[3] financial year, having fallen from 746 tCO2e in 2019. Our Scope 2 indirect emissions fell from 489 tCO2e in 2019 to 258 tCO2e in the 2025 financial year. These Scope 2 emissions were offset by our procurement of zero-carbon electricity, as made visible through the Scope 2 negative emissions above. Our covered Scope 3 emissions fell from 1472 tCO2e to 1054 tCO2e over this time period. For more information about what we mean by Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions click here.

[3] Corresponding to the utility data the reporting period for 2025 emissions data covers data collected in the financial / academic year (1st August 2024 – 31st July 2025). In previous years the data collected is for the calendar year period (1st January – 31st December).


Exeter College emissions by category in 2025 (excluding student travel)
1%
0%
1%
10%
14%
74%
Transport & Travel
Gas
Procurement/Materials
Electricity
Water
Waste


Exeter College emissions by category in 2025 (including student travel)
0%
0%
5%
7%
52%
36%
Transport & Travel
Gas
Procurement/Materials
Electricity
Water
Waste

While our Scope 1 and 2 emissions and our Scope 3 emissions for utilities and waste are complete, the figures for procurement and travel are initial estimates. We are working on including more of our Scope 3 emissions as better data become available. The graph above shows the currently estimated makeup of Exeter College emissions by category of activity across all scopes. We expect procurement to be a larger part of our emissions and have not accounted for our endowment in these figures as yet. Unless otherwise stated, the conversion factors for emissions are based on the government's official figures for the given year (2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025).

Scope 1: Direct emissions

Achieved

Exeter College's scope 1 emissions were 629 tCO2e for the 2024/25 academic year.

Exeter College's scope 1 emissions from gas fell from 734 tCO2e in 2021, 665 tCO2e in 2022, 610 tCO2e in 2023. In 2024 the College's scope 1 emissions rose to 652 tCO2e and fell to 629 tCO2e in 2025.

In addition, our gas use caused upstream Scope 3 emissions of 103 tCO2e in 2025, together accounting for over 36% of our estimated emissions which include student travel and 74% when excluding student travel.

In addition, the College owns a 2.4 litre diesel van which we have estimated produces annual emissions of 1 tonne of CO2e based on the annual milage of approximately 2,160.

Exeter also owns and responsibly manages approximately 12 hectares of woodland and six hectares of grassland including a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). Together these absorbed approximately 74 tonnes of CO2e each year (University of Oxford Carbon Accounting Tool 2020).

Scope 2: Electricity

Achieved

Scope 2 emissions remain zero due to our long-standing commitment to purchasing zero-carbon electricity. By procuring electricity generated from renewable sources the College avoided the production of 333 tCO2e in 2021, 303 tCO2e in 2022, 307 tCO2e in 2023, 304 tCO2e in 2024 and 258 tCO2e in 2025. Nonetheless, our electricity use in 2025 caused upstream emissions (scope 3) amounting to 100 tCO2e, which is around 5% of our total emissions when including student travel and 5% without. This has fallen from 116 tCO2e in 2019, 124 tCO2e in 2021, 107 tCO2e in 2022 and has levelled at 100 tCO2e in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Scope 3: Estimating our upstream and downstream emissions

Further Work Required

Scope 3 upstream emissions for energy have been fully calculated and provided above. For water and waste, they have been calculated based on the available water and waste data (excluding un-metered water and non-weighed waste), and business travel data from the Development and College Offices. The estimates for procurement are initial approximations, which will be expanded on in future years.

Water

In 2025 and 2024 water supply and treatment led to emissions of 7 tCO2e. This has fallen from 8tCO2e in 2023 9 tCO2e in 2022 and 10 tCO2e in 2021.

Waste

Emissions from non-hazardous and non-junk waste were 0.5 tCO2e in 2025 falling from 1 tCO2e in 2024 and 2 tCO2e in 2023 and 2024.

Procurement

Our waste figures highlight the amounts of materials produced for us, with at least 41 tCO2e upstream emissions related to the production of items that ended up in our glass, paper and dry mixed recycling

waste streams in 2025. Our IT procurement was also responsible for around 6 tCO2e in 2023, based on conversion figures from a recent study (Lövehagen et al., 2023), a value we are using to estimate IT procurement in 2025 until a more comprehensive way of calculating this value becomes available.

The food-based carbon footprint is calculated by broad approximation. The calculation uses the College's 2021 catering operations and is based on the equivalent of circa 19,200 day consumers at 5.2Kg/CO2e per day (source: "Food in a warming world: the changing foods on the British Plate", WWF, 2018; which is broadly consistent with data from "Dietary greenhouse gas emissions of meat-eaters, fish-eaters, vegetarians and vegans in the UK" by Scarborough P. et al., Nuffield Department of Population Health, Oxford, 2014). This equates to 100 tonnes of CO2e from food in 2021 and this has been used as an estimate for following years until current information can be acquired.

These procurement emissions are only an initial estimate with large gaps in data remaining. Thus, the proportion of our total emissions will be higher than the 7% currently allocated to procurement (for the dataset including student travel) and 14% (for the dataset excluding student travel).

Transport and travel

An initial estimate of our transport and travel emissions for College business travel lies at 8 tCO2e in 2025, which includes rail and air travel. In 2024 emissions from flights for College business amounted to 45 tCO2e. Based on the previous emissions calculations the College estimates domestic and international student travel based on 2021 data, using the methodology detailed below.

We have assumed that UK students travelled to Oxford by car, with a family member or friend dropping them in Oxford and then making the return trip home. For our calculations we included 100% of emissions for postgraduate students, rather than dividing their emissions equally between their University department and the College. For the purposes of estimating the CO2e emissions we assumed that the average return journey was 400 miles, equivalent to driving from Lancaster to Oxford and back. This equates to 174 tCO2e from our UK students travelling to and from Oxford (University of Oxford Carbon Accounting Tool 2020).

We assumed our international students on undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses made two return flights from their home country and that postgraduate students taking research degrees made one return flight from their country of origin. For our calculations we included 100% of emissions for postgraduate students, rather than dividing their emissions equally between their University department and the College. For the purposes of estimating emissions we assumed each student flew from the capital city of their country of residence to London and vice versa for return trips. This equates to 872 tCO2e from our international students travelling to and from the UK (University of Oxford Carbon Accounting Tool 2020).

The Sustainability Officer has initiated conversations with the University and other Sustainability leads in the College's to determine how the College's should report on student travel emissions. In their calculations the University accounts for two return trips for each student from their domicile region/country to Oxford and for the students commute to and from College and their department.

The Sustainability Officer in collaboration with colleagues at Hertford, Magdalen and the University of Oxford's Sustainability Team has developed a joint emissions toolkit, to assist in the standardisation of how college's measure and report carbon emissions including scope 3.

Overall: Continue to track scope 1&2 has been achieved. Continue the work to understand our scope 3 emissions has been achieved but further work is still required.

Long-term building decarbonisation plans

On track

The College commissioned a feasibility study to explore decarbonisation options at our Turl Street, Exeter House, and Stapledon House sites in 2021. The study was completed in August 2021 and highlighted various options for those sites. In early 2022 the College commenced the next stage and is now assessing the detailed upgrades needed to support our long-term transition to a decarbonised mechanical and electrical infrastructure on the Turl Street site.

In the 2025 summer vacation work on replacing the windows and installing Photovoltaic (PV) panels at the Thomas Wood Building started. These works are still ongoing with the programme of works to reach completion by the 18 November. The projected annual electricity production of the PV array is 13020 kWh. Which is approximately 2% of the annual consumption of the main site and 8% of the consumption off the Staircase 10 electricity meter that feeds, Staircases 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and the Chapel.

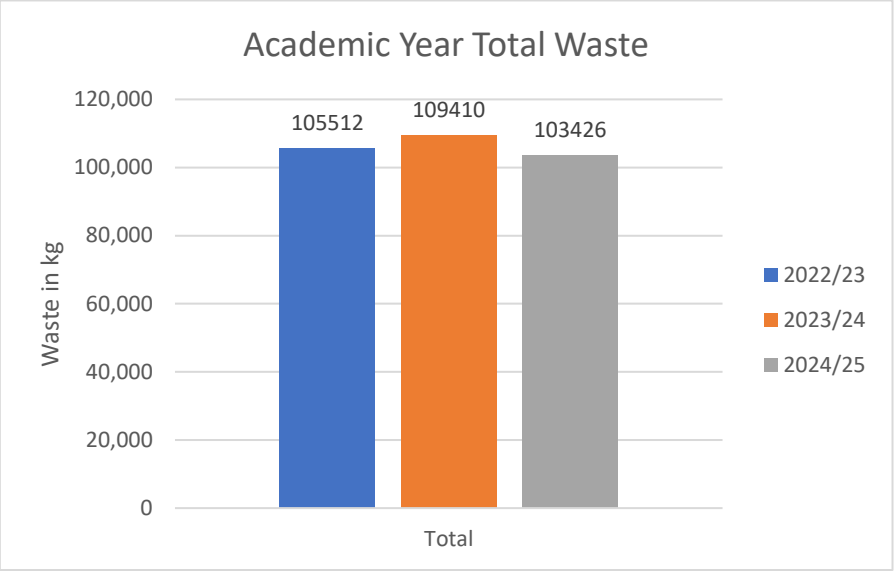
The College undertook work in the Hall, Servery, Kitchen and Undercroft Bar in the long vacation to decouple these areas from the main College heating system. These upgrades will make heating these spaces more efficient and in the 2025/26 academic year we should see a reduction in our gas consumption at Turl St.

In collaboration with the Department of Engineering and the Zero Institute, the College provided the use of their offsite accommodation Stapledon Houses, as a case study for the students to conduct a feasibility study for decarbonisation. By participating in this project, the College has helped equip students with hands-on experience, incorporating real-world case studies of properties transitioning to zero-carbon energy systems, while supporting Oxford's local transition to net zero. This programme and the College's participation was recognised in the prestigious CIBSE (Charted Institute of Building Services Engineers) Building Performance Awards 2025 in the Learning and Development Category.

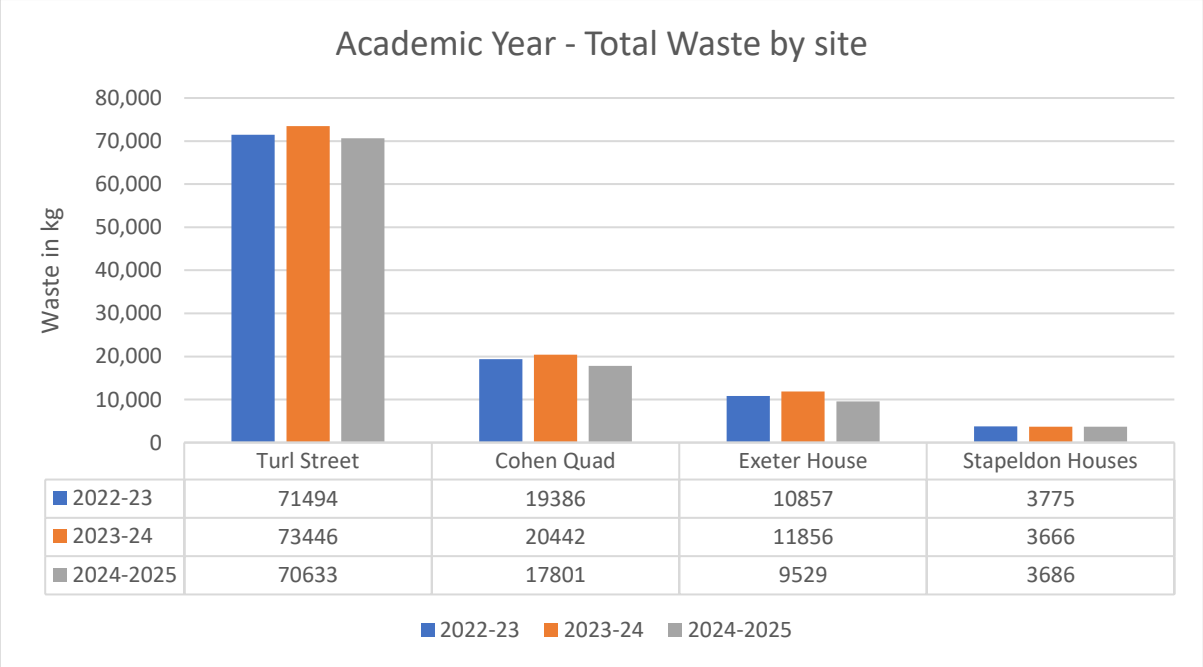
Overall: Submit planning application for solar panels and insulation improvements for Thomas Wood building and SC 12-14.has been overachieved. Conduct feasibility study on removing the hall, servery and kitchens from the main College heating system has been overachieved. Facilitate a decarbonisation feasibility study of Stapledon Houses from the Zero Institute (3rd year Engineering students) has been achieved.

Waste reduction

Further Work Required

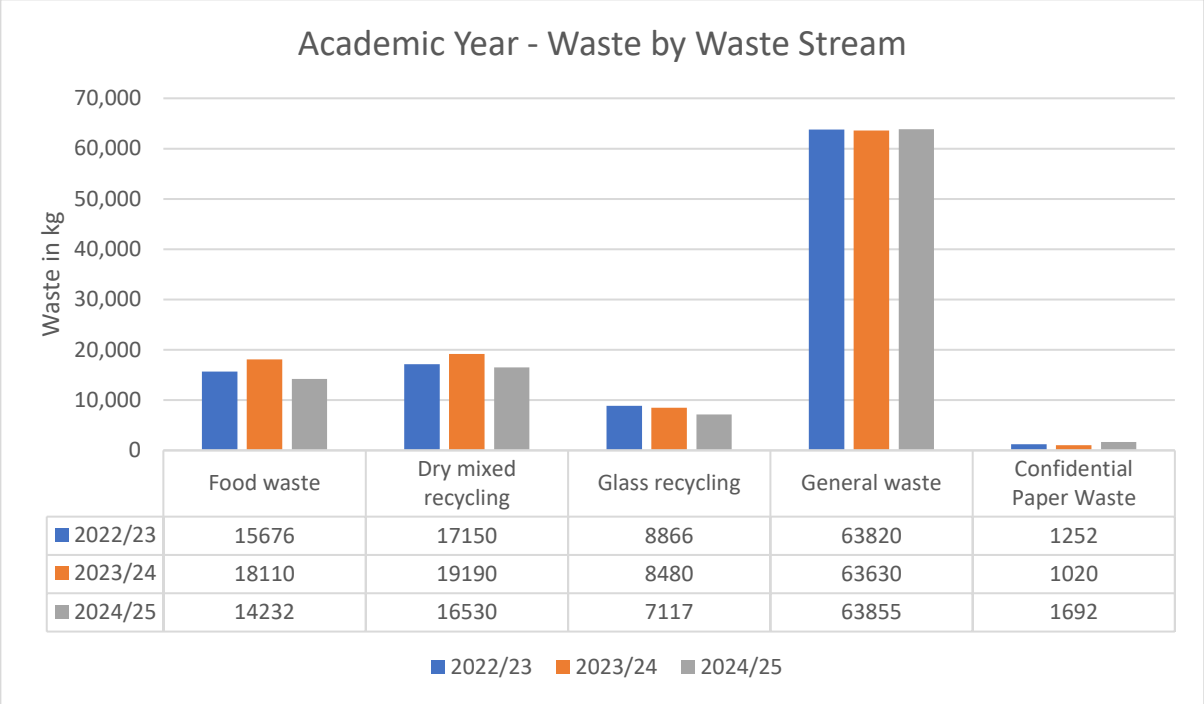


In the 2024/25 academic year, SELECT collected 103 tonnes of waste from Exeter College[4], which was a 5.5% decrease from 2023/24.



	Turl Street	Cohen Quad	Exeter House	Stapeldon Houses
2022-23	71494	19386	10857	3775
2023-24	73446	20442	11856	3666
2024-2025	70633	17801	9529	3686

[4] Since the switch to SELECT Environmental Services in 2021, Exeter College's non-hazardous, non-junk waste is weighed at collection, providing a monthly picture of waste collection across Cohen Quad, Exeter House, Stapledon Houses and the main site on Turl Street. The Sports Ground, Abingdon Road and Frieze Farm are not included in this data.



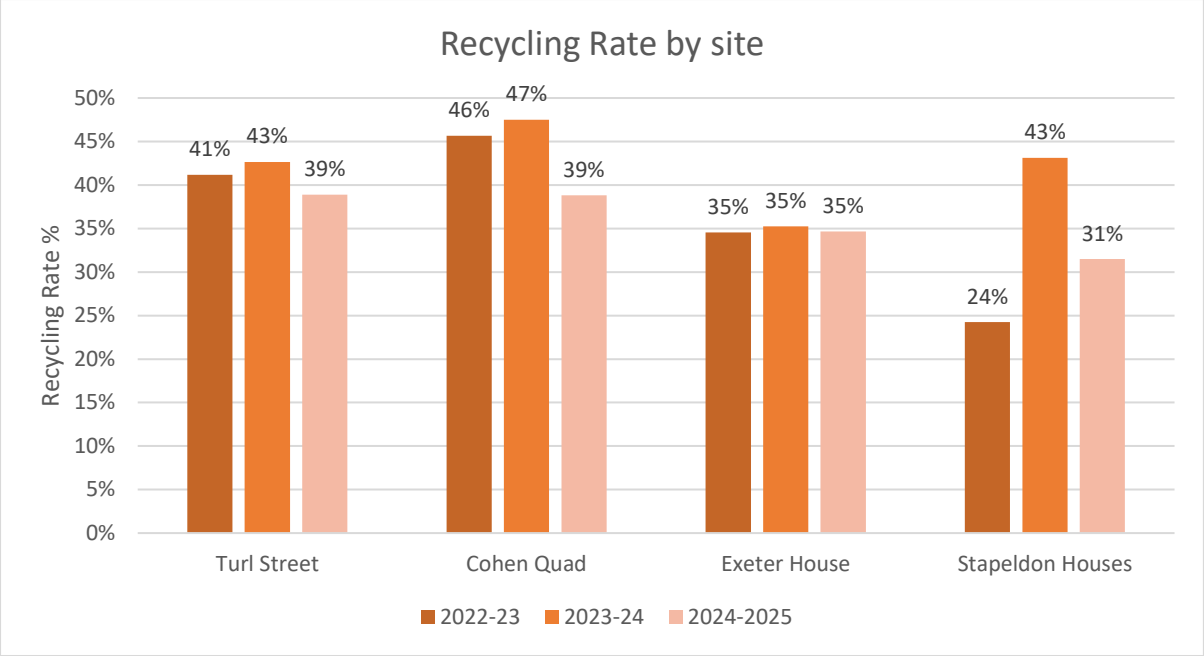
	Food waste	Dry mixed recycling	Glass recycling	General waste	Confidential Paper Waste
2022/23	15676	17150	8866	63820	1252
2023/24	18110	19190	8480	63630	1020
2024/25	14232	16530	7117	63855	1692

More than 40% of the College's waste is directed towards more sustainable categories: in the 2024-25 academic year, 24% of waste was recycled and 14% was sent to anaerobic digestion. The remaining 62% of General Waste was recovered as Energy-from-waste.

In 2024/25 the College's General Waste production increased by 0.4%. However, the College's Food Waste decreased by 22% compared to the previous academic year.

In March 2025 a waste audit was undertaken by SELECT on a General Waste bin and DMR bin at Turl Street. The results for the General Waste bin showed that 60% of the material by weight in that bin was recyclable and was incorrectly disposed of. 25% of the material in the DMR bin that was sampled was non-recyclable waste.

Although none of the College's waste goes to landfill, it is important that we reduce the number of non-recyclables we offer and continue to signpost information to members on how to dispose of waste on site. With the introduction of the Simpler Recycling legislation this year the College now has a legal responsibility to separate dry recyclable waste, food waste and non-recyclable waste and should be working on reducing the contamination of our DMR, Glass and Food Waste bins.



In the 2024-2025 academic year all of our sites recycling rates stayed consistent with the previous year or decreased.

Overall: Conduct a Waste Audit was achieved. A 10% reduction in General Waste production was not achieved. A 50% recycling rate at every site was not achieved.

Acquiring an electric van to replace the existing diesel van

Not achieved

The College has decided to carry this action forward and purchase a second-hand electric van in the 2025/26 academic year. The existing van is now reaching its end of life having failed its MOT this year, therefore the coming academic year is the right time to replace the van.

Overall: Replace the College maintenance van with an electric van has not been achieved.

Building community impact through the Green Impact scheme

Achieved

Exeter's Green Impact Team met regularly throughout the academic year, sharing ideas on how to make the College more sustainable across its operations. Exeter College achieved the Beyond Gold Award this year becoming one of the top three scoring teams. See some images of some of the initiatives below that included collaborating with other departments in College and other college Green Impact Teams.

Overall: Achieving the Beyond Gold Award was achieved. Including at least two additional staff members on the Green Impact Team was achieved. Hosting a sustainability related speaker event was achieved.

Biodiversity: understanding impacts and acting on opportunities

Further work required

The focus this year was Atkins Woodland located at the sportsground. In 2023/24 the University of Oxford Biology Department and the Leverhulme Centre for Nature Recovery undertook reptile surveys and a critically important urban population of Barred Grass Snakes (Natrix Helvetica) was discovered. To help preserve their habitat at the woodlands the College took direction form ecologist Thomas Atkins to schedule improvements to the site. A community litter pick was organised, overgrown trees were cutback, and the canopy was opened to allow for more light, the branches and trees removed were used to create deadwood piles beneficial for wildlife. Most significantly a pond was restored in the western side of the woodland. Through these actions the College has implemented some of the improvements identified in the Nicholsons Biodiversity Baseline Report (see extract in Table 1).

The efforts made to improve the habitat will be monitored in the 2025/26 year with the view to make further improvements where feasible and conduct another reptile survey in the spring.

Table 1: An extract from the Nicholsons Biodiversity Baseline Opportunities Report, Recommendations for habitat enhancement and management.

Location reference	Habitat baseline	Enhancements and management suggestions
Woodland in north-west corner	(w1g) Other Broadleaved Woodland (Moderate condition)	This area is currently relatively immature plantation with some secondary woodland growth. It was not seen to support ancient woodland indicator species. Enhancement of this area to a higher distinctiveness woodland, or to a Good condition example of w1g Other broadleaved woodland is likely to be unfeasible given its young age, but there are options to improve the numbers of condition points that this achieves, for example via: • Undertaking an arboricultural survey of the trees within the woodland, followed by selective removal of unhealthy/spindly individuals; • Opening up the canopy further where needed, for example via removal of individual trees in denser areas, to improve light ingress to the woodland floor and hence encourage plant growth; • Any trees removed should be used to create deadwood features within the woodland, which will be of value for many wildlife groups; • Careful creation of glades or rides, for example transversing the bramble dominated area in the southern half of the woodland; and • If desired, a woodland seed mix could be used to introduce a more typical woodland ground flora to this area.

The College has recently appointed a Head Gardener, the Sustainability Officer will be liaising with them to identify areas we can improve biodiversity across our central College sites.

Overall: Further work is required to achieve replanting to show likely biodiversity gain on College premises. Implement improvements identified in the College's Biodiversity Baseline Opportunities report has been achieved at the sports ground, with further work required at other sites.

Highlighting and strengthening Sustainability Education and Research

Achieved

The College has continued to promote Sustainability Research members of the College community are undertaking. The College had the opportunity to host the Vice-Chancellors Colloquium on climate last year with 21 Exeter students taking part including a DPhil student who assisted in facilitating the sessions. RePlateOx developed by three Exeter students, was one of three student-led proposals to come out of the colloquium selected for funding by Vice-Chancellor Professor Irene Tracey at the event's closing showcase.

Overall: Promote Sustainability Research on the website has been achieved.