Student Sustainability Stories

Episode 1: Garden Café with Hayden Costello

Transcript:

Maisie Wilson

So hello everybody. I'm Maisie with Hayden today and we're on student sustainability stories. So we're going to be talking to a few different students in this series, four of them all together, and we're going to be talking a little bit about the different kind of projects they do regarding social justice. And today we have hate. What do you do, Hayden?

Hayden Costello

Thanks for having me. Ohh so I'm currently psychology student. Mm-hmm. But.

My sort of passion project is working with the living lab to bring sustainable food systems onto campus, and the way I'm doing that at the moment is I'm trying to set up a student lead cafe that has all local produce and makes fresh quality for you every single day.

Maisie Wilson
Yeah, the garden cafe, right? Yeah. So I got involved with this a little while ago when you were working at the Saint Crookes Church and it was so fun it. Really amazing. How did it get started? Like, what brought you to this project?

Hayden Costello

So I joined the living lab through one of my psychology modules, but I met this girl, who was working with the living lab and she was doing this idea of a dream cafe. It's all the students, you know, ideal ideas. What a cafe could be. And I thought some of the ideas were really good. I was like, well, why don't we try and maybe bring them into the canteen or something. And they got challenged. Well, maybe we could actually just make a cafe.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah?

Hayden Costello

And I'm a bit stubborn. When someone challenged me, I'm like well. I'm gonna do that now, yeah.

Maisie Wilson

Have a dream café. That's a fun idea.

Hayden Costello

Yeah. So it started off as just idea really, but and with the support it's grown really well.

Maisie Wilson

So what kind of stuff do you try to cater for when you say a ‘dream café’?

Hayden Costello

The main thing was there's not a lot of space on campus for people to just sit and talk. Obviously there's the SU in the canteen, but it's limited. So people wanted, like, sort of a outdoorsy feel. But whilst some of they could just sit and have a chat. And unfortunately there's never enough of those is there.

Maisie Wilson

Absolutely. Outside, it's always raining.

Hayden Costello

Yeah. So we're sort of trying to create the idea of this comfortable space where people can sit, chat. You know, whoever they are, their backgrounds, money or allergies or anything, there's always some food.

Maisie Wilson

Nice.

Hayden Costello

And they can eat. Yeah. I just think food's so important. It sounds really obvious to say it, but it is. I mean, it's such like a personal thing to everyone. And there's, like, such a cultural background to it as well. So I just, I thought it was so important that people had that space.

Maisie Wilson
It sounds amazing, especially for the food side, for sure. When you said that. ‘it seems really obvious to say that food’s important’, but you're right. It is so important. But often, I think I just eat it every day and I never really think about it. And it's so part of the background that I never even really consider like ‘should I be doing this differently’?

Hayden Costello

Yeah, basic necessity, but it is a bit more than that and unfortunately it's not as much of A necessity as it should be.

Maisie Wilson

Exactly. I love hearing about the space as well because it seems like there's almost a sort of neurodivergence aspect to it where, you know, like if I have lunch in the canteen, it's nice, but it's often really loud and it's busy. There's people all around you. It's very all at once.

Hayden Costello

Yeah. Yeah.

Maisie Wilson

Whereas like a nice little cafe where you can just sort of relax a bit, have a chat.

Hayden Costello

Yeah. Well, I'm neurodivergent myself and I'm also the disability officer for this year, this year, so sort of that that.

Maisie Wilson
Congratulations!

Hayden Costello
Thank you. But yeah, the idea of having that inclusive space was I don't think I even considered it. It was just sort of a basic. Like ‘Yeah, we need to do this’.
But it's going pretty well so far and the support has been absolutely amazing, honestly.

Maisie Wilson

Great. Yeah. I'm glad to hear that it's been very supportive, because it seems like such a huge task. I know that on when we worked together on St Crux project that so much of your time went into it.
You were making rotas, you’re helping people out. You were baking. There was so much to get involved with, which I guess that leads me to the next question:
So you're a student and you also run this pretty time consuming social justice project, how do they marry together? Do you ever find it difficult to juggle them?

Hayden Costello

Oh there were sometimes where there were schedule overlaps, or other times there's, you know, every single day this month I'm busy. But and then this next month, nothing's happening.
It's sort of trying to find the balance of that, but I personally really like being busy. Sort of keeping myself busy is really good for my mental health, and especially if it's something I'm passionate about and I can really invest myself.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah.

Hayden Costello

And I found that with the living lab and with the garden project, it was just I was. It was something I could be really proud of.
Yeah, and it was something that, you know, I was having a positive impact and that just felt so good everyday coming in and doing these different things, even if it was just writing off emails or making food - which I love doing. So most of the time, it was just doing something you enjoy. It wasn't really much of a choral on top of work or anything like that.

Maisie Wilson

Amazing. That sounds so cool. Do you have any good memories of specific times at the Garden Café?

Hayden Costello

It's really nice of working with other people or like seeing the end project, like St Crux. It was so nice having the CSU Presidents visit, and obviously I had you and a few other friends helping me out.
And it was just it was so nice seeing everyone like, come together and work on something bigger than themselves. Sort of what the idea of the project is that people can come together in a comfortable space, and make something of it. Yeah. So it's just so nice seeing. That together, really, yes.

Maisie Wilson

Cohesion. Yeah, I think it can be quite especially important for students, I guess, because you know how a lot of the students at YSJ are fresh out of home, they've just moved to different city and it can feel so like overwhelming. Like ‘Oh God, I have no autonomy or power, and I can't do anything’, but to start a social justice project like this, It's like, ‘oh, wow, I could really do something’.

Hayden Costello

Well, that was part of the motivation really, cause my first year I had. I had five of the housemates.

Maisie Wilson
Oh no. One toilet?

Hayden Costello
Well, two toilets so.

Maisie Wilson

Ohh not bad.

Hayden Costello

But there were three lads there and two of them had never cooked, so I was I was cooking for them and I was teaching them to cook. One of them didn't even know how a thermometer worked like they're you had.

Maisie Wilson

Oh no.

Hayden Costello

They didn’t know that you had to change in on the wall and everything. They didn't get that. And it just kind of boggled me because I've always been quite independent and so looking after myself. But that's not the case for everyone. Yeah, a lot of people are, you know, they're really fortunate. They've got parents that love them. Look. To them, and sometimes they just unfortunately don't sort of have those skills that they need to look after themselves.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah.

Hayden Costello

And so I think a part of that is having something at Uni that can support them through it, whilst they're sort of making that journey and learning the things.

Just because they haven't quite got to that stage yet doesn't mean they shouldn't have nice food to eat. So that's sort of the idea. It's affordable as well because a lot of people they come to uni and it's like, ‘oh, where did all my money go?’ Because it's so easy to lose track of it.

Maisie Wilson

You're so right.

Hayden Costello

So sort of seeing other people struggle with that, and sort of struggling with that to appoint myself with money. It's like it's so important.

Maisie Wilson

For sure. I guess it's really easy to sort of deride or mock students? It's like ‘ohh bloody students, can’t cook, they’re eating pasta every day’.

Hayden Costello

Yeah. I mean, I have pasta every day. And I think that's fine.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah, exactly! It's really cheap and it's great. 10/10. But I think it's cool that you have a project that tries to address that and look after it, rather than being like ‘haha students’.

Hayden Costello

Because that that's the thing, especially in York, because it's very 50/50, you know, families and older people and students and it's so easy for to sort of walk through and see everyone else sort of go ‘ohh students’, but it's very difficult being a student.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah. Yeah. Why do people hate students so much?

Hayden Costello

Well, we can be kind of loud.

Maisie Wilson

That’s fair.

Hayden Costello

You know, we're just trying to enjoy ourselves. It is very difficult, and I think it's easy to forget that. So just trying to put in any kind of support I can. That's what I do. I try and help people.

I mean if that's another thing like food is so it's it can be a big part of mental health. Yeah, well, a lot of times when I'm not feeling great, I like, I'll eat less or, you know, I don't have the energy to cook. I think it's so important that just because you can be so stressful and it's so easy to just forget to take care of yourself.

Maisie Wilson

Hmm. Yeah.

Hayden Costello

You need to have that support there at university. That's sort of a part of the job really. It's safe. After us, whilst we sort of work and try really hard, so it's sort of that. I'm just trying to help people out whilst they're on this journey and putting so much of their time into this thing. So yeah, that's definitely a big part of it.

Maisie Wilson

Yeah. And you told me that you were working somewhere yesterday, right? Or this week was it?

Hayden Costello

It yes, actually so yesterday. The Garden Cafe had their first catering event. Yeah, which was so exciting.

Maisie Wilson

Amazing.

Hayden Costello

We did a takeover of the Canteen Kitchen, which was so nice.

Maisie Wilson

Amazing. That must’ve felt so weird. We've only seen that space from far away for so long, and now you’re behind it.

Hayden Costello

It was. At one point I was looking out over the food counter and I was like, ‘I'm on the wrong side’.

But it was so good. And Steve, the head chef is just an amazing guy. He's so nice. And he was really supportive and sort of giving me that space and offering any help with food. It was really nice to work with someone else. That is a lot more experience for myself, but…

Maisie Wilson

On the same journey, yeah, yeah.

Hayden Costello

But the food came out so well. Everyone was really happy with it. It was such a nice thing to do.

Maisie Wilson

OK, what did you make?

Hayden Costello

So we did sort of a summer salad kind of theme, so we did honey spiced hummus, which was so good. And we did a fruity couscous. We also did a salad and we got all of the ingredients from campus here that were growing planters. That was actually a really big hit. I think everyone loved the idea that it was growing just around the corner, which is part of the thing for the cafe that we’ll have food locally. Own food and just point and go. It's right over there. Yeah, it's.

Maisie Wilson

Trendy, isn't it? Yeah. Farm to table, or planter to canteen.

Hayden Costello

Yeah, no, people love that. But I mean, you see that in like M&S.

Maisie Wilson

You’re the new M&S now. I love it. So do you have any projects planned or anything in the diary?

Hayden Costello

We've got some rough plans. We're hoping that we can work with the SU next year. I'd love to do an SU take over. To have a space where people can come in, maybe talk to the presidents or something. And also just have really nice fresh food.
And it would be great to sort of get in contact with students that way, I think. But the main idea is just growing it until hopefully it can become a more permanent.

Maisie Wilson

That's such a good idea because I don't think I've ever met the president. It's such a title, isn't it? I feel nervous.

Hayden Costello

Yeah, I know exactly what you mean. Like the Presidents, and the liberation officers and everything. It sounds like it's really big, scary thing, but it's just another student. Yeah, you can come up and say hi.
If you want something, It's important. Especially like sort of the beginning of the year that people know we're until they can approach us. Especially with the presidents because they aren't current students. They've just been students, all in the office.

Maisie Wilson

Oh office, even saying that. So legitimate, I’m terrified.

Hayden Costello

Yeah, exactly, but so I just think that that would be a nice way for people sort of interacting, great, getting more into the student life.
Maisie Wilson

Yeah, that sounds lush. So if anyone listening is interested in getting involved with the Garden cafe. How might they get in touch?

Hayden Costello

We have an Instagram, which is the garden at YJ. But you can also e-mail me at my personal email its hayden.costello@yokesandjohnac.uk.

Maisie Wilson

Amazing. Well, thank you so much for talking me today and it's been lovely to hear all about the Garden Cafe. I can't wait to see what you do next.

Hayden Costello

No, thank you for having me. Thank you