

# INTERVIEWS

## INTRODUCTION

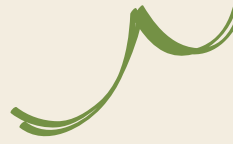
As the world is becoming more conscious of the affects of global warming, there has been an ongoing growth within the green sector. As part of a green careers internship, I had the opportunity to conduct three informal interviews to gain insight into the experiences of professionals in a variety of fields. Through these interviews, I aimed to learn about the challenges and opportunities of working within green careers, as well as the skills and knowledge required to succeed in this rapidly evolving field. The following is a summary of my findings and observations from these interviews.

03

Interviews

by Samantha Cooper  
MA Art in Science Student

# Tom Strodbeck



## Interview 01

Start-Up and Enterprise Consultant  
Student Futures



Tom Strodbeck is a mentor and advisor to startups, a pitch coach, and twice a company founder. Currently the CEO of Strodbeck & Company Ltd.

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### SUMMARY

Tom Strodbeck and his team are open to work with any student who wants to explore entrepreneurship. One of the biggest environmental shifts Strodbeck has noticed is the impact of COVID-19, which has altered the way people commute to work. There is an increasing interest in sustainability and Strodbeck has interviewed companies such as Willow, who have a device placed in restaurants that can reduce waste by understanding what people are eating. Strodbeck believes LJMU takes sustainability seriously, and he works in a green LJMU building. Although sustainability is not part of their initial conversation with startup students, they do provide advice if asked, and if sustainability is the primary focus of the business, it can be built into their business plan. They focus on helping students de-risk their business ideas, so that they don't waste time and money on a business idea that won't be successful.

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"There are lots of entrepreneurs all over the world working on how to reduce carbon footprint, how to reduce waste, how to reduce plastics, how to mitigate some of the worst things about global warming. There's so many people working on it that it makes me feel pretty good."

## *Reduced Carbon Footprint*

**"CAN OFTEN LEAD TO REDUCING YOUR OVERALL COST STRUCTURE AND INCREASING YOUR PROFIT MARGINS, WHICH IS ALWAYS GOOD FOR A COMPANY."**



### TRAINING

Tom Strodbeck believes providing businesses with training in the green sector is important. This includes the strategic decisions as a business owner that can be really impactful on the environment as well as providing knowledge around greenwashing.

### BUILDINGS

Tom Strodbeck thinks there's a conversation to be had at a national level as to what the University can do with old protected buildings such as the John Foster building, where there are limitations as to what they can do to make the buildings greener.

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# Sarah King


## Interview 02

Researcher and the Materials Science technician  
STEAMhouse



Sarah King's primary role is to support members across the various routes in areas such as materials development, surface design, print and product prototyping.

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 [https://steamhouse.org.uk/  
meet-the-team/](https://steamhouse.org.uk/meet-the-team/)

### SUMMARY


Sarah King graduated with a BA in textiles and went on to study a Master's degree focusing on sustainable textiles, specifically biomaterials. King notes that biomaterials are still in their infancy, but there is growing interest and involvement from students and businesses. Private funding is crucial for the development of biomaterials. King suggests that students interested in sustainability should educate themselves on materials and seek additional courses to build credibility. She also recommends developing a network of sustainability businesses and having a good understanding of net zero, carbon footprint and sustainable development goals.



"I would say more than 75% of individuals applying to be part of the biomaterials workshop are interested in sustainability and are looking to help make a positive difference"

## *Educate Yourself*

**"A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT MATERIALS ARE IN STANDARD PLASTICS AND WOOD. WHEN THEY FIND OUT THEY ARE SURPRISED AND ARE MORE INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT NATURAL BASED ALTERNATIVES."**



### NETWORK

Sarah King mentions that some businesses are not interested in sustainability, and are focused on creating ways to lower costs rather than help the planet. This has led to a network of local businesses connecting with each another to manage waste. Some businesses actually benefit from other business's waste products.

### FUNDING

The bio design models are still in their infancy and are about 10-20 years old. A lot of the time the problem comes down to funding. Private funding is key for helping this sector grow and to aid research.

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# Dr Timothy Lane


## Interview 03

School of Biological and Environmental Sciences  
LJMU



Dr Timothy Lane is a Lecturer in Physical Geography at Liverpool John Moores University, and Programme leader for the BSc in Climate Change.

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 <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/staff-profiles/faculty-of-science/school-of-biological-and-environmental-sciences/timothy-lane>

### SUMMARY

Dr Timothy Lane highlights the broad nature of the sector, which allows students with various backgrounds utilise their skills and knowledge to work in the green sector. He further explains that many companies now have an ESG (environment, social, and governance) person, so it is not limited to only environmental consultants. Dr Lane discusses Professor Jason Kirby's project of implementing sustainability into every programme as part of the curriculum. Dr Lane explains that it was part of the action plan, to create a Canvas sustainability course that was optional for students. Dr Lane mentions that sustainability and climate awareness training should be a compulsory part of training, similar to the 'anti-bribery' and 'how to safely store passwords' online training courses.



LJMU has pledged to be net zero. It's to actually help the world. The idea behind it is that everything gets better and we stop causing the damage. Some of the actions don't match this vision. It's not about making a date that we fail on and push the date further back.

## *Having a Short Course*

"IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL AND COVER DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUSTAINABILITY SUCH AS SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMICAL AND WASTE. THE IDEA IS THAT EVERYONE AT THE UNIVERSITY COULD COMPLETE THE COURSE."



### GREEN JOBS

Dr Lane believes having a good background knowledge of why we should care for the environment is important, as is being up to date with the latest IPCC reports and climate change headlines. Understanding what the future holds lends itself to understanding why we should be going into green jobs.

### GREEN SECTOR

Dr Lane describes the green sector as a growing area which is very broad. Almost every company now has the equivalent of an ESG professional working to implement sustainability. He mentions the green sector isn't necessarily just for geography, environmental science and climate change students.


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## SUMMARY

The University needs to improve its focus on sustainability and the green sector. To achieve this, it should provide training to students on the green sector through Canvas courses and hire staff members whose specialism is the green sector. The University should also ensure that sustainability is incorporated into all course curriculums and provide more work experience opportunities through internships.

It is also important to educate students on green skills and knowledge, and create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge for transferable green skills. The University can achieve this by creating a green network and promoting green living to all students. Additionally, the University should review its net-zero goals and align its actions accordingly.



Lastly, creating green spaces within the university can also help promote sustainability and enhance the student experience. By implementing these measures, the University can better equip its students with the necessary skills and knowledge to address the pressing issues facing our planet.