

Dragon! Public Art Sustainability Activism

Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

The climate emergency dragon in Becket Gardens at Canterbury Christ Church University is a fantastic ambassador for sustainable futures. The dragon was chosen as an easily accessible symbol for climate emergency, for what could be hotter, angrier, and more dangerous than a dragon?



The dragon takes shape July 2022

Photo: John Hills



Work finishes March 2023

Photo: John Hills



A baby dragon emerges Feb 2023

Photo: Pip Gregory

The Dragon (named 'Spiro' in a student competition) demonstrates sustainable futures through public art. The dragon represents the hottest and angriest creature in medieval bestiaries and what better way to raise awareness of today's current environmental emergency? Built by CCCU students, CCCU staff, Kent residents, our local scout group, and visitors, the dragon is made from recycled hard-core, covered in local clay and straw, topped with drought-resistant sedum and moss. Moss is an excellent form of carbon capture that makes the dragon's face naturally green and velvety and a figure for climate mitigation. Located on campus (formerly the site of a medieval monastery), it will serve as a teaching aid to improve the quality of our world and the need for a sustainable future. Due to its popularity, we are now building a 'baby' dragon; together these dragons form a sensory wellbeing space that celebrates our green heritage.

304

Participants at the Medieval Pageant Open Day

84

Students voting for the dragon's name

217

Views of the blog ['Here be Dragons'](#)

'What will be really memorable is the dragon!' (Visiting academic)

'Entertaining, stimulating and informative.' (Student) *'Great, a proper dragon'* (Visitor)

'An Outstanding contribution to sustainability' Prof Rama Thirunamachandran (Vice Chancellor)

Find out more

For details on dragon wrangling and green heritage see www.MedievalAnimals.org and #CCCUclimateDragon for a photographic essay, and [William Henniker's 3D Dragon scan](#)