Blackfriars Hall Water Management Strategy

Ensuring Responsible, Efficient, and Sustainable Use of Water Across All Accommodation Buildings

Last reviewed: February 2026

Blackfriars Hall is committed to responsible stewardship of natural resources, and water is one of our most essential. This Water Management Strategy sets out how the Hall will monitor, conserve, and sustainably manage water use across all accommodation buildings, including the heritage houses at **16–17 St John Street**, the modernised facilities at **33 St Giles**, and all future building projects or refurbishments.

1. Strategic Objectives

1. **Reduce total water consumption** year-on-year across all properties.
2. **Minimise wastage**, including leaks, inefficient fixtures, and unnecessary heating of water.
3. **Install efficient water-saving technologies** in all new builds, refits, and replacement works.
4. **Maintain high water quality standards**, with safe, hygienic systems for all residents.
5. **Promote behavioural change** among students and staff to reduce unnecessary water use.
6. **Protect the Hall's heritage buildings** by using non-intrusive, reversible water-efficiency upgrades.

2. Water Efficiency Standards for All Buildings

2.1 Fixtures and Fittings

When installations or replacement works occur, the Hall will use:

- **Low-flow or aerated taps**
- **Low-flow shower heads**
- **Dual-flush or reduced-volume toilets**
- **Flow restrictors** on older plumbing where appropriate
- **Automatic shut-off valves** in communal facilities where feasible

2.2 Appliances

All water-using appliances purchased or replaced must be:

- Highly efficient, with strong water-use performance ratings
- Durable and repairable

- Installed with cycle settings that minimise waste (e.g., eco programs)

This includes washing machines, dishwashers (in staff or communal areas), and any future high-use appliances.

3. Operational Water Management

3.1 Leak Prevention and Rapid Response

- Conduct **regular inspections** of taps, pipes, radiators, showers, toilets, boilers, and hot-water cylinders.
- Establish a **zero-tolerance policy on leaks**—any reported issue must be investigated within 24 hours, or less.
- Maintain a **maintenance log** recording all water-related issues and repairs.

3.2 Meter Monitoring

- Track water consumption for each building.
- Compare year-on-year consumption to identify anomalies or inefficiencies.
- Investigate spikes (could indicate leaks or malfunctioning fixtures).

3.3 Vacancy-Period Water Protocol

During the annual vacancy period (mid-August to late September):

- Shut off water to unoccupied floors or rooms where practicable, and conduct mandatory **hygiene flushing** only as required for water safety.
- Check toilets, taps, mixers, and stopcocks before re-opening.
- Consider deeper plumbing maintenance during this quiet window.

4. Sustainable Hot Water Management

4.1 Efficient Hot Water Production

- Use insulated hot-water cylinders and pipework.
- Optimise hot-water schedules to match building occupancy.
- Reduce unnecessary recirculation cycles and energy losses.

4.2 Combining Water and Energy Efficiency

Because water and energy use are linked, Blackfriars will:

- Prioritise **low flow hot water fittings** to reduce energy used to heat water.
- Ensure annual servicing of boilers, cylinders, and heat pumps to maintain efficiency.
- Encourage residents to use warm—not excessively hot—water where possible.

5. Water Management in Historic Buildings (16–17 St John Street)

The Hall recognises that heritage protections can limit certain interventions. Efficiencies here will focus on:

- Reversible and **non-intrusive upgrades** such as aerators and flow restrictors
- Ensuring original plumbing features are preserved where possible
- Improving insulation of pipework in roof voids and service areas
- Using compact, efficient appliances for shared spaces
- Monitoring older systems more frequently due to age-related risk of failure

Larger interventions (e.g., pipe replacement) will be coordinated with major refurbishment cycles to protect historic fabric.

6. Water Management in Modernised Buildings (33 St Giles)

Because 33 St Giles already operates with high efficiency systems, the strategy focuses on:

- Maintaining optimal performance of water heaters, fixtures, and circulation systems
- Monitoring water-use trends to detect performance drift
- Ensuring all future replacements exceed current efficiency baselines
- Integrating new technologies as feasible (sensor taps, greywater systems if suitable)

7. Resident Engagement

7.1 Education and Guidance

Junior Deans and accommodation staff will:

- Encourage responsible water use
- Remind residents to report leaks immediately
- Promote shorter showers and efficient use of washing facilities
- Share sustainability tips during induction and through the online portal and signs in the accommodation

7.2 Behavioural Nudges

- Place visual reminders near showers and sinks
- Provide clear instructions on how to use eco-settings on appliances
- Encourage use of basins for washing dishes rather than running taps continuously

8. Procurement and Contractor Requirements

8.1 Procurement Standards

- All purchased fixtures must meet internal water-efficiency standards.
- Prefer suppliers with ethical and environmentally responsible manufacture, repair services, and recycling pathways.

- All purchased appliances must be efficient and durable to reduce lifecycle waste.

8.2 Contractor Expectations

- Contractors must use **water-saving practices** (e.g., not leaving taps running) during works.
- All plumbing or appliance work requires a final check for leaks, efficiency, and correct settings.

9. KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) – from Trinity Term 2026

9.1 Resource Efficiency

- Annual water consumption per building
- Year-on-year reduction in water use (target: minimum 5%)
- Number of water-efficiency installations completed per year

9.2 Maintenance & Repairs

- Leak response time (target: <24 hours)
- Number of leaks per year (target: downward trend)
- Percentage of fixtures meeting efficiency standards

9.3 Resident Engagement

- Review water guidance communications in the context of general sustainability training
- Reduction in resident-related water wastage incidents

10. Review Cycle

- Formal review every **three years**, or sooner if major upgrades occur.
- KPI updates to be included in annual sustainability reporting.
- Strategy will evolve as new technologies, regulations, and conservation techniques emerge.