

Media Release
Speakers for Schools

Leaders and influencers go back to school to persuade students to say no to plastic

Speakers for Schools, supported by Business in the Community (BITC), Mouvement for Change and the Environment Agency, is teaming up with passionate advocates to inspire young people across the UK to take action against plastic waste. Launching on World Oceans Day on the 8th June, the Great British Plastics Challenge is a national campaign that will see over 30 leading figures who are helping to shape environmental attitudes in business, politics, culture and society, go back to school to discuss the impact of plastic waste and how they are taking steps to tackle the problem, in the hope to inspire students to join them. This is part of a wider campaign due to be launched at a summit in November and led by BITC, who are working with businesses, communities and experts on how we better manage plastics and other critical resources.

Ambassador speakers supporting the campaign include but are not limited to **Sir James Bevan** (Chief Executive, Environment Agency), **Emma Howard Boyd** (Chair, Environment Agency), Mike Coupe (CEO, Sainsbury's), **Jeremy Darroch** (CEO, Sky Plc and Chairman, Business in the Community), **Tim Farron** (MP and Liberal Democrat spokesperson on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs & North of England), **The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP** (Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), Amanda Mackenzie OBE (CEO, Business in the Community), **Dougie Poynter** (Musician, Author and Activist), **Roz Savage** MBE (Ocean Rower and Environmental Advocate), **Peter Simpson** (CEO, Anglian Water), **Tanya Steele** (CEO, WWF), **Richard Walker** (Managing Director, Iceland), **Sarah Weir OBE** (CEO, Design Council) and more.

A national challenge will also be launched as part of the campaign asking young people to commit to at least one action this summer and sharing that commitment on social media to encourage others to take action, too. With the help of Mouvement for Change, an LA and London based charity helping tackle important social issues through action-oriented campaigns, they hope to inspire simple, day-to-day actions young people can take to help create change. The charity is also encouraging campaign speakers to lead by example, by taking part in the challenge too. The challenge includes asking students to join speakers in committing to one of the following:

- Ditch 'the big four': giving up single-use plastics for 2 months (straws, bottles, coffee cups and bags)
- Take part in a community event: join a local tidy up via their charity partners
- Influence a local business: ask a local business to stop using plastic straws

Speakers for Schools will be signposting information on organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy, Surfers Against Sewage and more on their website for students, schools and employers linking to events, information packs and resources on how to take part in the challenges in their area. Over the campaign period, BITC will also be promoting the practical steps and commitments their corporate members are taking to continue to encourage business leaders and companies to join them in long-term plans to tackle the wider waste issue.

Jeremy Darroch, Chief Executive of Sky plc and Chairman of Business in the Community said: *"Through our own Sky Ocean Rescue campaign I've seen first-hand the impact that simple changes can have on reducing the amount of plastics we use. The Speakers for Schools campaign is a great opportunity for us to inspire young people to take action. No matter what your age, by working together we can turn off the plastics tap."*

Robert Peston, Founder of Speakers for Schools and ITV Political Editor said: *"At Speakers for Schools we are unashamedly all about equipping young people for the serious long-term challenges they face."*

And there are few long-term challenges more important than ending the environmental degradation from plastics. So, it is a privilege to partner on this campaign to energise school students to commit to doing something to end the scourge of plastic waste.”

Amanda Mackenzie OBE, CEO of Business in the Community said: *“All corners of society have woken up to the need to tackle plastics pollution. Through our work with companies on tackling the plastics challenge and our partnership with Speakers for Schools, we can bring together business leaders and our most important consumers - young people who will inherit the world we are creating. We can drive bigger and more long-lasting change that way. The Great British Plastics Challenge is something all of us can get behind. While I may not be at school anymore, there’s no reason I, or other business leaders, can’t commit to one or all of these pledges.”*

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, who will be speaking in Bude as part of the campaign said: *“Blue Planet 2 showed us shocking levels of plastic pollution in the oceans, but then we turned off the TV, looked around, and saw it’s a problem everywhere. We can all take action, so I hope the Speakers for Schools campaign will inspire students and business leaders alike to take part in the national challenge this summer.*

Bude’s relationship with its beaches means I expect to learn a lot about cleaning up plastic pollution from the students at Budehaven Community School. I’m looking forward to taking part.”

The challenge will continue into summer and beyond, aiming to give national visibility to the urgent need to address the plastics issue both through practicable actions for students, schools and families, but also to show the role of influential figures in helping inspire and lead this change.

To find out more visit www.Speakers4Schools.org/PlasticsChallenge
The Great British Plastics Challenge – Make your pledge!

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Speakers for Schools are calling on the UK’s leading figures, their companies and young people to take part in a national #PlasticsChallenge and say no to plastic:

- **Say no to the big four:** Refrain from using plastic shopping bags, disposable coffee cups, plastic straws and plastic bottles for 2 months.
- **Take action in the community:** Take part in an organised beach or street clean up via our affiliated campaign partners or set one up yourself.
- **Influence a business:** Persuade a local business to say no to single-use plastics such as removing plastics straws or making the switch to metal water bottles.

To find out how to pledge to one of the above or how your organisation can help, visit www.Speakers4Schools.org/PlasticsChallenge and share your pledge on social media using #PlasticsChallenge!

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Media contact

Ros Adams, Communications Speakers for Schools, Ros.Adam@speakers4schools.org / 07914 724489/ 02075 493 691

Ashley Hodges, Director Speakers for Schools, Ashley.hodges@speakers4schools.org / 02075 493 696

Notes to Editors

Speakers will be giving their time in state secondary schools and academies across the UK, with talks at schools in North Wales, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Greater London, Sussex, East Anglia, Nottinghamshire, Greater Manchester and more.

Speakers supporting the campaign and talk series include:

- **Richard Aylard CVO**, External Affairs and Sustainability Director, Thames Water
- **Ariel Booker**, Co-Founder, CanO Water
- **Judith Batchelar OBE**, Director of Brand, Sainsbury's
- **Sir James Bevan**, Chief Executive, Environment Agency
- **Emma Howard Boyd**, Chair, Environment Agency
- **Mike Coupe**, CEO, Sainsbury's
- **Jeremy Darroch**, CEO, Sky Plc and Chairman, BITC
- **Niall Dunne**, Chief Executive, Polymateria
- **Robert Edmondson**, MD Environmental Services, Amey
- **Richard Ellis**, Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility, Walgreens Boots Alliance
- **Tim Farron**, MP and Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs & North of England
- **Richard Flint**, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Water
- **Liv Garfield**, Chief Executive, Severn Trent Water
- **The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- **Marcus Gover**, Chief Executive, WRAP
- **Adrian Griffiths**, CEO, Recycling Technologies
- **Julie Hill**, Chair, WRAP
- **Kevin Hurst**, Chief Operating Officer, Veolia
- **Andrew Jenkins**, Sustainability Manager Global Brands, Walgreens Boots Alliance
- **Dr Zoe Laughlin**, Director, Institute of Making, UCL
- **Amanda Mackenzie OBE**, Chief Executive, BITC
- **Sir Charlie Mayfield**, Chairman, John Lewis Partnership
- **Agustina Mémoli**, Innovation Manager, Interface
- **Sebastian Munden**, Executive Vice-President and General Manager, Unilever
- **Allison Ogden-Newton**, Chief Executive, Keep Britain Tidy
- **Dougie Poynter**, Musician, Author and Activist
- **Steve Robertson**, Chief Executive Officer, Thames Water
- **Melanie Richards**, Deputy Chair, KPMG UK
- **Roz Savage MBE**, Ocean Rower and Environmental Advocate
- **Lucy Siegle**, Journalist and Presenter
- **Peter Simpson**, Chief Executive Officer, Anglian Water
- **Hanneke Smits**, CEO, Newton Investment Management
- **Jean Spencer**, Executive Director, Strategic Growth and Resilience, Anglian Water

- **Tanya Steele**, CEO, WWF UK
- **Robert Swannell CBE**, Chairman, UK Government Investments
- **Hugo Tagholm**, Chief Executive, Surfers Against Sewage
- **Ewan Venters**, CEO, Fortnum & Mason
- **Richard Walker**, Managing Director, Iceland
- **Sarah Weir OBE**, Chief Executive, Design Council

About Speakers for Schools

Speakers for Schools is a UK charity launched in 2011 helping state schools inspire their students and broaden horizon we through access to the insights, experiences and expertise of today's leading figures through free talks and more – free of charge. Speakers for Schools was founded by Robert Peston and has facilitated over 4,700 free school talks to date, reaching over 500,000 young people across the UK. Chaired by Andrew Law with a board of trustees, it is wholly funded by the [Law Family Charitable Foundation](#).

In 2018, the charity launched S4SNextGen, its portal connecting state schools with speakers' esteemed companies to offer work experience and related placements to those students who need it the most: [S4SNextGen.org](#). We now have hundreds of placements opening up with top employers for invaluable student workplace experiences.

Visit www.speakers4schools.org to find out more about how you can get involved today.

About Business in the Community

Business in the Community, part of the Prince's Responsible Business Network, is a business-led membership organisation made up of progressive businesses of all sizes who understand that the prosperity of business and society are mutually dependent. We exist to build healthy communities with successful businesses at their heart.

We use our Responsible Business Map to guide members on a journey of continuous improvement, working across the whole responsible business agenda. From community engagement to employment, diversity and the circular economy, we offer expert advice and specialist resources, driving best practice by convening, sharing learning and recognising great performance across our influential network. www.bitc.org.uk

About the Environment Agency

For more information, please visit: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Mouvement For Change

Mouvement for Change is the social and environmental-action arm of Mouvement Management, helping create visibility and involve social influencers on campaigns to inspire action including past campaigns on microbeads, plastics straws and more. Mouvement is a full-service entertainment company, inclusive of talent management, consulting, rights acquisition and TV and film productions. Our ecosystem fosters creative development across the cultural spectrum, with management and consulting at its centre, supported by a creative team that is able to build and continue dialogue for our clients.