

Sophie set for momentous climate change voyage

Sophie Goodall-Smith, aged 48, will board the Pelican of London on Sunday 18 July – a tall ship on a 13-week expedition around the British Isles for the Darwin200 environmental research project.

She is joining the last 4 week leg of the voyage as a crew member, alongside professional crew, trainee sailors and marine scientists who are studying the concentrations of plastic waste in UK waters, as well as surveying seabirds and marine megafauna.

Environmental organisation City to Sea is also partnering with Darwin200 to undertake the first UK-wide plastics survey.

Sophie, who supports the Environment Agency's plastics and sustainability team's Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution project, is having a break from the day job to undertake the trip in her personal time.

She said:

I am passionate about our precious planet, so protecting our natural world from harmful pollution, including plastics, is an issue very close to my heart professionally and personally.

I am thrilled to be joining this voyage, helping to gather invaluable conservation data to inspire and influence others to help our ocean ecosystems and marine life thrive.

It'll be part of my role to crew the ship and help City to Sea with its plastics survey, looking at floating macroplastics, microplastics suspended in the water column, and washed ashore beach plastics.

The Darwin200 dive team will also be collecting samples of seabed sediment at locations around the UK which will be analysed for their plastic content. The data collected is forming the basis of several academic studies and will contribute to national surveys.

Sophie, whose passion for the natural world has led to a 26-year career in the environment sector, is no stranger to adventure having previously undertaken conservation work in the Amazon rainforest, visited water, sanitation and hygiene projects in Uganda as a WaterAid ambassador, and run the Great Wall Marathon in China for charity.

Sophie's love of the ocean means she is also a regular sea swimmer and community volunteer, undertaking kayak river cleans, and beach cleans, including for the Leave No Trace Brighton group.

Sophie Goodall-Smith

She has also been actively involved in her local Greening Steyning campaign and Brighton and Hove WaterAid group, and recently volunteered at her local Covid vaccination centre in Brighton.

Further information about [Darwin200 and City to Sea](#) and [Darwin200 Voyage City to Sea Connecting our actions to our oceans](#).

For more information about the Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution project visit [Home – Preventing Plastic Pollution](#).

Notes to editor

Environment Agency: As a regulator, preventing waste plastic entering the environment by cracking down on waste crime and poor waste management is a key activity for the Environment Agency. As an influencer, it also has an ambition to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste, helping to achieve the goals and commitments outlined in its five year plan to create better place for people, wildlife and the environment, and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Preventing Plastic Pollution project: [Preventing Plastic Pollution](#) (PPP) seeks to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the river and marine environments. By looking at the catchment from source to sea, the project will identify and target hotspots for plastic, embed behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implement effective solutions and alternatives. PPP is a €14million funded EU INTERREG VA France (Channel) England Programme project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund which works mainly across seven pilot sites: Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez, Bay of Veys, Poole Harbour, and the Medway, Tamar, and Great Ouse estuaries.

Partners are the Environment Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Queen Mary University of London, LABOCEA Conseil, Expertise et Analyses, Syndicat mixte établissement public de gestion et d'aménagement de la baie de Douarnenez, Office Français De La Biodiversité, Parc naturel marin d'Iroise, Brest Métropole, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Conseil départemental de la Manche, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, The Rivers Trust, Syndicat de bassin de l'Elorn, ACTIMAR, Brest'aim, Westcountry Rivers Trust, South East Rivers Trust and Plymouth City Council.