

Scottish businesses celebrate sustainability success at 20th VIBES Awards

14 November 2019

Scotland's commitment to tackling increasing environmental challenges has been celebrated with twelve companies being recognised for their commitment to sustainability at the 20th VIBES Scottish Environment Business Awards.

Over 400 business figures came together at the prestigious VIBES Awards today (14th November 2019) to celebrate the achievements of innovative Scottish businesses which are demonstrating vision in implementing environmental best practice.

Twelve awards were presented on the day recognising the focus and efforts of a range of companies including Diageo, Vegware and FINDRA in helping to meet Scotland's ambition to be a world leader on tackling climate change and inspiring others to follow their lead. Winners came from across the country, from The Outer Hebrides to Edinburgh, Forres to Fife, Glasgow to the Borders and beyond covering a range of industry sectors with packaging, textiles, renewables, whisky and entertainment all recognised.

The winners were:

- Adapting Scotland Award, sponsored by Adaptation Scotland – **Biomatrix Water Solutions Ltd**
- Circular Scotland Award, sponsored by Scottish Leather Group – **Renewable Parts Ltd– Refurbishment Centre**
- Engaging Scotland Award, sponsored by Wave Utilities – **Aberdeen Performing Arts**
- Hydro Nation Scotland Award, sponsored by Scottish Government – **Diageo-Leven**
- Innovating Scotland Award, sponsored by Scottish Power – **Intelligent Growth Solutions**
- Leadership Scotland Award, sponsored by SEPA – **ACS Clothing Ltd**
- Moving Scotland Award, sponsored by Travel Know How – **TechnipFMC**
- Partnership Scotland Award, sponsored by The Glenmorangie Group – **Outer Hebrides Local Energy Hub (OHLEH)**
- Product Scotland Award, sponsored by Devro – **IES**
- Service Scotland Award, sponsored by Bright Green Business – **Vegware**
- Small Business Scotland Award, sponsored by University of Stirling

Management School – FINDRA

The 2019 event marked twenty years of VIBES, which over the years has recognised 220 businesses for their commitment to sustainability within their sector. To celebrate this milestone anniversary, a special 'Best of VIBES' award was presented to CMS Window Systems, a former winner of the prestigious award for Management SME in 2015. The company were recognised for continuously instigating environmental improvements and for pushing the market to higher specifications for heat loss and working with glass and profile manufacturers to increase the recycling content of new windows.

CMS were one of the first companies to remove all waste from the sites where they fit their products. The waste is transported and sorted at their three sites for onward recycling. This labour intensive process helps to achieve impressive recycling rates and control recovered material quality.

The announcement of the winners follows a rigorous judging process which included a written application, three rounds of judging panels and a site visit for each of the 36 shortlisted businesses, to assess their environmental processes.

The variety of businesses awarded show that operating sustainably is an option for all, regardless of size, scale or sector. There are many benefits to be enjoyed from embracing the economic opportunity of sustainability, with winners enjoying a range of associated positives including increased resource efficiency, resilience, competitiveness as well as a stronger working culture and implemented best practice in their daily activities.

Business Minister, Jamie Hepburn MSP, said:

“There is a global climate emergency and we all need to be part of the solution. Scotland has by far the most ambitious and stringent climate legislation of any country in the world and business will play a critical role in the transition to a net-zero society.

“It is important that we recognise the business leaders who are committed to developing innovative, ambitious and environmentally sustainable solutions while seizing the economic opportunities our net-zero transition presents, and I am proud to have presented the 'Best of VIBES' award this year, helping celebrate VIBES' 20th anniversary.”

Commenting, Bob Downes, chair of SEPA and head of the VIBES judging panel, said:

“The scale of the environmental challenge facing humanity, from climate change to plastics in our oceans, is enormous, with a real urgency to act. The most successful businesses in the future will be those that are not just compliant, but which are also low carbon, low material use, low water use and low waste, and which see environmental excellence as an opportunity. This is at the core of SEPA's One Planet Prosperity regulatory strategy.

“It is very encouraging to see the diverse range of businesses, small and

large, which are taking important steps to reduce their impact on the environment and which understand how environmental excellence can also benefit their bottom line. I would like to congratulate each of this year's winning businesses and organisations, and hope that others will be inspired to follow in their footsteps."

Winner of 'Best of VIBES' award, Martin McCrimmon, Business Systems Director from CMS Window Systems, said:

"We are very proud to receive this prestigious accolade which recognises our commitment to delivering environmental best practice.

"It is particularly special to be voted as the winner given the strength of the competition and the outstanding environmental innovations that they are delivering.

"Sustainability is at the heart of our business and drives every decision that we make as we recognise that it brings both economic and environmental benefits and contributes to a sustainable Scotland."

Each of the 2019 VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards winners is now eligible to enter the next European Business Awards for the Environment (EBAE) which is open to winners and runners up of RSA Accredited award schemes. VIBES is the only Scottish based RSA Accredited award scheme.

For more information on VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards please visit www.vibes.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

- VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards is a strategic partnership between Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Zero Waste Scotland, and Energy Saving Trust.
- The Awards are further supported by CBI Scotland, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, Bright Green Business, Quality Scotland and Scottish Council for Development and Industry.
- The Awards are accredited by the RSA Environment Awards Accreditation Scheme (www.rsaaccreditation.org).

Issued by the BIG Partnership on behalf of the VIBES – Scottish Environment Business Awards

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[Vote for Scotland's best sustainable business in the 20th VIBES awards](#)

📅 07 November 2019

Time is running out to vote in Scotland's best-known green awards scheme. Since their inception in 1999, the VIBES Scottish Environment Business Awards have recognised more than 150 businesses that have taken significant steps to improve or reduce their impact on the environment, often saving money in the process.

To celebrate the competition's 20th year, a public vote will decide the winner of a special Best of VIBES category from a shortlist of previous winners that have demonstrated an ongoing contribution to sustainable development.

This award will be presented by Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills, on Thursday, 14 November at the 2019 [VIBES](#) awards ceremony, which is also open to the public.

More than 400 guests are expected at the event at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in central Glasgow, where winners will be announced in 11 VIBES award categories.

The event's schedule will also include a panel discussion on the environment.

"The scale of the environmental challenge facing humanity, from climate change to plastics in our oceans, is enormous, with a real urgency to act," says Bob Downes, chair of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and head of the VIBES judging panel

"With increasing consciousness from consumers, corporate supply chains and investors, it's clear that the most successful businesses of the future will be those who embrace the economic opportunity of sustainable business.

"It's hugely encouraging to see so many Scottish businesses leading on this agenda, which will continue to set them up well for the future."

The ten shortlisted Best of VIBES businesses are Duns-based decontamination technology specialist Aqualution Systems; North Lanarkshire construction industry contractor Castle Group Scotland; whisky distiller Chivas Brothers; Cumbernauld-based manufacturer CMS Window Systems; Hawick-based tubing and ducting manufacturer Emtele UK; smoked salmon producer Farne Salmon, also based in Duns; shortbread, oatcakes and preserves brand Paterson Arran, manufacturing in West Lothian and the Isle of Arran; Stonehaven food retailer The Bay Fish and Chips; The Deep Project – a marine conservation project in the Dornoch Firth, in partnership with the Glenmorangie Company – and Edinburgh-based compostable packaging specialist Vegware.

VIBES is delivered as a partnership between SEPA, The Scottish Government,

Energy Saving Trust, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Water and Zero Waste Scotland.

The Awards are further supported by CBI Scotland, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, Scotch Whisky Association and Bright Green Business.

Last year's VIBES winners included Spruce Carpets, a Glasgow-based social enterprise which specialises in refurbishing and re-using textile floor coverings, and Peel Tech, a Fife-based micro business which has developed a system to minimise food waste from potato processors, such as fish and chip shops.

Online voting for the Best of VIBES Award closes at midnight on Sunday, 10 November. To cast your vote, go to vibes.org.uk/case-studies

[Radioactivity in Food and the Environment 2018 report shows all levels and concentrations of radioactivity continue to be well within dose limits](#)

 24 October 2019

The latest Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report (RIFE 24) has been published today (24 October 2019) and shows that doses of radioactivity received by people in Scotland remain well within international dose limits.

The highest dose for a member of the public reported in Scotland from an authorised discharge was 0.035 millisievert (mSv) – around one thirtieth of the legal limit.

As a comparison, the UK average exposure from all sources (including background radiation) is 2.7 mSv, of which 0.40 mSv is from patient exposure to radiation from medical treatments.

The [annual RIFE report](#) looks at the levels and concentrations of radioactivity measured in the environment during 2018 and discharges from all of the nuclear licensed sites in Scotland. It assesses the dose a member of the public could receive, based on a number of factors such as environmental concentrations, diet and activity.

SEPA is responsible for the radiological monitoring that is carried out in

Scotland and has a duty to ensure that no member of the public receives a dose in excess of the statutory dose limit of one millisievert (1 mSv) per year from authorised discharges. This year's data shows that doses were within the legal limits and that SEPA's regulatory processes in relation to radioactive substances are sufficiently robust.

Dr Paul Dale, Unit Manger from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), said:

"RIFE 24 continues to demonstrate that Scotland's communities are adequately protected against sources of radioactivity that could impact on our food and the wider natural environment. Due to the low concentrations of radioactivity measured we do see some small variations, which is due to changes in diet and activities.

"The report represents a collaborative effort by all agencies to carry out rigorous annual monitoring, to ensure doses are within international limits and the 2018 report confirms that this remains the case."

The [RIFE 24 report](#) is a joint publication between all six agencies across the UK with responsibility for ensuring that doses from authorised releases of radioactivity do not pose an unacceptable risk to health – SEPA, the Environment Agency (EA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), Food Standards Scotland (FSS), Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

Also released today is a [Summary of Radioactivity in Food and the Environment](#), which provides a summary of the public's exposure (dose) to radiation between 2004 and 2016.

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[Next steps consultation on regulation of finfish aquaculture sector](#)

📅 03 October 2019

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has today (3 October, 2019) launched an eight week public consultation to inform the next steps in regulation of the finfish aquaculture sector.

The technical consultation follows one of the agency's largest consultation programmes in late 2018, the publication of its Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan and the introduction of its new, firm, evidence-based regulatory framework on 1 June, 2019.

The consultation explores methods for how we regulate the organic load from a fish farm.

David Harley, Head of Water & Planning at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said:

“As one of a number of organisations regulating finfish aquaculture, SEPA is working with the finfish aquaculture sector to ensure protection of the environment is recognised as fundamental to the sector’s success. Our vision is that the sector becomes a world-leading innovator in ways to minimise the environmental footprint of food production and supply; where it has a strong and positive relationship with neighbouring users of the environment and communities; and where it is valued nationally for its contribution to achieving global food security.

“Having done more science, more analysis and more listening than ever before over the last two years, including in our largest ever public consultation across Scotland, we launched our Finfish Aquaculture Sector Plan and a new, firm, evidence-based regulatory framework in June this year.

“This further consultation is focused on how we ensure that the organic load does not negatively impact local environments. We want to provide certainty and transparency to site operators, regulators and communities. We’re committed to listening and to getting this right which is why we’re asking for responses to options for approaches from the broadest possible group of stakeholders with interests in our regulation of the sector.”

The consultation is open until Wednesday 27th November, 2019.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

CONSULTATION INFORMATION:

SEPA’S AQUACULTURE HUB:

FINFISH AQUACULTURE CONSULTATION EVENTS:

- Approximately 275 people attended across the nine community drop-in events.
- A total of 28 one to one meetings were facilitated between SEPA specialists and stakeholder groups including, community groups, local fisheries, NGOs and industry representatives.
- Specific round table discussions were also arranged for NGOs, fish farming environmental managers and partner public agencies in addition to the nine community events.
- Approximately 120 responses to the consultation received.
- A short summary of the consultation feedback has been published alongside [the sector plan](#).

Official Statistics' Publication for Scotland – Household waste summary, waste landfilled, waste incinerated (Jan-Dec 2018)

17 September 2019

Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) statisticians have published Official Statistics today (17 September 2019) which provide detail of Household Waste collected across all Local Authorities during 2018.

- Carbon impact of Scottish waste decreasing
- Total household waste generated in Scotland decreasing
- More household waste recycled than landfilled for second year in a row
- Plastic and glass recycling increase
- Paper and cardboard continues downward trend
- Total household recycling rate 44.7%
- Energy recovery of residual waste replacing landfill

CARBON IMPACT OF SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD WASTE DECREASING

Measuring the whole-life impact of resources is the role of the Scottish carbon metric. The metric, a measure of national performance, takes a holistic view, from resource extraction and manufacturing emissions, through to resource management emissions.

The 2018 metric shows a 15% decrease in Scotland's household waste carbon impact from 2011 to 2018, following a decreasing trajectory since 2011. The longer trend is largely a result of increased recycling rates, particularly for high impact waste materials, as well as reduction in waste generated and reduced landfilling of biodegradable waste.

The carbon impact of household waste generated and managed in 2018 was 5.76 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent – which is 1.06 TCO₂e per person. This was a decrease of 104,228 TCO₂e from 2017 and a decrease of 1,007,754 TCO₂e from 2011.

TOTAL HOUSEHOLD WASTE GENERATED IN SCOTLAND DECREASING

The total volume of household waste generated in Scotland fell a further 2% in 2018, from 2.46 million tonnes in 2017 to 2.41 million tonnes in 2018, a decrease of 55,574 tonnes.

MORE HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLED THAN LANDFILLED FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

2018 saw a further decrease of household waste sent to landfill, 7% or 75,491 tonnes down from 2017. This is the seventh consecutive decrease in household waste landfilled since 2011 – and for the second consecutive year there was more Scottish waste recycled (1.07 million tonnes) than landfilled (1.03 million tonnes).

PLASTIC & GLASS RECYCLING INCREASE

Plastic recycling rose by 8,163 tonnes (5%) to 56,586 tonnes in 2018, continuing the trend of increasing each year for the last seven years. Glass remains the second most recycled material, with the rate up by 832 tonnes (0.8%) to 107,380 tonnes, in line with the longer term trend.

PAPER & CARDBOARD CONTINUES DOWNWARD TREND

Paper and cardboard remains the largest volume of material recycled at 209,120 tonnes (19%). However, there has been a general downward trend of paper and cardboard wastes recycled or reused since 2011. The reduction from 2017 was 16,374 tonnes (7%) – making a 31,226 tonnes (13%) reduction since 2011.

HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING RATE 44.7%

Scotland's overall household waste recycling rate was 44.7%, a decrease of 0.9 percentage points from the 45.5% rate achieved in 2016. [Data for every one of Scotland's 32 local authorities are available on SEPA's website along with additional commentary for the whole of Scotland.](#)

ENERGY RECOVERY OF RESIDUAL WASTE REPLACING LANDFILL

All waste landfilled and incinerated summary

Separately from household waste statistics, data has also been published specifically for [all Waste Landfilled and Waste Incinerated within Scotland during 2018](#). Official statistics for waste from all sources, which will include all waste generated and recycled in Scotland during 2018, are due to be published in March 2020.

The total amount of waste disposed of to landfill has decreased steadily since 2009, following large reductions between 2007 and 2009.

- 2018 saw a 2.2% reduction of waste from all sources landfilled in Scotland, down 84,876 tonnes to 3.74 million tonnes.
- This included a 6.1% decrease in the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed to landfill (a decrease of 67,040 tonnes to 1.02 million tonnes).
- 711,504 tonnes of waste was incinerated in 2018, an increase of 3,340 tonnes (5%) from 2017.
- The top three categories of waste landfilled in Scotland in 2018 were:
 - soils (42 million tonnes – 38%);
 - household and similar wastes (19 million tonnes – 32%);
 - sorting residues (745,403 tonnes – 20%).

Disposal of sorting residues (what is left when recyclable materials have been removed) to landfill fell by 68,166 (8%) between 2017 and 2018. This is against the longer term trend and is consistent with more of these wastes being diverted from landfill to incineration, and an increase of infrastructure of waste sorting facilities in Scotland, such as Material Recovery Facilities.

WASTE DATA COLLECTION

Data on waste are collected to monitor policy effectiveness, and to support policy development, particularly commitments in the Scottish Government's [Making Things Last – A Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland](#). Further details on the methodology used to produce the figures are provided in the “Household waste” section of the annual [Waste Data Quality Reports](#).

The figures are accurate at the time of publication, however data may be updated if further revisions are necessary. Normally these revisions will be published concurrent with the next official release.

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