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Engineering students given opportunity to make a difference

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14th January 2019

Source: [University of Exeter](#)

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Exeter University (Penryn Campus) and Plymouth University's talented engineering students will be battling it out to create the best water fountain design in order to win £500 and the chance of a lifetime to make a difference to the planet. Organised by Our Only World, a new Polzeath-based charity created by Tina Robinson who is also the treasurer of Polzeath Marine Conservation Group, the competition will run from term start in January 2019 to April 2019 with the ultimate hope of moving the production of UK water refill stations from abroad to the UK.

The idea for the competition came in October just after Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, announced he was going to spend £1.7m on over 100 water fountains around the capital city in a bid to reduce plastic pollution. Up until now, the majority of these refill stations have been imported from the USA and Germany and it is Tina's ambition that this is altered so that they are designed and produced entirely within the UK.

Earlier this year, Polzeath Marine Conservation Group installed two water refill stations in Polzeath and Rock. Since the fountains were installed, they have seen more than 15,000 litres drawn, saving thousands of single-use plastic bottles from entering the waste stream and our oceans.

Our Only World is a charity set up to promote the children's song with the same name, composed by David Smart and Joe Broadfoot, and all proceeds will go towards the funding of marine conservation projects. This song will be professionally recorded in early 2019.

There has already been much interest amongst a range of different South West based companies to support the engineering competition and companies like the South West Manufacturing Advisory Service (SWMAS) are keen to lend their support in any way they can.

Paul Gilbert, manufacturing specialist with the SWMAS said: "We are delighted to be able to support this project given its potential to reduce plastic around our shores. The competition is a fantastic opportunity for a design student and potentially the end product could be a further opportunity for our local manufacturing supply chain – we look forward to seeing the designs."

Tina Robinson said: "What we are hoping this competition ultimately will achieve is the development of an efficient and cost-effective South West design that will be the natural option when choosing what refill station to install, whether on a beach or in the city. We question why our water refill stations are made in the USA when we have all this great mining and engineering knowledge in this part of the world."

"Not only will we have a new British product to be proud of but we will also save the environment by not having to transport the equipment across continents. It is also our aim to give the students taking part in the competition an incentive to develop their portfolio and gain future employment."

"The idea of seeing refill stations on every beach came with me from Australia where they are almost everywhere. To see our first two installed earlier this year was one of my proudest moments and to see politicians and the community around us engaging with the idea is truly fantastic."

Our Only World welcomes support from businesses and individuals, especially from anyone with engineering expertise.

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