



# SMARTER SOLUTIONS FOR A GREENER BRITAIN



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GeoConnexion

Despite being one of the coldest days of the winter, some 200 guests arrived at the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) headquarters in Kensington, London, in mid-February for the Geovation 2018 Conference. Mounted by the Geovation Hub, Ordnance Survey's innovation initiative, in association with HM Land Registry, Innovate UK and Northumbrian Water Group, the event took as its theme 'Building Greener, Smarter Communities'. As such, it set out to show how location-based initiatives can help society move from a 'take, make and waste' economy to one where it makes best use of natural and human-made assets and treats waste as a valuable resource.

Dr. Chris Parker, co-founder of the Geovation Hub and manager of its collaborative Challenge programme, set the scene by reviewing the achievement of the Hub over the past decade. "Our whole ethos has been to support ventures that tackle old problems in new ways, not least those that meet a global need but which can be implemented locally and scaled sustainably," he said. In doing so, the Hub

had provided mentoring, hot desking and marketing support for 65 location-based start-ups across 10 market sectors. To turn those innovative ideas into a commercial reality, it had also help secure more than £12 million in public and private sector funding.

## From rags to riches

With sustainability a key focus of the event,



Geovation Hub manager Alex Wrottesley (standing left) chaired a morning panel discussion that included (seated from L-R) Katie Gordon-Smith, Dr. Rick Robinson, Daniel Raven-Ellison, Gosbert Chagula, Jon Khoo, Wayne Hemingway and Alison Barnes

who better to opine on the topic than guest speaker, Wayne Hemingway MBE. Despite a degree in Geography and Town Planning, the business career of this self-made architect-cum-fashion designer took off in the 1990s by recycling and selling clothing in London's Camden Market. With a mix of down-to-earth observations and plain common sense, laced with some choice expletives, he evangelised on the virtues of creating wealth without creating waste (his own house is furnished almost entirely from salvaged and re-purposed materials). His philosophy could be summed-up as, 'It's not what you do, but the way that you do it.'

Other morning session speakers offering their own perspective on greener, sustainable communities included Niraj Saraf (Innovate UK), Clive Surman-Wells (Northumbrian Water Group), Alison Barnes (New Forest National Park Authority), Jon Khoo (Interface), Daniel Raven-Ellison (London National Park City initiative), Katie Gordon-Smith (HMLR), Mark Stileman and David Henderson (Ordnance Survey), Allison Savich (Sport England), Dr. Rick Robinson (Arup), Gosbert Chagula (Exeter City Futures) and Sam Parton (OpenPlay UK).

## Picking winners

The afternoon session included an outline of the Geovation Challenge judging process plus pitches from the 10 teams chosen from the 40 entries received for the 2017 Challenge. Details of the winning projects - which are now in the running for £185,000-worth of grants, thanks to a commitment by lead sponsor Innovate UK - can be found at <https://geovation.uk/geovation-challenge-2017-winning-ideas-announced/>

**More on this event at <https://geovate2018.splashthat.com/> and <https://geovation.uk/hub/>**