Do Odyssey & ORP have any future plans for UK-based reprocessing of the ocean plastics?

Ok, so our partnership with ORP has come to an end this year and we are not sure of the future involvement as Keep Britain Tidy are reviewing the project.

Our partnership with Odyssey goes from strength to strength. We are supporting the beach clean groups nationally with a further partner "Surfers Against Sewage" where we are accepting any beach clean recycling they get that meets our guideline quality into Exeter. This is currently going into our mainstream UK recycling supply chain if the plastics are of a high grade this is with JA Young of Leicester. They currently take all our plastics and turn them into high grade pellet for manufacturing use in the UK. If the plastics are low grade we are working on a regional solution.

By working with Odyssey we not only support the beach clean groups retrieving ocean plastics but we also work with the fishing industry by recycling the fishing nets which then do not end up being disposed of in the seas. We are currently the UK's leading scheme for fishing net recycling. There are ports and harbours across the peninsula involved and as far as Weymouth and the south east. Wales come on board shortly and Scotland are considering involvement. Odyssey has 10 year contracts in place with multiple ports and are supported by the Indigo project which is a collaboration of 10 universities inclusive of Plymouth and French universities looking at the data, biological and marine research, business and engineering modelling.

Currently the nets must be recycled in two European destinations as they are the global specialists. This supply chain is well established. We are looking to replicate this work in the UK in line with grant funding and govt support through fishing industry subsidies and extended producer responsibility but this is a cautious approach involving many stakeholders. We continue work at a local level proving concept and further research and development.

One such piece of work I refer to is the regional solution for low grade plastics. Odyssey have recently funded a shredding and granulating system to be hosted by ECC. By using this it means we can granulate low end plastics for a fee and supply them for sale into a regional composite item. As they contain ocean plastics as well as local authority plastics they are sought after from a "story" perspective hence the fees we will charge.

Using this granulation system we will be trialling higher end plastics such as nets and other maritime plastic waste which currently needs a third party and further fees. We will replace those third parties and charge our own fees. Odyssey will in turn then continue to create world first products such as the ocean kayak, waste bins, surfing goods etc.

One of the potential barriers to councils engaging more with local community groups & organisations is lack of staff & resources, given the cut backs Cllr Harvey has referred to. Is the ongoing activity now mainly run by Exeter's corporate communications team, or is there a resource within the Waste & Recycling team, and if so what is that level of resource & cost, if any?

I agree that engagement is challenging due to cuts at local level. This is where I believe partnering and collaborating with other community reach stakeholders, groups and organisations is key as they have resources we do not and also a reach we may not be able to tap into as effectively. I do think there is a case for a somewhat devolved approach to some comms streams from a specialist standpoint such as waste and recycling as the evidence is all around us to see its effect. The Exeter Journey to Zero Waste, Community builders, Denis the Dustcart social media presences all have significant hits and likes in greater amounts that a corporate page sometimes. This is also where partnering with

environmental organisations such as Surfers against Sewage can have an impact as their campaigns are not just coastal but also inland and urban as well.

This is not my technical expertise so I will bow to the experience of the comms team.

Does David have a supplier who is happy to take wet cardboard for recycling?

Wet cardboard is a national issue and we are not alone. Within Devon Exeter receives greater income for its cardboard than any neighbouring district as we have the larger bin meaning it stays dryer for longer as opposed to the smaller open kerbside box or bag. Most UK buyers act upon a limit of <12% moisture. Export of card acts on a much lower threshold due to tighter trans-frontier regulations. Anything leaving the UK for recycling must be of a high quality. It is of note at this point that the UK produces far in excess of its capability to recycle cardboard here hence a healthy export market. Until the UK heavily invests in the cardboard reprocessing sector here this will continue.

Any buyer of cardboard whether UK or abroad does not want to pay good money for moisture. Even at 12% allowance that is over 3000kg of water being shipped per load of no value. In my personal opinion residents need to appreciate that cardboard is a commodity that attracts income and should be treated as such (along with all other recyclables) and until the general population grasps this we shall continue in a global emergency. If local authorities collect wet cardboard then it is their collection methodology potentially at fault not the commodity.