

The Honorary Graduand: Dr Bevis Watts

The Orator: Professor Jim Longhurst

Dr Bevis Watts is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

Dr Bevis Watts – Chief Executive of Triodos Bank UK.

Dubbed by some media as ‘the first environmentalist to run a UK bank’, Bevis has spent 25 years working in sustainability in public, private and voluntary sectors, including environmental research, the recycling industry, conservation and banking.

Early in his career he created WRAP’s national Financial Mechanisms Programme which leveraged tens of millions of private sector investment into recycling in the early 2000s and in doing so became aware of how our current financial system undermines a fair and sustainable society.

Bevis has led a bank that is a global pioneer of sustainable finance since April 2016, having previously been Head of Business Banking earlier in his career. The bank has been recognised for its work through numerous awards including a Queen’s Award for Enterprise – Sustainable Development, several accolades at the Best British Bank Awards which are voted for by customers and is rated as the UK’s most sustainable banking provider by several consumer watchdogs and rankings.

During his time leading Triodos Bank UK, the bank has not only delivered profitable growth, launched a personal current account and a crowdfunding platform, and doubled UK customer numbers – but he has also been a leading challenger in efforts to change the banking system and direct money as a powerful force for good. He co-founded the All-Party Parliamentary initiative ‘Bankers for Net Zero’ and collaborated and appeared in, the Netflix film ‘Our Planet Too Big To Fail’. He is a regular commentator on sustainable finance and the need to create a nature-based economy, as a guest of numerous podcasts and media interviews.

Bevis has always worked for values-led organisations and was previously chief executive of Avon Wildlife Trust. He has held numerous Directorships and Trusteeships and was a Board member of Bristol 2015, the delivery company for Bristol European Green Capital 2015, and inaugural Chair of the West of England Nature Partnership. He has also held several advisory roles including the steering committees for the Banking Futures project and the UK government’s taskforce on Impact Investing, the forerunner to the Impact Investing Institute.

He has a first-class business degree, was awarded the business prize when graduating from Swansea University, holds a PhD in Management Science, is a Chartered Environmentalist (MCIWM, CEnv) and a Fellow of the RSA.

He has been the author of papers published in academic journals, conference proceedings, as well as opinion pieces published in national and international press. He now has a regular column in the Metro newspaper on how to green your money.

He has been an active conservation volunteer throughout his adult life and has participated in three international marine conservation programmes. In 2021 he made nationally significant discoveries of

beavers living and breeding on the river Avon and recently had a book published - 'River Journey - searching for wild beavers and finding freedom' with the author proceeds donated to conservation charities.