

# The Honorary Graduate: Natalie Fee

**The Orator: Tom Appleby**

## **Natalie Fee is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science**

Natalie Fee is an environmental campaigner, author, speaker and founder of City to Sea, a non-profit organisation running campaigns to stop plastic pollution at source. By engaging communities, working with retailers and lobbying manufacturers and government, her aim is to reverse the trend for disposable items in order to safeguard our seas for future generations.

In 2017 Natalie won the Sheila McKechnie Award for Environmental Justice for City to Sea's #SwitchtheStick campaign which successfully called on all UK retailers to make cotton bud stems out of paper — a move which has stopped over 400 tonnes of single-use plastic at source annually.

In 2016 Natalie won the Bristol Post's 'Environmental Hero' Award and in 2017 was recognised as one of the 50 Most Inspiring Bristolians Alive Today. For International Women's Day 2018, Bristol 24/7 celebrated her as one of 17 Trailblazing Bristol Women of all time.

Natalie began campaigning for cleaner rivers and seas in 2014 and founded City to Sea as a community interest company (CIC) in 2015, as a response to the amount of plastic waste she witnessed flowing down the river Avon out to sea. With a background in wellbeing and media, she was inspired to apply her skills to help solve the plastic pollution problem.

She galvanised the local community and built a small team to help deliver the first of their campaigns, Refill, an initiative which connects people to taps wherever they are, enabling them to refill their bottle for free – reducing the need for single-use plastic bottles. The City to Sea team won an innovation award in 2016 from the Ordnance Survey's Geovation scheme to develop an app, which maps out the location of Refill stations and fountains and rewards people for refilling. Three years later, Refill is Europe's leading tap water initiative with over 10,000 Refill stations in the UK alone and is now run by a team of 10 staff, based in Bristol's iconic Albion Docks building.

Natalie is particularly proud of City to Sea's work around disrupting the current brand bias around menstruation education in schools, and through their #PlasticFreePeriods campaign have reached over four million young people, with a schools pilot currently running in 22 schools with 6000 students.

She moved to Bristol in 2012 with her son Elliot, now 15, transitioning from her career in wellbeing to work in the media as a presenter and producer for an ethical film production company. Her book, *The Everyday Alchemist's Happiness Handbook* (Findhorn Press, 2012), earned her the title of a Bristol 'Happiness Champion' in 2013 and in 2014 she went on to work for Made in Bristol TV, presenting and producing their daily entertainment show.

Natalie's inspiration comes from her love of the natural world and her passion for sharing green ideas that playfully demonstrate 'a better way that's way more fun'.

The Honorary Degree is awarded in recognition of Natalie Fee's campaigning to protect the oceans from plastics and other avoidable wastes.