



CASE STUDY: VOLVO OCEAN RACE



LANDMARK EVENT COMPOSTS IN CARDIFF

OVERVIEW

For more than four decades, the Volvo Ocean Race has tested teamwork to the limit, and provided a human adventure like no other. The 2017-18 edition proved no different. Teams crossed four oceans and travelled 45,000 nautical miles around the world, touching six continents and 12 landmark Host Cities.

This included Cardiff – Wales’ sporting capital, and now, a historical sustainable stopover for the world-renowned event.

THE SITUATION

There is heightened awareness around the limitations of plastic recycling and the growing problem of plastic pollution at a global level. The 2017-18 Volvo Ocean Race brought sustainability to the forefront, mandating a plastic-free environment across all Host Cities.

Cardiff Harbour Authority and the City of Cardiff Council embraced this sustainable mission for the Cardiff Race Village. The team immediately researched all the aspects of hosting a plastic-free event. The added challenge? A 14-day stopover, open to the public, with 180,000 attendees.

THE SOLUTION

Upon hearing from Cardiff officials, Vegware presented an in-depth proposal including product recommendations and advice on executing a practical foodservice recycling system for the event.

Volvo Ocean Race raised concerns on compostable clear PLA products, stating they looked like plastic and would cause consumer confusion. Vegware was able to offer an alternative: fibre-based products such as bagasse takeaway packaging and wooden cutlery, so as to avoid any products that looked like plastic.



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Vegware’s catering disposables appealed to us, as they are attractive, plant-based and compostable with food waste where accepted. The variety and range of products offered meant there would be a compostable packaging option for each street food vendor at the Cardiff Race Village.

The products’ ethos and quality met all our criteria, and Vegware’s support went beyond packaging. Its Environmental team explained the entire process of implementing recycling, sharing how they would work with us at every step. With this high level of customer service, Vegware ticked all the boxes as our packaging supplier.

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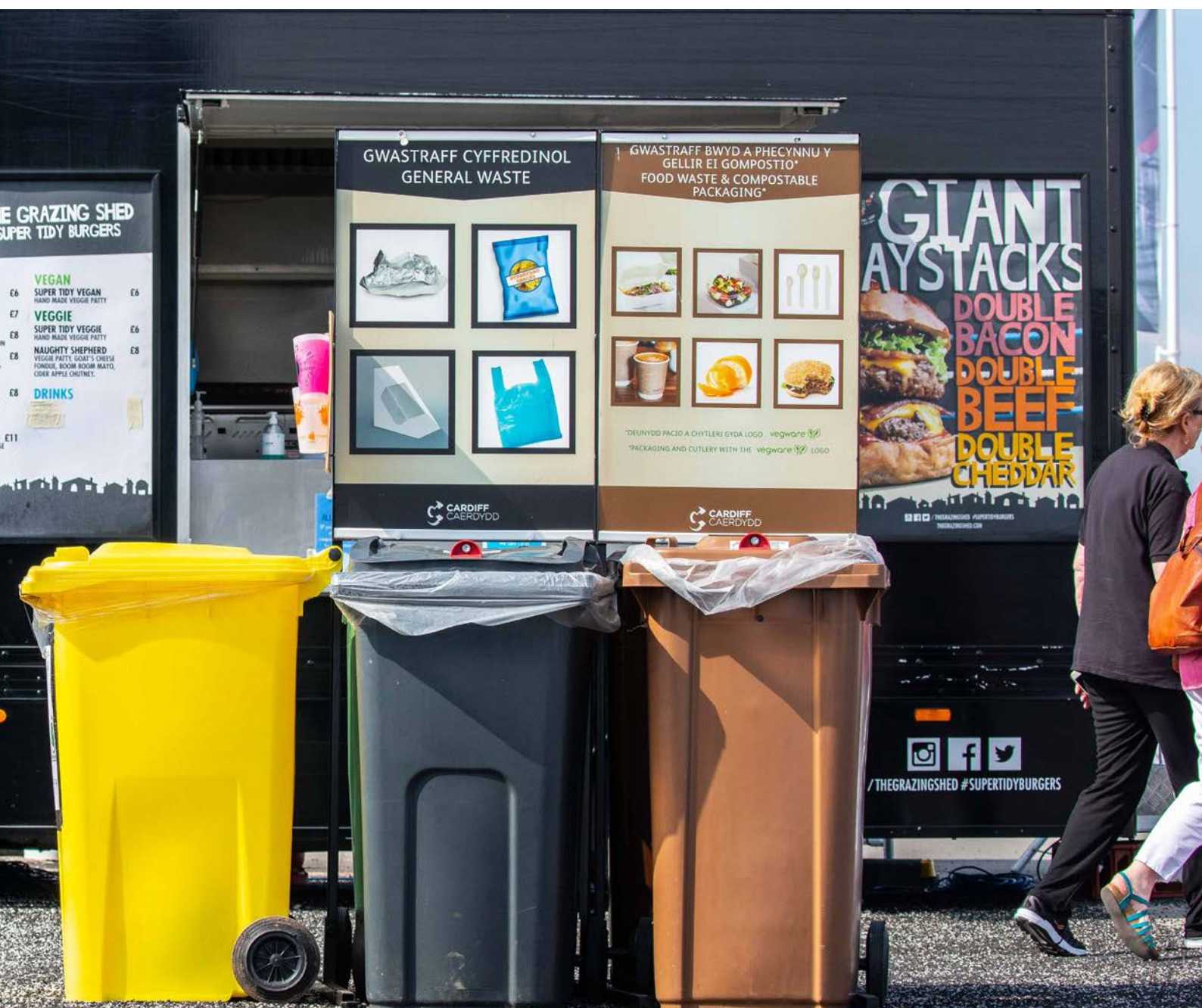
**ANNA MIDDLETON,
ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER,
CARDIFF HARBOUR AUTHORITY**

Vegware put the event organisers in touch with Smiths Waste Management, who provided bulk skips and hauled used Vegware mixed with food waste to Rose Hill Recycling in-vessel composting (IVC) in Gloucestershire.

Cardiff Council and the onsite waste management team, Eventclean, supplied bins, arranging them throughout the site using labelled pods: general waste, recycling, and food waste & compostable packaging. They also employed a colour-coded bin system, assigning food waste & compostable packaging to brown bins for both the front-of-house and back-of-house operations. The team designed signage to frame the bins, with Vegware advising on the inclusion of product photos to serve as visual cues. It was important that every

pod was the same and provided a complete set of disposal options. There were also more bin points than normal, so there was no excuse for not taking rubbish to a bin.

Vegware made education a top priority: training the event team on the products' benefits and proper disposal and advising on bin setup, including sharing examples of bin signage. This allowed for effective communications and a change in behaviour at all touchpoints, from the event's staff through to attendees, which in turn helped minimise waste contamination. Cardiff Council introduced the compostable packaging to foodservice traders, who eagerly adopted the eco-friendly approach.



THE RESULT

Bin signage featuring product images was well-received and key for site visitors and staff to understand how to dispose of waste properly. The event team also promoted the waste management system on its social media channels to raise public awareness. All traders on site had to adopt the use of Vegware or equivalent compostable packaging in order to trade, and their packaging was monitored regularly. As the site was some distance away from the nearest shops, cross contamination from other traders was kept to a minimum.



The event team's random bin checks initially showed some contamination. This was easily sorted through a back-of-house triage system. Over time, the contamination rates visibly decreased as event attendees learned how to properly dispose of used Vegware with food waste. The team maintained the house triage system throughout the event to ensure nothing slipped through the system. Smiths received positive feedback from the composting facility and had no complaints regarding any waste contamination issues.

The Volvo Ocean Race 2017-18 had 3.18 tonnes of used Vegware and food waste collected and delivered to an in-vessel composting facility. This catering 'waste' composted in under 12 weeks, creating quality compost to nourish soil in UK farmers' fields.

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Cardiff successfully achieved the sustainable goal required of host cities, and I could not be more pleased with the results, especially with World Environment Day falling during the Cardiff stopover.

Knowing that the used food packaging and food waste is now compost that helps nurture farmers' fields, is wonderful. For a global event that works with multiple countries and cities, we're delighted to help support the UK's circular economy through our partnership with the city of Cardiff.

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MEEGAN JONES
SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME MANAGER,
VOLVO OCEAN RACE





This event has been the first of its kind for Wales' capital and I am very proud and excited about what we have achieved. With the help of Vegware, we have now set a precedent by demonstrating that it's possible to change consumers' mindsets and have clean waste streams. Our hope is that compostable foodservice packaging will become the norm.

It has been a successful collaboration with forward-thinking Vegware. Together, we have created a legacy for the Welsh Government and the UK.



ANNA MIDDLETON ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER, CARDIFF HARBOUR AUTHORITY

At the prestigious international Beyond Sport Awards, the Volvo Ocean Race won in 'The Best Corporate Campaign or Initiative in Sport for Good' category. The judges commended the programme for its: "Fantastic use of a global platform to spread an important message around the danger of plastic pollution".

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