

# Bright Red Sparks award ceremony held in Edinburgh

Edinburgh Napier University's Bright Red Sparks awards recognise innovation and services by start-ups and fledgling companies.

There are six winners chosen from a shortlist of 16, with two judging rounds one of which was by external judges.

The winners will share £10,000 in prize money, and winners in the Going for Growth, Bright Ideas and Business for Good categories will share £14,000 of in kind legal support from law firm Shepherd and Wedderburn.

John Morrison of award sponsor Shepherd and Wedderburn, said: "The quality of Bright Red Sparks entries was once again very impressive, demonstrating the innovative thinking and drive needed to build successful businesses and charitable ventures.

"We wish all of the winners, and indeed all of the finalists, the very best of luck for the future."

The winners, announced at an awards dinner held at The Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh on Thursday evening, were:

## **Bright Ideas – Barbara Melville, BiaScan**

Barbara Melville is currently developing an early-stage business, BiaScan, which will offer businesses a web-based "spellchecker for prejudice" to help with recruitment and increase diversity, productivity, innovation, and profit for businesses.

Commenting on BiaScan's win, Shepherd and Wedderburn lawyer, and category judging panel member, John Morrison said: "Businesses are ever more focused on how they can improve the

diversity of their workforce and BiaScan is a welcome tool to assist with that, and as such will likely be of significant interest to business.”



Business for Good category winner, Shannon Fontius, with judges Sally Smith, Edinburgh Napier’s Dean of Computing, Josiah Lockhart, Chief Executive of Firstport, and Nick Fannin, Head of Bright Red Triangle at Edinburgh Napier University.

**Business for Good – Shannon Fontius, echo shoppe Ltd**

Edinburgh Napier graduate Shannon Fontius’s early-stage start-up, echo shoppe ltd, aims to reduce plastic pollution by helping customers lead a more low-impact lifestyle, offering consumers a broad range of practical, ethically-sourced zero waste and refill products.

The finalist judging panel described echo shoppe as being a “very well defined idea with both social and environmental impact that has demonstrated how to supplement existing businesses”.

## **Going for Growth – Tom Inglis, Wildcat Applications Ltd**

Web and mobile application developer Wildcat Applications' latest project, Cenefits, helps public sector organisations manage and assess social and community benefits added to contracts. Longer term, Inglis is looking to extend this offering to private companies that issue their own tenders.

The judges said Wildcat Applications have “a solid track record with high profile customers and a clearly defined opportunity for sales growth, with clear goals. It is clear the business model is desirable and viable.”



Going for Growth award winner, Tom Inglis, with judges Kirsty Irvine from Johnson Carmichael, Gail Boag, Dean of Edinburgh Napier's Business School, and Nick Fannin, Head of Bright Red Triangle at Edinburgh Napier University.

## **Enterprising Educators – Geraint Florida-James, Academic Lead at the Mountain Bike Centre of Scotland**

Professor Geraint Florida-James, a lecturer at Edinburgh Napier University's School of Applied Sciences, and his team –

Dr Tony Westbury, Dr Tom Campbell, Dr Lesley Ingram, Danny Cowe and Dawn Johnstone – demonstrated “exemplary collaboration between the public/private and academic sector with clear leadership and passion for the subject matter”.

The Mountain Bike Centre of Scotland, based at Glentress in the Scottish Borders, is Scotland’s national centre for mountain biking innovation and excellence, supporting businesses of all sizes in developing new mountain bike products and services in an initiative led by Edinburgh Napier University and Developing Mountain Biking in Scotland – part of Cycling Scotland – in a partnership with Scottish Enterprise.

The Centre helps businesses with product research, development and testing through to launch as well as leading on knowledge transfer and forging links between business and academia.

The judges said: “Evidence is clear in terms of commercial and wider impact – planning of phase 2 signals that this will continue to deliver impact and the team have created real ownership of innovation in a specific sector.”

### **Creative Consultants – Maximilian Brooks**

Edinburgh Napier Product Design student Maximilian Brooks won the Creative Consultants category prize for a solo client project with custom Land Rover workshop, Engine710.

The judging panel described Brooks as having given a “very authentic, from the heart, confident and passionate presentation that holds an audience and creates a strong empathetic bond”.



Active Citizens award winner Isabel Dosser, founder of Dignity Boxes, with Nick Fannin and Mark Wilkinson from Edinburgh Napier University

**Active Citizens – Isabel Dosser, Dignity Boxes**

Dignity Boxes is a charity organisation providing free toiletries to the homeless and those experiencing social deprivation across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

The judging panel said founder Isabel Dosser, a lecturer in palliative care within Edinburgh Napier’s School of Health and Social Care, has already made a tremendous impact since launching the charity in September 2018, with more than 20 volunteers now involved in the organisation.

The judging panel said Isabel had given “a great presentation with clear objectives and plans for the prize money”.

Commenting on this year’s winners, Nick Fannin, Head of Bright Red Triangle at Edinburgh Napier University, said: “The Bright Red Sparks Awards are a celebration of the breadth of

innovation and enterprising activity across the Edinburgh Napier University family. We have been so impressed by the creativity, drive and enthusiasm of all of our applicants to solve problems, to create opportunities and to build new businesses.

“It’s great to be able to reward all this hard work and we couldn’t have done it without the amazing support from our generous supporters and sponsors, Shepherd and Wedderburn, Johnston Carmichael, Santander Universities and the Moffat Charitable Trust.

“The package of support that our sponsors have offered will allow our winners to really hit the ground running as they set up and grow their businesses. We expect great things from our winners so watch out for their names in the future.”

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