

PROMOTED CONTENT



**VOLVO VISIONARIES**



Meet the brains behind the ideas changing our world



**VOLVO**

## Driving for great change

Volvo Visionaries celebrates the entrepreneurs working to improve the world around us

Britain has an illustrious history of innovation, from engineers such as James Watt and George Stephenson powering the Industrial Revolution to the World Wide Web, the first ATM and Dyson's pioneering technology.

Today, in our developed world, truly great inventions not only need to be successful, they need purpose and to make a difference.

Volvo Visionaries is a celebration of British entrepreneurs driven by a motivation beyond pure economic growth. All have one thing in common – the ability to improve our world.

Over the past weeks, working hand in hand with Volvo, *Sunday Times* researchers compiled a list of 24 visionary entrepreneurs all working towards making the world a smarter, safer, healthier, happier, more resourceful and more compassionate place. From this list, four were chosen to be in with a chance to walk away with the £60,000 Volvo Visionaries 2019 award, with a team of judges enlisted to select the overall winner. The four judges all have worked with socially aware companies. They are start-up expert Bindi Karia, social entrepreneur Cat Gazzoli, marketing strategy director of Volvo Mike Johnstone and *Sunday Times* enterprise editor Peter Evans.

The winner – Natalie Fee, founder of the Refill campaign – was described as “a great visionary thinker”. Equally, the pioneering work of the three remaining finalists, profiled along with her in this Volvo Visionaries special supplement, should not be underestimated. All four should be equally celebrated, for they are all changing the game when it comes to building a better future...



Volvo Visionaries on judging day

NATALIE FEE, REFILL

## TURNING THE TIDE

A heartbreaking documentary sparked the idea for Refill, a campaign to ditch single-use plastic water bottles. Now, its founder is the winner of our Volvo Visionaries 2019 award

When Natalie Fee watched *Albatross*, a documentary by the photographer and filmmaker Chris Jordan, it turned her life upside down. Following the plight of birds on Midway Island in the Pacific Ocean, their stomachs filled with bits of plastic cast aside by humanity, the programme made for shocking viewing. Fee was devastated.

She says: “I couldn’t believe the everyday items I was using – bottle tops and toothbrushes – were turning up inside the bellies of dead chicks. I was just engulfed by this huge grief I hadn’t felt with any other environmental issue. It really motivated me. I knew I had to do something – it felt like I didn’t have a choice, my reaction was so strong.”

At the time, Fee was a writer, TV presenter and producer, so she decided to use what she knew best to make some noise. “I started a crowdfunding campaign to make a music video. I thought that maybe using music might wake people up to the problem,” she says.

She raised £6,000 and made a video about plastic pollution – singing the song herself – but, by her own admission, it didn’t have a huge impact. “I realised it probably wasn’t going to change the world, but I’d found sponsors, a community and gained some momentum.”

She gathered together people living near her Bristol home who were keen to get involved, as well as some that were already active in relevant fields. Together they came up with campaign ideas and Fee’s not-for-profit company City to

Sea was born. An early campaign, #SwitchTheStick, focused on eradicating the use of plastic stems in cottons buds. The idea came from seeing rubbish strewn around the city’s watersides.

“Bristol has quite high tides that tend to bring in a lot of litter,” Fee explains. “I couldn’t believe the number of cottons buds I was finding along the riverbank – people flush them down the loo and they’re too small for the sewage filters.”

City to Sea started a petition to persuade supermarkets to switch from plastic cotton buds to biodegradable ones – and by the end of 2016, Aldi, Asda, Boots, Lidl, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s, Superdrug, Tesco and Wilko had all promised to switch to paper sticks. “You can’t buy plastic cotton buds in UK supermarkets now,” she smiles. “It gave me a real sense that consumer power can influence big companies. We had seen it working and in action.”

City to Sea’s biggest campaign so far is Refill – a drive to limit single-use plastic water bottles by encouraging local businesses to offer and



Refill’s call to action



publicise free tap water refills. Take a refillable bottle to a retailer or coffee shop and your water won’t cost you a penny.

Piloted on a city-wide scale in Bristol in 2015, Refill has now grown to more than 200 local schemes across the UK, powered by more than 250 community volunteers. “We provide stickers, posters and a ‘How to’ guide for businesses.

In 2016, we developed an app showing users where they can go to refill their bottles,” says Fee.

Refill began by partnering with local water boards, who would provide funding, but it wasn’t long before Water UK, the organisation representing the main water companies, came on board to sponsor the nationwide campaign. The Refill app has now had more

**‘I was just engulfed by this huge grief I hadn’t felt with any other environmental issue. It really motivated me. I had to do something’**

than 140,000 downloads and directs users to some 20,000 refill stations across the country, including venues such as Pret a Manger and Costa. “We work with most of the coffee chains now,” Fee explains. “Pret has even redesigned its window sticker to incorporate our logo – fantastic.”

The chains aren’t too concerned about the loss of sales of their own drinks, she says: “They’ve been really positive about it all because it shows they’re committed to sustainability, increases their footfall and connects them to local communities.”

City to Sea now employs 25 people in Bristol. Fee has hired a CEO to run the business day to day, while she’s setting her sights on international expansion. Refill is rolling out to Italy, India, Australia, Chile and Japan. “Another 40 countries have expressed interest, too,” she adds.

But the company’s growth plans don’t end there. City to Sea plans to expand Refill to include other household goods, promoting discount schemes for coffee cups and lunchboxes, as well as refills for shampoo and laundry liquid – and hopefully making it easier for people to break free of single-use plastic.

After winning Volvo Visionaries 2019 and receiving the £60,000 prize, this is something the company can now help make a reality.

“I’m overwhelmed and thrilled to win the award,” says Fee. “We usually have to work extremely hard to get grant funding and create commercial partnerships, but this win means that we can push ahead to create Refill More. It gives me real hope that we can turn things around – and that people truly are starting to prioritise the planet.”

Her vision for the future is simple: “We want to create a world where the beaches are strewn with driftwood, sand and seaweed – not plastic.”

To see the full Volvo Visionaries 2019 list of 24 companies, go to [thetimes.co.uk/volvo-visionaries](https://thetimes.co.uk/volvo-visionaries)

HELEN DEMPSTER, KARANTIS360

# INDEPENDENT VISION

Family misfortune was the driving force behind a smart monitoring system that's helping vulnerable people stay in their homes – and it's a lifeline for carers and relatives, too

**H**elen Dempster has had first-hand experience of the care industry. She was working for her family's taxi company when her grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of 62.

Her parents moved him, along with her grandmother, closer to the family home and hired a carer to help look after them both. It was the experiences they all shared in the process that set her on a path that would change her life – and potentially improve the lives of millions of people.

"Carers are really busy," explains Dempster. "They don't get enough time to deliver the essentials they want, let alone sit and talk to the family about what's been going on. We started to feel that we weren't getting enough information about my grandfather's condition."

This issue became even more pressing when her grandmother sadly died. With her grandfather alone and confused, Dempster's husband gave up his job as an engineer to help out, but the family was still relying on carers to fill the gaps and give them updates.

"The whole experience made me think that there must be a better way to enable carers to care, and, at the same time, to give enough information to help family and friends," she says.

That's where the idea for Karantis360 came from. Dempster's company, founded in 2017, provides an automated personal monitoring and alerting system, using an app and sensors to send reports straight to the mobile phones of families and carers. The system uses machine learning to recognise patterns of behaviour, creating alerts when something doesn't seem right.

"You can set it up to tell you when specific things happen," says Dempster. "People with Alzheimer's tend to wander so, for instance, it can



**WORD FROM THE JUDGES**



CAT GAZZOLI  
Social entrepreneur

*"You can see how the £60,000 investment would immediately help Refill to get more clients and offer the service in more public spaces. As a mum, I also felt huge compassion and hope for mOm Incubator's idea – it could make a huge impact."*

Having begun her career at the UN, Cat launched organic baby food brand Piccolo in 2016, inspired by her Italian roots. Piccolo donates 10 per cent of its profits to charity.

let you know if the front door opens between the hours of 8pm and 7am."

Dempster's previous role as a taxi driver hadn't prepared her for her new career as an AI machine learning entrepreneur. Luckily, she knew some of the right people. "A friend introduced me to our chairman Peter Seldon, who owns a live-in care company, but has also worked with technology companies," she explains. "Meanwhile, our chief marketing officer Tim Payne used to work for tech giant Oracle. And our CFO, Mike

**'I thought, there must be a better way to enable carers' family and friends to care'**

Jeans, worked globally for Mattel."

Work on the product started with Karantis360's technology partner and now investor DCSL Software. "I didn't understand technology and I went to them with an A4 piece of paper with drawings on," says Dempster.

"I just said, 'Can we have that?' They were very good at getting me to the next stage."

An introduction to IBM soon followed. "Having IBM on board has propelled us," says Dempster. "They've really embraced what we're creating, and we're working with them to get the product to market."

Karantis360 has raised just over £500,000 in private equity and has two pilot schemes running. "We had a meeting with the carers using it recently, including care agency, Care Response, and they told me they didn't know what they'd do without it."

Dempster's aim is to get Karantis360 into the hands of those who need it, allowing people to stay independent for longer.

"Care is in global crisis and we want everybody to get the treatment they deserve."



MURSAL HEDAYAT, CHATTERBOX

# LANGUAGE OF HOPE

Refugees with overlooked skills are getting a fresh start in the workplace, thanks to an innovative online tuition platform

**C**hatterbox began with the perfect spur: people telling Mursal Hedayat that her business idea wouldn't work.

She was at the end of a post-grad course, with potential funding on the table, when she pitched the concept of an online language school that paired skilled refugees with students. The response from some was that she'd never match supply and demand. "It fired me up," she admits. "If someone tells me something can't be done, I'm going to do my best to show it can."

Hedayat saw what she calls a "flaw in the matrix": 20 per cent of refugees are highly educated, yet struggle to find meaningful work. This can contribute to a loss of self-worth, as well as wasting important resources. "Refugees with degrees and valuable skills should not be unemployed," she says.

**'I want to make the idea that a neurosurgeon can be unemployed seem absurd'**

Her own family arrived in the UK from Afghanistan when she was three. Her mother had been a civil engineer, fluent in four languages, yet here, she struggled to find work – until, eventually, she began teaching.

Hedayat cites the example of Amira, a human rights lawyer in Sudan before she fled after death threats, as a good example of who Chatterbox can help. After three months, she landed a part-time job, an offer to study with one of Chatterbox's university clients, plus an internship at a law firm.

"This is what happens when you re-engage people who have been sidelined," says Hedayat. "Our platform provided a space to show what Amira could do."

But Hedayat knew that she needed to match ambition with profit. She noticed students were selecting tutors not just on language, but by



professional background. Lawyers wanted to learn from lawyers. Now, Chatterbox uses artificial intelligence to create optimal matches, which helps students stay motivated – Chatterbox boasts industry-leading course completion rates of above 70 per cent.

To date, tutors have taught some 2,500 students. Individuals buy sessions via its website; NGOs and businesses, including the Red Cross, use Chatterbox to train staff; and universities harness its live practice sessions to augment their existing language provision.

Hedayat aims to provide work for 10,000 refugees over the next three years and to help others who are marginalised, such as women returning after childbirth or the disabled.

"I want to create a paradigm shift," she says. "Once upon a time, the idea of ordering a cab from your phone was absurd. Now, Uber exists. I want to make the idea that a neurosurgeon can be unemployed seem just as absurd."

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**WORD FROM THE JUDGES**



BINDU KARIA  
Start-up expert

*"We had a challenging time choosing. Mursal Hedayat's Chatterbox is brilliant because it's clearly driven by her family's own experiences. Ultimately, Refill won because of Natalie's ability to achieve so much so quickly on a shoestring."*

Bindu is a super-connector, introducing investors, corporates and government. Previously, she led Silicon Valley Bank's move into Europe, a company with \$20bn of assets.

JAMES ROBERTS, mOm INCUBATORS

# A BETTER CHANCE FOR BABIES

A university challenge led to an invention that is set to revolutionise the health of newborns in war zones

**W**hen it comes to design, solving tricky problems is fundamental. It certainly was for James Roberts, founder of mOm Incubators.

Roberts was studying design engineering at Loughborough University in 2014 when he was set a challenge for his final degree project; to identify a problem, then come up with an idea to solve it.

One night, he watched a documentary on the Syrian civil war and what he saw horrified him. Scores of premature babies were dying unnecessarily because access to adequate care was unavailable.

Soon he was putting together a plan for an incubator that would be easy and cost-effective to deploy in disaster zones and hard-to-reach areas – but as good as any in a neonatal intensive care ward.

It took months to come up with the solution. It eventually occurred to him one night when he was browsing

**‘When I talked about an inflatable incubator, people got it. I was doing something that would make a real difference’**



## WORD FROM THE JUDGES



MIKE JOHNSTONE  
Marketing strategy director, Volvo

*“Strong businesses have a clear purpose – it was true of all our finalists. A company’s purpose drives it forward, creates a reason to be, beyond just financial gain and the culture to be successful.”*

Mike is responsible for the marketing efforts to support Volvo Car UK’s growth targets among younger audiences as well as the company’s traditional loyal customer base.

the internet. “I saw a photo of Richard Branson holding an inflatable solar lamp,” he explains. “Boom! That was the lightbulb moment – make it inflatable. It would pack into a really small space; you could get the air in naturally, so heating the box wouldn’t require as much energy; it would be more thermally stable for the baby; and it would be easy to clean.”

Roberts experimented with prototypes: blowing up his flatmate’s hairdryer and nearly electrocuting himself trying to create a heating coil. But it was worth it. In November 2014, his inflatable incubator, which packs down to the size of a briefcase and can run off mains or batteries, won the James Dyson Award, recognising international innovation. When Dyson told him he had won, Roberts almost collapsed. “Winning changed my life,” he says.

The designer went on a research tour of maternity wards in the Philippines, India and Africa. “It took me out of my bubble,” says Roberts. “But when I talked about the incubator, people instantly got

it. I was doing something that would make a real difference.”

He launched mOm from his dad’s conservatory, attracting co-founder Matthew Khoory, who had experience in the commercial side of medical devices. He then recruited a board and advisory team, including neonatologists and paediatricians. mOm secured £630,000 of funding in 2016. “I had 30 seconds of thinking, ‘this is amazing.’ Then I realised the responsibility, too,” says Roberts.

The incubator has progressed, but things move slowly in the rigorously regulated healthcare sector. But the invention will soon start clinical trials at several NHS hospitals across the country. Roberts’ vision has gained momentum, too. “We want to become a well-known brand in the health – and maybe even consumer – sectors. We know what we have to do and how to do it. We just need more partners. The sky is the limit.”

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## Why Volvo Visionaries?

Volvo works with purpose and vision – making it a natural partner for entrepreneurs with the same goal...

Just like our visionary entrepreneurs, Volvo is guided by a greater purpose. Everything Volvo does begins with people, from understanding what’s important to them to making their lives less complicated. At the same time, it minimises environmental impact to protect our world.

Human-focused innovation is at the heart of all of Volvo’s models, including the new Volvo S60, while a caring approach is central to everything it creates.

It’s a commitment beyond just words. By 2025, Volvo has pledged to put one million electrified vehicles on the roads and to give people back a week of time each year through automated innovations and connected services in its new models. Drivers can already save time, thanks to innovations such as engine remote start, which can pre-heat or pre-cool their car directly from the Volvo on Call app.

On top of that, the company’s vision is that no one should be seriously injured or killed in a new Volvo car by 2020 – a motivation to which others can only aspire.

## Volvo S60 – in a class of its own

It would be easy to label the new Volvo S60 simply as a baby S90. That’s no bad thing, but Volvo’s midsize saloon is much more – it heralds a new era for the Swedish car maker taking a significant step towards a post-combustion engine world.

The S60 does come with an advanced, efficient Drive-E petrol engine, but this is the first modern Volvo to be offered without a diesel option. Instead, later this year, a T8 Twin Engine plug-in hybrid version will join the T5 unleaded version, and all Volvos from now on will be available in hybrid or pure electric.

Don’t think the S60’s eco

credentials make it soft – it’s arguably Volvo’s most dynamic car to date, with striking design setting the tone.

Out on the road, sporty suspension and a punchy 250hp T5 turbocharged petrol engine offer hot hatch performance (0-62mph in just 6.5sec), yet an officially rated fuel economy of up to 39.8mpg.

Being a Volvo, comfort and technology abound. The dashboard is dominated by the 9in touchscreen control, keeping the minimalist cabin largely free of switches. A 360-degree parking camera makes negotiating tight spaces a doddle. Purity of sound comes from a 14-speaker, 600-watt Harman Kardon sound system, but for an exceptional listening experience, the Bowers & Wilkins 1,100-watt upgrade is unrivalled. Attention to detail includes heated leather seats and hand-finished inlays.

Volvo’s focus on making life simpler and safer includes Pilot Assist, which can maintain a gap to the vehicle in front and also keep you in the centre of your lane. As packages go, for style, luxury and performance, the new S60 is hard to beat.

## WORD FROM THE JUDGES



PETER EVANS  
The Sunday Times enterprise editor

*“It was great to be involved in the search for the next outstanding entrepreneurs. The finalists would have each been worthy winners, saving babies and helping to fix the broken social care system.”*

As enterprise editor, Peter writes about entrepreneurs and fast-growing private companies across all sectors. He previously worked on *The Sunday Times* business desk and *The Wall Street Journal*



To find out more, go to [volvocars.co.uk/s60](https://www.volvocars.co.uk/s60)

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## THE NEW S60 | FOLLOW NO ONE

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Fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub>\* figures for the MY20 Volvo S60 range, in MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 35.3 (8.0) – 176.5 (1.6), NEDC CO<sub>2</sub> emissions 155 – 39g/km, T8 Twin Engine WLTP electric energy consumption 3.3 - 3.5 miles/kWh, T8 Twin Engine WLTP all electric range 30.4 – 36.0 miles.

Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. \*There is a new test used for fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> figures. The CO<sub>2</sub> figures shown however, are based on the outgoing test cycle and will be used to calculate vehicle tax on first registration. Preliminary data. Please contact your retailer for latest information.