As UK Waterways Face Plastic Pollution Crisis, Boris Johnson's Father Endorses Breakout STEM Novel for Kids

Monday 14 July, 2025

Stanley Johnson throws his support behind a bold new adventure tackling microplastics, citizen science, and youth action — as 90% of English rivers exceed safe chemical levels

With research now showing that toxic PFAS chemicals are now found in more than **90% of English rivers**, concern is growing over the long-term impact of plastic pollution on the UK's health and environment. In the same week this alarming data hit headlines, a new children's chapter-novel tackling plastic waste, science, and social responsibility is drawing powerful praise — including from **Stanley Johnson**, the veteran environmentalist, former MEP, and father of former Prime Minister **Boris Johnson**.

Johnson has written the foreword to *Ellie Ment and the Material Matter*, published by the not-for-profit *Clean Planet Foundation*, calling it:

"Nothing short of exhilarating… This book pulls off something quite remarkable. It makes science genuinely exciting, the problems facing our world accessible, and environmental responsibility fun. Not through lectures, but through story."

The story follows a sharp-witted 11-year-old who stumbles upon a secret science society, uncovers an environmental cover-up, and uses her scientific knowledge to challenge the adult world around her. It's a wild blend of quantum physics that treats science like magic.

As concerns over "forever chemicals" grow and climate anxiety among young people spikes, the book is striking a chord with readers and educators alike.

Since its release two weeks ago, the book has already climbed to **#1 on Amazon's "Most Gifted" list for a STEM category**, earned over 100 Goodreads reviews averaging 4.7 out of 5 stars, and has been praised by teachers across the UK and US as "perfect classroom science fiction" and "a brilliant way to inspire environmental curiosity."

"These themes – so central to environmental action – shine here through the eyes of young characters who must navigate what is right, what is possible, and what is simply necessary," Johnson adds in his foreword.

Author Bertie Stephens, also a founder of the Clean Planet Foundation, said:

"Children's fantasy always looks to magic; magic isn't science, but we know that science is magic. The real magic in this story is the kind young people should be talking and learning about. Stanley Johnson's endorsement gives weight to that — this isn't just fiction, it's a spark."

The book blends real-world issues like **microplastic pollution** with accessible **STEM** learning and an irresistible plot. Teachers and librarians are already using it to kick-start conversations around environmental ethics, chemistry, and how one voice — no matter how young — can make a difference.

Johnson concludes his foreword looking back on his stella environmental career, *"In my years working on environmental protection – whether drafting the original EU Habitats Directive or helping establish the European Commission's first Environmental Action Programme – I've learned that solutions rarely come from the top down. They often begin with curiosity. With a question. Sometimes, with a young person who simply refuses to accept "that's just the way it is."*

The book is now available in hardcover alongside paperback and Kindle editions at major retailers such as Amazon, Waterstones, Foyles and Browns Books. Educational resources for schools and libraries are also available at EllieMent.com

About Stanley Johnson

Media:









Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Children & Teenagers :: Education & Human Resources :: Entertainment & Arts :: Environment & Nature :: Health ::

Related Keywords:

STEM :: Climate Crisis :: Microplastic :: Pollution :: UK Rivers :: Education :: Middle-Grade Reading :: Youth Action :: Chemicals :: PFAS :: Boris Johnson ::

Scan Me:

Stanley Johnson is a renowned environmentalist, author, and former MEP who helped lay the foundations for the United Nations' and Europe's environmental policy.

As Head of the European Commission's Prevention of Pollution division and later Director of Energy Policy, his work has shaped decades of global environmental action. He has published extensively on conservation and sustainability, from The Politics of Environment to Antarctica: The Last Great Wilderness. Recognised worldwide, Stanley has received the Greenpeace Prize for Outstanding Services to the Environment, the RSPB Medal for Services to Nature Conservation, and WWF's prestigious Leaders of the Living Planet Award, among many others.

About the Clean Planet Foundation
The Clean Planet Foundation (CPF) is a UK-based not-for-profit organisation dedicated to tackling plastic pollution, advancing climate education, and empowering communities through science, storytelling, and action. From the HAPSIE comic series for budding eco-warriors to the Seed Collection Project in partnership with Trees for Life, and recently via its Polar region research project, CPF aims to connect people with nature and drive systemic change from the ground up.

Company Contact:

Clean Planet Foundation

T. +44 (0)203 195 3814
E. hello@cleanplanet.com
W. https://cleanplanet.com/foundation

Additional Contact(s):
Ashley Maxwell - hello@cleanplanet.com

View Online

Additional Assets:
https://youtu.be/C1qqiasmkPI
https://www.elliement.com/

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.cleanplanetfoundation.pressat.co.uk