

Press Release 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## PLASTECOWOOD SHOWCASES ARTIST MARK WEIGHTON'S RECYCLED SCULPTURE AT UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP26,

GLASGOW, 1<sup>st</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2021

Internationally acclaimed UK artist Mark Weighton has created an eye-catching, FIRE RAVAGED forest sculpture made entirely from Smartawood®, North Wales-based Plastecowood's proprietary recycled plastic lumber. The artwork, entitled 'Burnt Wood', represents five charred trees rising from a barren block landscape, while integral patches of bright colour emerge from the burnt wood indicating all might not yet be completely lost to the climate crisis inferno.

Despite its stark appearance it is hoped that 'Burnt Wood' proves to be an enjoyable, social focal point at the conference on which people can sit, relax, have their photo taken and engage with the vital issues being discussed at this year's convention.

For the last thirty years, Surrey-based artist Mark Weighton has been creating artworks that explore a vision of the interconnected nature of existence. He explains, "'Burnt Wood', is evocative of the regrettable increase in burnt forests across the globe. Whether caused by 'slash and burn' agriculture, drought or carelessness, forest fires decimate biodiversity and add huge amounts of CO2 to Earth's rapidly warming atmosphere. Once thriving, fertile environments are left barren, and rich soil erodes. Earth itself struggles to support life, symbolised by the trees, which remain here as little but charred skeletons. However, the natural world generously strives to renew itself regardless of human influence, and the brightly coloured cores of scorched tree branches and trunks might be the bright signs of hope for the future, dependent on humanity's collective endeavour to think and act in a way that respects and benefits"

Weighton continues, "Smartawood® was the ideal product to use for this sculpture. In its regular black form, it is reminiscent of charred wood. Being 100% recycled from rejected mixed plastic packaging waste, it also allowed me to tell an optimistic story - one where humanity makes a positive intervention to repurpose the unwanted and toxic into something sustainable, useful... and hopefully carbon-neutral! In fact, this sculpture is a carbon-negative construction which can be easily recycled into fresh construction materials when no longer required in its current form. Many of my sculptures are delicate 'hands-off' affairs, but this is robustly people friendly and I hope to see many COP26 conference visitors sitting and chatting on it."

"The work is modular in construction and it is planned to offer different sized editions of the work for sale or long term residencies to individuals, businesses, public spaces, institutions, schools, colleges, councils and governments to mark their support for the UN COP26 conference and its subsequent accords."

Weighton intends to tour the work around the UK and Europe for the following year. "We are currently in discussion with a number of public outdoor venues, but would welcome invitations from any others."

UK and international companies already using Smartawood® include: the RSPB (boardwalks at Rainham Marshes), Carlsberg UK (decking, fencing, seating), Marston Breweries' pubs (picnic tables, decking, fencing), St Peter's Garden Centre, Worcester (display tables), Conwy Borough Council (steps, tables), Knorr Bremse (carriers for train components), Llanfair Highways (fencing for highway security), amongst others.

Henning von Spreckelsen, Technical Director at Plastecowood, comments, "Plastecowood receives plastic waste, mainly via household collections, and reprocesses it to produce recycled plastic lumber: planks, boards, posts, containers, and assemblies, mainly for external uses, as well as bespoke items. We believe our proprietary process is the most cost-effective in the world at converting unwanted mixed waste plastic packaging into a useful, durable, reusable and recyclable product that can be used in a wide range of applications."

"These numbers are important: 700, 25,000 and 2.5"

"Every tonne of Smartawood® created saves at least 700 kg of carbon from either landfill or incineration, recycles over 25,000 plastic containers, and saves 2.5 ten metre high trees from being chopped down."

## **“BURNT WOOD” sculpture Photography**

“Burnt Wood” is evocative of a forest after the fire. The earth supporting the trees and the tree trunks themselves are nothing but charred structures.

Mother Nature always strives to renew itself and one can see the coloured points of the branches as signs of hope for the future, based on humanity’s collective endeavour to do better, be better and save itself.

The conversations and collaborations of people interacting on the sculpture, laughing, drinking coffee, eating sandwiches, talking and thinking about what they can do for the planet, will ultimately move things forward.

For photographs of ‘Burnt Wood’, visit [www.markweighton.com/galleries/sculpture](http://www.markweighton.com/galleries/sculpture)

## **About the Artist: Mark Weighton**

For over thirty years, Mark Weighton has been creating artworks that explore a vision of the interconnected nature of existence. From his studio in Surrey, he has exhibited his work internationally and features in many private and public collections across Europe and the Americas

For more information on Mark Weighton, visit [www.markweighton.com](http://www.markweighton.com)

## About the Material: Smartawood ® contributes to UK Net Zero Goals

**Plastecowood is delighted to confirm that its Smartawood ® range of recycled plastic lumber and assembled products continues to expand into new applications that contribute to achieving the UK Net Zero Goals**

Smartawood ® is created in Rhyl, North Wales using a proprietary process, which the company believes is the most cost effective process in the world at converting unwanted mixed waste plastic into a useful, durable, reusable and recyclable product that can be used in a wide range of applications.

Smartawood ® (which comes with a minimum 10 year manufacturer's warranty) lasts many times longer than timber and never releases its captured carbon into the atmosphere. At the end of its long use time it can even be fully recycled by the manufacturer into further Smartawood ® products, whereas wood rots over relative short time periods and releases all the CO2 captured as a growing tree, straight back into the atmosphere.

**Every tonne of Smartawood ® created saves at least 700kg of carbon from landfill, recycles over 25,000 plastic containers and saves 2.5 trees from being chopped down.**

Whilst not only saving forests, avoiding carbon being lost to landfill or incineration and recycling unwanted, difficult to recycle mixed plastics, it also contributes to the ability of the wider public being able to enjoy the great British outdoors in a socially distanced manner.

Local authorities realised other benefits of Smartawood ® in that it has a low slip surface and does not absorb moisture. This avoids the "wet bum" moment when sitting on wooden structures after a rain shower – the wood absorbs water, becomes slippery and gives users wet backsides if sat on. By contrast, Smartawood ® can be immediately wiped dry and does not absorb rainfall so benches and seats made from the material can be immediately enjoyed without problems after inclement weather. Denbighshire County Council were amongst several organisations to deploy large numbers of socially distanced picnic tables for their residents during 2020 in order to increase the amenities for their residents and visitors.

A large variety of other organisations have also seen the benefits of substituting wood. All of these users are helping to reduce carbon losses by choosing a smarter route to their activities.

- The RSPB have used Smartawood ® at their Rainham Marshes nature reserve, in order to replace the rotting wooden boardwalks.
- Pubs have used the material for pub gardens and outdoor furniture.
- Potato growers have used the material to make potato boxes.
- Garden centres use the material instead of wood for display tables that never rot and never need painting.
- European industrial manufacturers have used the strength of Smartawood to make robust shipping structures for high value end products, in order to both store and ship them all over the world.

In order to meet our NET ZERO global and UK goals, many commentators are now realising that removing plastics from incineration streams and sending it to mechanical recyclers like Plastecowood is the way forward. <https://www.circularonline.co.uk/news/study-remove-plastic-from-waste-sent-to-incinerators-to-meet-net-zero-goals/>

**So if we want to meet our Net Zero Goals, we need to evaluate the carbon released from rotting wooden structures, the carbon incinerated in waste and the trees that are lost as carbon absorbing sinks.**

Save forests – Use Smartawood ®

## About the Company: Plastecowood

[www.plastecowood.com](http://www.plastecowood.com)

Plastecowood is a British company based near Rhyl in North Wales. It has spent over a decade developing the technology to make Smartawood and believes that, due to its proprietary technology, it is the lower cost converter of plastic packaging waste into lumber replacement in the world.

Company contacts: Paul Segal or Darren Northcott 01745 827000

### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **Trees Saved by using Smartawood**

*This government guide tells you how many trees are needed to make 5 cubic metres of timber*

[Rough guide to calculating timber volumes - Gov.uk](#)

*Essentially it says that it takes 10 trees (10 metres high and 25cm diameter) to make 5 cubic metres of timber. That is the same as 4 tonnes of Smartawood® which is about 5 cubic metres too.*

**So every tonne of Smartawood® saves approximately 2.5 softwood trees (10 m high and 25cm (mid-height) diameter) from being chopped down.**

#### **Plastic Containers Reused by using Smartawood**

*Most plastic containers in the UK are lighter than a 40 gramme 4 pint milk bottle. **So 1 tonne of Smartawood material is the equivalent of recycling at least 25,000 four pint milk bottles.***

*If you would use a more typical 28 gramme 2pint milk bottle as a proxy for the weight of the average container, the calculation of the number of containers recycled would be much higher than 25,000 containers.*

#### **Carbon Saved**

*Smartawood is made almost entirely from mixed waste polypropylene, low and high density polyethylene which was originally used to make food packaging and would otherwise go to landfill or incineration.*

*If one calculates the carbon content of these materials it is at least 70% carbon by weight. **So every tonne of Smartawood® produced has captured over 700kg of carbon.***

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