

# Business Comment

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024

**Infrastructure &  
Development**

 Edinburgh  
Chamber of  
Commerce



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# Infrastructure & Development

Welcome to the latest edition of Business Comment. magazine.

In this issue we look at something of fundamental importance to our city – our infrastructure and development. The recent declaration of a Housing Emergency by the City of Edinburgh Council has underscored the urgent need for continuous investment in our infrastructure and the promotion of developments that bring with them investment and job opportunities.

The scarcity of affordable homes, and indeed homes in general, poses a significant challenge for our city. This shortage has wide-reaching social implications and also impacts our economy, as businesses grappling with a tight labour market struggle to recruit staff who live within a reasonable commute. Recognising this, the Chamber, in collaboration with the city council and the city's homeless charities, appealed to the Scottish Government for additional support for the Capital.

Our special report in this edition highlights the extensive refurbishment of one of the city's most iconic north-south links – North Bridge. Despite the challenges, the bridge is set to reopen in the coming months, ready to serve the city for the next century. In line with the theme of transport, we feature insights from Arup on the necessity for a more integrated approach to transport infrastructure planning, especially in a challenging fiscal climate.

We also explore the innovative use of hydrogen at Forth Ports, bring you the latest updates from our Airport, and discuss strategies to navigate the housing crisis.

As always, we share insights from our members and partners about the developments, innovations, and challenges they encounter, and the creative ways in which they are addressing them. Inspiring as ever.

Enjoy the magazine.



**Liz McAreavey**  
Chief Executive,  
Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

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Delivering wider value from transport through effective decision making



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**Hannah Blackford & Michael Scobbie**

Hannah Blackford joins as Senior Account Manager and Michael Scobbie as Head of B2B and Corporate Communications

## Muckle Media bolsters corporate team with two senior hires

Creative communications agency Muckle Media has welcomed two new employees, Michael Scobbie and Hannah Blackford, following a period of continued growth.

The pair will join the agency's B2B, crisis and corporate communications specialist team, with Scobbie joining as Head of B2B and Corporate Communications and Blackford being appointed as Senior Account Manager.

Michael Scobbie joins the agency from Scottish SPCA where he was Head of Communications and Marketing, bringing a wealth of experience in strategic communications and reputation management. Under his leadership, the team won 'In-House PR Team of the Year' at the 2021 CIPR PRide Awards in Scotland.

Hannah Blackford joins the agency as Senior Account Manager from a London-based strategic communications agency, where she led campaigns for Coca-Cola Europacific Partners and AstraZenca. Blackford additionally has seven years' experience

in account management, with a wealth of communications experience in industries including the third sector, transport and renewable energy.

Commenting on his new role, Michael Scobbie said: "I'm over the moon to join the team. Muckle has gone from strength to strength in recent years, as evidenced by the slew of awards in 2023 for industry-leading communications campaigns."

Hannah Blackford added: "I'm delighted to be joining Muckle Media's B2B and corporate communications team. It is a business that has strong values, a really talented team, works with interesting and important clients and looks after its people. I'm really looking forward to helping them drive new and existing client growth."

Commenting on the two new team members, Muckle Media Founder and MD, Nathalie Agnew, said: "We are really excited to welcome Michael and Hannah to the Muckle team. The B2B, crisis and corporate communications team are going through an exciting period of growth and I look forward to working alongside them to continue to deliver award winning work."

Muckle Media saw a period of continued growth throughout 2023, with corporate new business client wins including charity Culture & Business Scotland and more-than-profit organisation Cyber and Fraud Centre Scotland. Hannah and Michael will work closely to build on Muckle Media's B2B, crisis and corporate communications services.

Muckle Media was recently awarded 'PR Consultancy of the Year' at Scotland's CIPR PRide Awards, and 'Agency Employer Brand of the Year' at the Marketing Society Scotland's annual awards.

For more information on Muckle Media and the services we offer please get in touch at [hello@mucklemedia.co.uk](mailto:hello@mucklemedia.co.uk)

"The B2B, crisis and corporate communications team are going through an exciting period of growth."



## EICC hosts trio of premier events industry conferences

The Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) recently hosted a trio of premier tourism and events industry conferences. The VisitBritain Association Conference, EXPERIENCEit, and ETAG's annual tourism industry conference took place between 5-8 February, bringing together over 1,000 tourism and event professionals to meet in Edinburgh.

The VisitBritain Association Conference 2024 is the UK's annual gathering of association meeting planners who organise conferences worldwide, EXPERIENCEit brings together organisations and individuals from Scotland's marketing, communications, film, entertainment, sport, festivals, and business events sectors, and ETAG Annual Conference 2024 was billed by organisers as a "must attend" for everyone with an interest in Edinburgh's visitor economy.

EICC CEO Marshall Dallas said: "What's notable is that we hosted three major

conferences for key players in our industry at an Edinburgh, Scotland, and UK-wide level at the EICC. Overall, while the events sector grew last year, and the demand for in-person events is robust, we know the industry remains circumspect around areas like economic backdrop, fluctuating costs, and ensuring we have the right skills in place to match the evolving dynamics."

Marshall Dallas added: "We believe these conferences can help shape positive strategies to underpin continuing industry growth this year and in the years ahead."

The UK events market is projected to reach £110 billion by 2032, registering annual growth of approximately 5% from 2023 to 2032. Research has indicated that the events industry in the UK has the potential to grow even quicker, but is being held back by staff shortages.

Other key trends discussed at the VisitBritain, EXPERIENCEit, and ETAG conferences included rising costs, technology, sustainability, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The EICC is set to announce annual results for 2023 later next month.



# Major report reveals rise in litigation cases – 25% of respondents’ expect to appear in Scottish courts in 2024

A major survey conducted by law firm Shoosmiths has revealed that litigation cases are on the rise, with over 25% of in-house legal teams expecting that they will be dealing with claims in Scotland in 2024.



## Andrew Foyle

Solicitor Advocate &  
Joint Head of Litigation,  
Shoosmiths in Scotland



The major trends report, that surveyed the views of 360 general counsel / senior-in-house lawyers working within businesses with a £100m+ turnover (including technology, telecoms, automotive, and financial services firms), revealed:

- 28% of the 360 respondents had been required to deal with litigation in Scotland over the past year.
- 17% of the respondents expect to be engaged in disputes in Scotland over the next three years.
- Board and GCs (general counsel) are not fully aligned on risk. UK-wide, only 13% of (GC / senior in-house lawyer) respondents felt that they aligned extremely well.
- GCs and boards also disagree on the significance of data breaches. 38% of GCs surveyed stated that data breach follow-on litigation is a top concern for their board. The majority of GCs and legal teams regarded this issue as less of a worry for the business.

- Over three quarters of respondents expect to increase headcount and 82% expect to increase spending on dispute resolution over the next three years.

These are just some of the key findings from Shoosmiths ‘Litigation risk 2024’ report conducted using a phone-to-web methodology that canvassed the opinion of 360 GC / in-house lawyer respondents during July and August 2023.

The report also revealed that respondents conducted 62% of their litigation cases in the England & Wales legal jurisdiction last year, with these same respondents expecting that 41% of their cases will be conducted down south in 2024.

Commenting on the significance of the report, Andrew Foyle, a solicitor advocate and joint head of litigation at Shoosmiths in Scotland, said: “The trends report clearly underlines that both in Scotland and UK-wide, litigation cases are on the rise. Notably, there is an expectation among major businesses in key sectors that they will see more head count and spend on dispute resolution over the next three years.

“This is highly significant for all involved in Scotland’s dispute resolution sector. Equally, the report has shone a light on the fact more work needs to be done by many major businesses to identify future areas of risk. According to our findings, 50% of those

surveyed don’t undertake horizon scanning and 64% fail to undertake trend analysis in their sector.”

Among other key findings, feedback from GCs and senior in-house lawyers suggested there is a disjointed approach to mitigating litigation risk, specifically in terms of internal training, litigation preparedness reviews and contract audits.

Litigation is an important chosen market for Shoosmiths along with Real Estate and Corporate, as it doubles down on focus to lead the upper mid-market of law firms by 2030.

The firm continues to invest in this chosen market and has recently welcomed new dispute resolution and litigation partner Andrew Whalley to the business and has also recently supercharged its disputes team with Solomonix, a litigation insights platform.

### \*Methodology

**During July and August 2023, on behalf of Shoosmiths, Momentum ITSMA conducted a phone-to-web survey of 360 respondents (General Counsel) working in technology and telecoms, automotive, financial services and other industries. All respondents had a base in the UK and worked for companies with revenues exceeding £100 million.**

# Work-based qualifications serve up success

Qualifications are a crucial part of an individual's learning and training experience and make a valuable contribution to society. They give people a goal to work towards, and open the door to further education, training and career opportunities.

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are based on job competence and recognise the skills and knowledge people need in employment. With over 500 SVQs available in sectors as diverse as accounting and retail to forestry and fashion, they can be achieved in most occupations for all types and level of job.

SVQs are assessed on the practical activity undertaken by the learner in the workplace using a portfolio of evidence that meets occupational standards. This makes them ideal for those in full-time employment wishing to undertake a qualification.

## Simon's Story

Having recently completed an SVQ in Professional Cookery at SCQF level 7, Edinburgh College graduate, 20-year-old Simon Perkins, will be competing in the 2024 Culinary Olympics in Germany. He shares his story below:

"My professional cooking journey began at Edinburgh College when I was 15 years old. I undertook a National Progression Award (NPA) while still at school, travelling to the college every Tuesday and Thursday. When I left school at 16, I decided to pursue college full-time to follow my passion for cooking. With a few things going on at home, I treated cooking as something to focus on.

"I spent a total of five years at college, progressing through SCQF levels 4, 5, 6 and 7. The earlier courses included learning how to prepare different vegetables, soups, and classic traditional dishes. I also developed front of house training, learning the other side of hospitality, like how to prepare hot and cold beverages. When I began the SVQ at SCQF level 6, my love for cooking really started. I learned everything from butchery to fish, then created my own menu to deliver to customers at the EH15 Restaurant within Edinburgh College."

## Looking back on highlights

"I had so many highlights during my time studying, including cooking with the Scottish National Culinary team, cooking at events at Prestonfield Hotel, travelling to Luxembourg with the Scottish National Culinary team, and living in Dinard, France as part of a class exchange to learn about French culture and cuisine.

"In 2022, I worked with the Scottish Culinary Team at a dinner of 120 people, as the team practiced for the 2022 Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg. I was there to help them as much as I could, which then led to me being asked to join them on the road to the World Cup. During competition week, I called checks to the team as they competed in one of the largest cooking competitions in the



**Simon Perkins (right) with a team member from the Scottish Culinary Team**

world. For 2024, I will officially be a junior member of the team and will be competing in the Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, Germany in January! It's a privilege to even be part of it. The amount I can learn from the team is limitless.

"In recognition of my achievements, I was awarded the SQA Outstanding Student Award for Professional Cookery and Hospitality in 2023. These courses and my time at college have been a huge part of my life, so it's really nice to be recognised for my hard work."

## Goals for the future

"I really recommend every course I took at Edinburgh College, and I hope to inspire

others with my story. I hope it shows that if you are scared to take opportunities, you should just go for it and look where you can end up.

"In the future, I'd love to travel the world to learn new skills and experience different cultures. I already have an offer on the table from a chef based in France, who I met during my class exchange trip to Dinard!

"My end goal is to open my own restaurant in the East Lothian area. I hope that with a lot of hard work, and learning in the best kitchens with great chefs, luck comes my way and I'm able to make this a reality."

To find out more about all of the SVQs that SQA offer, visit [www.sqa.org.uk/SVQ](http://www.sqa.org.uk/SVQ).



As the Regional Manager for Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian, Theresa McGowan has extensive knowledge of SQA qualifications, from those delivered in schools and colleges, to workplace-based qualifications. She supports and engages with organisations delivering SQA qualifications in her area and aids the development of new qualifications to meet the changing needs of learners and employers. If you would like advice on delivering SQA qualifications, please contact Theresa at [theresa.mcgowan@sqa.org.uk](mailto:theresa.mcgowan@sqa.org.uk).





**Martijn Gilbert**

Managing Director Open Access  
Operations for FirstGroup,  
including Hull Trains and Lumo

## Embracing open access will help us make the most of our rail infrastructure

The UK has had strong railway links for well over a century – and the value that this has brought to businesses, relationships and the wider economy is incalculable. But its value is now arguably higher than ever as, in today's climate crisis, rail is one of the most environmentally-friendly ways to travel, contributing just a fraction of the emissions of a car or plane journey. It's vital, therefore, that we continue to invest in our rail network.

One of the key challenges of our railway – and one that we have all witnessed recently – is that improving its infrastructure is both logistically and financially challenging. The time and resource required for almost any rail project is considerable. However, with such significant pressure on the public finances, there is a way to make the most of our existing infrastructure and increase the choice of service to customers without significant government funding – and that's with open access.

Open access rail essentially allows private companies to run services alongside government-contracted train operators, taking on the financial risk of doing so. It's about making the most of capacity on the tracks where there are gaps. From being able to better meet evolving customer needs, to tailoring services to specific market segments or customer

preferences, open access can lead to overall increased efficiency and capacity on our railway. Our experience through Lumo and Hull Trains has shown it can bring major benefits to the customers and communities we serve. Indeed, greater choice of services has helped to grow customer numbers across all operators on the East Coast Main Line.

As the UK's newest open access operator, Lumo has delivered over 6,000 services and carried over two million customers, helping rail become more affordable and provide a more competitive offer than flying between Edinburgh and London. But while Lumo's launch onto the tracks is making the most of our existing rail infrastructure, there is more to be done to ensure taking the train remains a viable alternative to flying.

One barrier to entry and good service provision along our route is the need

for power upgrades. The East Coast Main Line, for example, has insufficient electricity supplies on the northern end of the route around the border. Work to upgrade these power supplies has been pushed back – despite the fact it would enable operators to run at full-speed and improve reliability for those travelling by rail to and from Scotland.

Open access is at the heart of unlocking rail's potential to be our green travel champion. In the year ahead, we have huge ambitions for the future and are keen to partner with businesses and organisations across Edinburgh to support green travel between the UK's capital cities. But to ensure rail remains the go-to choice for long-distance travel in the UK, we must continue to invest in the infrastructure we operate on, and commit to a strategic focus on upgrading power for critical parts of the railway network.





## Navigating the Housing Crisis: Infrastructure, Energy, and Legal Considerations in Scottish Residential Developments

Despite the current financial crisis, there remains an urgency for connection of residential developments, including affordable housing.

The housing crisis in Scotland is not a new issue but is being brought to the fore by issues of affordability of rents and mortgages and also money flow/timely sales for housebuilders. This is compounded by an arguable lack of both forward planning and suitable housing infrastructure in place for both social housing occupiers and the later living sector. The inflexibility of occupational models in Scotland is a restricting factor, and one which our English counterparts have comparatively studied in detail South of the border. Incidentally, there is a campaign for more flexibility within later living market, which is another area of focus for us in Scotland from both a development and social change perspective.

Since the initial planning application as long ago as 2005 the 347 hectare site at Winchburgh continues to break new ground as one of the UK's largest developments. Located just 12 miles from Edinburgh the development offers an excellent opportunity to examine the intricacies required for a range of infrastructure to services necessary to support and supply around 3400 new homes. With a masterplan of expanding this West Lothian community, getting the core infrastructure right is imperative to the project's success.

We have a strong team of people who have, for a number of years, been acting on behalf of one of the largest independent connection providers (ICP's) on sites at Winchburgh and beyond. The process is facilitated between the landowner and where appropriate, the Distribution Network Operator (DNO). The Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) will begin by initiating contact with us, stating the requirements for energisation and the various landowners and developers

involved. The IDNO is required to determine the land rights – whether the transaction will involve a servitude, lease, link pillar transfer or site purchase.

We are also involved in the expanding BESS (battery energy storage systems) market in Scotland. This provides us with insight as to the infrastructure being put in place to energise residential and commercial developments and the demand for energy to the grid via PPAs (power purchase agreements).

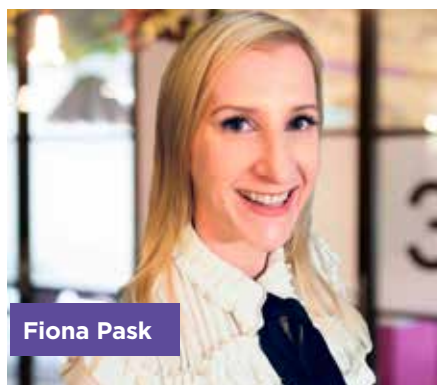
Larger developments are also impacted by the availability and attractiveness of borrowing, both to banks and customers. Banks remain cautious as to lending criteria, with stress tests applied as to viability of developments and timeframes for a return to facilitate repayment terms. Despite this, we are seeing an increased number of both new borrowing and refinancing getting through credit control, including leveraged deals.

While our aim is always to negotiate

successful arrangements we recognise with new ground and development our clients inevitable face risks. Being ahead of the game is key to ensuring that contentious issues and legal disputes do not unduly delay and prejudice development opportunities. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. To that end we recommend that our clients have in place Caveats, a document unique to Scotland that can be lodged in Court of Session and/ or any Sheriff Court by a range of clients - private individual, company, firm or partnership etc. The party lodging the document is called a caveator. Coined as a litigation early warning system, the purpose of this is to ensure that certain interim orders cannot be granted without notice allowing our clients to avoid being blindsided by an interim order preventing ongoing development.

Our team at Shakespeare Martineau would be delighted to share further insight with should that be of interest, please just get in touch.

[www.shma.co.uk](http://www.shma.co.uk)



Fiona Pask



Amal Kaur

# New business support initiatives launched by Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

We have recently launched three new business support initiatives aimed at bolstering the growth and scalability of businesses within the Scottish ecosystem.

## Programme 1: AI and Digital Capabilities: A Growth Catalyst for Scottish Businesses

This programme is designed to equip SMEs with a robust understanding of AI and digital technologies, along with the meta-skills required for effective implementation, including best practice in change management. This will support innovation, enhance scalability, and boost productivity within the participating organisations.

The programme is structured into three modules, delivered across nine interactive sessions. Read more [here](#).



## Programme 2: Creating a Strategy for Transformational Growth

This programme aims to support Scottish businesses to navigate the challenges of a hyper-competitive world by supporting transformational growth, helping to build resilience, increasing leadership ambition and risk appetite, and providing strategic support to enable participants to identify and maximise opportunities. Read more on this programme [here](#).

## Programme 3: Supporting the Net Zero Journey

This programme is designed to guide Scottish businesses towards achieving Net Zero emissions, aligning with the Scottish Government's 2045 target. We take participants through a five-stage journey, which includes the creation of a comprehensive Net Zero action plan tailored to each business. It also offers SMEs bespoke guidance on their journey towards Net Zero. This not only facilitates change within your organisation, but can open up new opportunities within your supply chain. Read more [here](#).



## Keen to Participate?

Our programmes, offered at no cost, are open to Scottish companies with a workforce of 10 or more. Applications are now open, and can be made by completing an application form. Companies can apply for all three programmes but will need to complete separate application forms. Application forms can be downloaded below.

- [AI and Digital Capabilities](#)
- [Creating a Strategy for Transformational Growth](#)
- [Supporting the Net Zero Journey](#)

In partnership with:  
**Scottish Enterprise**

Once you've completed your application form, please send it to [projects@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:projects@edinburghchamber.co.uk). Please be aware that a pre-screening process is in place to ascertain the suitability of participants. Due to the limited availability of spaces, we cannot guarantee a spot for every applicant.

Once approved, we will be in touch with participants to share more details on each programme and to confirm the start date.

If you have any questions please contact [our team](#).



# Renewing the benefits of solar energy

With dialogue surrounding net-zero commitments, government policy shifts, carbon reduction objectives, and the pursuit of ESG objectives ever-growing, it's unsurprising that renewable energy sources are a top priority across real estate.

As the industry prepares for MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) targets, solar energy has understandably been recognised as a vital element in making the UK's building stock more environmentally sustainable. But whilst the potential benefits of solar energy are evident, it's crucial to consider the associated risks and formulate resilient sustainable solar strategies.

## Solar energy on the rise

Technology in renewables has been constantly advancing over the past few years facilitating a long-term downward trend in costs. With occupiers out of contract now facing up to a 400% increase in energy costs, solar energy is a popular option for owners and occupiers to decrease bills by making use of spare roof space.

Alongside reducing energy bills, solar PV's also help make buildings compliant and more rentable, hold lower maintenance costs and can be used as a new revenue stream for landlords. It's also a more environmentally conscious way of generating energy due to little to no greenhouse gas emissions being produced; this in turn helps an owner's ESG agenda too.

Besides the financial and environmental benefits, solar energy may also provide a backup to securing energy in a time of electrification. The gradual societal shift to electrification requires a significant supply of electricity to meet demand, which hence puts a large strain on our National Grid that we cannot guarantee it can maintain. Increasing our nations use of renewable energy reduces this strain and maximises our chance of meeting electrical demand.

## The risks of solar

Knowing the positives of solar energy, what are the risks? One identified issue surrounds solar panel electrical connectors. The most common connector is the MC4 (Stäubli Multi-Contact); a weatherproof single-contact connector containing built-in strain relief and interlocks. Whilst a standardised connector, with many created overseas there is a risk those connectors either supplied with the solar module or utilised by the installer are not genuine Stäubli Multi-Contact MC4 or are mismatched.

Manufacturers often create a variety of different brands to varying quality standards, making pairing different PV connectors one of the most common solar deficiencies and one that holds the potential for fire.



**Stuart Patience**  
Hollis' Head of Energy Solutions

## Resolving risk from solar

The good news is that fire risk can be minimised by good system design, product selection and installation practices. According to a BRE report (Fire and Solar PV systems, Investigations and Evidence), most fires have generally been caused by poor installation or the use of wrongly specified or faulty equipment. Once deciding to proceed with PV installation, it is imperative to recruit consultants and contractors who are experts and put fire safety first – and who pay attention to the important product selection process.

Fire safety is also important past initial installation and short-term operation, however; regular maintenance is key in guaranteeing long-term safety for owners and occupiers alike and should be drawn into an owners' renewable energy plan from the early stages.

## All things ESG

Before proceeding with solar panel installation, it is worth understanding whether they support an overall ESG strategy. Whilst a source of clean energy, not all panels are equal, and some reports have highlighted the alleged forced labour from some solar panels from the Xinjiang

area in China. Considering a solar panel's supply chain will help reach ESG ambitions.

## Moving forward

The use of solar PV is a viable option for owners looking to increase the sustainability credentials of their assets and assist in tenants' energy costs. It is however essential to understand the risks, especially those surrounding fire, and to take the necessary precautions. Whilst PVs are generally seen as positive, there will be more due diligence checks and requirements that need to be understood at the early stages.

This is where the expertise of solar experts at Hollis can help. Get in touch with Hollis' Head of Energy Solutions Stuart Patience to hear more.

### Contact details:

**Email:** [stuart.patience@hollisglobal.com](mailto:stuart.patience@hollisglobal.com)

**Website:** [Hollisglobal.com](https://hollisglobal.com)

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# New-generation, reliable waste clearance

NuGen Recycling - Edinburgh's sustainable waste clearance company - is a business born to provide a range of new-generation, reliable waste clearance services for both home and business. NuGen has at its core our customers, our employees and the environment.

Our professional clearance services - from single-item uplift or smaller 'part-load' clearances to full house/commercial clearance - ensure a hassle-free experience, prioritising safety and environmental responsibility. Whether you're a business upgrading your office furniture or an individual refreshing your home decor, our team is here to assist you. We also offer pressure washing & road sweeping services throughout Central Scotland, helping businesses to keep their premises safe & looking their best.

Central to NuGen Recycling's ethos is our commitment to 're-use', giving a second life to items that still have years ahead. Furniture deemed in good condition during our assessment process is carefully returned to NuGen's 'Salvage Yard'. Here, these pieces are cleaned up and displayed, ready for the opportunity to find a new home for individuals seeking affordable and sustainable alternatives.

Many items are also donated directly to local charities and community projects. Our commitment to re-use not only minimises waste but also contributes to our local community.

When re-use or donation isn't feasible, we guarantee that every material extracted during our clearance work is processed & fully recycled with certified material recycling facilities.

NuGen Recycling prides itself on our professional, Disclosure-checked staff and reliable service. Our dedicated teams bring a wealth of experience to every project, ensuring that the clearance processes are executed with precision and care. From the initial assessment to the final cleanup, our team is committed to delivering a seamless and stress-free experience.

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## February

### Monday 19th

Focus on Food: Tariff Classification

### Wednesday 21st

Viral Content & Trending Topics

### Thursday 22nd

Understanding Commodity Codes

### Monday 26th

Beginners Guide to Export Licensing Controls

### Tuesday 27th

Understanding Export and Export Documentation

## March

### Friday 1st

Focus On: Embargoes, Sanctions and End-Use Controls

### Tuesday 5th

Maximising productivity within hybrid teams: an overview

### Thursday 7th

IICC - INCOTERMS ® 2020 RULES - Full Day Workshop

Google Analytics 4 For Business - The Complete Guide

Methods of Payment & Letters of Credit

### Monday 11th

Focus On: Northern Ireland - The Movement of Goods

### Tuesday 12th

Marketing in the Digital Age: Strategies and Tactics for Success

### Wednesday 13th

Becoming a Successful Leader

### Thursday 14th

Imports: Inward & Outward Processing

### Monday 18th

Finance for Non-Financial Managers

### Tuesday 19th

A Beginner's Practical Guide to Exporting

### Wednesday 20th

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)- A Strategic Masterclass That Drives Results

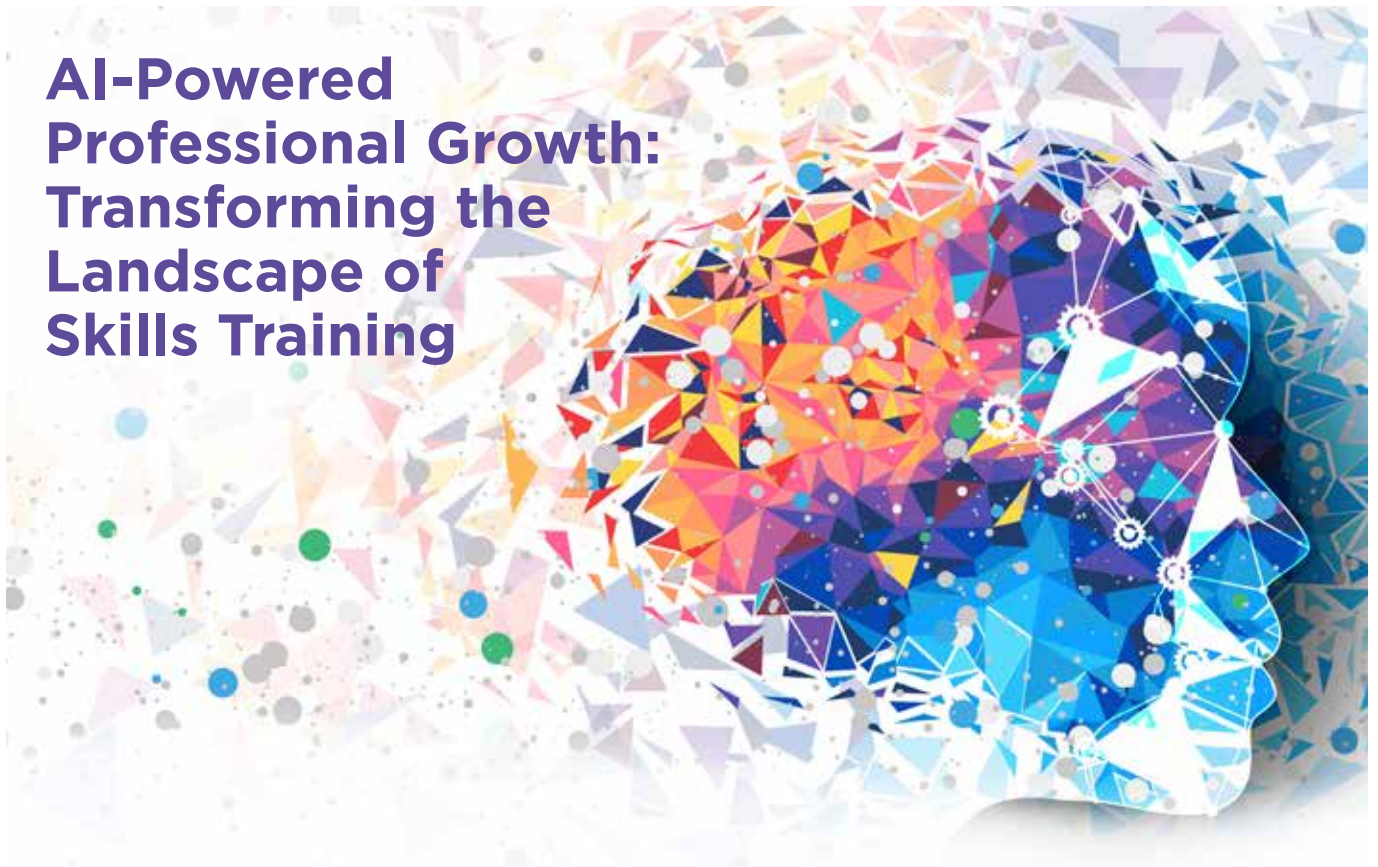
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# AI-Powered Professional Growth: Transforming the Landscape of Skills Training



In an era where technological advancements continue to reshape the landscape of various industries, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in skills training and development has emerged as a pivotal force and one that simply cannot be ignored. As businesses strive to adapt to rapidly evolving markets, the infusion of AI technologies is revolutionising the way individuals and employees acquire and refine their professional skills.

## Jimmy O'Connell

**Head of Operations and Business Support,  
Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce**

Traditionally, skills training has often been a time-consuming and resource-intensive process. However, the rise of AI in this domain is streamlining and enhancing the effectiveness of training programmes. One notable application is the utilisation of AI-driven personalised learning platforms. These platforms leverage machine learning algorithms to analyse individual employee performance, identifying strengths and weaknesses to tailor training content accordingly. This personalised approach not only optimises the learning experience but also ensures that employees acquire the specific skills required for their roles, ultimately enhancing overall productivity.

AI is proving to be a real game-changer in simulations and virtual reality (VR) environments for all sorts of industries from the most intricate medical science training for neurosurgeons through to business skills training. Companies are increasingly adopting immersive training programmes powered by AI, providing individuals with realistic scenarios to hone their dexterity,

decision-making and problem-solving skills. For instance, in the financial sector, AI-driven simulations enable employees to navigate complex market scenarios and make strategic decisions in a risk-free virtual environment. This hands-on training not only accelerates skill acquisition but also minimises the potential impact of mistakes in real-world and life / death scenarios.

The integration of natural language processing (NLP) in AI is also revolutionising communication and interpersonal skills training. Virtual assistants and chatbots equipped with NLP capabilities can engage in realistic conversations with employees, providing feedback on communication styles and interpersonal skills. This real-time feedback loop enhances self-awareness and allows employees to refine their communication strategies, a crucial aspect of professional development in today's collaborative and globalised business environment.

In addition to personalised learning and immersive simulations, AI is playing a pivotal role in data analytics for skills assessment. Businesses are harnessing the power of AI algorithms to analyse vast datasets related to employee performance, identifying trends and skill gaps across teams. This data-driven approach enables organisations to make

informed decisions about training priorities and allocate resources more efficiently. It also empowers employees by providing them with actionable insights into their own performance, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

The growing prominence of AI in business skills training is not without its challenges. Concerns related to data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the ethical implications of AI use in the workplace have sparked important discussions. As businesses embrace these technologies, it becomes crucial to establish transparent and ethical frameworks to ensure fair and unbiased training opportunities for all employees.

The advancement of AI in business skills training and development marks a significant paradigm shift in the way organisations nurture talent. From personalised learning experiences to immersive simulations and data-driven analytics, AI is reshaping the landscape of professional development, offering a more efficient, effective, and tailored approach to skill acquisition. As businesses continue to navigate the ever-changing demands of the global market, the integration of AI in training programmes stands as a beacon of innovation, promising a workforce equipped with the skills needed to thrive in the future.

# International Trade Support & Services

Edinburgh Chamber provides Scottish businesses with a variety of services to help them grow and enter new markets. Our team regularly prepare accurate export documentation, ensuring your goods get to their destination without delay.

Our team can issue and process a range of documents including:

- UK Certificates of Origin
- Invoices and packing lists
- Egyptian Certificates of Origin.
- EUR1 Certificates
- ATA Carnets
- EUR1 Movement Certificates

## Sweden Trade Mission

On 30th November we hosted our virtual trade mission to Sweden where our delegates heard from experts in market including the department of Business and Trade and Business Region Gothenburg. Our delegation were given an insight into the Swedish trade opportunities, business etiquette and support in market! Our delegation included representatives from:

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| ■ Esker Spirits | ■ Clarus Networks Limited |
| ■ Lost Loch     | ■ E-Rail                  |
| ■ Vegware       | ■ Studio LR               |
| ■ Topolitics    | ■ Geleval                 |
| ■ SilviBio Ltd  | ■ Edinburgh College       |



[www.investingothenburg.com/publications/retail-guide-202324](http://www.investingothenburg.com/publications/retail-guide-202324)

## Spain Trade Mission

On March 21st we are hosting a virtual trade mission to Spain:

- Spain is a priority market for Scotland and was worth £623 million in goods exports in 2022.
- The World Bank rates Spain as the 30th easiest country in the world to do business with.
- Spain is a good place to export to because it:
  - Has very good transportation links
  - Has excellent information communication technology (ICT) networks
  - English is spoken in businesses widely
  - UK and Scottish brands are trusted in Spain

This mission is open to all Scottish businesses (both members and non-members) who are from the following sectors:

- Chemical sciences
- Computer and IT services
- Food & drink
- Transport logistics and equipment
- Financial services
- Green tech Professional services

## Programme Highlights

As part of these mission, delegates will take part in a market awareness session with our expert partners in market as well as two b2b connections based on their business requirements. If you are interested in joining this virtual trade mission or any of our services please get in touch with the international team by email [international@edinburghchamber.co.uk](mailto:international@edinburghchamber.co.uk) or phone on **0131 221 2999**.

\*Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, as part of the International Trade Partnership with the Scottish Government





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## Are data insights the new money?

If data is the new oil, insights are the new money. But without the right systems and processes supporting a sustainable strategy, data is just useless and expensive.

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[ct.me/evolve](https://ct.me/evolve)

# Delivering wider value from transport through effective decision making

The critical need to reduce emissions from transport, and to create highly liveable, attractive and productive towns and cities, requires a carefully coordinated, timely and budget-conscious approach to the planning and delivery of transport investments.

**Gareth Fairweather**

Cities Integration Lead, Arup



This is hugely significant in today's challenging fiscal climate, when the need to ensure the transport system delivers both long-term place-based and broad, network-wide benefits has never been more pressing.

All too often, however, the way transport infrastructure is planned and prioritised, consented, delivered and funded is not conducive to a need for integration and coordination. Instead, we see delays to

delivery as individual processes for decision making are played through, with each gateway presenting new opportunities for the core case for investment to be questioned.

As Scotland looks towards the delivery of major investments signalled in the Scottish Government's second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), a renewed emphasis on delivering outcomes through integrated decision making, and public-private collaboration is needed.

At the front-end, projects need broad social licence where links between investment, housing, regeneration, health and productivity are clearly articulated and understood. Clarity of outcomes and joined-up, cross-sector messaging on the benefits of investment are critical.

This can go a long way in alleviating problems faced when getting projects going, including prioritisation, funding, and the corralling of public opinion and political advocacy. Consistent and 'on message' leadership, and a commitment to seeing projects through, are also critical components of creating the right conditions for inward investment.

At the delivery end, there are blockers around consenting, cost and inflation pressures, land supply and acquisition, procurement, and industry capacity. This can be exacerbated by having unclear roles and accountabilities across agencies within the



transport and land use system, as well as uncertainties regarding responsibilities for planning, funding and benefits realisation within the machinery of government.

An overall shift in mindset is needed, which recognises the function of transport networks as enablers of wider social, environmental and economic outcomes, and where a resolute commitment to these outcomes continues as a golden thread through a project's lifecycle.

Part of this shift involves acknowledging the broad spatial impact of the transport network as a whole. This calls for a strategic approach to identifying solutions where both local and adjacent settlements can benefit from infrastructure improvement,

reducing competition and focussing growth on corridors of opportunity.

Investment appraisals and business cases should be innovative in their development. Appraisals should look beyond solely quantifiable evidence to inform benefit-cost ratios, and place stronger emphasis on the strategic case in drawing out the breadth of outcomes sought from investment.

It's also vital that decision makers collaborate in a way that uses transport appraisals to guide and prioritise decisions across

multiple sectors. In addition to informing decisions on specific transport projects, business cases should also underpin choices relating to planning and the phasing of development, densification, land assembly, and regeneration delivery and funding models.

Collaboration in decision making is key, including through proactive stakeholder engagement that builds and maintains broad platforms of support. Meaningful engagement with businesses and residents that goes beyond 'consultation' is vital to establish a clear and compelling 'case for change' for investment, one that speaks to issues beyond those faced by the existing transport network.

Coordinated delivery also relies on a range of tools being utilised alongside the core investment, and it is unlikely these tools are wholly within the gift of any one agency, authority or sector. Collaboration is therefore essential within government agencies and authorities, and between the public and private sectors.

Here are my suggestions for creating the right conditions for transport investments:

■ **Ensure decision makers are 'on message' regarding intended outcomes.**

Keep core outcomes and benefits at the heart of decisions, and bake this into the decision making model. Transport-only decisions and engineering concerns should not reduce the focus on core benefits.

■ **Ensure the right governance is in place. Define roles early on for all those at the decision making table.** Responsibilities for risk, funding, and delivery of long-term outcomes must be mirrored in governance arrangements, and there should be wide-spread confidence these will endure.

■ **Enable creative delivery arrangements for infrastructure.** Responsibility and accountability for complex infrastructure projects must remain undiluted with joined-up accountabilities in place to deliver across transport, housing, placemaking and other interconnected elements.

■ **Consider what powers are needed to deliver broader benefits.** Review roles of existing agencies, to ensure they have the necessary remit, accountability, resources and powers to deliver the suite of benefits.

■ **Make full use of the national and local government toolkit to maximise investment value and enact change.** Alongside investment, consider the value of specific and targeted planning, land assembly and fiscal powers to provide an investment-friendly environment.

Putting the right arrangements in place for joined-up decision making and delivery is critical to progressing at pace. This will also ensure transport contributes effectively to creating vibrant, multi-functional and quality places.







# Arching Ahead

It's more than a bridge. It's a link between Edinburgh's Old and New Towns; it's a vital transport link; it's a structure with engineering history attached; and it's one of the city's most popular viewpoints.

If you hadn't already guessed, it's North Bridge – and it's finally nearing the end of a years-long and eagerly awaited refurbishment that should see it not only looking brand new, but also fit for another century of use.

By the time it is finished next year, North Bridge will have taken longer to refurbish than it did to build. But that shouldn't be altogether surprising, given the evolution of a complex project designed to protect a key part of the city's built history and culture.

In terms of time and costs, the original plan for £22million over two years had to be radically revised as the scale of the problems facing the refurbishment were revealed by detailed inspection, layer by layer. Factor in the discovery of asbestos in the structure, the global pandemic and its attendant restrictions, and you begin to see the issues

faced. Come next year, it will be seven years and £86million to see the project through to a successful conclusion.

And now the city is looking forward to finally unveiling the fruits of a gargantuan task carried out by the international infrastructure group Balfour Beatty for the Council. If you pause at the use of "gargantuan" here's a few interesting statistics that may convince you:

- The bridge is 160m long, almost 25m wide, and is made up of three spans each of more than 50m
- A colossal, enveloping scaffold was built for the bridge, requiring 300,000m of scaffolding tubes
- The cast iron façade and its decoration

has been stripped off and sent to specialist off-site blacksmiths to be sensitively checked and restored

- On average each day, 100 operatives have been onsite
- Within each span, an average of 500-600 sites requiring strengthening and repair were identified and dealt with
- 80,000 new, heritage-friendly, bolts have been installed in the structure
- New road surfacing and footpaths are being laid
- A new permanent access platform will be created under the bridge to allow better and easier future maintenance

North Bridge, which has the highest





A-listing in terms of its architectural importance, has an important place in bridge-building history, built in the Victorian era as it was by Sir William Arrol, who also built the Forth Bridge and Tower Bridge in London. It took from 1894-1897, and the foundation stone was laid by then Lord Provost Andrew McDonald in 1896. The ornamentation was designed by the city architect of the time, Robert Morham.

Stephen Knox, Services Manager for the City of Edinburgh Council, explained that keeping the road open or partially open while the work had been ongoing had been one of the challenges, and added:

"There's actually only a very small amount of work being done on the top of the bridge - the vast majority of the work is being done underneath.

"There's a vast array of complex steelwork, that's all been surveyed, assessed and repaired, often requiring new bespoke pieces to be designed and fabricated, and that's all to facilitate the bridge being suitable for service for many years to come.

"Most of the engineering is hidden, covered in this beautiful cast iron façade which doesn't play a structural part - but it's been a very important part of the refurbishment."

Rory McFadden, Project Director at Balfour Beatty added: "Grit blasting, repairing and repainting all structural steelwork and entirely replacing large sections of the bridge's concrete deck are just some of the works that were needed to restore the North Bridge.

"Specialist welding of the cast iron façade components continues at a workshop

offsite. At the workshop the components are dismantled, blast cleaned, tested for defects and fractures, after which components are very carefully welded back together. Waterproofing has been improved, and we have improved the ducting for power and technologies.

"Hundreds of paving slabs and kerbs that were damaged have been replaced appropriately to the heritage of the bridge. The lighting columns have been repaired where necessary and repainted.

"It has been an absolutely mammoth task, but one we have been delighted to be involved with given the importance of the bridge - not just in terms of its amazing history but also because it is such an important feature of the life of the city."

"There's a vast array of complex steelwork, that's all been surveyed, assessed and repaired, often requiring new bespoke pieces to be designed and fabricated, and that's all to facilitate the bridge being suitable for service for many years to come"





## Innovations to support people, purpose and planet unveiled at global university company creation competition

More than 500 innovators from across four continents have unveiled solutions to tackle a range of global challenges including crop disease management, sustainable shopping and healthcare.

The international university competition, organised by Heriot-Watt University, trains and inspires new student and academic-led companies across sectors with 13 winners receiving a share of £30,000 to progress their businesses and prototype development.

Following a competitive pitch event, Heriot-Watt Online student Annie Mamvura, founder of GreenGraceWear in Nairobi, Kenya, won the Health & Care-led Business Award. Providing reusable incontinence wear for women and girls facing urinary incontinence due to disability, aging or the menopause, Annie's business is focused on dignity and comfort

while contributing to sustainability goals by minimising waste from disposable products.

Receiving the Audience Award, five engineering graduates behind Dubai-based company SMEFA (Shopping Mode Effortless For All) have developed a smart scan supermarket trolley designed to simplify and support shopping for those with disabilities and allergies such as automated basket lifting, secure payments and managing allergen checks.

Receiving a runner up award, robotic engineers Aswath Ganesan Indra and Adip Ranjan Das from the Edinburgh campus aim to address the significant cost disparity

between healthy and ultra-processed food by introducing an innovative semi-autonomous catering service. Powered by their proprietary autonomous technology, GI Healthcare minimises energy, reduces food waste, and increases accessibility to affordable, freshly prepared and healthy food.

The annual competition, which is bolstered by a 10-week workshop series, is open to all Heriot-Watt students, staff and alumni across the university's five global campuses and Heriot-Watt Online, a worldwide education initiative increasing accessibility to world-class skills development. This year has seen participation grow by 140% compared to 2022.

“The annual competition, which is bolstered by a 10-week workshop series, is open to all Heriot-Watt students, staff and alumni.”



# Creative transformation for Granton Station

Wasps Studios is Scotland's largest provider of workspaces for artists and the creative industries, with a history of supporting the country's cultural community for over 45 years. Our estate has grown to include buildings of significant heritage from Shetland to the Borders, allowing up to 1,000 creatives workspaces to flourish from.

As part of our remit, Wasps redevelops historic, unused buildings to convert them into ideal and much needed facilities for artists, creators, creative industries, social enterprises and charities, in turn generating employment and improving the activity for local communities.

Granton Station is the first of its kind in the region that focuses on providing space for creative businesses and social/cultural enterprises, all located within the upcoming Granton Waterfront regeneration project.

Granton Station features:

- 24/7 secure building access (not applicable to hot desk members)
- staffed reception during office hours
- high-speed fibre broadband
- meeting room for hire
- dedicated co-working space for freelancers, start-ups and remote workers
- hot desking areas with flexible memberships
- gallery and project space
- cycle parking
- lockers and shower facility
- access to Wasps' network of 1,000 fellow artists/creatives



Follow the QR code to be taken to the Granton Station webpage on the Wasps Studios website.

[www.waspsstudios.org.uk/space/granton](http://www.waspsstudios.org.uk/space/granton)

wasps\_

Scotland's provider of creative spaces  
est. 1977



**NOW AVAILABLE at Granton Station: office spaces, hot desking, dedicated desks, meeting room hire and more.**

Granton Station, brought to you by Wasps Studios, is a brand new workspace for the creative industries within the exciting Granton Waterfront regeneration project. This Edwardian former railway station has been transformed by City of Edinburgh Council into a cutting edge location for creative businesses and cultural/social enterprises to flourish from.

[waspsstudios.org.uk](http://waspsstudios.org.uk) @waspsstudios

Discover your new workspace:



## 60 Seconds

**Name:** Pam Aldred

**Company Name:** Edinburgh Playhouse

**Website:** [atgtickets.com/edinburgh](https://atgtickets.com/edinburgh)

**Q: In five words or less, what do you do?**

A: We entertain

**Q: How long have you been in your current role?**

A: I've been working in the theatre for over 30 years and 8 of those in my current role as Head of Marketing & Communications.

**Q: What does a week in your job look like?**

A: Every day really is different. It can involve anything from announcing shows, to booking media, pitching PR stories, budget planning and lots of meetings!

**Q: Your proudest moment with your organisation, or biggest 'win'?**

A: Reopening our venue in September 2021 was one of the greatest moments in my career.

**Q: Your favourite top tip or quote in business?**

A: Sometimes it's better to ask for forgiveness than to seek permission – used sparingly of course.



**Q: How long have you been a member of the Chamber for and why did you join?**

A: For over 8 years. We joined to be part of a thriving business community.

**Q: Where do you read your copy of Business Comment?**

A: I have a 2 hour round trip bus commute and do most of my reading then.

## The Balmoral announces five star rating in Forbes Travel Guide's 2024 Star Awards

The hotel has secured its position as a Forbes five-star property, retaining the world-renowned accolade for the fourth year running.

Forbes Travel Guide is the authority in genuine five-star service. In 2021 The Balmoral became the first hotel in Scotland to receive a five-star rating and has continuously worked hard to secure its position as an icon of luxury hospitality. Last year, The Balmoral announced the appointment of Andrew McPherson to the position of General Manager. Andrew oversees the iconic Edinburgh hotel which boasts 167 rooms and 20 suites as well as a comprehensive spa and fitness centre and a diverse culinary offering.

General Manager, Andrew McPherson said: "It is a wonderful honour to be able to share that we have retained our five-star Forbes rating for the fourth year running. Forbes truly requires the very best standards for guests and we are extremely proud to be



recognised with one of the most renowned hospitality awards in the world.

"Edinburgh's most iconic hotel is highly regarded not only for its incredible architecture, history, restaurants and bars but also for the world-class Scottish hospitality delivered every day. The Balmoral

team works hard to provide our guests with memorable experiences, and we look forward to continuing to deliver world-class service for our guests."

A gold standard in the hospitality industry since 1958, Forbes Travel Guide's luxury travel rating recognises the world's finest properties. Anonymous inspectors check into a hotel for at least two nights, then test up to 900 objective standards with an emphasis on exceptional service, to help discerning travellers select the world's best luxury experiences.

To view the new Star Award winners, visit [ForbesTravelGuide.com](https://ForbesTravelGuide.com).

For a detailed explanation of how Forbes Travel Guide compiles its Star Ratings, click [here](#).

To book a room at The Balmoral please visit: [www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/the-balmoral-hotel](https://www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/the-balmoral-hotel).



# Our planet is sending out an E-SOS!

2023 was reported as the hottest year on record, therefore more businesses than ever before are embracing sustainability through environmental legal compliance.

The Energy Saving Opportunity Scheme (ESOS) is a mandatory requirement for all large organisations in the UK with more than 250 employees, or an annual turnover of greater than £44,000,000 and an annual balance sheet in excess of £38,000,000. ESOS has benefits that go far beyond just compliance, adherence is one of the easiest ways to improve operational capability, increase efficiency and take your sustainability efforts to the next level. How can ESOS help your business?

**Cost Reduction:** the average reduction in annual energy costs through energy management improvement is 20% - a significant number for your organisation's bottom line.

**Efficiency Improvements:** the type of energy efficiency investments typically sees a 48% return, compared to 12% on a regular business investment.

**Increase Staff Satisfaction:** 65% of employees are more likely to work for a company with robust environmental policies.

Our team of experienced energy engineers, including a number of qualified ESOS Lead Assessors, are able to provide turnkey support for your ESOS submission. We know the significant impact that well-planned, easily implementable energy efficiency measures can have on an organisation's overhead costs, resulting in an ESOS audit that lays the foundations for a more efficient business, through ESOS Phase 4 and throughout your sustainability journey.

The deadline for ESOS compliance deadline is 5th June 2024. Don't wait until it's too late - get in touch with our team today.

**+44 (0) 131 346 7771**  
[website@gepenv.co.uk](mailto:website@gepenv.co.uk)



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[www.gepenv.co.uk](http://www.gepenv.co.uk)



All Photos on page credit:  
Ewan Barry at Tete a Tete Photo



# Kicking of this years events and the return of Edinburghs Business Festival

Having returned rejuvenated from the festive period, our events team is ready to bring you a calendar brimming with unique events at exciting venues across the City of Edinburgh.

Never one to shy away from a busy schedule, our 2023 events brought together over 4,000 attendees across over 100 events. From Business Updates with some of the city's key stakeholders, to Distillery tours and axe throwing with our young professional network, we hope to keep our calendar just as varied as we come into 2024.

To round off 2023, we hosted a sold out breakfast at Edinburgh Zoo, where members had the chance to network with a festive twist, creating presents and Christmas crackers for some of the zoo's furry friends. In addition, our final Inspiring Women in Business Lunch welcomed Emma MacDonald, CEO of TBCo, to share her personal business success story, topping this off with an expertly paired whisky tasting.

The year commenced with our Annual Address, delivered by City of Edinburgh Council Chief Executive, Andrew Kerr. Over 100 members joined us for a morning of reflection on the city's progress in 2023 and a preview of the Council's priorities for 2024. This marked Andrew's 9th annual briefing

for Chamber members and his last before retiring in June after a remarkable 42-year career in local government.

We have also been lucky to visit some new member venues. In January our members attended Tattu for our popular monthly networking lunch within Edinburgh's most opulent contemporary Chinese restaurant. Following this, in February, we will be heading to The Botanist - St James Quarter's newest hot spot, known for its hanging kebabs, botanical interior and lively late nights! However, do not fear, we will also be seeing the return of some Chamber lunch favorites such as Gusto Italian, Fazenda and Hawksmoor to name a few.

The event hot on everyone's lips is of course our upcoming Annual Edinburgh Chamber Business Awards taking place on Thursday 29th February at the EICC. At this popular dinner, we're looking forward to hearing from our keynote speaker for the evening Ian Stirling, founder and co-CEO of the Port of Leith Distillery. The distillery, having opened its doors late last year, had attracted

millions of pounds in investment to enable Ian and his co-founder to open the world's tallest, and Scotland's first vertical distillery. Running through this year's Awards will be our theme 'Grow, Scale, Succeed' reflecting upon Edinburgh's strong entrepreneurial landscape, and looking to how we continue to nurture this to ensure Scotland, and it's businesses, continue to chart a course to lasting success.

Following on from our Awards, we are excited to announce the return of Edinburgh's Business Festival, taking place on Wednesday the 27th March, kindly supported by the Royal Bank of Scotland. Our festival will continue to delve into this year's awards theme 'Grow, Scale, Succeed' and we are looking forward to welcoming a number of keynotes and panel discussions to highlight some of Scotland's best business growth success stories, and to delve into how we can achieve such success.

Keep updated on our events plans by visiting our [events calendar here](#).

"We are excited to announce the return of Edinburgh's Business Festival, taking place on Wednesday the 27th March, kindly supported by the Royal Bank of Scotland."



# Skilled Scots: A University's Role in the Future Landscape

If you have not yet had the headspace to read the Skills Delivery Landscape Review Report – Fit for the Future, then add this to the top of your tasks list as a priority. It's gloomy and glorious in equal measure.



In the report, James Withers eloquently captures the immense challenges faced in the Scottish skills landscape and honestly outlines the weaknesses discovered. Yet, the twelve priority pillars, fifteen recommendations and accurate recognition that there is appetite and energy for systematic change, left me inspired.

Beyond the traditional learning pathways that Universities offer, this report gave me a chance to reflect on where Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) is positioned. Whilst the national system is undergoing reform through infrastructural change, what can we continue to do well or change to support the lifelong learning agenda?

Three of the report's recommendations attracted my attention, in terms of thinking about how ENU successes in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) could be scaled up and enriched in the future.

Firstly, recommendation three suggests enhanced national skills planning and oversight of sector and regional needs. ENU play a key role as partners in City Deal funded initiatives, namely the Data Skills and Housing, Construction and Infrastructure (HCI) Skills Gateways. The Data Skills Gateway aims to upskill people in the region to become future data leaders. The HCI Skills Gateway is building

inclusive and sustainable construction careers in the region.

These regional specific initiatives have been highly impactful and offer great learnings in terms of future skills planning for specific sectors.

Further on, the fifth recommendation outlines how a single national funding body could streamline public funding and increase flexibility. Over the last three ENU has developed an impressive portfolio of short courses using SFC Upskilling and UIF funding. Increased flexibility of this funding would certainly enhance the possibilities to further support individual learners, particularly those in SME's, with their skills and knowledge needs.

Finally, recommendation 15 advocates for business playing a key role in workforce development by considering learning and workforce development as an integrated part of business planning. ENU develops bespoke courses that respond to organisational needs.

In January 2023, ENU launched a new MSc programme for Deloitte, a leading professional services firm. Now recruiting the second cohort, Deloitte offers this unique, part-time ENU MSc in Digital and Business Risk Management to its IT Audit and Assurance and Risk Advisory graduate hires across the UK. Paul Langford is the Programme Leader and was instrumental

in this co-creation work with industry. Feedback from the first cohort has also been overwhelmingly positive.

Innovative initiatives such as these at ENU are just a snippet of what Universities can achieve to support the report's recommendations and drive forward the much-needed change in the skills landscape in the coming years.



**Georgina Gilmer**  
Head of CPD and Consultancy,  
Edinburgh Napier University



## Reappraisal of flood protection delivery could help step up safeguards for communities

As our climate changes and weather grows more volatile, the need for flood protection becomes more pressing. A fresh approach to the way projects are delivered could enable that protection to be provided to more communities across Scotland

This winter has seen a succession of storms - from Babet to Elin and Fergus - bringing high winds, heavy rain and flooding with consequent disruption to daily life and infrastructure across areas of Scotland and the UK. With climate change increasing the volatility of our weather patterns, it is essential that we work to develop greater flood resilience to safeguard communities.

The Scottish government is driving that through the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009. This has enabled the creation of 14 local flood management plans, which together form Scotland's first national plan. Across these plans, 42 flood protection schemes were earmarked for delivery in the first phase of implementation, called Cycle 1.

The government's priority is to protect areas already identified as potentially vulnerable in Scottish Environmental Protection Agency flood risk assessments, as this offers greatest potential to minimise damage and makes the most of public investment. But there is scope to extend protection to future vulnerable communities by bringing a fresh approach, based on these key principles.

### Be more forensic in planning

Cycle 1 has seen successes, but only 14 of the 42 planned projects have been completed to date. Some projects have been paused to enable their investment viability to be reviewed, as understanding of the potential scale of solutions has itself evolved.

These experiences show that schemes require higher levels of planning, coordination, consultation and engineering. From the outset, there needs to be a forensic approach to programme planning,

including detailed assessments of capability, supply chain capacity, material availability and potential design solutions. Lessons and data from successful project cycles must be scrutinised.

### Partner for long-term benefit

The Scottish Government has borne 80 percent of the costs of projects in Cycle 1, while the remaining 20 percent has come from hard-pressed local authorities. Given the scale of work needed to safeguard communities, there is a clear challenge in financing these projects into the future.

While the public sector is responsible for promoting flood schemes, there is great benefit to the private sector the protection and certainty schemes provide. Investor

confidence in the property industry is increased, for example, while the insurance sector can better manage its risks and so limit premiums.

Public and private sector players should therefore look to share project risks and responsibilities, including cost, building a tangible return on investment into new infrastructure. This would drive a shift in thinking, away from the current approach of mitigating risks at lowest cost and towards a focus on creating value, factored into the business case and embedded in long-term strategy.

### See the bigger picture

Sharing risks and responsibilities gives partners greater certainty and clarity, enabling them to develop a longer-term investment and delivery strategy for a programme of interventions. Lessons and data can be applied to target improvement and best practice throughout the programme.

This approach enables a collaborative dialogue to be established, extending from policymakers to communities, with all working towards the common goal of addressing climate change.

### Looking ahead

Like our weather patterns, engineering solutions to manage and mitigate flood risk will evolve into the future, with a focus on nature-based solutions where practicable. We need to prepare now to implement the best solutions to protect Scotland's communities, and we can do that most effectively by planning forensically and working together.



**Stephen Taylor**  
Associate Director,  
Infrastructure Scotland,  
Turner & Townsend



# Promoting Scotland with Edinburgh Airport

One of my passions in life is music. It's the thrill of attending a gig, finding new artists and rediscovering bands I haven't listened to for a while.



**Gordon Dewar**  
Chief Executive,  
Edinburgh Airport

What we as business leaders need is a framework that prioritises rather than ignores the economy. It is the economy that drives the things we need and want as a country. It is the common thread that runs through everything.

We need to shake off this reluctance to talk about the economy and instead embrace and understand the crucial role it plays. It is folly for us not to. We need our politicians to be confident in ourselves and in our offering, and we need to boast about Scotland and push ourselves to the front of the queue.

As Scotland's airport, we stand ready to be that conduit. I make a promise that we will continue to fight for every route and airline that we can, and we will make sure they are the first to know we are open for business. All we ask is that you use the connectivity and services we offer and help us make the case for new ones.

Unless we take a Team Scotland approach then, in the words of Del Amitri, 'Nothing Ever Happens.'

Del Amitri's been on heavy rotation for me recently and it was a song of theirs that got me thinking about Scotland and how we market ourselves. 'Always The Last Know' is one of their most famous songs, but our approach to promoting Scotland should be the complete to that.

I'm in a lucky position where I get to talk about that almost every day of my working life. I enjoy nothing more than talking about what Scotland has to offer, and it's why I love my job.

At Edinburgh Airport, we fly to 153 destinations in 40 countries thanks to our relationship with our 35 airline partners. And every route brings the world closer to Scotland.

To North America we have daily year-round flight to New York, summer seasonal routes to Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Orlando and Washington D.C.. We also connect into Canada via Toronto, Calgary and Halifax. To East we have double daily flights to Doha, more services to Beijing than ever before, and up to 10 weekly flights to Istanbul. And of course, we connect into the major hubs across Europe, whether that's London, Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam, Madrid or Zurich.

They all increase our global influence and reach. We always promote Scotland as a brand and that comes from talking about things like our history and our culture, our innovation and expertise in technology, and our renowned universities and research credentials. It showcases our country.

I want airlines to be the first to know why they should fly here. I want them to understand Scotland is welcoming and that they should invest time and money here. Yes, there will be a return for them, but there's also huge potential for us to capitalise on the links we have and the connections we forge. Our politicians must understand that, too.



# Innovative green hydrogen shore power trial launched at the Port of Leith

A consortium of four Scottish renewable and maritime companies have been awarded a UK Government Department for Transport grant of over £535,000 to develop an innovative UK-first approach that will use clean, green hydrogen energy to reduce carbon emissions from vessels when berthed in port.

Supported by Forth Ports, the highly innovative trial will see the large tugs operating out of The Port of Leith powered by green hydrogen when tied up. The green hydrogen will be produced from treated wastewater from a nearby water treatment works, without compromising local water supplies.

The year-long trial, run by partners Forth Ports, Waterwhelm, Logan Energy and PlusZero, will deliver a state-of-the-art demonstrator system for green hydrogen shore power which marine vessels can use when they are berthed, removing the need for the diesel-powered systems which are currently in use on some quaysides.

The project draws together leading Scottish innovation and technology with sustainability expertise from the water, energy and transport sectors, and will be the first of its kind to be demonstrated at a UK port - leading the way for a circular economy approach to port decarbonisation across the country. The project will act as a precursor to the deployment of green hydrogen in shore power supply to large ships and vessels, addressing an important challenge in decarbonising the maritime industry, particularly in remote locations or areas where a connection to the main electricity grid is not available.

Alasdair Smith, Commercial Director of Targe Towing, part of the Forth Ports group, said:

"This is an exciting project for Forth Ports and Targe Towing as we work towards our commitment to reduce carbon emissions across Forth Ports group operations by 2032, and becoming net zero by 2042.

"Our tug fleet currently uses diesel-powered generators to provide electricity when tied up in port. This new green hydrogen system shows how tugs or other vessels can be completely emission-free whilst berthed.

"The project will also serve to widen our knowledge and experience of working with hydrogen, which provides a foundation for future endeavours towards a net zero future. We look forward to starting this project with our partners in the Spring."

Using specialist water treatment technology provided by Waterwhelm, fresh re-use water will be made from wastewater from the treatment works site in Seafield, Edinburgh, which will then be used to produce hydrogen at Leith Port.

Waterwhelm's leading technology enables water re-use and desalination processes to operate at significantly lower pressure,



providing lower maintenance benefits as well as a world-beating reduction in electricity consumption and carbon emissions.

Dr Richard Wood, Research and Developer Manager and Engineer from Waterwhelm said:

"Following a successful feasibility study, we are delighted to be partnering with Forth Ports, Logan Energy and PlusZero to deliver a combined state-of-the-art demonstrator system at the Port of Leith for the production, storage and utilisation of green hydrogen to supply green shore power.

"Waterwhelm's system will utilise waste heat and wastewater to produce re-use water for electrolysis - a new, innovative approach which is much needed to support the drive towards decarbonisation whilst reducing the upcoming demand on local water networks."

Green hydrogen specialist partners Logan Energy and PlusZero will apply their expertise to bring the clean power solution to the port - a significant collaboration that highlights major strides in Scottish hydrogen innovation.

Using a process known as electrolysis, East Lothian-based Logan Energy's electrolyser technology will split the re-use water into oxygen and hydrogen.

The hydrogen will then be used as a clean fuel for PlusZero's combustion engine which will generate green electricity to provide shore power for the tug boats when they are in port, replacing the need for polluting diesel generators.

Bill Ireland, Chief Executive Officer of Logan Energy said:

"Hydrogen-based solutions can play a pivotal role in decarbonisation and achieving net-

zero targets both in the UK and globally. We're honoured to be part of this consortium that can develop one such application where our innovative solutions can benefit UK industry.

"Logan Energy's fully integrated system approach will take green energy and Waterwhelm's clean water supply and produce, compress, and store hydrogen for the purpose of powering PlusZero's equipment, without producing any emissions. This will be a key demonstration within the marine sector that can be easily replicated elsewhere."

David Amos, Managing Director at PlusZero said:

"There is a huge amount of momentum behind hydrogen as an accelerator to the global energy transition. PlusZero's ready-to-go clean power solution replaces the need for polluting diesel generators across multiple sectors of the economy - construction, events and production, and the industrial sectors.

"We are delighted to be demonstrating the true promise of this technology alongside our partners and Forth Ports, a company which is already leading the way in making Scotland's renewables future a reality."

The project is part of the Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition Round 4 (CMD4), funded by the UK Department for Transport (DfT) and delivered by Innovate UK. CMD4 is part of the Department's UK Shipping Office for Reducing Emissions (UK SHORE) programme, a £206m initiative focused on developing the technology necessary to decarbonise the UK domestic maritime sector.



We thank our Partners for their continued support of the Chamber.

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Dynamic Earth	Martin Stucki	Strategic Transport Consulting
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**At the heart of Edinburgh and across Scotland, EiB provides strategic work winning advice, research, bid management and bid writing services.**

The three projects below show how we have successfully helped clients.

### **Delivering double success on the Scottish Trunk Road Network (STRN) contracts**

In 2020/21 EiB's strategic work winning team supported one of our clients to secure the South West and North East STRN contracts. This secured over £1.2bn of turnover, over an 8 year contract period.



### **Delivering for Scotland's Railway**

EiB supported a new Scottish client to successfully pre-qualify for a £240m major civil engineering and buildings framework within Scotland's Railway CP7 workbank. We worked on-site with the client team to storyboard both the quality and technical responses. We reviewed and challenged the 177-page ITT submission to align with the tender requirements before carrying out a 'one voice edit' ensuring consistency across the final drafts.

### **Strategically supporting a new entrant into the Scottish roads market**

EiB supported a new entrant to the Scottish roads market to bid for the North Lanarkshire highways maintenance contract. The 12 year contract is worth approximately £360m. As part of a fully integrated client team, we provided strategic support to develop the operational solution and led the development of the quality submission. We used our local knowledge of highways and the supply chain to ensure a compliant and compelling tender submission.



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# Businesses are continuing to develop and embed their ESG processes and priorities

DWF's corporate team, are often asked about "Governance" (being the 'G' in ESG) and how an organisation can maintain "good" corporate governance practices. A solid leadership structure (i.e. a company's board of directors) is key to ensuring these responsible behaviours - as the board is best placed for influencing corporate governance matters (setting the tone at the top).



Directors are agents of the company and control the affairs and assets of the company. As a result of this relationship, a number of duties were established based on common law rules and equitable principals deriving from trust and agency law. These duties have since been codified in the Companies Act 2006 (the "Act") and are set out in sections 171 to 177 of the Act.

Directors are obliged to act in good faith and in a way they consider would be most likely to promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members as a whole. Where a director is appointed to multiple group companies (which is often the case), the director must act in a way that is in the best interests of the company they are making the decision on behalf of, meaning the interests of that company (and its shareholders) should not be sacrificed for those of another group company. No duty is owed by a director to the shareholders or creditors of other group companies, including the ultimate parent company. This could potentially cause issues in practice with the usual temptation, to treat the group as an individual entity.

That being said, whilst directors are not entitled to forgo the company's interests for another group company, the law does not

require directors of a group to 'ignore' the interests of the wider group - particularly as a benefit to the wider group, could be a direct or indirect benefit to the company in question. For example, consider where an individual is appointed to multiple group companies and there are group-wide banking arrangements in place. If facilities are being increased in order to allow company A to carry out M&A activity and company B is required to grant further/increased security in order to obtain the new group facilities, the increased burden on company B may be justified as is in company B's interest to allow company B (and the wider group) to grow and continue to operate.

In practice, the most common scenario where group companies' interests may not align, is if one company is insolvent or at risk of insolvency. In cases of insolvency, directors are obliged to consider the interests of creditors and minimise their loss (and potentially prioritise the creditors' interest to

that of the company's shareholders). In those cases, it may be difficult to justify a decision of the directors' by reference to a 'wider group benefit.' It may, however, be easier for the solvent group company to take certain actions that are in the interests of the group as a whole, for instance, they may be able to justify paying a supplier on behalf of a distressed group company (notwithstanding the immediate cost to the company) taking into account the potential impact that would occur if the relevant supplier was to cease trading with all group companies.

Whether in a group scenario or not, it is always advisable for directors to ensure that all of their decisions are formally documented (i.e. by way of board paper or minute). Such papers are often overlooked as an administrative burden but are crucial evidence to demonstrate that directors' duties have been considered by the board, indicating good corporate governance.



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## Reflecting on the Property Industry

As we start into Spring, I reflect on recent events in the property industry. Mark Twain gave the sage advice that when it comes to land; “they’re not making it anymore”! Real estate is finite and there are very few businesses that operate without a requirement for land.

In the year past in Edinburgh, the truth is that it was difficult for most businesses. Real estate businesses were hit especially hard – increased interest rates, falling valuations, rising property yield, rampant build cost inflation. And, of course, the ‘will they won’t they’ return to the office.

Nevertheless, we must retain our optimism. There is only one way to go from a downturn and that is up! Further good news is that most businesses become bored being pessimistic and innovation especially flourishes in challenging times. Write down in values and distressed disposals sometimes unlocks exciting opportunities.

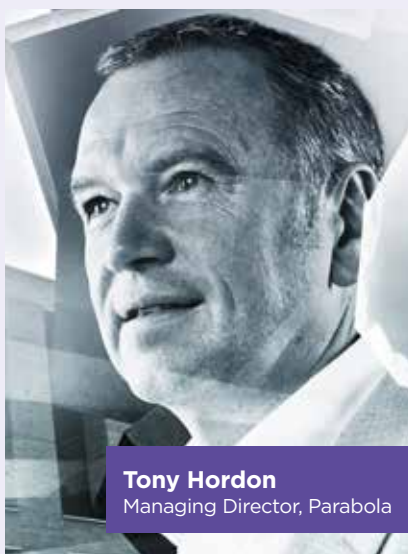
Despite economic predictions or political posturing in an election year – the property agenda still remains the same as does the challenge for well-being. Our productivity requires to be effectively addressed, mental and physical health in a population rapidly aging cannot be ignored. Whilst facing the real and present danger of a housing crisis here in Edinburgh, the climate emergency and ensuring we have sustainable, accessible spaces to thrive.

In the capital, we have some of the most acute challenges on a larger scale than many similarly sized cities.

In my experience as part of the leadership creating a new quarter of the city, at

Edinburgh Park, we are well placed to realise a unique opportunity for the benefit of the whole city and beyond. Edinburgh Park is one of only a handful of sites with scale, and location, which can respond to all the agenda and challenges we face.

But you need a vision. Edinburgh Park is Parabola’s chairman and founder Peter Millican’s vision. ‘An ambitious new community designed around the happiness and success of its people’.



**Tony Hordon**  
Managing Director, Parabola

This vision is starting to materialise, but it does take time. Time to assemble the right team, ensuring appropriate skills and chemistry to deliver against the challenges.

Nevertheless, with belief, with calmness, and with a great deal of patience, you will overcome the odds.

Working with the City of Edinburgh Council is paramount, we cannot speak more highly of them given their own budgetary and resource pressures. We have had a partnership which is now realising an exemplar community which will be considered a trailblazer in place-making and community evolution in years to come.

When we started 2023 at Edinburgh Park – we really were staring at an empty sheet and empty building at 1 New Park Square. Now 12 months on a considerable amount has been achieved. Three new tenants for 1 New Park Square – Marsh McLennan, GE Digital and Element – then an Arena and now the very respected Edinburgh-based S1 has agreed terms to be our trusted partner to kickstart the residential phase.

The success of Edinburgh Park is reflective of the city’s fortunes. Remain optimistic, remain patient, build well, build the best and care for the environment and community – and they will come – and as Mark Twain reminded us they are still not making any more land!



# What's The Secret to Lasting Success in Business?

Statistics vary on how many Scottish businesses will fail in their first few years, but one thing that nearly always strikes a common chord is the reason for failure. Businesses fail because they struggle to secure enough high-paying clients to make the business profitable, or because the business owner no longer enjoys running the business.

## Natalie Dent

Copywriter,  
Written by Natalie



Interestingly, when we dig a little deeper, we find that most businesses fail because their clients are misaligned with their long-term objectives. This nearly always happens from the outset.

We attract the clients we have whether we mean to or not. When we have the wrong messaging in our brand stories, we attract the wrong types of clients.

This inadvertent path to failure is so common that businesses find it hard to spot the red-client flags until it's too late. It starts with the 'always-say-yes' approach. As problem-solvers, business owners often have a propensity to just say yes to every client request and then try to figure things out later.

On paper, saying yes to everybody pays

the bills and brings in short-term revenue, but it's reactive. These haphazard sales are what attract our misaligned clients. It detracts from achieving our long-term business objectives.

Ultimately, having too many misaligned clients results in business owners shutting shop either because they can't pay the bills, or because they don't gain enough personal fulfilment to make running the business worthwhile.

Natalie Dent of Written by Natalie is challenging that narrative by encouraging business owners to reverse-engineer the right types of clients into their brand stories.

By starting with the end in mind and building a business that serves only the right types of people from the outset, we can craft superior sales stories that fill our businesses with perfectly aligned clients who empower us to do our best work, for the right price.

In her latest book, 'Enriched Marketing: Empower Your Brand With The Perfect Client', Natalie combines 20+ years of high-end sales experience with powerful sales

psychology, proven copywriting techniques, and robust brand storytelling to explore how having dream clients can develop lasting success in business.

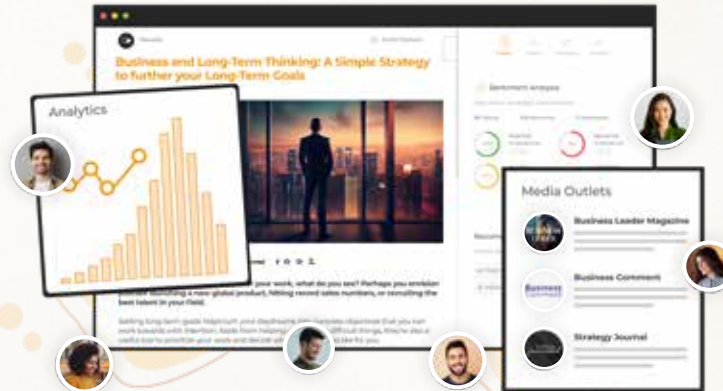
Alongside her established copywriting business, Natalie has created a new business that caters to business owners who lack the budget or the bandwidth to outsource. Enriched Marketing® offers a DIY approach that's ideal for cracking the sales conundrum in a challenging economic climate.

Whether you take the self-guided route with Enriched Marketing® or collaborate directly with Written by Natalie on larger communication projects, Natalie Dent's work is driven by a single overarching theme.

When we set ourselves up for success, when we encourage each other to thrive, and when we take every opportunity to improve our human sales stories, we can build a powerful world that lifts our shared business community through intentional success.

For more info, visit [writtenbynatalie.co.uk](http://writtenbynatalie.co.uk), or take the self-guided path to stories that sell at [enrichedmarketing.co.uk](http://enrichedmarketing.co.uk).





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**Stuart  
Clubb**

### Clubb appointed chair of Edinburgh insolvency discussion group

Stuart Clubb, partner, solicitor advocate and joint head of the Scottish dispute resolution and litigation team at Shoosmiths in Edinburgh has formally taken over as Chair of the Edinburgh Insolvency Discussion Group (EIDG) with effect from 1 January 2024.

Stuart, who specialises in corporate restructuring and insolvency, with a particular focus on contentious insolvency matters, was previously vice-chair of the group.

Confirmation of Stuart's appointment was made in November at an EIDG event hosted by Shoosmiths in Edinburgh and which featured a panel discussion on finance and lending.

Stuart commented: "Huge thanks to our outgoing Chair, Duncan Raggett of AAB for his hard work over the last four years. It's an honour to take over this important new position. As Chair, I look forward to helping further drive forward the Edinburgh Insolvency Discussion Group, as a key knowledge sharing and networking group for insolvency professionals in and around Edinburgh."



**Rachel  
Elliot**

### Building relationships and curating memorable events at Fazenda

With over 9 years of hospitality experience starting at age 16, Rachel found her passion in delighting guests. She honed her skills over 5 formative years at Hickory Food. When the pandemic hit, Rachel adapted by supporting healthcare heroes during the pandemic at an NHS Lothian vaccination centre. This reaffirmed her dedication to helping people. Rachel gained invaluable experience in Private Dining, Events and Sales at the renowned Gleneagles Hotel, working with high end clients.

Originally from East Lothian, Rachel pursued a Bachelor's degree in Management from Robert Gordon University. Now settled in Edinburgh, Rachel leverages her natural leadership abilities, organizational talents and interpersonal skills to build connections and curate memorable relationships and events at Fazenda. With hands-on hospitality experience paired with a management degree, Rachel brings a well-rounded foundation as Relationships and Events Manager. Her lifelong dedication to guest satisfaction drives her to continue growing and creating unforgettable experiences.



**Jason  
Barrett**

### New appointment at The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

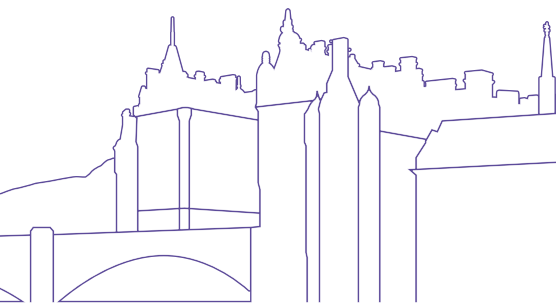
Jason Barrett has been appointed as Chief Executive of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, as the world-renowned spectacle looks ahead to its 75th anniversary in 2025.

Utilising a wealth of knowledge from previous experience in both the military and hospitality management roles, Jason steps up from his previous position as Chief Operating Officer.

Since joining the Tattoo three years ago, he's been involved in outlining the vision for the Show and helping shape the organisation's 10-year plan alongside senior management colleagues.

With the military in his blood, Jason has served for 20 years as an infantry officer in the United States Marine Corps, where he held leadership positions involved in high-level strategic planning and active service with the UK Royal Marines. Jason retired from the Marine Corps as Lieutenant Colonel in 2010 having led over 1,000 marines with \$150 million in assets.

Originally from Colorado, Jason's relationship with Scotland began over 26 years ago after meeting his wife who is from Linlithgow.



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