

DTAS Annual Conference 2026

Speakers



Panelists

Kimberley Guthrie

As Chief Officer at Scotland's Towns Partnership and a recognisable figure in Scottish place-making, my role is to drive transformative change for towns through collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders across all sectors.

I bring over 25 years' experience in senior management roles across the retail and business sectors, working with organisations of all sizes across the public, private and third sectors. A passionate advocate for independent business, I previously ran my own successful childrenswear boutique for 17 years, giving me first-hand insight into the challenges facing those who live, work and invest in town centres.

A company director and founder of my own business for 19 years, I am also an independent business consultant with extensive expertise in marketing, consumer strategy, retail and business transformation for SMEs across the UK.

As a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, I have a strong foundation in multi-channel marketing, brand management and entrepreneurship.



Zoe Holliday

Zoe is the CEO at Community Energy Scotland. Since joining the organisation in 2022 she has become a leading voice for the community energy sector in Scotland and the UK and uses insights from more than 450 community energy members on the ground to unlock barriers and campaign for change. Zoe was instrumental in setting up the Scottish Community Coalition on Energy with DTAS and Community Land Scotland, and has co-authored several publications that have had significant traction. Prior to her role at Community Energy Scotland, Zoe was Head of Strategic Development for Caritas Sofia in Bulgaria working with vulnerable groups including people with disabilities and refugees, which led to subsequent posts leading the Refugee Survival Trust and Humans in the Loop Foundation. She has also spent time working for the Energy Saving Trust, the Center for the Study of Democracy and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations.



Neil McInroy

Neil McInroy is the Global Lead for Community Wealth Building (CWB), at the USA Research Organisation – The Democracy Collaborative – advancing systemic economic reform and inclusive ownership across the United States and internationally. With more than 30 years' experience in progressive economic policy, he is widely regarded as a leading international voice in democratic economic development.

In his current role, Neil supports collaboration among practitioners and scholars worldwide. He delivers training, facilitates action planning, and leads deep-dive partnerships that help places move from vision to implementation. He also oversees the Global Academic and Researcher Network and leads the USA Community of Practice.

Previously, Neil spent 20 years as Chief Executive of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES). He served as a Community Wealth Building Adviser to the Scottish Government until 2023. He is currently Chair of the Economic Development Association of Scotland (EDAS), which houses the CWB centre for excellence.

Neil's work blends policy innovation, practical delivery, and thought leadership, positioning Community Wealth Building as a transformative approach to economic development centred on equity, resilience, and democratic ownership.



Ewan McLachlan

Ewen McLachlan is a part-time development officer with the Assynt Development Trust (ADT) in the Northwest Highlands.

ADT are the anchor organisation for the Scottish Government's Regional Land Use Partnership and the groundbreaking force of community collaboration that is Northwest 2045.

Ewen has a wealth of diverse experience spanning community development, media, cultural sectors, and rural advocacy

He is determined to work towards tackling the solvable challenges that have placed much of remote rural and Island Scotland in an existential state. The poly-crisis that drives depopulation, lack of attainable housing, food and energy poverty and a not fit for infrastructure, must be tackled by both governments listening to local voices.

Ewen has had a long diverse career that has encompassed many aspects of communication including scriptwriting, short film production, documentary making, broadcasting, media, and cultural management. He has worked as a political advisor, public commentator, and writer. He takes a great deal of satisfaction from his experience as co-founder of the Stove Network in Dumfries and Galloway which is still going strong today.



Short Talks

West Lothian CDT Forum

The West Lothian CDT Forum brings together Development Trusts from across West Lothian to share knowledge, strengthen partnerships and promote collaboration and mutual support. Initially started 10 years ago by local DTs the forum provides a regular space to discuss common challenges and opportunities and a vehicle to amplify our voices, develop positive influence and share evidence of our impact. Having struggled to find the capacity to administer the forum in addition to delivering core activities (particularly post-covid), we are now supported administratively by West Lothian Council which means the forum now also acts as a mechanism for engagement with the Local Authority and other public sector partners.

Rannoch Community Trust

Rannoch Community Trust is a community-led development trust serving the remote rural communities of Rannoch and Tummel in Highland Perthshire. Established in 2016, the Trust works to create a sustainable future for the area by responding to local priorities and delivering projects that strengthen community resilience, opportunity and connection.

Its current work includes developing affordable homes for people who live and work locally; supporting Heartland Cares, which explores community-led approaches to health and wellbeing; and operating The CornerStone, a community-owned hospitality venue and social hub in Kinloch Rannoch.

Working closely with residents, local organisations and funding partners, Rannoch Community Trust aims to ensure that projects are shaped by the community, owned by the community and capable of delivering lasting benefits for current and future generations.



Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust

Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust (EOTDT) is a charity rooted in supporting and revitalising the Old Town community of Edinburgh. With a mission to foster a welcoming, cohesive, and sustainable community, EOTDT serves an area of 10,000 local residents through the Crannie Community Hub, a dedicated space for connection, creative expression, and community-driven initiatives.

EOTDT addresses critical needs within the Old Town, where residents often experience social isolation and economic disparities. By providing inclusive programmes like health and wellbeing groups, arts workshops, financial inclusion initiatives and community-building activities, we empower residents of all ages and backgrounds to actively participate, develop meaningful connections, and find their voice within the community.





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