



**SURF**  
Scotland's Independent Regeneration Network

SURF : sharing experience : shaping practice

2012 SURF Annual Conference  
24 May; Surgeons Hall, Edinburgh

### Biographies of plenary contributors

**Andrew Lyon** | Converger | International Futures Forum



Andrew is currently Converger of the International Futures Forum.

He studied sociology and economics at Edinburgh University 1976-80, and conducted research for a PhD in India between 1981-83 and again in 1985.

In 1986 he became the co-ordinator the Glasgow Healthy Cities Project, part of a World Health Organisation Europe programme, based with Glasgow City Council. During this period, he also acted as a consultant for the WHO in Europe and Bangladesh, seeking to support this type of approach in other places.

In 1996, he moved to Forward Scotland, the sustainable development charity, as development manager, enabling and supporting action to demonstrate what sustainable development looks like when you try to do it, and feeding this back into the thinking and policy processes in this field. In 2000 he became Acting Chief Executive, until leaving to join the Scottish Council Foundation's International Futures Forum in May 2001.

The International Futures Forum is a group which holds that our current understandings of the world do not help us to solve the challenges it contains. We need to find new approaches based on deeper humanity, a more balanced relationship with nature and respect for diversity.

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**Alex Neil MSP** | Cabinet Secretary, Infrastructure & Capital investment | Scottish Government

Alex Neil is currently a member of the Scottish Parliament for Airdrie & Shotts and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure & Capital Investment in the Scottish Government.

He has been an MSP since 1999. He was elected at the 1999 parliamentary election at the head of the SNP list for the Central Scotland region, and has since been re-elected at the top of the SNP list in 2003 and 2007. He won the Airdrie & Shotts constituency in May 2011 with a 2001 majority.



Born in Patna, Ayrshire, in 1951, he began political life as a member of the Labour Party. He joined the Labour Party at the age of 16 and became the head of their student wing whilst studying economics at Dundee University. Upon graduation he became the Labour Party's Scottish researcher, until he left Labour in 1976 to help form the Scottish Labour Party.

After the 1979 general election, he worked in America before returning to Scotland and forming his own economic consultancy business. In 1985 he joined the SNP and stood as their candidate in the 1989 Glasgow Central by-election, also rising to senior office within the party.

After election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, he became SNP spokesperson for social justice before chairing the Parliament's Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Committee from 2000-2003 and then again 2004 till 2007. From 2007 Alex was vice-Convenor of the European and External Relations Committee and member of the Finance Committee. He was also co-Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on the Scottish Economy and on the Council of Europe's Local and Regional Authorities Association. In February 2009 Alex was appointed Scottish Government Minister for Housing and Communities.

After the 2011 elections Alex was promoted to the Cabinet as Infrastructure & Capital Investment Secretary. His portfolio covers housing, transport, procurement, European Structural Funds, Scottish Futures Trust, as well as communities and regeneration.

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**Gerry McCartney** | Head of the Public Health Observatory Division | NHS Health Scotland



Gerry qualified at Glasgow in 2001 (MBChB) before undertaking training to become a GP in Paisley (DRCOG 2004, MRCGP 2005). In 2005 he started as a public health trainee first with NHS Argyll and Clyde and subsequently with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (MPH 2006, MFPH 2007). Gerry completed a part-time honours degree in Economics and Development during this time with the London School of Economics and the University of London external programme (BSc (Hons) 2007).

As part of his public health training, Gerry has worked in health protection, health service planning and health improvement. This has included work on obesity prevention, the planning of clinical services for children and outbreak management. His research to date has included a series of articles looking at the potential health impact of actions to counter rising energy prices and climate change, a model of the effect on mortality of changes to the breast cancer screening programme, an evaluation of the impact of a new nursing service for looked-after children and an evaluation of the awareness and acceptability of the introduction of the electronic care summary.

He is currently registered for a higher research degree on the topic of, "Maximising the positive health impacts on the host population of the 2014 Commonwealth Games". This involves conducting a systematic review into the health impacts of major sporting events on the host population and participation in a Health Impact Assessment of the successful bid in Glasgow.

He took up a consultant post at NHS Health Scotland in 2010 as the Head of the Public Health Observatory Division.

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### **Andy Milne** | Chief Executive | SURF – Scotland’s Independent Regeneration Network

SURF is an independent network of regeneration practitioners and policy makers. By sharing and channeling the views and experience of its cross-sector membership, SURF seeks to inform and positively influence the development of successful community regeneration policy in Scotland.



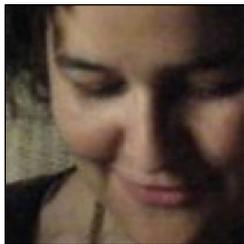
Andy became Chief Executive of SURF in June 2003. Prior to that, he spent 10 years as co-ordinator of the Wester Hailes Representative Council which was often cited as a model of community led innovation and service delivery.

From 1987 to 1992, Andy was director of the Bathgate Area Initiatives Team, providing support and co ordination to the voluntary sector across West Lothian. Having originally studied Architecture at Edinburgh College of Art, and undertaken a subsequent year of voluntary work, Andy then went into community work where he developed and managed the Wester Hailes Management Agency until 1987.

Andy is also active on the board of Planning Aid for Scotland and the Community Development Alliance Scotland.

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### **Gehan Macleod** | Project Coordinator | GalGael



Gehan is a founding member of the successful GalGael social enterprise in Govan, Glasgow.

In celebration of Govan's shipbuilding past and its Gaelic heritage, GalGael has established a reputation as one of Scotland's most unique and imaginative projects.

Through teaching traditional skills, community values and respect for cultural and national heritage, GalGael addresses issues such as unemployment, addiction, isolation and social exclusion.

The project is perhaps best known for engaging local community members in building and sailing traditional boats modelled on a 1000-year-old Scottish prototype.

As Project Coordinator, Gehan is responsible for managing activities, strategic planning, development and fundraising.

**Karen McGregor** | Chairperson | GESTRA



Karen is the Chairperson of the Gallatown East and Sinclairtown Tenants and Residents Association (GESTRA).

GESTRA's aim is to protect and advance the interests of all tenants and residents in the area covered by the Association, which is in east Kirkcaldy in Fife, on matters concerning housing, the environment, the social and community life of the area and the health and wellbeing of the tenants and residents.

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**Meg Peterson** | Cultural Planner, Visual Artist, Arts Educator & Project Manager



Meg is an artist, arts educator, community activist and cultural planner based in Chicago and London.

After graduating with a Fine Arts degree from the University of Oregon in 2006, Meg began working to not only create art but to use art as a means of improving self-esteem, identity and community cohesion, mostly through teaching and her grassroots work with communities across the city of Chicago.

Since then, she has brought her talents in designing programmes, regenerating community spaces and organising events to schools, community centres, cultural institutions, markets, exhibitions and special workshops in Ghana, England, Italy and across the US, with most of her efforts centred in Chicago. Artistically, she has created work across the US and now Europe. Stepping away from the traditional “art for art’s sake” mentality, her art explores social, environmental and cultural issues, hoping to bring new perspectives to both her subjects and the people who view her work.

Upon finishing a Masters degree in Cultural Policy & Management in 2011, Meg is now able to more effectively combine her passion for arts and culture with knowledge of theory and practicalities of cultural planning and policies. Her main aims are to promote local art, tap into existing cultural resources in neighbourhoods to foster regeneration, create partnerships and work with various stakeholders to make the most of limited resources on various projects, always striving to use art and culture as a means of social change and bringing people together.

After working in Chicago on public art beautification projects, community workshops and arts curriculum development intensively for the last seven months, Meg is now working and creating art in London, while still maintaining close ties with the city of Chicago to promote local arts and culture and provide assistance to various grassroots initiatives there.

**Jim McCormick** | Scotland Adviser | Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Jim became Scotland Adviser to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) in November 2007 and was previously director of independent think-tank the Scottish Council Foundation (SCF) for five years.

He is co-founder of a research partnership, McCormick-McDowell, and an ippr Research Associate. His main professional interests include tackling poverty, schools reform, and policies for older people. He is Chair of the Scottish Government's workstream on Learning in Custody and a Board member of Govanhill Community Development Trust.



Before joining SCF, he worked at ippr and in the European Parliament in Brussels.