Biographies

Janey Godley | Comedienne, Playwright and Award-winning Blogger

Multi-award-winning Scottish comedienne, playwright, award-winning blogger, best-selling author and former Scotsman newspaper columnist Janey Godley has performed her comedy shows and one-woman play around the world, including off-Broadway in New York. She is a regular on BBC Radio 4's Just a Minute and has appeared in the Glashow soap River City.

In 2006, Janey was nominated and was close runner-up for the annual Scotswoman of the Year title as 'the most inspirational woman in Scotland'; at the New Zealand International Comedy Festival, she won the Spirit of The Festival Award.

A regular 5-star performer at the Edinburgh Fringe, in 2008 she won the Fringe Report Award as 'Best Performer' and two Nivea Funny Women Fringe Awards - as 'Best Stand-Up' and, overall, for 'Best Show' as "one of the most prolific and extraordinary stand-up comedians working in the UK".

In 2008, she also won Edinburgh's WAG of the Year Award as 'Best After Dinner Speaker' and was voted No 3 by readers in London listing magazine Time Out’s list of Top Ten Comedians.

In 2009, her new Edinburgh Fringe show Godley's World received three 5-star reviews... and the New Zealand Comedy Guild nominated Janey as 'Best International Guest'; they had also nominated her on each of her previous visits in 2002, 2006 and 2008.

In 2012, a regular Tweeter, her live Twitter description of a couple's rapidly-deteriorating relationship on a train became a viral sensation and caused a media debate on personal privacy. At the Edinburgh Fringe in August, she staged a 5-star-winning one-off play #TimAndFreya based on the incident.

She continues to tour the world from Glasgow to Adelaide, writes an award-winning blog and broadcasts weekly podcasts to thousands.

The Glasgow Comedy Queen" (The List)
"Compelling... ballsy... a breath of fresh air" (The Guardian)
"The most outspoken female stand-up in Britain" (Daily Telegraph)
"The greatest British improver of her generation" (What's On Stage)
"Some of the sharpest-elbowed comedy in the world" (New York Times)
"Scotland's funniest woman... the Godmother of Scottish Comedy" (The Scotsman)
Russell Gunson | Director | IPPR Scotland

Russell leads IPPR Scotland, IPPR’s dedicated thinktank for Scotland.

Russell set up and has grown IPPR Scotland from scratch to become one of Scotland’s leading policy organisations.

Before joining IPPR in 2015, Russell worked across government, parliament, and the voluntary and private sectors. Most recently, prior to moving to IPPR Scotland, Russell was director of the National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland, working on a cross-party basis within Scottish politics.

Russell has taken part in a number of Reviews and Commissions in Scotland including as a commissioner on Scotland’s independent Commission on Widening Access. He was a founding director of Safe Deposits Scotland, the only non-profit tenancy deposit protection scheme based in Scotland.

Russell has experience across the full range of public policy issues in Scotland, with particular expertise in education, skills, fiscal analysis and the economy.

Martin Avila | Director | Kinning Park Complex

Martin is Director of the Kinning Park Complex. A centre for communities, creativity, wellbeing and citizenship. Originally with a background in social enterprise and non-formal education Martin had turned his creative nature to the development of community assets.

An eye for opportunity and the ability to convince people of a good idea are two of his greatest strengths.

Nick Skelton | Director – Strategic Planning and Economics | Peter Brett Associates

Nick Skelton is Director, Strategic Planning & Economics with Peter Brett Associates, now part of Stantec. He has responsibility for the firm’s planning and economics service in Scotland, and development of its economics offer across the UK. He has over 30 years’ experience across the private and public sectors in all parts of the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and Hong Kong.

He has acknowledged expertise in economic and strategy development, planning and economic analysis, regeneration planning, and infrastructure development.

His work spans area development strategies, major development projects, road, rail and canal infrastructure improvements, national and international visitor attractions, as well as renewable and
other energy projects. He lectures in socioeconomic impact analysis and its EIA role and has also presented to Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment seminars. He has also provided expert witness evidence to Planning Inquiries, Hearings and other forums in the UK and overseas.

In the last 2-3 years, Nick has applied his case making and business case development experience on City Deal, TIF and other work in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Argyll & Bute, Perth & Kinross and elsewhere. He is currently developing the Business Case for a Growth Deal proposition for the Falkirk area. Vacant & derelict land and how it can be used effectively is a recurring theme across much of his project work. PBA is currently working with the Scottish Land Commission, helping development of a framework to establish the effects of vacant and derelict land on local communities and Nick is directing this analysis.

**Fraser Carlin| Former Chair | Heads of Planning Scotland (Former)**

Fraser Carlin is a Town Planner and is Head of Planning & Housing at Renfrewshire Council. Fraser has worked for a number of Local Authorities in Scotland and England throughout his career and has significant experience in relation to Development Management, Plan Making, delivering Capital Projects and managing a stock of some 12,000 social rented homes across Renfrewshire.

Fraser is a former Convener of the Royal Town Planning Institute in Scotland and was the Chair of the Heads of Planning Scotland. As such he has played a key role in developing and implementing improvements to the Planning system and has been closely involved in the long process that has been followed in relation to the current review of Planning.

Fraser is determined to ensure that the Planning System in Scotland is a facilitator for economic growth and that the professionals who work in it are committed to creating great homes and places for the communities that we work for.

**Karen Patton Orr| CEO | RIG Arts**

Karen is a graduate of Glasgow School of Art with a BA Honours Degree in Fine Art, 1992. As an undergraduate she also studied at the Royal Academy of Art - (KABK), The Hague, Netherlands in 1991. In 1993-1994 Karen was awarded a Polish Government Post Graduate Scholarship from the Polish Culture Institute, London to study at the Academy of Fine Art, Poznan, Poland. In 2002 she graduated with an MBA, with distinction, from Glasgow Caledonian University whilst working as a Customer Programme Manager at IBM UK Ltd.

In 2007 Karen left IBM and created Artysta Fine Art which made commissioned artworks for the Scottish TV & Film industry.
Karen has always had a passion about bringing the visual arts to the wider community and has taught and been involved in many community art education projects over the years working for local authorities. In 2011 she was one of the key founders of RIG Arts which is a multi-award winning, socially engaged arts charity based in Inverclyde bringing professional artists and the community together in a collaborative and creative way. Karen continues to work as the CEO.

RIG Arts design and deliver a dynamic programme of visual arts and film projects, workshops, training opportunities, exhibitions, public artworks, community spaces and events. RIG Arts use creativity to work with people to affect change in Urban Regeneration, Climate Challenge, Heritage, Mental Health and it helps young people with Autism to build better social & communication skills. RIG Arts won the Creative Regeneration SURF Award in 2017 for the Broomhill Project, Greenock.

Karen continues to develop her own creative practice having solo exhibitions and taking part in group exhibitions both in Scotland and abroad.

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**Steve Dunlop | CEO | Scottish Enterprise**

Steve Dunlop has spent over 30 years working to rebuild and regenerate local and national assets in order to grow the economy and support communities and families.

Just over a year ago Steve took the helm as CEO at Scottish Enterprise – Scotland’s national economic development agency – with a vision to create an economically vibrant Scotland that benefits those who call Scotland home and has a positive impact on the world stage.

Steve has become a leading public sector entrepreneur with a reputation for innovative and disruptive thinking in traditional environments. In roles across public service – from national infrastructure to local government – Steve has re-imagined some of Scotland’s most important industrial assets.

Steve started his professional career as a teacher and is passionate about building confidence in Scotland’s young people to participate early in the economy of the future. Steve lives in Stirling - the gateway to the Scottish Highlands and the scene of the famous ‘Battle of Bannockburn’ – with his wife Fiona and daughter Becky.

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**Aileen Campbell MSP | Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government | Scottish Government**

Aileen Campbell was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government in June 2018. Her responsibilities include; social justice, tackling inequalities, community empowerment, the third sector and democratic renewal.
Aileen grew up on her parents’ tenant farm and attended Collace primary school and Perth Academy before graduating with an MA joint honours degree in Politics with Economic and Social History at the University of Glasgow.

She started a career in publishing by working as an editor for Keystone, a construction magazine, in 2003 and was an editorial assistant on the pro-independence newspaper, the Scottish Standard. Before her election to parliament, Aileen also worked for Nicola Sturgeon in 2005 and Shona Robison in 2006 as a Parliamentary Assistant.

She was first elected to the Scottish Parliament in May 2007 as a list member for the South of Scotland. She was re-elected as the MSP for Clydesdale in May 2011 and appointed as Minister for Children and Young People. Aileen Campbell was appointed Minister for Public Health and Sport in May 2016.

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**David Cowan | Head of Regeneration Unit | Scottish Government**

David has been Head of the Scottish Government Regeneration Unit since October 2011. Since then he has overseen implementation of the Regeneration Strategy, including the launch and delivery of the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, the Empowering Communities Fund, the Strengthening Communities Programme and more recently the development of the Place Principle.

He has worked in many other areas across the Scottish Government including health, education, sustainable development and culture.

Prior to joining the Scottish Government in 2001, he worked with industries across North America to promote energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

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**Geraldine Campbell | Economic Partnerships Policy Manager | SCRG**

Geraldine joined the civil service in 2007 and currently works in the Business Engagement and Economic Development Division. She leads the work of Scotland’s Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth which has a remit to enable and support developing Regional Economic Partnerships by deepening the evidence base on what works in regional inclusive growth and promoting best practice policy.

She has previously held roles in planning and regeneration teams within the Scottish Government and, before joining Economic Development, worked in Higher Education policy covering tuition fees and student support.
Kate Wimpress | Director | North Edinburgh Arts

Trained in fine art Kate has worked for arts organisations across Northern Ireland and Scotland since 1990. Currently Director at North Edinburgh Arts Kate previously led Edinburgh’s Capital City Partnership Arts For Inclusion programme.

North Edinburgh Arts provides opportunities for individual and community development through contact with the professional arts. The organisation is active in the local regeneration process advocating the role of the artist, and creativity, as positive forces within the dynamic of a community in flux.

NEA’s current focus is kindness, contributing to a caring community as the place where connections are made and relationships built; a community-led production house and free space where trust is developed and risks are taken.

Kate’s particular area of interest is how art can change the public realm and public imagination, working with artists whose practice takes them beyond the boundaries of the institution, studio or theatre. She was a founder member of the National Cultural Planning Forum, and currently sits on the boards of Tinderbox Orchestra and North Edinburgh Childcare, as well as that of SURF.

Andy Milne | Chief Executive | SURF

SURF is Scotland’s regeneration forum for practitioners, policy makers and academics. By sharing and channelling the experience, views and ideas and of its extensive membership of over 300 cross-sector organisations, SURF helps to inform better policy and practice for more successful and sustainable community regeneration throughout Scotland. SURF is primarily concerned with shared efforts to tackle the causes and degenerative impacts of poverty and inequalities.

Andy became Chief Executive of SURF in 2003. Since then, it has expanded its capacity, range and influence. In addition to an extensive programme of networking activities and information outputs, SURF also delivers an innovative Alliance for Action programme. It links local assets and initiatives with national policy and resources via a range of practical, place based, cross sector, community regeneration collaborations.

Prior to his SURF role, Andy spent 10 years as co-ordinator of the Wester Hailes Representative Council; frequently cited as a model of genuinely community led innovation, representation and service delivery. He found his way into independent community development work via studying architecture and an interest in politics.