

SCOTO GATHERING 2026
GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
Learning & Knowledge Exchanges - 5 March 2026
Conference - 6 March 2026

List of Speakers

THURSDAY 5 MARCH

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SESSION 1

Natasha Almond has a background in social economics and has spent her career working alongside communities to advocate for what people value in meeting their needs. Her work spans public service transformation, VCSE development, and participatory research, using community insight to influence systemic change. She is Co-Director of The Good Organisation and has over nine years' experience developing shared benefits for communities within tourism. This includes piloting projects that enable marginalised communities to benefit more equitably from tourism, alongside research into community-led tourism models. She also founded York Residents Know, a participatory research initiative that centres community voices in shaping the future of tourism in York. Natasha sits on York's Tourism Advisory Board, where she brings a residents' perspective to the development of the city's tourism strategy.=



Joanna Hatch (née Quinney-Adams), Chair (FEACymru Organiser and Dolennu Project Lead). Joanna is a group organiser and marketing consultant with more than twenty years' experience working across tourism, community engagement, and cultural/economic interpretation in Wales. She currently holds several organisational and governance roles in the heritage and foundational economy sectors. Joanna works at the intersection of heritage, tourism, and civic participation - helping communities not only preserve their local pasts, but shape how they are understood and experience the present.



Tansy Rogerson (Dolennu Research Organiser and Chair of the destination Conwy Partnership). Tansy is a tourism development consultant who has dedicated her career to tourism that benefits both people and place. She has a strong focus on community-led, regenerative and fair tourism, and holds a Master's in Sustainable Tourism Management and Regional Planning working with communities in Catalonia, Latin America and Wales. She is Chair of the Destination Conwy Partnership, delivering positive change for local businesses and communities. Tansy also works as a research coordinator for the Dolennu project, supporting researchers to amplify community voices and explore new fairer approaches to tourism.



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SESSION 2

Dr Anna de Jong is a professor in tourism and regional development with the School of Social and Environmental Sustainability, University of Glasgow, with a background in human geography, tourism management and philosophy. Anna's research takes focus with tourism management and governance in regional areas, guided by wider concerns of resident inequalities and political participation. Originally from Australia but now residing in Scotland, Anna has worked on projects in Australia, Spain, Ghana, Nigeria, Sweden, Norway and the UK, funded by the Australian Department of Education & Training, Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie, Research England and UKRI.



Dr Michael Humbracht is a post-doctoral associate on the JUST TOUR project at the University of Glasgow, an EU project looking at the relationship between tourism governance and community experiences of place in tourism dominated rural areas of Scotland, Spain and Sweden. Within the project, Michael draws on cultural and geographic approaches to research the drivers of tourism governance change and how community voice plays a role in those changes. Through his research, he is helping to develop a conceptual framework that will better enable community equity, rights and participation in tourism governance. This also allows him to do what he enjoys most, learning the stories of stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds and understanding their connections to place.



Dr Steve Taylor is director of the University of the Highlands and Islands' Centre for Recreation and Tourism Research and Chair of the university's tourism sector group. A tourism and recreation generalist, his current workload is centred on collaborative projects exploring ecotourism development in South East Asia, digital interpretation of cultural heritage and how the great outdoors can positively affect mental and physical wellbeing. Steve's scholarly output has recently been on the slow adventure marketing concept, cultural heritage and adventure recreation. In his spare time, he can be found in the highlands on foot or on his bike.



Dr Constantia Anastasiadou is Professor in Tourism and the Research Lead for Tourism in the Tourism and Intercultural Business Communication Group at Edinburgh Napier University. Her main research interests lay in EU tourism policy, tourism governance and organisational structures. She is also interested on technological mediation processes in tourism and cultural/heritage tourism practices and identity. Her project work has been funded by the EU (TEMPUS programme), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), UK, and the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. Constantia was also previously employed as qualitative social researcher on tourism-related and employability projects and held various posts in the tourism industry.

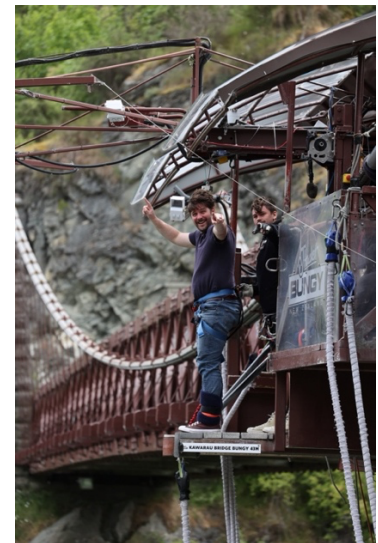


KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SESSION 3

Kevin Anthony Perry is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Ilisimatusarfik, where he has been based since 2017. His work brings together academic research, applied social work practice and long-term ethnographic engagement in Arctic communities, focusing on homelessness, marginalisation, outreach social work and welfare provision in Greenland. Originally from County Durham, England, Kevin holds a PhD in Social Sciences from Roskilde University, a Candidate degree in Social Work from Aalborg University, and a BA (Hons) in European Social Work from the University of Portsmouth. He has been centrally involved in national homelessness mapping in Greenland and develops training and practice-oriented resources for frontline social workers. Alongside academia, he volunteers at Nuuk's local soup kitchen and collaborates with municipalities and NGOs. He also served six years with the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, and writes for Sermitsiaq.



Dr Sandro Carnicelli is a Professor of Tourism and Leisure Studies at the University of the West of Scotland and the Co-Director of the Centre for Culture, Sport & Events (CCSE). Sandro is also a member of ABRATUR (International Academy for the Development of Tourism Research in Brazil). Sandro has been working in the fields of Tourism, Events, and Leisure for over 20 years. Sandro has now over 50 publications between book chapters and peer-reviewed papers and has co-edited three books: Digital Leisure Cultures (2014); Lifestyle Sports and Public Policy (2014); and Tourism Cases in Latin America (2025). He has delivered funded projects for organisations such as the Carnegie Trust, UK Department of Transport, the Moffat Trust, The Higher Education Academy, and the UKRI-GCRF. He is currently the Editor in-Chief of the World Leisure Journal and Chair of the Renfrewshire Tourism Leadership Group.



Director of Tourism, Travel and Festivals at EFI **Joshua Ryan-Saha** is Director of Tourism, Travel and Festivals at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, University of Edinburgh. With the support of Scottish Enterprise he established Traveltech for Scotland to cement our position as a European leader in travel technology innovation, delivering £20m+ of inward investment. He serves on Scotland's Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group, advising on data, AI and technology transformation. He has also established strategic partnerships with global leaders including Booking.com, Hilton, Marriott, Skyscanner and TravelPerk, building a network of over 250 traveltech companies worldwide. In 2024, he delivered AI and tourism innovation workshops to more than 400 industry professionals across Europe, America and Asia. Joshua also represents Scotland at international forums, including with the American Hotel and Lodging Association and international traveltech investors.



SCOTO CONFERENCE – FRIDAY 6 MARCH

WELCOME

After 45+ years working in the front line of tourism and hospitality industry both in Scotland and abroad **Marc Crothall MBE** was appointed as the Chief Executive of The Scottish Tourism Alliance (STA) and he has been at the helm of the organisation since 2012. In addition to the above he co-chairs the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Leadership Group (THILG) with the Minister for Business and Employment Richard Lochhead MSP. Marc is also a board member of Apprenticeship in Hospitality Scotland, Interface , an advisory board member to Springboard and a member of the Scotrail Stakeholder Forum. In 2020 Marc was awarded the “Fellowship” by the Scottish Hotel industry, and in June 2022 he was awarded an MBE in the Queens Platinum Jubilee Birthday Honours for services to the Tourism Industry in Scotland. In 2025 he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Institute of Directors for his work in the Tourism and Hospitality industry.



Carron Tobin is SCOTO's Exec Director and has been the driving force behind SCOTO's innovative Press Pause® initiative which has now supported over 60 communities across Scotland. Carron's career started in planning and landscape design and has culminated in working in community led tourism. She is currently an active member of the Scottish Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group and is their mission lead for Community Led Tourism which is one of five missions pushing forward the implementation of Scotland Outlook 2030. When she isn't busy at work she'll be out walking her two dogs, cooking, reading or planning her next travels.



EVERYONE CAN EMPOWER COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOURISM

Luke Fraser grew up in Orkney, a place that has shaped both his personal life and career. He first became involved in tourism as a teenager, working as a tour guide at a busy local attraction, gaining an early appreciation of how powerful great visitor experiences can be for both visitors and host communities. After a career spanning the public, private and community sectors, he now runs L & L Fraser Ltd, supporting island and rural communities across Scotland to deliver community-led projects. His work focuses on housing and community-led capital projects, housing needs analysis, community resilience and place-based development. He has recently returned to tourism through the North Ronaldsay Trust, leading a community-led cruise offering centred on local people and benefits. He also chairs the Scottish Islands Federation and has joined the SCOTO board, championing resilient island economies and meaningful, place-rooted experiences.



Kat Brogan leads award-winning family business and BCorp Mercat Tours which delivers expert storytelling in Edinburgh and on WWI & WWII battlefields in Europe. A passionate advocate for Fair Work, community impact, and youth careers in tourism, she holds leadership roles nationally while still guiding tours herself to combine strategic influence with a love of history and people. Borne from a desire to lead real, long-lasting change to benefit the local community, the ground-breaking project 'Our Stories, Your City', was launched in 2022. This reconnects the vulnerable communities of Edinburgh with their city through storytelling, paid for by visitors' donations and supporting Living Wage jobs, demonstrating tourism as a force for good. Her work resulted in Kat receiving the prestigious VisitScotland Silver Thistle Award 2024 recognising she 'not only excels but inspires as a selfless and passionate advocate for Scottish tourism'.



Aileen Crawford is Head of Tourism & Conventions at the award-winning Glasgow Convention Bureau, responsible for the successful positioning of Glasgow as a conference destination for national and international association meetings. In addition, Aileen's role includes Tourism and Destination Management, working in partnership with industry and stakeholders to deliver on the Glasgow Tourism 2030 strategy, with a focus on sustainability, accessibility, community tourism and partnerships. Aileen brings extensive experience in delivering meaningful social impact through conferences—an area in which Glasgow has earned numerous awards under her leadership. Community Tourism features in Convention Bureau promotion to both meeting planners and delegates under the In Glasgow Meetings Mean More strategy. Aileen sits on the Scottish Government's Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group in a personal capacity.



COMMUNITY TOURISM SIX CITY PERSPECTIVES

Mahri Reilly is a multidisciplinary artist and cultural leader whose work centres on socially engaged arts, creative wellbeing and community collaboration. She is newly appointed Chief Executive of The Hidden Gardens. Mahri has held senior roles across the arts sector, including Artistic Director at Toonspeak Young People's Theatre, Associate Producer at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Creative Director at Scottish Youth Theatre, Head of Learning and Participation at Ovalhouse Theatre in London, and Learn Project Manager at the National Theatre of Scotland. She is a Trustee of Loop Theatre, a disability-inclusive company, and has worked on festivals and events across the UK with Surge Scotland. Mahri received the RCS Innovation Studio Award for her research project, *The Winter Grief Retreat*, and is also a qualified complementary therapist and certified Yin Yoga instructor, integrating wellbeing and creativity into her leadership practice.



Vanessa Gilpin is Founder of Gathering Ground CIC a non-profit cafe, community space and garden that brings people together through food, culture and creativity. Our main purpose is to support marginalised groups who want to learn more about food growing & hospitality. We do this by giving people a platform to learn and share their culture through supper clubs and food focused events. We also work with the local community to engage in urban growing and the outdoors through our community garden.



Rob Morrison is a placemaker and social entrepreneur focused on creating the spaces communities need to turn ideas into action. Trained in architecture, he co-founded Agile City CIC in north Glasgow, retrofitting Civic House and the Glue Factory as hubs for social, cultural and green enterprise. This work contributed to a wider regeneration vision for the Glasgow Canal area. In 2018 the Glasgow Canal Co-op was formed in collaboration with local organisations, which Rob co-chaired until 2023. His most recent role is with Built Environment Smarter Transformation (BE-ST) to develop Retrofit Scotland, building a national platform for training, knowledge sharing and community-led retrofit across Scotland.



Annette Mullen is a proud citizen of Glasgow who is the Chair of the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis, a registered Scottish Charity which she has been a Member of for 20 years, both as a Tour Guide and as a Committee Member. Her passion for the Glasgow Necropolis began when she was a small child, having been born a stone's throw away in nearby Barrack Steet. She was taken to visit and hear of its stories on a very regular basis. From those visits when she was little, she learned of the social history of the City she loves, from Wee Willie Winkie to those who made a difference in shaping the health and well-being, to the Industrialists and the Architects alike and of course to those who paid the ultimate price for their City.



Lauren Macrae is Visitor Experience Manager at The Tall Ship Glenlee, where she leads all front-of-house operations, overseeing daily visitor experience, weddings and events. With a professional background in hospitality and events, she has built her career around customer service, venue operations and creating memorable experiences. For the past four years, Lauren has worked in the heritage and visitor attraction sector, combining operational expertise with a strong interest in tourism and community engagement. Her role focuses not only on welcoming visitors from around the world, but also on ensuring Glenlee plays an active role in Glasgow's cultural and tourism landscape. Launched in 1896, Glenlee is one of only four Clyde-built sailing ships still afloat and is an award-winning visitor attraction, event space and community hub.



Michaela Ditrichova is Project Manager for Scotland at Invisible Cities, a social enterprise delivering walking tours led by people with lived experience of homelessness. She works across Glasgow, Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders, developing tours, partnerships and projects that place social impact and local voices at the heart of tourism. Michaela is also the coordinator of Meet Me in Govan, a weekly community walking group that brings together residents, organisations and visitors to explore place, stories and connection through walking. The project reflects Invisible Cities' wider approach to inclusive, community-focused tourism and collaboration at a local level. Outside of work, Michaela is a passionate cyclist and enjoys discovering new places and communities along the way.



TOURISM THAT FOCUSES ON PEOPLE, PLACES AND PURPOSE

Eimear Hargey is the Heritage Manager at Fáilte Feirste Thiar, a community-led organisation dedicated to developing and promoting neighbourhood tourism in West Belfast. She leads the development, protection, and promotion of the area's heritage, overseeing programmes that showcase its historical, cultural, and linguistic assets. She also sits on the board of the Market Development Association, a leading community development organisation in the historic Market area of south Belfast, working to advance social, economic, and cultural wellbeing in the neighbourhood. In this role, she oversees the strategic acquisition and regeneration of key sites as future visitor attractions.



Kevin Anthony Perry - As above

Jess Silvester dreams of a world where we live in balance with each other and our planet and is optimistic we can imagine and make a more just future shaped by what matters to people and communities, within planetary boundaries – just. Coming to People's Economy from climate-ocean research and community development, she facilitates journeys with communities to reimagine and make more democratic, equitable and liveable economies where they can meet their needs and priorities. One of the projects Jess facilitates is Dolennu, working with community researchers, community partners and academics to explore what would tourism look like if it worked for communities? across 4 slate valleys in North Wales. She lives in another slate valley, where she's worked in tourist hospitality, watched a spot a few hundred metres away from her home become a tourist hotspot, and sometimes escapes to be a tourist elsewhere!



COFFEE AND CAKE BREAKOUTS

Jess Silvester, Kevin Anthony Perry, Eimear Hargey – as above

Catriona Waddington is a SCOTO Director and Chair of community tourism group Wild Skies Shetland, based in the island of Unst. She is semi-retired from her job in public health in low-income countries and loves to take part in community projects (this is Up Helly Aa season!), walks and travel. She has just finished the second of her “SCOTO adventures with a bus pass” and says she is more impressed than ever by the variety of community tourism set-ups in Scotland and the enthusiasm of staff and volunteers. She reckons she has been on 75 bus journeys, worth over £550.



Di Smith is a project manager for the Moray Way Association, which promotes the 100-mile Moray Way walking route. She manages the Association's annual Moray Walking & Outdoor Festival each Midsummer as well as various arts and environmental projects across the region. In 2022, Di took part in the Communities Leading in Tourism programme, which led to her involvement with SCOTO. She now works part-time for SCOTO and has loved discovering the many inspiring communities within the network. She's bought a mini camper and will be visiting a long must-visit places list. You'll usually find Di walking her dog Murray, cooking/eating, watching rugby and travelling when she can.



Ellen Fogel Walker is the Destination Director (CEO) of Visit Inverness Loch Ness. She has over ten years of experience working across the tourism and heritage sectors in the United States, Spain and Scotland. She began her studies in the United States focusing on Public History and Economics at Flagler College and completed her post-graduate studies at the University of Stirling. Ellen and her team champion the nearly 500 businesses VILN represents over a 1200 square mile area. As the official regional tourism body, VILN was the first sector specific BID in the UK. Ellen works closely with communities to deliver meaningful projects, so as to ensure that places can thrive.



Melanie Allen is a SCOTO Director driven by the belief that tourism works best when it's shaped by communities, not just for them. She's chaired a UNESCO Biosphere partnership, led national and regional destination marketing campaigns, and run her own award-winning sustainable accommodation business — giving her insight into tourism at every level, from day-to-day operations on the ground, to strategic leadership at board & government level. A champion of shaping policy and strategy from lived experience, she's passionate about circular economy thinking and making sure tourism genuinely benefits the places people call home. When she steps away from work, you'll usually find her outdoors — walking, finding a local coffee shop or talking herself into a slightly-baltic sea swim.



STRONGER TOGETHER

Community Tourism UK: Natasha Almond, Joanna Hatch, Eimear Hargey & Carron Tobin – as above

NEXT STEPS

Melanie Allen & Carron Tobin – as above