



Rural SEN – 26th February 2024

Notes

Attendees:

Ailsa Clark - Inspiralba, Aimee Spence – Inspiralba, Beth Mukushi - SCVO, Amaka Akhidenor - Business Energy Scotland, Clare Gee - Voluntary Action Orkney, David Rennie - Argyll & Bute Council, Douglas Spence - The National Lottery Community Fund, Duncan Thorp - Social Enterprise Scotland, Edward Fittell - TSI Moray, Eva Milroy - Dumfries & Galloway College, Fiona Thomson - Outside the Box, Freya Young - Outside the Box, Iain Boyd – Social Enterprise Academy, James Thomson - Laxdale Community Hall, Karen Donnelly - Mactaggart Leisure Centre, Karen Fitzsimmons - First Port, Nicola McCormack - Skills Development Scotland, Reeni Kennedy-Boyle – Fyne Futures & Thomas Fisher – CoDeL.

After some brief introductions, the group were introduced to our three speakers; Beth Mukushi from Scottish Centre for Voluntary Organisations, Nicola McCormack from Skills Development Scotland & Amaka Akhidenor from Business Energy Scotland.

MOVE TO NET-ZERO FOR THIRD SECTOR – SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

We were first joined by Beth Mukushi from [The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (SCVO). SCVO is the national membership organisation for the voluntary sector. Their mission is to champion the role of voluntary organisations in building a flourishing society and support them to do work that has a positive impact.

SCVO are passionate about what the voluntary sector can achieve. Along with their community of 3,653 members and supporters, they believe that a thriving voluntary sector should be at the heart of a successful, fair and inclusive Scotland.

SCVO launched their Growing Climate Confidence website in 2023, where third sector organisations in Scotland can find help to reduce emissions and engage their community. Through the website, organisations can learn about the climate crisis, share their experiences with others in the sector, and discover actions and funding they can take to address it.

The Growing Climate Confidence website also features a Net-Zero scorecard that organisations can use to assess their progress on the journey to net zero. Reducing the emissions of organisations is an important part of the journey towards a more sustainable future. The simple scorecard and template environmental policy are a useful way to show what organisations have done already, and what they plan to do next.

Additional links:

- Growing Climate Confidence Website - <https://climateconfident.scot/>
- Net Zero Scorecard – <https://climateconfident.scot/scorecard>
- Conversations about Climate Change: a New Tool for Staff and Boards Event - <https://scvo.scot/events/a1vP1000003JcCmlAK/conversations-about-climate-change-a-new-tool-for-staff-and-boards>

Watch the full SCVO presentation here - <https://vimeo.com/918247772>

You can find Beth's full Powerpoint presentation here - <https://1drv.ms/p/s!AvzeyTPXeJSq2Hy3K-LiGzWNLBk5?e=IRCIeV>

SKILLS FOR GROWTH – SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND

Our second speaker of the session was Nicola from [Skills Development Scotland](#) (SDS), the national skills body supporting the people and businesses of Scotland to develop and apply their skills. They are committed to building a Scotland which champions fair work practices and a diverse workforce.

Working with partners, SDS strive to ensure employers have the right skills at the right time in high performing, fair and equal workplaces, and that every individual has the skills and confidence to get a job and progress in the workplace, achieving their full potential.

Through Skills for Growth, SDS offer skills reviews for businesses. The skills and knowledge of employees is key to the growth strategy for many Third Sector organisations. Skills for Growth is like a skills diagnostic service where SDS take steps to understand the skills needs of the organisations in order to create a detailed plan and guide employers and employees to the right support.

SDS executives guide employers through the whole process and help them to make the best use of their management abilities. They also assist in assessing staff's skills and then work with training providers to fill the gaps.

Inspiralba went through a skills review in 2023 and found it a very valuable experience in understanding how each member of the organisation can utilise their skills for the maximum potential of the organisation and the individual.

Additional links:

- Skills for Growth - <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/supporting-scotlands-employers/skills-for-growth>

Watch the full SDS presentation here - <https://vimeo.com/917961986>

You can find Nicola's full Powerpoint presentation here - <https://1drv.ms/p/s!AvzeyTPXeJSq2H3KZx-0k3gTYskV?e=2rXIS6>

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT – BUSINESS ENERGY SCOTLAND

[Business Energy Scotland](#) (BES) is funded by the Scottish Government to provide free, impartial support and access to funding to help small and medium-sized enterprises save energy, carbon and money.

Previously known as the Energy Efficiency Business Support Service from Zero Waste Scotland, Business Energy Scotland launched in April 2022 and is managed by Energy Saving Trust.

Amaka is a Business Energy Advisor at BES and came along to the Rural SEN meeting to highlight areas where our members could get support in light of the Cost of Living crisis. Amaka spoke about BES's SME Loan Scheme in which small and medium sized businesses can receive loans of up to £100k to help them pay for energy and carbon-saving upgrades in their business. Organisations could also receive a cashback grant of up to £30k.

She also spoke about the Energy Efficiency Assessments offered through BES. Whether organisations are just starting out on their energy-saving journey and need some pointers or are looking for expertise and funding to support their current plans, BES's team of experienced business advisors and energy-saving consultants are here to help.

Additional links:

- SME Loan Scheme – <https://businessenergyscotland.org/smeloan/>
- Energy Efficiency Assessment - <https://businessenergyscotland.org/energy-efficiency-assessment/>

You can find Amaka's full Powerpoint presentation here - <https://1drv.ms/p/s!AvzeyTPXeJSq2H778pdI2MCwAfMg?e=ffljMU>

ADDITIONAL NEWS

Social Enterprise Scotland Membership Survey

Social Enterprise Scotland have released a membership survey for their members. Those who complete the survey will be in with the chance to win £100.

They want to hear from their members about what the organisation is doing well, where they can improve and what their priorities should be to help us plan future work and develop their member support and services. Please take 10 minutes to complete their survey.

All responses will be entered into a draw and the winner will receive £100 to spend with a Buy Social Scotland listed social enterprise.

SES Membership Survey - https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024_SESmembersurvey

Community Learning Exchanges

The Rural SE Hub are currently looking at topics for community learning exchanges that we can focus on over the next year. If anyone has any suggestions for relevant topics that they think would be of interest then please email: aspence@inspiralba.org.uk.

NETWORK UPDATES

- [Outside the Box](#) have a new project called Climate Chat that is about engaging with different marginalised communities across Scotland on Climate Action and Engagement. They have had a few in-person events already and have a few online shared learning sessions event coming up over the next month. You can register for these two events here –
 - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/climate-chat-shared-learning-tickets-825148731067>
 - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/climate-chat-shared-learning-tickets-827200578197>

They also have loads of resources on their webpage that they have made in conjunction with various different groups they are working with. You can access these resources here - <https://otbds.org/projects/climate-chat/>

- [Bute Produce](#) is reopening to the community after being closed since the Covid-19 Pandemic. Staff and volunteers have been working hard to get it ready for the public again. Bute Produce have been awarded some money from Awards for All which will help them kickstart a project with three focuses; teaching children about supply-chain, celebrating culture through food and health and wellbeing respectively.