

Meet our Expert Panel



Sarah Deas

Trustee, Wellbeing Economic Alliance (Scotland) and Visiting Professor, Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, University of Strathclyde

Sarah is passionate about creating a progressive economy – one that delivers for people and planet. She is currently a trustee of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (Scotland) and the Bank of Scotland Foundation. She is also a Visiting Professor at the University of Strathclyde, a member of the Institute of Directors' Sustainable Business advisory group and a member of the British Council's Scotland Advisory Committee. She is a fellow of both the Royal Society of Arts and the Salzburg Global Seminars. Previous non-executive roles include chair of Arts & Business Scotland. Her professional background is in strategy, marketing and business development, most recently as chief executive of Co-operative Development Scotland (Scottish Enterprise subsidiary) where she championed progressive business models. Her career spans the public and private sectors, including leadership roles in economic development, advertising and the packaging industry.



Miriam Brett

Director of Research and Advocacy at Common Wealth think tank

Miriam is Director of Research and Advocacy at Common Wealth think tank, designing ownership models for a sustainable and democratic economy. She is also a research fellow at The Democracy Collaborative and the Wellbeing Economy Alliance. Prior to this role, Miriam worked for a critical watchdog to the IMF and World Bank and was previously the SNP's economic advisor in Westminster.



Joe Guinan
Vice President of Theory, Research & Policy, The Democracy Collaborative

Joe Guinan is Vice President of Theory, Research & Policy at The Democracy Collaborative, a U.S.-based think-do tank working on the democratic economy, where he serves as Executive Director of the Next System Project. A former journalist, he was previously a program director at the Aspen Institute and a fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and has served as a consultant to the William & Flora Hewlett Foundation. Born in England with dual Irish and British citizenship, he grew up in labour movement circles and was educated at Balliol College, Oxford. He is a frequently cited expert on economic alternatives and system change and is co-author (with Christine Berry) of *People Get Ready! Preparing for a Corbyn Government* (O/R Books, 2019) and (with Martin O'Neill) of *The Case for Community Wealth Building* (Polity, 2020).



Laurie Macfarlane
Economics Editor at openDemocracy

Laurie Macfarlane is an economist and writer based in Edinburgh. He is currently economics editor at openDemocracy and a fellow at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, New Economics Foundation and Democracy Collaborative. He is the co-author of the critically acclaimed book 'Rethinking the Economics of Land and Housing.'



Jess Thomas

Senior Programme Leader for place based economic development at Co-operatives UK's Development Unit

Jess Thomas is the senior programme lead for place based economic development at Co-operatives UK's Development Unit. Jess is currently overseeing several programmes including Power to Change flagship place-based programme, Empowering Places. The five-year programme is centred on a place based, action led approach to developing enterprise in community ownership in 6 places of high deprivation across England. Jess has a background in campaigning and movement building before working in the co-operative sector.



Neil McInroy

Chief Executive, Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

Neil is CEO of CLES www.cles.org.uk – UK's leading independent think and do tank, realising progressive economics for people and place. CLES's aim is to achieve social justice, good local economies and effective public services for everyone, everywhere.

At present he is focused on applying a progressive economic model for places which includes ideas around local wealth building. Local wealth building is a new people-centered approach to local economic development. It is a range of practical actions that reorganises local economies so that wealth is retained and flows into our towns, cities and communities, rather than flowing out.

Neil has been commissioned and collaborated, with a broad range of local, regional and national governments and agencies across UK and in Europe, Asia, US and Australasia. He is an Honorary Fellow at the Manchester Urban Institute, University of Manchester, and a Visiting Fellow at Edge Hill University.



Sarah McKinley

Director for European Programs for The Democracy Collaborative and the European Representative for the Next System Project

Sarah McKinley is the Director for European Programs for The Democracy Collaborative and the European Representative for the Next System Project and works to build transatlantic partnerships to develop new community wealth building models and learning exchanges to advance the democratic economy in the United Kingdom and continental Europe. Previously, she managed the Learning/Action Lab for Community Wealth Building, supported the publication of *An Indigenous Approach to Community Wealth Building: A Lakota Translation* and co-authored *Cities Building Community Wealth*, *The Anchor Dashboard: Aligning Institutional Practice to Meet Low-Income Community Needs*, and *Raising Student Voices: Student Action for University Community Investment*. She currently resides in Brussels, Belgium.



Roz Foyer

General Secretary- Designate of the Scottish Trades Unions Congress

Roz Foyer is the STUC's General Secretary Designate. She comes to the role with twenty-five years' experience in the trade union movement. Roz began as a workplace activist in the Benefits Agency. After leading a successful campaign against support services privatisation, she was recruited by the printer workers union as a trainee organiser, before gaining prominence in the Scottish movement as an Assistant Secretary at the STUC. She went on to become a National Officer with the Transport and General Workers Union, later moving into Unite's National Organising Department. She excelled as a strategist who delivered a series of successful membership campaigns. Her role as General Secretary Designate of the STUC involves representing over half a million trade unionists in Scotland, co-ordinating, developing and articulating the views and policies of the trade union movement.



Ian Mitchell
Chief Executive, Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS)

Ian has 25 years plus senior experience in the public sector at local, regional and national level and within the social enterprise sector. Ian is now Chief Executive of Community Enterprise in Scotland (CEIS) one of Scotland's largest social enterprises which delivers quality business advice, loan funding support and employability services across Scotland.

During the last 20 years Ian has worked for the Scottish Government and has led on several policy initiatives. Most recently heading up the Scottish Government response to and approach to Brexit, including the promotion of a positive approach to migration for Scotland. Ian managed legislation through the Scottish Parliament including Best Value in local government and community planning. Ian has used innovative programme and project management approaches, most notably outcome-based approaches to assist with the delivery of investment programmes. These include the former Scotland-wide Community Regeneration Fund and a groundbreaking national investment programme for social enterprise – Futurebuilders.

Ian also has over 11 years' experience in local government having led a series of high-profile European investment programmes and having led a review of programme management structures for these programmes across Scotland.