

Construct a thoughtful dialogue on climate emergency

Companies who embed climate literacy into their corporate ethos not only stand to benefit from opportunities in the green sector, but also contribute towards Scotland's journey to Net Zero, writes Peter Reekie, CEO of the Scottish Futures Trust

THE World Bank estimates that approximately 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from infrastructure construction and operations such as power plants, buildings, and transport.

As a public sector centre of infrastructure expertise, the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) has reduced these infrastructure-related emissions front and centre in our corporate priorities.

We want those who have a role in planning, funding, building, and maintaining Scotland's infrastructure to play their full part in achieving the legislative pathway to net zero emissions by 2045 whilst contributing to inclusive economic growth and resilient places across Scotland.

In February of this year, Scottish Government published its 2021-26 Infrastructure Investment Plan setting out three overall priorities:

- Enabling the transition to net zero emissions and environmental sustainability
- Driving inclusive economic growth
- Building resilient and sustainable places

We at SFT cannot play our part in delivering these priorities unless we are climate-change literate.

As SFT's chief executive, it is my job to provide leadership on the most important issues facing our organisation.

We have had a team dedicated to low-carbon infrastructure since 2013, but I felt that I needed to up my game in understanding the science behind Climate Change and the leading practices in developing solutions.

I joined the Scottish Government funded group to take the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) Climate Solutions Professional Course and have been followed by five of my colleagues from across our organisation – not just the net-zero specialist team.

I believe that embedding climate literacy across all that we do, rather than having it concentrated in one specialist



■ Chief Executive of the Scottish Futures Trust Peter Reekie

team is essential for the scale of change that we need to deliver across Scotland's Infrastructure.

The SFT attendees used the Climate Solutions Professional programme to refine their understanding of infrastructure-related emissions and draw out the areas where our corporate actions can make the most difference.

Heat used in buildings and transport emissions are the two biggest challenges in our sector and amongst the biggest for Scotland as a whole.

Transport is our highest single carbon emitter due to the fuel mix, whereas heating buildings is the highest energy consumer, accounting for 54% of Scotland's total energy consumption, versus 25% for transport.

In each of these areas there are huge challenges for the whole of Scotland to overcome and, importantly, corresponding opportunities to be pursued.

We will be using the talents of SFT's infrastructure professionals and our unique relationships across central and local government and the private sector to pursue them relentlessly.

We will work to develop the funding and financing arrangements which will be central to creating markets for decarbonisation, manage delivery programmes and collaborate with colleagues across the public sector to show real climate leadership, using decarbonisation of our own buildings and transport fleets to develop local skills and supply chains to maximise the economic upside of the transition.

When the RSGS developed the 90-minute Climate Solutions Accelerator programme we were then able to take our corporate

knowledge to a higher level. Now everyone in SFT has attended that programme to bring increased understanding of this critical global, national and organisation issue to us all.

We have a shared understanding of the global drivers, the language of climate change and the ways we can go about developing and delivering solutions.

I know that many organisations have required training for all staff on issues such as IT security, the



Attendees used the programme to draw out areas where our actions can make the most difference



■ Companies and organisations can take the initiative by educating staff on climate change with an innovative new online programme

Get on course for a lesson on sustainability

THE Herald is determined to play its full part in the climate change debate, having recently launched a pioneering new initiative in conjunction with Climate Solutions Network.

This unique online programme has been developed by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (RSGS) in association with the universities of Stirling and Edinburgh and the Institute of Directors (IoD).

Climate Solutions Accelerator provides a quick, simple and rounded introduction to the fundamentals of climate change, helping to explain how everyone and every organisation can play a role to reduce their emissions, and informing businesses and organisations so they can better plan and predict future trends, legislation, and change.

It focuses on the need-to-know information and most importantly outlines the key solutions managers can implement to respond to climate change and is already being used by other forward-thinking major organisations.

To find out more visit www.climatesolutionsnetwork.com

General Data Protection Regulations and Diversity and Inclusion.

These are critical organisational issues and SFT is no different – we have them too.

However, in my view, an understanding across all staff members of climate change as the biggest global issue of our generation, and what we can all do to play our part in mitigating it, is equally as important. Treating climate literacy as a baseline knowledge across our organisation does two things.

Firstly, it cements competency and language as all training does – but equally importantly it identifies the issue as core to the success of our organisation's mission, showing leadership commitment and creating a common cause.

SFT may be the first organisation to have Climate Solutions as an all-staff training package – but I very much hope we will not be the last.

The Herald CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

What do you *really* know about Climate Change?

Tackling the global climate emergency is everyone's responsibility. Whether you're an individual, a small business or part of a national or multi-national organisation, learning more about a seismic issue such as this can give you a better understanding on how to transition to a greener, carbon-neutral future.

The Herald has long been a champion for climate action through our 'Climate for Change' campaign and now, working in partnership with the **Climate Solutions Network**, we're keen to engage with businesses and individuals

to educate and inform on the changes we can all make in business and in our personal lives.

Our courses offer certificate accreditation of your commitment to taking personal and corporate action on climate change. Prices are inclusive of VAT and start from just £120 per participant.

To begin your Climate Solutions journey and discuss the various opportunities please contact:

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www.climatesolutionsnetwork.com/the-herald-climate-solutions