

New Directors August 2023 - Biographies

Rodney Ayre Senior Department Production Manager, Mitsubishi Electric Air Conditioning Systems Europe Ltd

Rodney Ayre joined Mitsubishi Electric in 1998 and is the Senior Department Manager responsible for production activities on the 6 sites in West Lothian.

Previously he was a manager with British Rail working on the development of the Heathrow Express Rail link and a project engineer for the manufacturing of the freight rolling stock in the Channel Tunnel.

He is a Chartered Engineer, Fellow of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE), Past President of Scottish Engineering, former chair of the Japanese Business Council in Europe Group, a board member of West Lothian Chamber of Commerce, chair of Developing the Young Workforce (West Lothian) and member of the Strategic leadership Group for Manufacturing within the Scottish Government.

Claire Baird CEO, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce

Claire Baird was appointed as Chief Executive in September 2022.

Claire has been involved in the Chamber Network for over twenty years with a range of roles. These have included Regional Lead (Ayrshire) for Developing the Young Workforce, a senior secondment to the Scottish Government's Directorate for Fair Work, Employability and Skills, and worked at the Scottish Chambers of Commerce in policy development. She is a passionate advocate for Ayrshire, and the role of the Scottish Chambers of Commerce Network across Scotland and internationally.

She is fully committed to representing the Scottish business community through influencing and developing the future strategy of SCC, Government(s) and other key partners and stakeholders.

Jacqueline Dobson President, Barrhead Travel

Jacqueline Dobson is the President of Barrhead Travel, one of the UK's largest travel agencies. With over two decades of experience within the travel industry, Jacqueline has been pivotal in shaping Barrhead Travel into a UK-wide success story.

Thanks to her proven track-record, ambition and innovative strategic decisions, Jacqueline's story of success is well-known and admired amongst industry peers and senior business executives. Jacqueline has been commended at a number of business and industry awards including Inspiring Woman of the Year at the Business Women Scotland awards and TTG's Contribution to Travel award, both recognising her steadfast leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Her grass-roots development from where she began to where she is now – as trainee to President of the UK's leading travel groups – is echoed in her passion for mentorship. She leads and inspires a new generation of future business leaders through a dedicated coaching and one-to-one mentoring programme.

Jacqueline also serves as President of the Scottish Passenger Agents Association (SPAA).

Dr Hina Khan Executive Director, Space Scotland

Dr Hina Khan has recently taken up the first ever Executive Director role at Space Scotland, a not-for-profit company formed through an industry-led group seeking to develop the space sector in Scotland.

As ED, Hina will pull together the sector, championing the unique end to end capability of space in Scotland, engaging directly with UK and Scottish Governments to enable growth of the sector and capture opportunities that can be overcome through effective use of the Scottish Space Ecosystem.

Hina has an extensive background in the space sector, with a PhD in Space Science from the University of Leicester followed by a 10yr research career in space science data analytics from NASA, ESA and UCL.

Doug Smith Consultant, CBRE Scotland

Doug Smith is a leading voice and expert on a range of areas including commercial property, economic development, inward investment and regeneration.

A qualified chartered surveyor, he currently serves as Consultant to CBRE, the world's largest commercial real estate services and investment firm. Previously, Doug served as Managing Director and Chairman of CBRE Scotland and head of the EMEA Corporate Capital Markets service line in London.

Doug holds various external appointments including Lay Member of University of Glasgow Estates Committee, member of Scottish Property Federation Commercial Real Estate Committee, member of the Bank of England Scottish Panel and an Honorary Professor in the Urban Institute at Heriot Watt University. In previous external roles he was Chair of Irvine Bay Urban Regeneration Company and a member of the Scottish Cities Taskforce.

Mary Ann Smith Director, We Achieve Associates Ltd

Mary Ann is an experienced leader who provides consultancy and coaching to global enterprise and corporate sectors. With over 30 years of experience, she specialises in transforming £500k to £20m turnover businesses and is passionate about supporting small start-up businesses to embed solid growth foundations.

She is a Board Director with the Dunbartonshire Chamber of Commerce, leading business development and online support for SMEs. She is also committed to creating more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces with a focus on supporting the development of female talent and releasing opportunities for women to access executive and board-level roles.

Mary Ann advocates showing up as your true self. She believes that this level of authenticity is fundamental to business and life success but is often difficult to achieve. To support this, she created GENIUS Leadership®, which simplifies leadership development and one she embeds within her Executive coaching and leadership development roles.
