

3rd John Pearce Memorial Lecture 2017

The Chief Executive Officer of the WISE Group, Laurie Russell delivered the 2017 John Pearce Memorial Lecture.

Immediately prior to that, Professor Pamela Gillies, GCU Principal and Vice-Chancellor CBE FRSE welcomed guests and Professor Cam Donaldson, Director of the Yunus Centre for Social Business and Health at GCU, introduced the lecture held in memory of John Pearce, a founding figure in social enterprise.

CommonHealth researcher Dr Gill Murray then provided an update on the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland), before Laurie started his address.

Laurie Russell reflected on his career in social and economic regeneration in Western Scotland. In work spanning some 40 years, his journey through community regeneration initiatives in Clydebank to Chief Executive of Strathclyde European Partnership Ltd, and finally CEO of Wise Group from 2006 had intertwined with that of John Pearce at various stages. He also considered aspects of continuity and change in the sectors relationship with local authorities, governments in Holyrood and Westminster, and Europe.

The Wise Group is a Glasgow based social enterprise established in 1983. It makes a positive difference to people's lives through accessing new skills and securing employment, reducing re-offending, regenerating communities and tackling fuel poverty in Scotland and north-east England.

Laurie chaired the board of Social Enterprise Scotland from 2007 to 2013. He is a geography graduate and has a MPhil in town and regional planning from Glasgow University.

John Pearce played a pivotal role in Scotland's community business movement, the precursor to social enterprise. Before his death in 2011, he donated his collection of papers to the GCU archives, which have now been developed into the Social Enterprise Collection (Scotland).