Beacons for Public Engagement are funded by the UK higher education funding councils, Research Councils UK, and the Wellcome Trust.

EDINBURGH BELTANE BEACON FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FINAL REPORT

FIRST SUBMITTED 3 OCTOBER 2012

REVISION SUBMITTED 17 DECEMBER 2012
# SECTIONS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ............................... 1
2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE BEACON ....................... 2
3. OVERALL APPROACH TO CULTURE CHANGE ..................... 4
4. IMPACT ...................................................... 7
5. STORY OF CHANGE ........................................ 14
6. LESSONS LEARNT ........................................... 24
7. SUSTAINABILITY PLANS ..................................... 27
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......................... 29

APPENDIX I - MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP AND BELTANE CORE TEAM .......................... 30
APPENDIX II - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND FUNDED PROJECTS FOR EACH YEAR ......................... 31
APPENDIX III – DISCOVER BELTANE: CASE STUDIES OF ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS FUNDED ........ 41
APPENDIX IV - SPENDING PROFILE ..................................... 44
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Edinburgh Beltane – Beacon for Public Engagement (Edinburgh Beltane) was one of six Research Councils UK (RCUK) Beacons for Public Engagement which ran from 2008 until 2012. Sharing its name with the Gaelic word for ‘beacon’ and a spring festival for matchmaking between communities, Edinburgh Beltane was a partnership between five Scottish academic institutions (University of Edinburgh; Heriot-Watt University; Edinburgh Napier University; Queen Margaret University; University of Highlands and Islands, formerly the UHI Millennium Institute) and nine non-university partners. Edinburgh Beltane was built on an ethos of collaboration and engagement between and beyond its partners.

Edinburgh Beltane defined public engagement as ‘sharing knowledge between communities, policy makers (internal and external to higher education institutions – ‘HEIs’) and researchers’. Working both from its own initial aims and those agreed collectively with the other RCUK Beacons, Edinburgh Beltane established its central objective as being to embed a culture of public engagement in higher education institutions.

To achieve its objectives, Edinburgh Beltane had the following staffing and governance structure:

- Director: Professor Mary Bownes
- Core staff: Peak staffing levels of four posts, including a deputy director
- Working groups: Five working groups to coordinate specific lines of activity (events; reward and recognition; training; evaluation; communications)

From the start, one of Edinburgh Beltane’s key aims was to establish its Fellowship scheme; this scheme enabled researchers to spend dedicated time undertaking public engagement activities and training. By acting as public engagement ambassadors within their institutions, the fifteen Beltane Fellows (and two Honorary Beltane Fellows) were able to help embed public engagement in everyday academic life. We felt this was more likely to lead to sustainability than having a larger core team.

Edinburgh Beltane met or exceeded all of its objectives, including its central goal to embed public engagement in HEIs. In a survey which formed part of Beltane’s final evaluation, 49% of respondents reported that the culture of public engagement at their institution had become more supportive during the period of the Edinburgh Beltane project, with the majority of the remaining respondents being unsure rather than in clear disagreement. Edinburgh Beltane successfully demonstrated the engagement best practice it advocated in flagship events like Discover Beltane. Equally, Beltane-coordinated training was valued highly and Beltane Fellows were clear about the benefits their award had given them.

Edinburgh Beltane brought about many stories of change, for example: the University of Edinburgh showed particular improvement in communication and support; Heriot-Watt University launched a new public engagement prize; Edinburgh Napier established new Champions for Public Engagement. Key lessons learnt from Beltane include the need to involve the right people and to have a clear vision. With funding from four of the partner universities, the legacy of Edinburgh Beltane’s work will be sustained and culture change further embedded through the new Beltane Public Engagement Network.
2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE BEACON

The Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement (Edinburgh Beltane) was built upon an ethos of collaboration and engagement between and within our academic and non-academic partners. In identifying our strategic priorities, we worked closely with all partners to develop a shared definition of public engagement to inform our strategic priorities, plans and activities.

2.1 PARTNERS
Edinburgh Beltane was a partnership of five Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and nine other organisations, led by the University of Edinburgh.

The academic partners were:

- The University of Edinburgh
- Heriot-Watt University
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Queen Margaret University
- The University of Highlands and Islands (formerly the UHI Millennium Institute)

The Edinburgh College of Art and the Roslin Institute, having merged with the University of Edinburgh in 2010 and 2008 respectively, are now both embedded within an academic partner.

Edinburgh Beltane’s nine non-university partners were:

- Edinburgh Consortium for Rural Research
- Edinburgh International Science Festival
- Global Science
- National Museums Scotland
- Our Dynamic Earth
- Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
- Royal Observatory Visitor Centre
- The Royal Society of Edinburgh
- Vitae Scotland & Northern Ireland Hub

Working with these partners ensured that Edinburgh Beltane had links with wider communities and a non-academic perspective. Some of these organisations also brought specific professional experience in working with wider audiences that could be shared across the partnership.

2.2 OUR DEFINITION OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
We define public engagement with research as ‘sharing knowledge between communities, policy makers (including those internal and external to HEIs) and researchers’ (figure 2.1).
Our definition uses unrestricted but managed methods to:

- Enhance democracy through evidence-based policy decisions.
- Allow informed decisions and choices (by the public).
- Identify future research objectives.
- Create opportunities for publics to engage with research and for researchers to engage with the public.

2.3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our strategic priorities as a Beacon were to:

- Embed a culture of public engagement in each of our five higher education partners.
- Encourage, support and help researchers to play their part in society and policy making by engaging relevant public audiences.
- Encourage citizen participation in and understanding of research that is relevant to public policy, such as health and life sciences, energy and the environment.
- Encourage researchers from different disciplines and working from different perspectives to work together and look at issues more broadly.
3. OVERALL APPROACH TO CULTURE CHANGE

Central to Edinburgh Beltane’s approach to supporting culture change was the development of a project plan, governance and staffing structure tailored to partner requirements and our strategic objectives.

3.1 STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE

Professor Mary Bownes, currently the University of Edinburgh’s Senior Vice Principal External Engagement, was Director of Edinburgh Beltane. Prof Bownes led the successful Beltane bid together with the current Communications and Engagement Manager for the University of Edinburgh’s College of Science and Engineering, Dr Patricia Erskine. Professor Bownes had line management responsibility for the core Beltane team and chaired the Steering Group, the latter being comprised of senior colleagues from partner organisations.¹

The remit of the Steering Group was to:

- Establish and fortify working relationships with appropriate partner organisations.
- Identify strategic areas for collaboration and development.
- Review activity carried out by the Beltane.
- Make recommendations on new initiatives and projects.

While the Steering Group played a key role in partner engagement and strategic direction, we felt it was important to build strong collaborative links across partners for staff at different levels and with different roles, many of whom were actively involved in different ways in bringing about culture change. Working groups, each with a membership drawn from across all partners, were established in five strategic areas:

- **Training and Staff Development**: Coordinated public engagement training and development for all levels of staff in the partnership; developed models to share courses and resources, and piloted new approaches to strategic personal development.
- **Communications**: Maintained the profile of Edinburgh Beltane among a range of internal and external audiences.
- **Events**: Developed the Edinburgh Beltane events programme; identified opportunities and best practice; set out and developed scoring criteria for the Public Engagement Challenge.
- **Reward, Recognition and Related Matters**: Influenced policy and planning through dialogue with HR offices and senior management; adapted current HR systems to specifically include public engagement; identified and shared best practice; identified alternative means of acknowledgement and reward.
- **Evaluation**: Ensured consistent evaluation of the Edinburgh Beltane programme; established evaluation resources for partners.

Supporting these working groups was a significant element of the core team’s workload, but they were crucial to the design and implementation of an appropriate and effective programme. Some of their key achievements are listed in appendix II.ii.

3.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FELLOWS

¹ See appendix I for membership of Steering Group and Beltane core team
The Fellowship scheme was launched in 2008, initially to develop an enduring ethos of public engagement in early-career researchers. Fellowships allowed time to develop public engagement ideas, improve engagement skills and act as a public engagement ambassador. In response to demand, the initiative was extended to all levels of academic staff (see appendix II.i for a list of Fellows).

The Fellowship Scheme provided awards of up to £8,000 to cover a secondment buy-out for the Fellow (20% full-time equivalent for six months) or replacement teaching costs. Fellows were expected to spend half of their seconded time in Edinburgh Beltane’s office to share best practice and develop a supportive network. They were also asked to share their experiences, and some chose to do this in the form of a blog. The blogs make for entertaining, thought-provoking reading, but also send out important messages, including practical advice on how to overcome common obstacles to public engagement and examples of public engagement effectively extending impact beyond the specialist group of people directly involved in research. The impact of the Fellowship scheme is covered further in section 4.

3.3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY
At the 2009 Beacons Annual Gathering, Edinburgh Beltane worked with the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE), other Beacons and funders to establish five objectives for the RCUK Beacons for Public Engagement:

1. Create a culture within HEIs and research institutions and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students.
2. Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff (all levels), postgraduate students and undergraduates to get involved where appropriate.
3. Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded down to departmental level.
4. Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate work and ensure those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise.
5. Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning.

Mary Bownes and Patricia Erskine, the staff who wrote the original Beltane proposal, also invested considerable time in working with other Beacons on an initial survey run by Oakleigh Consulting Limited. The survey was commissioned to evaluate how staff working in UK HEIs and research institutes and centres perceived public engagement. The survey was first run in 2008 – at the start of the RCUK Beacons initiative – to establish a baseline against which the Beacons for Public Engagement could be evaluated in future years.

A key task for the Beltane Steering Group and core team, with input from Dr Laura Grant (external evaluator for Edinburgh Beltane), was to create the over-arching Beltane project plan and objectives. In section 4, we outline the seven objectives established for Edinburgh Beltane (section 4.1), and the Theory of Change approach (a means of working out how to bring about a social change) subsequently used to establish the indicators and steps needed to achieve the culture change to which we aspired (section 4.2). The work described there informed the design of activities, supporting staffing structures and governance arrangements needed to generate the desired short-, medium- and long-term outcomes of the Beltane project, outlined here in table 3.1.
Table 3.1: Edinburgh Beltane Logic Model of activities, staffing structures, governance and outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Short term outcomes</th>
<th>Medium term outcomes</th>
<th>Long term outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Core team Director**  
Deputy Director*  
Project Administrator*  
0.1 FTE Project Adviser**  
0.4 FTE Programme Manager*  
0.5 FTE Events Officer* (1yr)  
0.5 FTE Comms Officer* (1yr) | General  
Share practice  
Establish networks  
Build capacity in PE  
Map stakeholders  
Recruit PE Fellows  
QA & Coaching of PE Fellows  
Training and Staff Development Group  
Training survey  
Case studies of successful engagements  
Share best practice in training  
Promote PE training to trainers  
Advice on mentoring programme | General  
PE activities involving researchers/research, publics, policymakers  
Collaborations and networks  
14 PE fellows + 2 Honorary PE fellows  
Training and Staff Development Group  
Survey of existing course relevant to public engagement  
Shared database of courses  
gpd.beltanenetwork.org  
3 new courses & course evaluation report  
Embedding team at the IAD | Beltane  
Awareness and support of Beltane  
Effective partnership  
Public / policymakers  
Researchers inform MSPs' community meetings  
Policy makers willing and able to engage with researchers/publics  
PE valued by all stakeholders | Researchers  
Gain skills and experience in PE  
Time and funding available for PE  
Collaborations built and good practice shared  
Researchers support peers in PE  
Researchers value PE  
Network of PE champions | HEIs  
Ownership of cultural change agenda  
Shared learning of PE and research  
Benefits to HEIs / researchers  
Higher quality research proposals  
Better informed research and researchers  
Better quality teaching (and more motivated/engaged students) through researchers' PE skills  
More young people choosing research careers  
Better recognition of HEIs | Public / MSPIs demand/expert researchers' involvement in PE  
Researchers  
Greater awareness and clearer links between PE and policy | HEIs  
PE funding linked to overheads: financial controllers understand process  
PE portfolio plays significant role in HEI funding models: 1% linked to research grants  
Competition between HEIs in PE and celebration of excellence  
HEIs employ PE staff  
Collective and institutional understanding of PE inc. related competencies  
PE in strategic plans  
PE recognised in appraisal systems Needs of Coms professionals understood | This is a context where:  
Funders PE included in REF/RAE  
PE is a precondition of research funding  
Funders demand information on outcomes of PE  
Funding available for PE  
Wider benefits | Scotland / Edinburgh enhances international reputation for research  
More informed public  
More informed policymakers  
Public can easily find out about HEI research  
Better policy decisions (stronger evidence base) |

** Scottish Gov / ESRC - studentship funding  
*** UoE support / Office space  
Press office support  
** And ** above  
Partner Support  
Communications support  
Members of Groups  
PE Fellow Candidates  
North Coast and other Beacons experience etc  
Communications strategy  
Communication strategy  
Appointment of Events & Communications Officer  
The Communications Breakfast seminar series  
Reward, Recognition and Related Matters Group  
Adopt HR systems  
Identify & devise other means of acknowledging PE work  
Meetings with Principals, Vice Principals & HR teams | Events Group  
Survey of event opportunities  
Review of PE Challenges | Events Group  
21 PE Challenge Projects  
Engaging Scotland Challenge  
3 annual Gathering events |
4. IMPACT

4.1 PERFORMANCE AGAINST EDINBURGH BELTANE’S ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES

As noted in section 3.3, Edinburgh Beltane (‘eb’) established its own seven objectives. These mapped onto the five Beacons for Public Engagement (‘BPE’) objectives already outlined in section 3.3 as shown in table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edinburgh Beltane (‘eb’) objective</th>
<th>Beacons for Public Engagement (‘BPE’) objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Develop a successful collaborative partnership with good communication links.</td>
<td>4. Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners to share good practices, celebrate their work and ensure those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Develop an effective management structure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Ensure effective evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Embed a culture of public engagement across the partnership</td>
<td>3. Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Run events and activities with partners to share best practice on public engagement in our theme, research relevant to public policy.</td>
<td>1. Create a culture within HEIs and research institutions and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi. Establish effective training and support for public engagement activities across the partnership.</td>
<td>2. Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students and undergraduates where appropriate to get involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii. Develop appropriate post-BPE structure to meet ongoing public engagement support needs.</td>
<td>5. Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 – Mapping of Edinburgh Beltane objectives onto Beacons objectives

The additional objectives proposed by Edinburgh Beltane ensured that the Edinburgh Beacon would be effectively managed and evaluated. All of the ‘eb’ objectives – and, by consequence, ‘BPE’ objectives – have been met and often exceeded, as we outline in the rest of this section.
Dr Kathy Velander, Chair of Training and Staff Development working group

Beltane’s almost like the key [network] for us to be quite honest. Because it just covers such a – it’s massive, it’s sort of a bigger broader network and there’s nothing else really like that to be quite honest.”

Final evaluation interviewee

Of the five academic institutions involved in Edinburgh Beltane, four – the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Queen Margaret and Heriot-Watt – have already committed to funding the partnership for at least another three years in the form of the new Beltane Network (objectives eb i and BPE 4). The academic consortium worked closely with external partners to deliver its activities, a number of which were involved with the Edinburgh Beltane’s management. Activities with some of these non-academic bodies are already underway as part of the Beltane Network and discussions with others about future joint initiatives are planned or already taking place. A directory of Beltane members – currently containing over one hundred entries – was compiled and is made available on the Beltane website, as were databases of the engagement and training opportunities available across the partners; all of these resources are being further developed by the new Beltane Network.

As noted, Beltane’s management structure involved individuals both from across the academic consortium and other key partners (eb ii). In addition to the Steering Group, there were working groups (see section 3.1) which met, in some cases, every two months. Some of Edinburgh Beltane’s Steering Group has formed the Beltane Network’s new Advisory Group. Evaluations of Edinburgh Beltane (eb iii) were undertaken by Laura Grant of Laura Grant Associates (see also section 3.3); from these, annual reviews were produced.

Laura Grant’s final evaluation of the Edinburgh Beltane showed clearly that researchers at partner universities feel more supported in undertaking public engagement than they did at the start of the project (eb iv; BPE 1, 3). The Edinburgh Beltane Fellowship scheme supported fifteen individuals working on subjects ranging from bilingualism to forestry, and will continue to run under the Beltane Network. The Fellowship scheme has recently been highly commended in the “Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers” category of the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, and was described by one of the Fellows as “one of the most successful things that the Beltane has done”.

Our evaluators noted the following impacts of the scheme on our Fellows’ professional development:

- Provided Fellows with an extensive network of public-engagement enthusiasts and connections to public groups (e.g. policy makers, voluntary organisations, societies).
- Gave Fellows recognition for public engagement activities through conference papers on public engagement, joint interdisciplinary research papers and increased professional profiles.
- Allowed Fellows to develop new professional approaches to public engagement, for example, collaborative research projects and working with partner organisations.
- Improved Fellows’ confidence and experience in a wide range of public engagement approaches.

The Fellows enabled researchers in our partner institutions to see demonstrable, inspiring and replicable examples of their peers adapting the skills they use every day in their work (such as

“I was delighted with the outputs of the training group; we worked as a partnership with everyone willingly contributing their time, ideas and skills. It was fantastic to have the camaraderie and support from such a diverse variety of people from so many institutions.”

Dr Kathy Velander, Chair of Training and Staff Development working group

“The Beltane Fellowship has been a unique opportunity for my career development.”

Dr Kathy Charles, Beltane Fellow

Of the five academic institutions involved in Edinburgh Beltane, four – the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Queen Margaret and Heriot-Watt – have already committed to funding the partnership for at least another three years in the form of the new Beltane Network (objectives eb i and BPE 4). The academic consortium worked closely with external partners to deliver its activities, a number of which were involved with the Edinburgh Beltane’s management. Activities with some of these non-academic bodies are already underway as part of the Beltane Network and discussions with others about future joint initiatives are planned or already taking place. A directory of Beltane members – currently containing over one hundred entries – was compiled and is made available on the Beltane website, as were databases of the engagement and training opportunities available across the partners; all of these resources are being further developed by the new Beltane Network.

As noted, Beltane’s management structure involved individuals both from across the academic consortium and other key partners (eb ii). In addition to the Steering Group, there were working groups (see section 3.1) which met, in some cases, every two months. Some of Edinburgh Beltane’s Steering Group has formed the Beltane Network’s new Advisory Group. Evaluations of Edinburgh Beltane (eb iii) were undertaken by Laura Grant of Laura Grant Associates (see also section 3.3); from these, annual reviews were produced.

Laura Grant’s final evaluation of the Edinburgh Beltane showed clearly that researchers at partner universities feel more supported in undertaking public engagement than they did at the start of the project (eb iv; BPE 1, 3). The Edinburgh Beltane Fellowship scheme supported fifteen individuals working on subjects ranging from bilingualism to forestry, and will continue to run under the Beltane Network. The Fellowship scheme has recently been highly commended in the “Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers” category of the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, and was described by one of the Fellows as “one of the most successful things that the Beltane has done”.

Our evaluators noted the following impacts of the scheme on our Fellows’ professional development:

- Provided Fellows with an extensive network of public-engagement enthusiasts and connections to public groups (e.g. policy makers, voluntary organisations, societies).
- Gave Fellows recognition for public engagement activities through conference papers on public engagement, joint interdisciplinary research papers and increased professional profiles.
- Allowed Fellows to develop new professional approaches to public engagement, for example, collaborative research projects and working with partner organisations.
- Improved Fellows’ confidence and experience in a wide range of public engagement approaches.

The Fellows enabled researchers in our partner institutions to see demonstrable, inspiring and replicable examples of their peers adapting the skills they use every day in their work (such as

“I was delighted with the outputs of the training group; we worked as a partnership with everyone willingly contributing their time, ideas and skills. It was fantastic to have the camaraderie and support from such a diverse variety of people from so many institutions.”

Dr Kathy Velander, Chair of Training and Staff Development working group

“The Beltane Fellowship has been a unique opportunity for my career development.”

Dr Kathy Charles, Beltane Fellow

Of the five academic institutions involved in Edinburgh Beltane, four – the University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Queen Margaret and Heriot-Watt – have already committed to funding the partnership for at least another three years in the form of the new Beltane Network (objectives eb i and BPE 4). The academic consortium worked closely with external partners to deliver its activities, a number of which were involved with the Edinburgh Beltane’s management. Activities with some of these non-academic bodies are already underway as part of the Beltane Network and discussions with others about future joint initiatives are planned or already taking place. A directory of Beltane members – currently containing over one hundred entries – was compiled and is made available on the Beltane website, as were databases of the engagement and training opportunities available across the partners; all of these resources are being further developed by the new Beltane Network.

As noted, Beltane’s management structure involved individuals both from across the academic consortium and other key partners (eb ii). In addition to the Steering Group, there were working groups (see section 3.1) which met, in some cases, every two months. Some of Edinburgh Beltane’s Steering Group has formed the Beltane Network’s new Advisory Group. Evaluations of Edinburgh Beltane (eb iii) were undertaken by Laura Grant of Laura Grant Associates (see also section 3.3); from these, annual reviews were produced.

Laura Grant’s final evaluation of the Edinburgh Beltane showed clearly that researchers at partner universities feel more supported in undertaking public engagement than they did at the start of the project (eb iv; BPE 1, 3). The Edinburgh Beltane Fellowship scheme supported fifteen individuals working on subjects ranging from bilingualism to forestry, and will continue to run under the Beltane Network. The Fellowship scheme has recently been highly commended in the “Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers” category of the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards, and was described by one of the Fellows as “one of the most successful things that the Beltane has done”.

Our evaluators noted the following impacts of the scheme on our Fellows’ professional development:

- Provided Fellows with an extensive network of public-engagement enthusiasts and connections to public groups (e.g. policy makers, voluntary organisations, societies).
- Gave Fellows recognition for public engagement activities through conference papers on public engagement, joint interdisciplinary research papers and increased professional profiles.
- Allowed Fellows to develop new professional approaches to public engagement, for example, collaborative research projects and working with partner organisations.
- Improved Fellows’ confidence and experience in a wide range of public engagement approaches.

The Fellows enabled researchers in our partner institutions to see demonstrable, inspiring and replicable examples of their peers adapting the skills they use every day in their work (such as
practicality, creative thinking and the ability to communicate complex ideas) to effectively engage the public with their research concepts. Further information about the fellowship scheme is given in appendix III.i.

In addition to the Fellowships, which were envisaged in the Edinburgh Beltane proposal, the Edinburgh Beacon played a crucial role in establishing the following public engagement awards:

- The University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt institution-level prizes
- The Royal Society of Edinburgh-Beltane prizes
- The Beltane Public Engagement Challenges
- The University of Edinburgh Principal’s Medal

All Edinburgh Beltane universities now also include public engagement in their promotion criteria for academic staff.

Edinburgh Beltane ran or contributed significantly to a great number of events (eb v; BPE5). Given our theme of ‘research relevant to public policy’, highlights were the 2011 Research Futures events held at the Scottish Parliament in collaboration with the Scotland’s Futures Forum. This joint activity has resulted in a new programme of twice-yearly working dinners for Members of Scottish Parliament (MSPs), parliamentary researchers and senior university management which will feed into Beltane Fellows’ activities. Our aim has been for all Beltane events to be models of best practice; one example is Discover Beltane, an evening which marked the official end of the Edinburgh Beacon. At the event, 110 attendees explored Beltane’s achievements by navigating their way through a personalised programme of storytellers (twenty-three in total) that were hidden around the National Museum of Scotland. The event resulted in the Discover Beltane final review (appendix V).

By enabling partner universities to combine their provision, Edinburgh Beltane ensured a much fuller offering for researchers at each institution than would otherwise be available (eb vi; BPE 2). The final year of Beltane training attracted 269 attendees to 11 different training courses. Most of our final-year trainees (80% or more for nearly all courses) remarked that the training ‘met or exceeded their expectations’. A flagship Beltane training course, Dialogue Techniques for Public Engagement, was developed during the course of a Beltane Fellowship and has resulted in two publications – one on dialogue theory and a training handbook – which have been available to download free of charge from the Beltane website and which can be re-used under Creative Commons license.

Four Beltane partner universities have committed to funding the Beltane Network until at least July 2015 (eb vii). The Network currently has two full-time employees who are housed in the University of Edinburgh’s Institute for Academic Development. This greater integration of Beltane into existing university structures indicates success in embedding an ethos of public engagement into academic culture.

4.2 FINAL EVALUATION OF EDINBURGH BELTANE

A summary of the inputs, outputs, mechanisms and outcomes of Edinburgh Beltane are shown in figure 4.1.

The Theory of Change (ToC) methodology used for Edinburgh Beltane is a powerful cultural change evaluation tool. In the ToC model, all the steps needed to bring about a particular change – outcomes, results, accomplishments or preconditions – are mapped out into a ‘pathway of change’. The particular pathway of change for Edinburgh Beltane is shown in figure 4.2 (green = vision of success; orange = effects; purple = indicators; yellow = outputs).
Inputs:
- Funding
- UoE support (e.g. office space)
- Core team
- Steering Group
- 5 Working Groups
- NCCPE and other Beacons
- Partners
- External Evaluator

Outputs:
- Beltane identity & brand
- Training workshops and database
- Events
- Fellows
- Challenge projects
- Contacts
- Manifesto for Public Engagement

Mechanisms:
- Collaborative working
- Working groups
- Networking and sharing events
- Facilitative approach to promoting change from within

Leadership: Beltane Director, Deputy Director, Fellows, NCCPE, and champions
- NCCPE work at sector level

Implementation environment:
Diverse existing cultures of public engagement at partner HEIs

Outcomes four years on:

For Beltane:
- Assets and knowledge: identity, reputation, contacts, partnerships, and trust.

For researchers:
- Awareness of and skills in public engagement;
- Opportunities to network and collaborate;
- Prizes and rewards for high-quality PE work;
- Support to develop PE practices.

For HEIs:
- Changes in practices including PE committees and groups;
- Some changes in policies;
- Joining up ‘pockets’ of engagement activity;
- More supportive cultures of public engagement.
HEIs employ PE staff (including at senior levels) included in REF / RAE. Ample funding is available for PE. Funders demand information on outcomes of PE as well as research. PE is a precondition of research funding. Public demand/expect researchers’ involvement in public engagement.

Researchers inform MSPs community meetings. PE is valued by all stakeholders. Stakeholders identified and mapped.

Public demand/expect researchers’ involvement in public engagement. PE is included in REF / RAE. Time and funding available for researchers to do PE. Researchers encourage and support their peers in public engagement.

Policy makers willing and able to engage with researchers/publics. Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Funders send strong message about public engagement being part of researchers’ roles.

Researchers inform MSPs community meetings. Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Researchers encourage and support their peers in public engagement.

Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Researchers recognise importance and value of PE and public input. Researchers inform MSPs community meetings.

Stakeholders see PE as HEI role and demand/expect researcher involvement. All researchers are willing and able to engage, strong communities of researchers doing PE exist. Researchers recognise importance and value of PE and public input.

Stakeholders see PE as HEI role and demand/expect researcher involvement. All researchers are willing and able to engage, strong communities of researchers doing PE exist. Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience.

Collective and institutional understanding of PE. PE written into promotion and appraisal performance indicators for researchers at all levels. HEIs employ PE staff (including at senior levels). PE portfolio plays significant role in HEI funding models.

Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Researchers encourage and support their peers in public engagement. Researchers recognise importance and value of PE and public input. Researchers inform MSPs community meetings.

A culture of public engagement is embedded in HEIs. Public engagement is supported, recognised and rewarded in HEIs. Spaces for PE and PE discussions exist in HEIs. Greater awareness and clearer links between PE and policy.

Spaces for PE and PE discussions exist in HEIs. PE capacity-building is engaging and relevant for researchers. Public engagement is supported, recognised and rewarded in HEIs.

Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Researchers encourage and support their peers in public engagement. Researchers recognise importance and value of PE and public input.

Funders demand information on outcomes of PE. Ample funding is available for PE. Public demand/expect researchers’ involvement in public engagement.

PE included in REF / RAE. PE included in job descriptions. Financial controllers understand process. Competition between HEIs in PE and celebration of excellence.

Public engagement is supported, recognised and rewarded in HEIs. Spaces for PE and PE discussions exist in HEIs. Greater awareness and clearer links between PE and policy.

Researchers inform MSPs community meetings. Researchers take opportunities to gain skills and experience. Researchers encourage and support their peers in public engagement.

Figure 4.2: Edinburgh Beltane pathway of change
As shown by figure 4.2, the ToC methodology established Edinburgh Beltane’s central objective as being to embed a culture of public engagement in HEIs (eb iv); the six other Beltane objectives (eb i-iii, v-vii) support this. There is no doubt that the Beltane has brought about significant progress with respect to its primary objective but, equally, there is yet more potential for change – recognised in the partner universities’ investment in the Beltane Network. As part of our final evaluation, an e-survey of academics at the Beltane partner institutions was conducted in 2011 (300 respondents, 214 of which had research as part of their roles). In this study, 49% of respondents reported the culture at their institution has changed during the last three years to become more supportive of public engagement. Of the other 51% of respondents, 31% didn’t know and 17% reported little or no change. Four respondents (1%) who report the culture has changed in a different way suggest the broader financial climate is influential. A further four (1%) feel the culture has become less supportive. Interviews (26 in total) conducted by evaluators in spring 2011 supported this perception of a positive culture change with, for example, discussions of public engagement at different levels in institutions being given as an example of improvement. While we acknowledge that a broader culture change is being driven by institutions themselves as well as Research Councils, something which also came through in our final evaluation, the surveys and interviews cited here have clearly recognised the specific contribution of Beltane as a facilitator and enabler of high quality, collaborative and diverse public engagement practices across the partnership.

“Senior managers at the university can now see it’s the sort of thing that can add a lot of value.”

Final evaluation interviewee

Through the development of the Edinburgh Beltane’s own pathway of change (figure 4.2), we came to recognise that our work had four key audiences: funders, researchers, institutions and external stakeholders. Changes within all four of these audiences – not all of which are within our remit – are required to meet our central aim of embedding a culture of public engagement in HEIs.

Our final evaluation revealed that funders – notably, Research Councils – are seen as strong drivers of cultural change. We considered to what extent funders are sending a strong message about public engagement being part of researchers’ roles. Our final e-survey and interviews indicated that the message from funders was becoming clearer – it had been perceived as mixed in earlier Edinburgh Beltane evaluations. However, the message from funders is still somewhat confused; researchers are also still concerned as to what extent public engagement will remain a priority given the challenging financial climate.

“This is a fairly major PE activity in the last year in part because I wanted to know what the public thought about this particular area of science and because it is a requirement of funders that we make the results of research available to the public…”

Respondent to final e-survey

“EPSRC shut down overnight its public engagement partnership scheme and that I think caused a great deal of disquiet amongst the community … I think the message it gave out was that EPSRC are no longer interested in this. So what I’m saying is you’ve got a mixed message, on one hand you’ve got the concordat which is great, but on the other hand you have this other thing’s overtaking it.”

Final evaluation interviewee
With respect to researchers, our final e-survey and interviews showed that Beltane has had a strong positive effect on public engagement capacity-building. This result was also echoed by our evaluation of the Beltane Fellowships. ‘Thinking differently’ about public engagement and developing public engagement skills were also areas where respondents reported Beltane having a useful influence. The e-survey showed no differences in the amount and type of public engagement activities delivered by researchers. This may be due, at least in part, to the competing messages researchers feel they are receiving about whether they should be spending more time on income generation, the UK’s Research Excellence Framework (REF) or public engagement (reported in final interviews and e-survey).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Edinburgh Beltane’s final evaluation suggested that institutions had made slower progress than individual researchers. Many of our evaluation indicators for institutional change look for ‘hard’ evidence – mentions in annual reviews, strategy documents and job advertisements. One would anticipate a time-lag between a positive change in personal attitudes – something our evaluation has clearly revealed – and formalisation. Happily, while institutional progress was static during the first years of Edinburgh Beltane, our final evaluation revealed progress during the final twelve months of the Beacon. In reality, progress made by Edinburgh Beltane is likely to be even greater than shown by these indicators, as some changes initiated by the Beltane – for example, work on University of Edinburgh promotions criteria – were not yet widely known about at the time of the final evaluation.

Work with external stakeholders – the non-academic partners of Edinburgh Beltane – was strong through 2010 and further accelerated in 2011. In its final year, Beltane began to work at a Scotland-wide level and also increasingly engaged with policy makers around the role of universities and public engagement in policy making. Edinburgh Beltane’s work with Bright Club, where researchers are encouraged to do stand-up comedy about their work, was another 2011 success, and the Beltane Network is continuing to work with its external stakeholders on this initiative. The number of public events reported in the Edinburgh Beltane’s annual register nearly trebled from 134 in 2010 to 380 in 2011, reflecting a willingness from partners to share this information. Partners also submitted accompanying information which suggested many are actively evaluating the quality and impacts of their public engagement activities.

“Positive progress against many [institutional] indicators, especially in the last 12 months with increasing involvement of senior staff, sign-up to the Manifesto for Public Engagement and public engagement featuring in institutional reviews. HWU has also introduced a Principal’s Prize for public engagement.”
Evaluator’s comment from final Edinburgh Beltane annual report

“Work on training has reached fruition and researchers that had been involved reported this as very useful in the e-survey.”
Evaluator’s comment from final Edinburgh Beltane annual report

“It’s the first time I have ever seen a group of new performers do so well, and I run a lot of beginners comedy nights. But I’ve also never seen a group of new performers support and encourage each other as much as this group have.”
Susan Morrison, professional comedian and Bright Club compere
5. STORY OF CHANGE – CULTURE CHANGE IN THE BELTANE PARTNERSHIP

5.1 WHERE WE STARTED FROM – ACCOUNT BY PROF MARY BOWNES
Mary Bownes was Director of the Edinburgh Beltane and is currently Senior Vice Principal External Engagement at the University of Edinburgh.

We found that the academic institutions involved in the Beltane partnership each brought different strengths.

As a large, old institution, the University of Edinburgh had an established public engagement infrastructure and good links with major non-academic organisations (museums, science centres, key Edinburgh festivals). However, its size also meant that internal sharing of best practice and linking of public engagement activities was a challenge.

As a newly-formed university, UHI was still establishing its core public engagement infrastructure, but had excellent links to local, rural communities. Links to the surrounding area were also particular strengths of Edinburgh Napier and Queen Margaret universities, both of whom specialise in applied research. The Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) brought to the partnership numerous relationships with creative and cultural practitioners and organisations. In terms of resource, Heriot-Watt University’s research in the engineering and physical sciences had recently attracted substantial funding from the EPSRC, specifically to support public engagement.

Some of the Beltane partners were already working together, for example, ‘Roberts-funded’ training shared by the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt.

5.2 EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY – ACCOUNT BY DR GRÁINNE BARKESS
Gráinne Barkess is Researcher Developer at Edinburgh Napier University. Gráinne was a member of Edinburgh Beltane’s Steering Group and Training Sub-Group.

During the project, Dr Heather Rea, Edinburgh Beltane’s Deputy Director, was seconded to the Office of the Vice Principal (Academic) at Edinburgh Napier University. We found that this made it easier for us to connect with work being done elsewhere in the Beltane partnership and in other RCUK Beacons. We also found that momentum was created by having a central University figure whose remit was solely to focus on embedding public engagement.

During her time at Edinburgh Napier, Heather was instrumental in the University’s work to adopt RCUK’s Manifesto for Public Engagement; the Manifesto was signed by Napier’s Principal during the Beltane project. Adoption of the Manifesto has provided a means to highlight public engagement within the University and gives support to those interested in starting to engage with different publics.

Our researchers were beneficiaries of Beltane Public Engagement Fellowships. The awardees gained dedicated time to focus on innovative public engagement projects. The Napier Fellows also joined a wider network of Beltane Fellows whose interests and backgrounds vary, creating an opportunity for novel, fruitful collaborations across the Beltane partnership.

During the Beltane project, we established Champions for Public Engagement within each of our schools. These are experienced academics that are able to support others as they take their first steps into public engagement in its many forms. Having ambassadors for public engagement throughout the University highlights all the public engagement that already goes on, and at the same time allows fostering of new practices and events.
5.3 HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY – ACCOUNT BY PROFESSOR GRAHAM TURNER

Graham Turner is Director of Research in the School of Management and Languages at Heriot-Watt University. Graham was the winner of the first Beltane Public Engagement Challenge (a competition for pilot engagement ideas) and, with Beltane support, held an event at the Scottish Parliament.

Heriot-Watt University was and is accomplished in working with industry. Possibly as a consequence of this, the University had a tendency to conceive of external engagement in terms of ‘knowledge transfer (KT)’ and for there to be a binary distinction of ‘industry’ versus ‘general public’. Recognition of multiple diverse publics, with industry even being one of these, was a change we hoped to see occur during the project. There has been some progress: the KT Scotland conference run by Heriot-Watt has changed its name to KE (i.e. ‘knowledge exchange’) Scotland, and the conference now devotes more of its programme to non-commercial engagement than previously; Heriot-Watt University runs both the Scottish and Heriot-Watt Crucible (http://www.hw.ac.uk/scottishcrucible/), an institutional leadership programme in which public engagement is embedded.

A major culture change milestone for us was the creation of Heriot-Watt’s Principal’s Prize for Public Engagement. This has been a very successful outcome of time Heather Rea, Beltane’s Deputy Director, spent on secondment at the University. The Principal’s Prizes have prestige at Heriot-Watt and are presented at the University’s annual Converge Challenge Awards dinner. Converge Challenge Awards are presented for commercial innovation, and it is welcome to see non-commercial engagement being recognised alongside its income-generating counterpart. The profile of the Principal’s Prizes could, however, be raised even further if the awards were presented in a setting which has a high profile outside commercialisation sectors, such as the University’s graduation ceremonies. As an interesting side-note, we found that it was not the money which awardees of the Principal’s Prizes seemed to value nearly so much as the recognition they bring.

Other awards which we found were particularly beneficial for Heriot-Watt were those given out in the Beltane Public Engagement Challenge. The Challenge was a competition created and run by Beltane which provided a modest amount of seed funding (£1,500 each) to competitors to pilot novel public engagement work, with the winner in each round of the competition being awarded a further £2,000. The sums of money, while small, were useful and nimble; informal feedback indicates that these awards are well-worth sustaining. It is not currently clear whose responsibility it would be to sustain this funding opportunity. However, we feel that continuation of them could be argued to be a necessity for parts of the University which do not have a strong ethos of applying for the large external research grants into which public engagement expenses can otherwise be built.

As has already been noted, the Public Engagement Fellowship was Beltane’s flagship funding scheme. Heriot-Watt University had three Beltane Fellows. Their Fellowships were successful in terms of the public engagement work they supported, but it was also hoped that Beltane Fellows would act as ambassadors for culture change within their institution and this has not happened at Heriot-Watt – yet. This is not to say that Beltane Fellowships do not have potential to have a broader effect at the University. Four years and three Fellows are little on which to make assumptions about long-term impact or to develop insights into how the Fellowships could be best deployed to this effect. We think that sustained investment in Beltane Fellows at Heriot-Watt may well still contribute to embedding of public engagement in the culture of the institution.

We believe that a lack of a dedicated public engagement staff member at Heriot-Watt similarly hindered the progress of culture change at the institution. We have inferred this from the progress made during the time when Heather Rea was based at Heriot-Watt – such as the Principal’s Prizes and adoption of the RCUK Manifesto for Public Engagement – versus the time was she was not. Happily, there is a plan to appoint a full-time member of staff at Heriot-Watt as part of the new Beltane Network.
I think that Heriot-Watt University has several factors in its favour in terms of embedding a culture of public engagement. As well as an established track record of external (industrial) partnership-building and a strong reputation for applied research, the University’s grounds are an excellent means by which the University can engage with its local community. The sports centre is used by individuals who are not members of the university, as well as many external sporting groups. As a result of being on the outskirts of Edinburgh – something which is, in some respects, a challenge to public engagement – the University has a very pleasant, semi-rural wooded location which is already used for walks by individuals not affiliated to the University. Sharing of the sports centre’s best practice and developing or resurrecting initiatives to make the most of the University’s setting are both directions we think Heriot-Watt could pursue in future.

5.4 QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY – ACCOUNT BY PROF ISOBEL DAVIDSON
Isobel Davidson is based in Dietetics, Nutrition & Biological Sciences at Queen Margaret University.
Isobel was a member of the Edinburgh Beltane Steering Group.

There were two important changes at Queen Margaret University during the course of the Beltane project:

- A new public engagement policy was established for the period 2011-15.
- The University signed up to RCUK’s Manifesto for Public Engagement.

In my opinion, some of Queen Margaret’s public engagement highlights of the last four years are: a theatre production on alcohol abuse by the Alcohol Evidence and Research Group; working with local companies to create an evaluation framework to assess the positive impact of sport and physical activity; building links with the Scottish Prison Service with a view to developing community arts services. We are delighted that Queen Margaret is now setting up, with its own funds, a Researcher-in-Residence programme in response to demand from local schools.

Engagement which took place during the Beltane project indicated that many Queen Margaret students, as well as staff, recognised the value of engagement. Students helped set up the event A Celebration of Regional Scottish Food, where attendees enjoyed free tastings, demonstrations by local chefs such as Tom Kitchin, tutored beverage tastings, and a local producers’ market.

Oliver Escobar, a researcher on citizen participation, communication and policy practice, held a Beltane Fellowship at Queen Margaret from September 2009 until February 2010. As part of his Fellowship, Oliver co-developed a training course on dialogue which, I am pleased to say, is still running, most recently (November 2012) for researchers and practitioners in the area of healthcare genetics.

At the end of the Beltane project, while there had been significant progress at Queen Margaret, we could not argue that culture change had become embedded. Beltane provided much of the impetus for the culture change that had already taken place, and the University was concerned about how to ensure this progress would continue after the end of the project. Areas highlighted by the University as requiring further attention were:

- How to maintain the profile of public engagement within Queen Margaret.
- A need to adopt - from other, similar-sized institutions – current best practice in embedding public engagement.
- How to make the most of the University’s strength in the creative industries.
- How to ensure continued involvement in Bright Club and training for performers.
- A need to agree upon a definition of public engagement across the institution.
- A need to implement formal HR systems for recognising and rewarding public engagement.
5.5 THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – ACCOUNT BY PROF MARY BOWNES

At the start of Edinburgh Beltane, the University of Edinburgh, where I am based, had many projects involving public engagement. However, not all Schools (academic departments) in the University were involved and the projects were not coherently linked, despite some instances of sharing best practice.

We chose to make a retrospective assessment of culture change at the University using the NCCPE’s EDGE (Embryonic, Developing, Gripping, Embedding) tool (see http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support/self-assess), which revealed that the University of Edinburgh was initially strong in the Mission and Learning sections. After four years of being involved in the Beacons programme, I am very pleased to say that there has been movement on all fronts, with significant gains in Support and Communication. This progress is illustrated by table and figure 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The University of Edinburgh</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mission:</td>
<td>Gripping</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leadership:</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Gripping/ embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communication:</td>
<td>Embryonic</td>
<td>Gripping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recognition:</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Support:</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Learning:</td>
<td>Close to gripping</td>
<td>Close to embedding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Staff:</td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Gripping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Students:</td>
<td>Embryonic</td>
<td>Developing/gripping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Public:</td>
<td>Embryonic / developing</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: EDGE analysis of the University of Edinburgh in 2008 and 2012

![Figure 5.1: Comparison of EDGE analyses of University of Edinburgh in 2008 and 2012](image)

5.5.1 DISCUSSION OF EDGE ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH IN 2012

We found that, by 2012, the University of Edinburgh had improved in all areas of Purpose:

1. **Mission** – embedding (previously gripping)
2. **Leadership** – between gripping and embedding (previously developing)
3. **Communication – gripping (previously embryonic)**

Engagement is included in the University’s mission statement:

> [The University will] make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health and economic and cultural wellbeing [...] As a great civic university, Edinburgh especially values its intellectual and economic relationship with the Scottish community that forms its base and provides the foundation from which it will continue to look to the widest international horizons, enriching both itself and Scotland (from [http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/mission-governance/mission](http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/mission-governance/mission)).

Similarly, the University’s strategic plan for 2012-2016 has clear references to engagement (see [http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2012-16](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2012-16)). Most significantly, a continuation of the Beltane will be hosted in a central University of Edinburgh department and part-funded by the University.

We were pleased to see that there has been similar progress on all fronts in terms of **Process:**

- **Recognition** – embedding (previously developing)
- **Support** – embedding (previously developing)
- **Learning** – close to embedding (previously close to gripping)

To improve **Recognition**, we set up a committee involving HR and academics which looked at the importance of public engagement. The outcome was very successful: public engagement is now included in academic job descriptions and promotion criteria at all grades at the University of Edinburgh. This is a significant achievement, but we need more time for this to be regularly applied in practice.

During the Beltane project, the University launched a new public engagement with science prize (the Tam Dalyell Prize), where the winner gives a public lecture, and The Principal’s Medal for Service to the Community to reward a person or team whose work has significantly impacted the wider community. The Principal’s medal is awarded at graduation ceremonies, thus giving them a high profile – indeed, equal to getting an honorary degree (see [http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/staff-awards-140212](http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff/staff-awards-140212)). The Tam Dalyell Prize is presented at the annual Tam Dalyell Prize winner lecture (see [http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/all-news/dalyell-prize](http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/all-news/dalyell-prize)).

We have seen that Edinburgh’s excellence in public engagement is also receiving external recognition. Bilingualism Matters and Heat in the City, both projects supported by the Beltane, have been chosen by the League of European Research Universities (LERU) – an association of twenty-one leading universities – as two of a total nine examples of European good practice in relation to interdisciplinary research. We were delighted when Beltane Public Engagement Fellow Dr Marieke Hoeve won the Society for General Microbiology (SGM) Outreach Prize in 2012, and were equally pleased when the Beltane itself was asked to contribute to discussions on public engagement in a variety of academic and professional forums, including CAMERAs (A Coordinated Agenda for Marine, Environment and Rural Affairs Science, 2011-2016), the Science Scotland Conference, the Knowledge Transfer Scotland Conference, and the ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators) Annual Conference.

In terms of **Support**, considerably more of our researchers at the University of Edinburgh are now sharing best practice than at the start of the Beltane project, and these individuals are supporting each other to be more innovative in what they do. All three University of Edinburgh Colleges now have staff in post with an operational remit for public engagement. Internal networks and groups
with a focus on public engagement now exist, and the Beltane’s move to a central department will ensure it is embedded as part of the University’s central support for researchers. We have found that Beltane Public Engagement Fellows have felt supported to try out new things, have become more prominent (internally and externally) and have been successful as ambassadors for public engagement within their Schools. As at Heriot-Watt, we have found at the University of Edinburgh that the Public Engagement Challenge Awards are very useful opportunities for real learning.

For **Learning**, we have found that an area of strength for the University have been the development opportunities and support available to PhD students, early career researchers and more senior staff. Beltane’s new location within the Institute for Academic Development will ensure that we can offer continuing professional development in public engagement to academic and research staff and PhD students. At a national level, Lara Isbel, Beltane Programme Manager, was involved in the development of the learning and support sections of the NCCPE’s Toolkit for Senior Managers and other learning projects.

---

**Our Changing World – the value of crossing boundaries and culture change**

**Case study**

One of the areas which I lead at the University is Sustainability and Social Responsibility. We see this in its broadest sense of not just environmental management, business processes and estate management, but as the impact of our research over the wider world and student volunteering. See the following links for more information:

- [www.oured.ed.ac.uk](http://www.oured.ed.ac.uk)
- [www.ed.ac.uk/about/sustainability/home](http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/sustainability/home)

At an away-day to discuss our objectives over the coming years, we brought together academics and support staff from across the University to brainstorm and develop innovative ideas.

One of the projects that came from a conversation at this event with a Head of School in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, Gareth Leng, is worth describing and shows how things cross-fertilise. Eventually, after much work with Senate and teaching and learning committees, and finding a real champion to deliver the concept in Mayank Dutia, the Our Changing World project was conceived. What was developed was a novel first-year course for undergraduates. The idea was to showcase our best academics tackling big global issues. This would cover a wide range of disciplines. Whilst the students have tutorials and discussions and produce written work set around the themes, we also arranged to have the lectures in the early evening and to open them up to the public and to record them and make them available on our website. We are now in the third year of this course, which goes from strength to strength and the website indicates many people watch the lectures specifically designed for a general audience. Indeed, some of them made it to YouTube and have been watched by thousands across the world. The website can be found at [www.ocw.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ocw.ed.ac.uk).

I think this is a very clear and positive output not led by the Beltane but complementing it because our culture change had begun and people were slowly becoming more receptive to novel ideas and public engagement.
Finally, our assessment showed that all three focuses of People showed improvement, although none are yet at the level of embedding:

7. **Staff** – gripping (previously developing)
8. **Students** – developing/gripping (previously embryonic)
9. **Public** – developing (previously embryonic -> developing)

For **Staff**, creating a culture where public engagement is supported, recognised and valued required a huge amount of effort behind the scenes. Although this proved to be an effective strategy, and resulted in more and more people becoming engaged, success wasn’t always associated with Beltane. This became more of an issue when we needed to raise funds from different areas of the University. Some middle managers, who had been involved in various aspects of the project and were aware of the importance of engagement, decided that they did not really know enough to warrant extending the funding. Although we could clearly evidence all those we had supported, we realise that we should have been more aggressive with our communications, providing facts and figures from about two years before the end of the project. Going forward, we will implement more reporting mechanisms to count the number of people we support and train, and share evaluation results much more broadly, particularly with those in middle management.

We also found that staff changes had an impact on the perceived value of the Beltane. Some Heads of Schools were very engaged, but when they are replaced by a new Head of School (generally every three to five years), there tends not to be a good transfer of information about anything not directly related to research or teaching. We believe, however, that this is to improve as researchers are asked to better evidence the impact and value of research for the wider community.

Supporting undergraduate and taught postgraduate **Students** to engage is an area the Beltane is starting to grasp. Our original bid was focussed on researchers and policy and a variety of publics, hence, from the student population, we had focussed on PhD students, however, University of Edinburgh students have a long history of volunteering within our local community and other communities around the world. During the period of the Beltane, the University supported EUSA, the Edinburgh University Students’ Association, to establish a wonderful volunteer centre that matches students with need in the community. We also have a scheme called Making the Most of Masters which supports students to undertake their projects in the community, public service sector or companies, and have introduced Innovative Learning Week (an opportunity to abandon traditional lectures and tutorials and explore new ways of teaching) for all undergraduate students. In summary, we are currently working hard as an institution to ensure that our undergraduates all have the opportunity to engage in a wider way with the community and learn life skills to go with their course outcomes. Some of these things are being embedded in the curriculum to make it clear they are for everyone.

For our **Public** focus, having a Scottish parliament close by that was keen to engage with the wider community led to the bid we put together for the Beacon having a specific focus on linking to public policy. We have some wonderful examples of projects in partnership with others and we wanted to build upon this by developing closer links with the Parliament. Initially, we spent time developing processes of public and community engagement but, as this became more established, the focus moved towards public policy, with a number of successful events at the Scottish Parliament held in collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum. As noted in section 4.1, our relationship with the Scottish Parliament, which relies on the inclusive nature of our work and the ability to draw in voices from many research institutions, has been so successful that this will continue. Smaller meetings with MSPs from all parties and university principals to discuss matters which are crucial to the communities around Scotland and the economy of Scotland going forward are planned for autumn
2012 and spring 2013. Scotland’s Futures Forum has also agreed to host a version of the successful Beltane Public Engagement Fellowship scheme, but with researchers being based in the Scottish Parliament. This will ensure that good ideas developed in these collaborative autumn and spring meetings are acted upon and taken forward.

Within the University of Edinburgh, one of the most exciting developments for us has been the appointment of a Vice Principal for public policy. The University’s Communications and Marketing team have also appointed an External Relations Manager who has a remit to help with public policy development and help researchers engage with MSPs, businesses and the wider community to listen to what is required and to share developments. This ensures that our progress in this area will be continued and embedded in the university going forward. I think that the on-going relationship with the Scottish Parliament will be crucial to changing the culture in the University of Edinburgh, and potentially other universities across Scotland. It will also ensure that the research of universities is better integrated into Scottish society, policies and its value to the economy is better understood.

5.6 UHI – ACCOUNT BY DEREK GORRIE

Derek is UHI’s STEM Engagement Officer and was often the University at Beltane’s Steering Group.

We were pleased that a variety of public engagement activities have been undertaken by members of UHI during the Beltane project, including public lectures, school events, science festivals and open days. UHI, including its thirteen academic partners based in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (which includes the Scottish Association for Marine Science), now runs or provides resources to all of the seven annual science festivals which take place in Highlands and Islands; the UHI partners are also setting up a presence at local music festivals. The partnership has active, ongoing involvement with the British Science Association and contributes to the very active programme run by the Caithness Branch.

We were very happy that a UHI project to develop STEM activities and a longer-term strategy for STEM engagement was successful. Established at the start of 2010, the project has since successfully produced all of its planned outputs and, indeed, exceeded a number of them, including the number of public and school events held. The project has aligned well with UHI’s strengths and had significant relevance for local communities.

In light of the STEM project’s success, UHI has decided to proceed with a more embedded approach to STEM engagement post-Beltane, resulting in the establishment of STEM resources within the Faculty of Science, Health and Education rather than a stand-alone project. UHI successfully bid for the contract to deliver the STEM Advisory Service to all secondary schools in the Highlands and Islands. This contract, which runs until 2015, is in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, who will provide support and training to STEM ambassadors. A number of UHI academic partner staff are already active STEM Ambassadors; the STEM Advisory Service contract will offer better co-ordination of Ambassador and UHI engagement activities.

We were especially pleased that four of the most research-intensive centres in UHI – the Scottish Association for Marine Sciences (SAMS), the Environmental Research Institute (ERI), Perth College and Inverness College – were fully engaged with the Beltane agenda. The Beltane partnership had an opportunity to learn from SAMS’ experience of developing the Festival of the Sea and supported it by providing training and networking opportunities for SAMS researchers; SAMS is currently establishing physical facilities suitable for hosting public engagement activities. Researchers from UHI won two rounds of the Beltane Public Engagement Challenge competition, and another UHI beneficiary of a Beltane award was ERI’s Kathleen McDougall, who won a Beltane Fellowship.
In terms of the current capabilities for sustaining public engagement at UHI, we perceive our greatest challenge to be getting staff, researchers and students to be actively and consistently involved in public engagement. The core support and training staff required to support the types of activities outlined above are currently being recruited. We have chosen not to remain an institutional partner of Beltane as other initiatives have taken priority. However, some of UHI’s academic partners are still informally engaged with the Beltane, allowing us to share some best practice which may help create a sustainable programme at UHI.

5.7 PARTNERSHIPS – ACCOUNT BY PROF MARY BOWNES
Our Beacon was founded on strong partnerships. Although we had a large number of partners, they were all bodies that we had successfully worked with before on various public engagement projects. There were two types of partners: (i) universities; (ii) organisations like the National Museums of Scotland and the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh whose professional roles led them to interact directly with the public. Each partner brought something different to the table and, as the project progressed, there was a real understanding of how much these different experiences helped to enhance the ways the Beltane supported different types of engagement. We found that input from others always led to more innovative ideas and new ways of doing things. It was especially pleasing that the partnership was so highly regarded that four of our partner universities (University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh Napier University; Heriot-Watt University; Queen Margaret University) have agreed to continue to work in partnership going forward. I was disappointed that UHI chose not to continue to be a formal member of Beltane given the levels of support UHI received during the Beltane project and the perceived needs of UHI researchers.

In addition to our Beltane partners, we found working with the other RCUK Beacons and the National Co-ordinating Centre to be of real value. We learnt much from each other and I feel sure we will continue to work together. We also look forward to other partners joining in and sharing our learning across Scotland.

Beyond its partner universities, the Beltane has supported a much wider network and has often acted as a broker to establish the new connections. Successful networks depend on personal relationships built on trust, and these relationships have often lead to highly successful activities. Our partnership with Scotland’s Futures Forum will continue, and Bright Club Scotland is becoming well-established. Part of the success of Bright Club is due to the involvement of Susan Morrison, a local stand-up comedian. Susan Morrison has supported Bright Club from the beginning, been heavily involved in training researchers and has organised a highly successful partnership with Edinburgh’s famous Stand Comedy Club.

Two valuable new relationships for us emerged towards the end of the Beltane project. Preparing for our showcase celebration event (Discover Beltane) in March 2012 led to new links with Donald Smith, Director of the Scottish Storytelling Centre, and a new storytelling training course for researchers. The same event resulted in a relationship with Sophie Dow, the founder of Mindroom (http://www.mindroom.org/), a Scottish special needs charity, and a former successful journalist. Sophie is a wonderful champion for the benefits of collaboration and the value of working together across disciplines, across sectors and across countries to solve big challenges; the annual Mindroom conference is an exemplary illustration of best practice in these respects. We look forward to working more closely with both Sophie and Donald in the years ahead.

Another success resulting from Beltane’s work with other partners were the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Beltane Prizes for Public Engagement. Prizes were awarded at two levels: people with a substantial impact over many years, and people newer to public engagement who demonstrated innovation. The judging process identified many stunning practitioners and we found
it almost impossible to choose winners. A component of the Prize is that awardees deliver a RSE-branded public event. One previous award-winner, Aubrey Manning, used his to deliver an academic appraisal of public engagement to a public audience at the RSE. Another winner, Tom Devine, conducted an event for a broader public audience in a ‘question-time’ style; the event title was ‘Scottish History in Question’ and took place in September 2012 as part of RSE’s @Lochaber programme. The event’s rural venue at the Nevis Range in Fort William allowed it to reach a more remote and diverse audience, and some people living in the area ventured to the top of the cable car for the first time.

We found that Beltane’s partnership working aided culture change. Because our Beacon did not represent one particular institution, it was perceived as pursing a mutually beneficial outcome for all parties, something which opened doors for us by giving Beltane credibility in the eyes of bodies like the Scottish Parliament. By acting as a single point-of-contact for all partners, the Beltane also made it possible for the Parliament, National Museums of Scotland and other organisations to reach more researchers rather relying heavily on a handful of interested individuals. Last but not least, we felt that working in partnership was important if we were to practice what we preached with respect to engagement: sharing knowledge, building relationships and trust, and respecting the input of others, regardless of where they come from.
6. LESSONS LEARNT – ACCOUNT BY LARA ISBEL AND PROF MARY BOWNES

As noted in section 5, Lara was the Programme Manager (formerly Training and Development Coordinator) for the Edinburgh Beltane, and Mary Bownes was Beltane’s Director.

6.1 EMBEDDING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITHIN UNIVERSITIES

Both of us, and the rest of our Beltane colleagues, have learned a number of key lessons during the Beltane project. Some of these have provided insights which can be incorporated into our further work; others are challenges which the Beltane Network will continue to encounter.

6.1.1 A BESPOKE VISION FOR ENGAGEMENT

We feel it is important to have a vision about where you want to end up. The RCUK Manifesto for Public Engagement is a useful starting point, but the strategy and culture of the individual universities involved need to be taken in to account, too. The EDGE (Embryonic, Developing, Gripping, Embedding) tool developed by the NCCPE (see http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support/self-assess) – which we used to analyse the University of Edinburgh in section 5.5 – is a great way to take a step back and assess your institution’s strengths and areas for improvement.

More broadly, we have found that you need to consider the internal and external drivers which support a culture of engagement in your institutions. Where are the pockets of good practice and groups which are already very active in public engagement? Where (and who) are the barriers? What can you influence and what do you have no control over? In the areas where you could influence, are there any indicators you could use to help you assess your progress? We found that the Theory of Change (ToC) approach described in section 4.2 was useful in making sense of the range of factors which could affect culture change in the Beltane partnership.

6.1.2 JOINED-UP APPROACH

Our experience has been that a significant challenge in communicating the importance and value of public engagement is the term itself: ‘public engagement’ is understood differently in different disciplines. The humanities and social sciences define it as a strand of knowledge exchange, while science and engineering associate knowledge exchange /transfer mainly with commercialisation, and often view public engagement as a tool to win support for science and to recruit school pupils to a science or engineering career. A certain amount of variation in terminology is manageable as long as individuals have an awareness of the world beyond their own particular expertise and are able to adapt to different audiences.

To improve your chances of success, you need to be aware of the bigger picture beyond the world of public engagement. If people take too much time away from their research or teaching for public engagement activities, this could damage their promotion prospects if their institution or line manager is not yet supportive. It is important to integrate the support for public engagement with discussions around career progression. If public engagement is included in promotion criteria, it provides a stronger platform to encourage more staff to get involved – this has been achieved at Beltane partner universities.

6.1.3 INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

For the Beltane project to work, we found that we needed people in the following roles:

- **Coordinator**: At least one person needs to drive the project and work to build momentum, as culture change requires persistence and dedication.
**Champions:** You need champions at every level of the institution to support and lead on engagement, particularly at a senior level.

**Influencers:** Edinburgh Beltane operated by running dedicated working groups focusing on reward and recognition, training and development, communications and events, and evaluation; there was also a project Steering Group.

Because it involved five different university partners, the Beltane was not straightforward to coordinate. Our project manager, Heather Rea, spent time on secondment at individual HEIs to ensure she had a presence in local projects; as described in section 5, this had real impact.

Champions are those people in your institution who already have considerable experience. You must recognise their expertise if you are to earn their support. Champions have a valuable role to play in demonstrating how to integrate engagement into an academic or professional services career, and the benefits of doing so. The presence of influencers – people with the appropriate authority to implement decisions – on our working groups and committees was vital to ensure there was progress. A committee with relevant expertise, a wide knowledge of the context but no means of making things happen is likely to become frustrated. Identifying the influencers at any one institution requires knowledge of that institution’s structure.

It is likely that there will be people in influential roles who are not initially supportive of culture change; any case for embedding public engagement must respond to their concerns. With Beltane, we are now at a point where senior colleagues who have been involved with the project are fully on board with the public engagement agenda. However, as discussed in section 5.5.1, those in middle-management positions often felt they did not have enough information upon which to make a decision about providing further funding for the Beltane project, even if they had been involved with it. In hindsight, we might have been able to pre-empt their concerns by providing them with facts and figures from about halfway through. Where you do have support from influential figures, it is important to be aware that they will not be in post forever and, depending on how they hand over and to whom, support may not automatically be forthcoming from their successor.

### 6.1.4 BUILD A COMMUNITY

We are immensely proud of how we have been able to build a Beltane community – the strength of this network was vital in building momentum for culture change. The community has allowed people to:

- Meet
- Learn
- Try
- Share and reflect
- Celebrate

Although there were many people who were actively involved in public engagement at our academic partner institutions, they were not necessarily aware of each other, even within the same institution. Networking events which allowed people from all the partners to meet face-to-face meant people began to feel that they were part of a larger community, and a number of new projects arose from chance discussions over coffee.

We wanted to embed a culture of high-quality engagement. For this to happen, people needed to be able to learn, try, and then share and reflect upon their experiences with the rest of the Beltane community. To build capacity, we developed a wide programme of training and development opportunities which allowed people to focus on areas relevant to them. We then provided support and funding through the Public Engagement Challenges and the Public Engagement Fellowship scheme to give people the space to try innovative new approaches. We also circulated other
opportunities for people to get involved and pushed people to step out of their comfort zone. If projects failed, we encouraged people to reflect on and learn from this. Where best practice was developed, we encouraged people to share it. Reflecting and sharing can put people in a vulnerable position, particularly if it brings people to reconsider their established ways of doing things. Here, the trust built within the Beltane community meant that people felt comfortable discussing things that did not go well or accepting that their way was not, perhaps, the best way.

Recognising when things had gone well was important as reflecting on failure. Celebrating success helped to ensure the Beltane community remained energetic, positive and keen to experiment. The prizes which Beltane established served to highlight expertise and exciting projects and, importantly, acted as institutional recognition for the best quality public engagement.

6.2 WORKING WITH OTHER BEACONS
The ethos of sharing and learning which the Beltane community practiced was found in the Beacons network, too. A feature of the network was a willingness to share ideas and, crucially, to accept the need to adapt projects or models to suit local contexts. Two brilliant projects which Beltane adopted from other Beacons were:

- **Bright Club**: With support from the London Beacon, we launched Bright Club Scotland in Edinburgh to great success. Bright Club is now well established in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and a Dundee version is in the early stages of development. The Bright Club team has secured funding from the Scottish Government to take Bright Club to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, including the Hebrides and Shetlands. We have also modified the Bright Club training to help new lecturers develop their teaching skills.

- **Culture Change Labs**: The Culture Change Lab format pioneered by the Manchester Beacon (see [http://nccpe-demo.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/how/case-studies/culture-change-labs](http://nccpe-demo.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/how/case-studies/culture-change-labs)) was the starting point for our events in UK Universities Week in 2011. The Beltane Culture Lab event brought together senior managers in universities across Scotland to explore the benefits of embedding engagement in universities. This was followed by a Parliament briefing as part of our collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum.

6.3 CONTRIBUTION TO LEARNING
As well as working with individual Beacons, we worked closely with the NCCPE on a number of projects, including the secondment of one our team members to develop resources on support and learning for the senior managers’ toolkit; we were also heavily involved in the development of Research in Context, an NCCPE course commissioned by RCUK. We shared our approach to continuing professional development (CPD) with the British Science Association. The Association used our CPD website as the model for its own UK-wide version.
7. SUSTAINABILITY PLANS

Sustainability is the key challenge for any culture change project. The question is whether or not the activities, attitudes and behaviours encouraged and actively supported through project funding will last once funding ceases. For the Edinburgh Beltane, the answer to these questions is clearly ‘yes’.

Key to plans for sustainability has been a commitment from partners to continue to work together through a new Beltane Public Engagement Network. This includes funding from four of the University partners to continue and build on previous work whilst non-academic partners have confirmed their continued involvement and support.

From 1st August 2012, Beltane is being hosted by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) at the University of Edinburgh. This provides Beltane with a strong organisational base for the continuation of current activities and further strengthening of the culture of public engagement for researchers and Universities.

7.1 ACTIVITIES AND ORGANISATION

Funding from the four University partners will support a core Beltane team of two at the IAD who will continue to run and develop a wide range of workshops, projects and other activities in support of researchers in their engagement with the public and policy.

A base in the IAD complements the Beltane’s strong reputation in training and personal development, and provides an opportunity to use IAD infrastructure to build efficiencies in event organisation and running costs. The IAD base (and continued connections with the Vitae Hub) also provides an opportunity to further embed public engagement skills development in the programmes of personal and professional development offered to doctoral students and early career research staff. External funding is being sought to extend the successful Dialogue Techniques courses to new disciplines and we are working with groups across the partners to identify local priorities and opportunities to use Beltane expertise and contacts to further extend training and other activities.

Beltane Fellowships will continue (funding has been secured to support six Fellowships in the 2012/13 academic year), with a commitment from the Scottish Parliament to host two of these Fellowships linked to the programme of Working Dinners planned as part of a suite of engagement activities between the Scottish Parliament and Beltane. In a change from previous years, the Fellowships will be used to support the partner’s strategic themes for public engagement activities. The first Fellowship at the Scottish Parliament will be on the theme “Health Well Being in an Aging Population”, a choice that was informed by discussion with MSPs and is in line with the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 framework. Future Fellowships calls will likely be around the Horizon 2020 themes applied to the Scottish context. Post-2013 Fellowships will be funded through a variety of means, including direct support from the Schools/Institutes of the partner HEIs as well as through funding sought externally.

Contact with other non-academic partners (e.g. Scottish Storytelling Centre, National Museums of Scotland, Royal Society of Edinburgh) is also continuing and deepening. Many Beltane initiatives, including Bright Club, are reaching a critical mass of engagement and support that is allowing them to run with minimal direct Beltane involvement.
7.2 LONG TERM CULTURAL CHANGE AND EMBEDDING

Long term cultural change and the embedding of public engagement in University business and as a core element of researcher and academic life is the ultimate route to sustainability for the Beacons agenda. Significant progress has been made during Edinburgh Beltane project period and the signs are good that this embedding will continue, broaden and deepen.

By spending time working in and with each of the academic partners, the Beltane Deputy Director supported a number of key policy developments. All partners have signed the Manifesto for Public Engagement. Public engagement and knowledge exchange are now built into University promotion, reward and recognition arrangements (for example, at the University of Edinburgh) and all recognise the importance of engagement linked to REF and in institutional strategic plans. Each of the academic partners has developed internal structures, initiatives and forums to promote and support public engagement. These have links to, but are not dependent on, Beltane and represent an important step towards sustainability and embedding.

In the University of Edinburgh, the College of Science and Engineering has established a new Public Engagement Committee to review College public engagement strategy. The Beltane Public Engagement Network will work closely with members of this Committee and equivalent groups in the other Colleges as well as working alongside the University’s Social Responsibility and Sustainability group. One of the most exciting opportunities opened up by basing Beltane within IAD is the link between teaching and learning and public engagement, particularly in providing professional development opportunities to academics. The chance to integrate public engagement, teaching & learning, research and supervision training is already being explored in connection with the support being developed for new Chancellor’s Fellows across the University.

Heriot Watt University is committed to the recruitment of a public engagement officer who will work as a member of the Beltane team, supporting the University Public Engagement Group and associated activities (including the Principal’s Public Engagement Prize). Edinburgh Napier University have established champions in Public Engagement for each of their Schools and are piloting new outreach activities to link researchers with local schools. Queen Margaret University has established a public engagement committee to continue to raise the profile of public engagement linked to their new public engagement policy and 2011-15 knowledge exchange strategy.

One of the key principles informing the Edinburgh Beltane – Beacon for Public Engagement was its focus on collaboration between and within the different partners. It is particularly heartening to see that this commitment to collaboration has been retained and remains at the centre of plans for sustainability.

A key objective for the Beltane Public Engagement Network will be to work with institutional structures and develop activities and relationships that support each partner’s distinctive cultures and structures for public engagement. One of our priorities for autumn 2012 is to develop a three-year work plan for Beltane with partners that move us further in the embedding of a culture of public engagement.

The Edinburgh Beltane team will continue to share its learning by working directly with the RCUK-funded University of Aberdeen Catalyst, with the NCCPE-member universities in Scotland, and Glasgow Caledonian University. Equally, we will maintain relationships with the other Beacons, working on joint initiatives as appropriate.
8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this report illustrates, the Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement has achieved a great deal over the last four years. Many high quality, innovative events and workshops have been organised for researchers, the public, policy makers and others. Many researchers have been supported to try new ideas, to develop events and engage with the public either for the first time or in new ways. Publications, on-line resources, case studies and reports have been produced that will inform, enhance and support future engagement activities. Through training courses, awards, fellowships and networks significant numbers of researchers have been inspired and supported to participate in and lead new engagement activities, making new connections with research for many more members of the public.

These activities have taken place against a backdrop of sustained collaborative effort across the Beltane partnership to support and embed a culture of public engagement for researchers, Universities and other partners. Continuation of this collaborative approach through the Beltane Public Engagement network beyond the end of the Beacon project funding is one illustration of the progress that has been made and the commitment to sustain, deepen and embed that culture change. We are grateful to RCUK and the Funding Councils for their support of the Beltane Beacon. The level and duration of their funding has been central to the progress we have made, as has the opportunity to build relationships and contacts with other Beacons and the National Coordinating Centre, contact that is also continuing beyond the end of the Beacon project.

The personal stories included in sections 5 and 6 of this report make several significant recommendations for other Universities, and funding bodies, seeking to embed public engagement. First is the importance of developing, maintaining and communicating a clear and consistent vision for a culture of public engagement, what it will involve, how will be achieved and the difference it will make. Second is the need to take time to map out and understand the existing institutional landscape of public engagement and the relevant structures and strategic priorities of the institution and its constituent parts. Third is the benefit of investing in people, as champions and leaders for public engagement and practitioners, exemplifying approaches that are effective and make sense to other researchers. Fourth is the importance of ensuring that all you do is innovative (and risky in some cases) and of a very high standard, particularly for training courses, events, publications and communications. Last and most significantly, is the benefit of taking a collaborative and partnership approach to public engagement. This was central to the ethos of Edinburgh Beltane and has paid off handsomely in terms of the scale, quality and creativity of the Edinburgh Beacon. This, in turn, requires patience and a commitment to understand and respond to the different needs, cultures and perspectives of the partners themselves.
APPENDIX I - MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP AND BELTANE CORE TEAM

Steering Group members

- **Professor Mary Bownes** – Vice Principal External Engagement, University of Edinburgh **Convener**
- **Dr Patricia Erskine** – Communications and Engagement Manager for the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Edinburgh
- **Professor Colin Pulham** – Director of Teaching in the School of Chemistry at the University of Edinburgh
- **Dr Catherine Lyall** Deputy Director of the Innogen Centre and Director of Knowledge Exchange for the School of Social and Political Science
- **Professor Dorothy Crawford** Professor of Medical Microbiology and Assistant Principal of the Public Understanding of Medicine
- **Professor Stuart Monro** – Scientific Director at Our Dynamic Earth
- **Professor Charlie Jeffery** – Vice Principal, University of Edinburgh
- **Robert Rae** – Director 3rd Horizons, formerly Director of Scotland’s Futures Forum
- **Professor Alan Miller** – Professor of Physics and Deputy Principal for Research and Knowledge Transfer at Heriot-Watt University.
- **Professor John Duffield** – Vice Principal (Academic) at Edinburgh Napier University
- **Ian Leslie** – Dean of Faculty of Science, Health and Education at the University of the Highlands and Islands
- **Professor Isobel Davidson** – Queen Margaret University
- **Professor Andrew Patrizio** – Director of Research Development at Edinburgh College of Art
- **Ben Dipper** - Science and Society Division (S&S) within Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser in Scottish Government.

Management team

- **Professor Mary Bownes** – Director
- **Dr Patricia Erskine** – Communications and Engagement Manager for the College of Science and Engineering at the University of Edinburgh
- **Dr Heather Rea** – Deputy Director

Core team

- **Professor Mary Bownes** – Director
- **Dr Heather Rea** – Deputy Director
- **Lara Isbel** – Programme Manager (formerly Training and Development Co-ordinator)
- **Jehane Barbour** – Programme Administrator

Former team members

- **Jessica Monsen** – Communications and Events Officer
- **Sarah West Alin** – Project Coordinator (formerly Communications and Events Officer)
- **Ruth Cooper** – Programme Administrator

External evaluator

- **Dr Laura Grant**, Laura Grant Associates
## APPENDIX II - SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND FUNDED PROJECTS FOR EACH YEAR

### II.I BELTANE FELLOWSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Engagement Fellows</th>
<th>Honorary Fellows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jun-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oct-09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Timothy Johnson</strong>, RCUK Academic Fellow in Financial Mathematics, School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Heriot-Watt University</td>
<td><strong>Dr Alan Walker</strong>, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Particle Physics Experiment Group, School of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oliver Escobar</strong>, Researcher, DIALOGUE Research Project, Centre for Dialogue, Queen Margaret University (now a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh)</td>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Wendy Faulkner</strong>, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Institute for the Study of Science, Technology &amp; Innovation (ISSTI), College of Humanities and Social Science, The University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prof Antonella Sorace</strong>, Professor of Developmental Linguistics, School of Philosophy, Psychology &amp; Language Sciences, The University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Kathy Charles</strong>, Lecturer, School of Sport, Life &amp; Social Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Anne Claveirale</strong>, Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care, Edinburgh Napier University</td>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Bernadette O’Rourke</strong>, Lecturer, Department of Languages &amp; Intercultural Studies, School of Management &amp; Languages, Heriot-Watt University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Kathy Charles</strong>, Lecturer, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care, Edinburgh Napier University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dec-09</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Sue Milne</strong>, Researcher, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, The University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><strong>Dr Mar Carmina</strong>, Senior Research Associate, Wellcome Trust Centre for Cell Biology, The University of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apr-10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Marieke Hoeve</strong>, Senior Post-Doctoral Fellow, Interdisciplinary Centre for Human and Avian Influenza Research (ICHAIR), The University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><strong>Dr Kathleen McDougall</strong>, STEMNET co-ordinator, The University of the Highlands and Islands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Bernadette O’Rourke</strong>, Lecturer, Department of Languages &amp; Intercultural Studies, School of Management &amp; Languages, Heriot-Watt University</td>
<td><strong>Dr Jenny Rodgers</strong>, PostDoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions, The University of Edinburgh (now Outreach Coordinator for Royal Society of Chemistry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Kathy Charles</strong>, Lecturer, School of Sport, Life &amp; Social Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University</td>
<td><strong>Dr Stephano Padilla</strong>, Research Associate, School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Heriot-Watt University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mar-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Mar Carmina</strong>, Senior Research Associate, Wellcome Trust Centre for Cell Biology, The University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><strong>Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis</strong>, Principal Research Fellow, Forest Products Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Apr-11</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Kathleen McDougall</strong>, STEMNET co-ordinator, The University of the Highlands and Islands</td>
<td><strong>Dr Mark Wright</strong>, Research Fellow, Informatics Forum, School of Informatics, The University of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Honorary Fellows</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Jenny Rodgers</strong>, PostDoctoral Research Fellow, Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions, The University of Edinburgh (now Outreach Coordinator for Royal Society of Chemistry)</td>
<td><strong>Oct-09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Alan Walker</strong>, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Particle Physics Experiment Group, School of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Edinburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dr Stephano Padilla</strong>, Research Associate, School of Mathematical and Computer Sciences, Heriot-Watt University</td>
<td><strong>Sep-10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mar-11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dr Wendy Faulkner</strong>, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Institute for the Study of Science, Technology &amp; Innovation (ISSTI), College of Humanities and Social Science, The University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. II BELTANE WORKING GROUP OUTPUTS

Training working group
The training working group met approximately every 2 months from Dec 2008 to Apr 2012. The outputs from the training working group include:

- A survey of existing courses which are relevant to public engagement
- The cpd.beltanenetwork.org shared database of courses
- An evaluation report of the new courses run by Edinburgh Beltane
- Embedding of the Edinburgh Beltane team at the IAD

Evaluation working group
The evaluation working group met with the external evaluator approximately every 2 months from Nov 2008 to Jan 2012. The outputs from the evaluation working group include:

- Appointment of the External Evaluator
- A map of the partners public engagement events
- 3 Annual Reports
- 3 Interview reports
- A series of workshops on Quality on Public Engagement
- A masterclass module developed for HE stem on Quality in Public Engagement

Rewards, Recognition and Related Matters working group
The Rewards, Recognition and Related Matters working group met approximately every 3 months from Dec 2008 to Feb 2011. The outputs from the Rewards, Recognition and Related Matters working group include:

- Influence on the promotions criteria at the University of Edinburgh
- The RSE Beltane Awards
- The Heriot-Watt Principal’s Public Engagement Prize
- The “Realising the Potential of Engaged Universities” event at the Scottish Parliament
- Partners signatures of the Manifesto for Public Engagement

Communications working group
The communications working group met with the external evaluator approximately every 2 months from January 2009 to March 2010, when the website and the Communications Breakfast Seminar Series were launched. The outputs from the communications working group include:

- A successful communication strategy
- Appointment of the Events and Communications Officer
- The www.edinburghbeltane.net website
- The Communications Breakfast seminar series

Events working group
The events working group met with the external evaluator approximately every 2 months from Jan 2009 to Mar 2010, and subsequently as a panel to assess the Public Engagement Challenge Project Applications. The outputs from the events working group include:

- Awarded funding to 21 Public Engagement Challenge Projects
- The Engaging Scotland Conference
- 3 annual Gathering events
II. III BELTANE TRAINING COURSES

2012 (5 courses)
Policy Perspectives on Academic Research
Writing beyond the Academy
Evaluation
Broadcast Media
Storytelling

2011 (18 courses)
Research in the Spotlight
Policy Perspectives on Academic Research
Narrative Skills
Voice and Presentation x 2
Science Writing (EuSci)
Science Editing (EuSci)
Prezi x 2
Dialogue x 5
Vox Leadership course x 2
Introduction to Public Engagement (for Royal Botanic Gardens)
Presentation Skills (Napier)

2010 (3 courses)
Introduction to Public Engagement (for Royal Botanic Gardens)
Dialogue
Chairing Public Events

2009 (2 course)
Introduction to Public Engagement (for University of Highlands and Islands)
Chairing Public Events

Note:

- Courses in blue were specially commissioned by us
- Courses in orange were developed by the core team
- Courses in green were based on existing courses but tailored specifically for Beltane
- Courses in black are standard courses which could be booked by any institution.
II.IV PUBLIC EVENTS AND PROJECTS FUNDED

Public Events

In the first year funds were used to run two public events that were committed to in the original proposal.

- Sep 2008: Carnegie Masterclass Series: Making a Difference in Diabetes, Carnegie Festival of Imagination, Dunfermline, Fife
  Contributors: Dr Richard Simpson, MSP; Ross Kerr, Diabetes UK Scotland; Gordon Hughes, Optos, plc; Dr John McKnight, The University of Edinburgh, Professor Ian Megson, UHI
- Nov 2008: Dark Skies Scotland, Scotlandwell, Kinross, Fife
- Nov 2008: Regenerative Medicine: How will it change my life? Royal Society of Edinburgh
- 2008/2009 academic year: Ed Sign Lecture Series, Heriot-Watt University
  A series of lectures about research around British Sign Language (BSL) with BSL interpreters.

Beltane Public Engagement Challenges

Once the procedures were established three calls were made for Public Engagement Challenges, which provided up to £1500 to researchers or partners to run either public events or culture change activities. The projects were then asked to submit short reports which were judged, and the project deemed to be either the most innovative and/or have the most impact (either on the public or culture) was awarded a prize of £2000. Note in the final year it was decided to also award two runner up prizes at the standards of entry had increased significantly.

Round 1 – funded Dec 2009 (9 projects):

- Dr Chris Speed, Edinburgh College of Art: Overcoming the Public Fear of Tagging Culture
- Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis, Edinburgh Napier University: Plant biology and biomechanics at the Botanic Gardens. In 3D!
- Dr Elaine Farrow, Heriot-Watt University: EdSign Open Lecture Series
- William Hardie, Royal Society of Edinburgh: Facing up to the Challenge of Climate Change in the Highlands
- Amy McDonald/Max Coleman, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh: Growing public engagement capacity amongst staff at the RBGE
- Jen Wood, Edinburgh International Science Festival: EISF delegate passes scheme
- Margarita Kominou – PhD Student, The University of Edinburgh: Who is the Ethical Consumer? Research findings, discussion and networking

Winner of the £2000 Public Engagement Challenge Prize (awarded Oct 2010):

- Professor Graham Turner, Heriot- Watt University: BSL:UPTAKE Knowledge Exchange Café

Round 2 – funded Sept 2010 (3 projects):

- Dr Iona Beange, University of Edinburgh: Dialogue and Dance
- Dr Magda Pieczka, Queen Margaret University: Peer learning though dialogue: young people and alcohol

Winner of the £2000 Public Engagement Challenge Prize (awarded Oct 2011):
• Catalina Muntenau, Perth College, UHI: Cairngorms National Park – Knowledge Exchange Meeting

Round 3 – funded Feb 2011 (9 Projects):

• Anne Bevan, Edinburgh College of Art: CORE Interventions
• Dr Bernadette O’Rourke, Heriot-Watt University: Who needs languages? A dialogue.
• Catherine Lichten, University of Edinburgh: Best practices for small-scale magazines and media: A consultation and workshop
• Dr Jenny Rodgers, University of Edinburgh: Autumn Leaves - a celebration of the International Years of Chemistry and Forests 2011 (working title)
• Lydia Kerr, Napier University: Midlothian Women Get SET
• Dr Nicola Hillhouse, Vidiowiki: Enhancing public engagement events with a supplementary Vidiowiki

Winner of the £2000 Public Engagement Challenge Prize (awarded Mar 2012)

• Dr Karly Kehoe, University of the Highlands and Islands: Looking Back to Move Forward: Slavery and the Highlands

Runners up of the Public Engagement Challenge Prize (awarded £1000 Mar 2012)

• Dr Janette Webb, University of Edinburgh: CREATING A BLUEPRINT FOR DISTRICT ENERGY & SUSTAINABLE HEATING IN UK CITIES: A Workshop on Municipal Leadership and Organisation for District Energy
• ASCUS; James Howie, Stephan Matthieson, Mark Eischeid: Science communication and public engagement through collaborative art-science-exhibitions

Events at the Scottish Parliament with Scotland’s Futures Forum

With the exception of the Working Dinner, the events at the Scottish parliament consisted of two seminars per theme. The first seminar was a public workshop whose outputs were reported at the second, an MSP briefing at the Scottish Parliament. The working dinner was by invitation only to MSP and Principals of Scotland’s 20 HEIs.

Nov 2010 – The Future of British Sign Language in an Inclusive Scotland

Mar 2011 – Facing up to Climate Change

Jun 2011 – Realising the potential of Engaged Universities in Scotland

Oct 2011 – Working Dinner

Bright Club Edinburgh Shows

#1.0 Beginnings 26/07/2011
#1.1 BBC@Potterrow 24/08/2011
#1.2 Turing Fest 27/08/2011
#2.0 Revolution 20/09/2011
#3.0 Luck 01/11/2011
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>13/12/2011</td>
<td>Minced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>04/01/2012</td>
<td>Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>24/02/2012</td>
<td>Lates (Mummy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>First degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>05/04/2012</td>
<td>Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>14/04/2012</td>
<td>Z-axis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>09/05/2012</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>18/05/2012</td>
<td>Lates (Wonderland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>12/06/2012</td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>25/07/2012</td>
<td>Birthday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>26/08/2012</td>
<td>BBC@Potterrow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II.V NETWORKING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Partnership forums and conferences:

Sep 2008 – Beltane Launch Event at Our Dynamic Earth
Sep 2009 – First Annual Gathering at Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Mar 2010 – Beltane Website Launch event – Inspace, the University of Edinburgh
Oct 2010 – Second Annual Gathering at the Engine Shed (a local Social Enterprise) and Inspace, the University of Edinburgh
Sep 2001 – Engaging Scotland Conference at Our Dynamic Earth
Oct 2011 – Third Annual Gathering at Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh
Mar 2012 – Discover Beltane – Story Telling event at the National Museum of Scotland
June 2012 – Beltane Midsummer Soiree at the Scottish Story Telling Centre – Final thank-you event

Learning Lunches: Introduction session about Public Engagement

Mar 2009 – Heriot-Watt University
Oct 2009 – Edinburgh College of Art
Nov 2009 – Edinburgh Napier University
Nov 2009 – College of Humanities and Social Sciences, The University of Edinburgh
Nov 2009 – Centre of Study of Environmental Change, The University of Edinburgh
Dec 2009 – Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh – Life Science focus
Feb 2010 – Heriot-Watt University
Apr 2010 – Geosciences, The University of Edinburgh
May 2010 – History Classic & Arts, The University of Edinburgh
Mar 2011 – Edinburgh Napier University

Communication Breakfats: Networking and best practice sharing

May 2010 – Festivals
Aug 2010 – Blogging
Nov 2012 – Social Media
Feb 2011 – Partners venues
Mar 2011 – Meet the Public Engagement Fellows
Apr 2011 – Bright Club
Oct 2011 – Working with the National Museum of Scotland
Apr 2012 – Social Sciences and Humanities

Workshops:

Dec 2008 – Dark Skies Scotland Best Practice Sharing: Royal Observatory Edinburgh
Oct 2010 – Quality in Public Engagement (Edinburgh)
Nov 2010 – Quality in Public Engagement (Manchester)
Dec 2010 – Quality in Public Engagement (London)
Dec 2010 – The NASA Approach to Public Engagement with Piers Sellars
II.VI PUBLICATIONS AND ARTEFACTS

2010
www.edinburghbeltane.net
Edinburgh Beltane Interim Review 2010

2011
Public Dialogue and Deliberation: A communication for public engagement practitioners (Output of Oliver Escobar’s Fellowship)

2012
Discover Beltane magazine –
www.beltanenetwork.org
Micromania card game reprint (Output of Mareike Hoeve’s Fellowship)
Public Dialogue and Deliberation: A communication for public engagement practitioners - update and reprint (Output of Oliver Escobar’s Fellowship)

II.VII AWARDS

2008
The Tam Dalyell Prize For Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science – The University of Edinburgh: Professor Sergio Della Sala, Professor of Human Cognitive Neuroscience

The Principal’s Medal (for contribution to wider community) - The University of Edinburgh - Grant Guthrie (International/Student) and Lesley Forrest (Inspiration/Staff)

2009
The Tam Dalyell Prize For Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science – The University of Edinburgh: Professor Chris Bishop, Professor of Computer Science in the University’s School of Informatics and Chief Research

The Principal’s Medal (for contribution to wider community) - The University of Edinburgh - Ben Miller, Student

2010
The Tam Dalyell Prize For Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science – The University of Edinburgh, Professor Jose Torero, BRE/Royal Academy of Engineering Chair of Fire Safety

The Principal’s Medal (for contribution to wider community) - The University of Edinburgh - Paul Nisbet , Joint Coordinator of CALL Scotland

Beltane Public Engagement Challenge Prize – Professor Graham Turner, Heriot-Watt University

2011
The Tam Dalyell Prize For Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science – The University of Edinburgh, Professor Colin Pulham, Professor of High-Pressure Chemistry

The Principal’s Medal for Service to the Wider Community) - The University of Edinburgh - Dr Chris Speed, Reader in Digital Architecture

Beltane Public Engagement Challenge Prize – Catalina Muntenau, University of Highlands and Islands
The Principal’s Public Engagement Prize – Heriot-Watt University – Dr Murray Roberts, School of Life Sciences

The RSE Beltane Public Engagement Prize

Senior Prize winner: Professor Aubrey Manning, The University of Edinburgh

Innovators Prize winner: Joanna Brookes, PhD Student, The University of Edinburgh

2012

The Tam Dalyell Prize For Excellence in Engaging the Public with Science – The University of Edinburgh – not yet announced

The Principal’s Medal (for contribution to wider community) - The University of Edinburgh – not yet announced

Beltane Public Engagement Challenge Prize – Dr Karly Kehoe, University of Highlands and Islands

The Principal’s Public Engagement Prize – Heriot-Watt University - Dr Bill MacPhearson, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences

The RSE Beltane Public Engagement Prize

Senior Prize winner: Professor Tom Devine, The University of Edinburgh

Innovators Prize winner: Dr Nicola Stanley-Wall, The University of Dundee

Awards in blue were directly funded by the Beltane project

Awards in orange were established as a direct result of the Beltane project, but funded by the host institution
II.VIII Events and Activities with the NCC, other Beacons and Catalysts

2008

- Gathered data for Beacons baseline evaluation survey
- Attended Beacons Gathering in Norwich

2009

- Hosted the Beacons Gathering at Heriot-Watt University
- Contributed to the NCC session at the British Science Association’s Science Communication Conference
- Recruited 16 academics to participate in NCC – BBC collaboration on Bang Goes the Theory

2010

- Hosted NCC Senior Manager Toolkit Workshop
- Hosted Ketso workshop (from Manchester Beacon)
- Contributed 2 workshops to Manchester Beacon Summit
- Contributed 2 Workshops (co presented one with Norwich Beacon) to NCC Engage Conference
- Gathered data for Beacons evaluation
- Attended Beacons Gathering in Manchester
- Manchester Beacon provided a culture change lab day for the Beltane core Team
- Beltane Training Officer worked part time with NCC

2011

- Supported Catalyst bids from The Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow
- Provided Keynote and 1 workshop at NCC Engage Conference
- Attended Beacons Gathering in Cardiff
- Contributed to NCC workshop at ARMA conference
- Invited NCC to contribute to Realising the potential of Engaged Universities at the Scottish Parliament
- Invited NCC and Beacons to contribute to Engaging Scotland conference
- Coordinated 2 Leadership courses for Fellows from all Beacons and co-hosted with Beacon North East.
- Worked with UCL Beacon to develop Bright Club Edinburgh
- Co presented a workshop with the Norwich Beacon at Nottingham University
- Beltane Training Officer worked part time with NCC

2012

- Joint presented with NCC at Glasgow Caledonian University
- Invited NCC to contribute to Discover Beltane event
In four years of being a Beacon for Public Engagement, Edinburgh Beltane has a wide and varied back catalogue of case studies and funded projects. Here we highlight just a few, further examples can found in the 2012 publication Discover Beltane.

III.I THE EDINBURGH BELTANE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FELLOWSHIP SCHEME

This innovative scheme offered early-career research staff at partner institutions the opportunity to enhance their public engagement-skills and to undertake a significant public-engagement project in a supported and facilitated manner. This scheme, which started in 2009 and continues beyond the funded life of the Beacon, not only further embeds public engagement activities, but contributes to each institution’s implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

The aims of the Fellowship are to:

- Provide fellows with the time, space and support to develop their public-engagement portfolio;
- Create champions for public engagement who support others and catalyse culture change in their own institution.

Fellowships bought-out researchers’ time for one day-a-week over six months to focus on public engagement. Fifteen early-career researchers have received a Fellowship to date and each worked alongside more experienced academics, developing their public-engagement skills and planning and implementing their public-engagement activities. Former fellows now act as champions for public engagement within their institutions and mentor subsequent Fellowship holders.

The Fellowship scheme was different by design with several bespoke and traditional elements that combined to form a unique offering:

- A facilitative approach to encourage and support quality public engagement. This included trust and flexibility to develop ideas and building community among the Fellows.
- Dedicated time and space of one day-a-week plus a hot desk to work at the Beltane offices, in company with other Fellows, away from Fellows’ regular work, a quiet environment, a space to share ideas.
- An expectation to champion public engagement while being championed as Beltane Public Engagement Fellows.
- Training in leadership, dialogue, storytelling, broadcasting and the media and evaluation.
- Networking events and opportunities.
- Opportunities for reward and recognition such as prizes.
- Funding for conference participation or additional activities.

The scheme was evaluated by external evaluators who reported impacts on professional development including:
• Providing fellows with an extensive network of public-engagement enthusiasts and connections to public groups (e.g. policy makers, voluntary organisations, societies)
• Recognition for public-engagement activities through conference papers on public engagement, joint inter-disciplinary research papers, increased professional profiles,
• New professional approaches to public engagement e.g. collaborative research projects and working with partner organisations.
• Improved confidence and experience in a wide range of public-engagement approaches.

The Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellowship Scheme was highly commended at the Times Higher Awards (2012) for Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers.

III.II CONFLICT WITHOUT CONFRONTATION

As part of his Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellowship, Oliver Escobar wrote a handbook on public dialogue and deliberation. Begun in 2008 and published in 2011, the book covers a range of issues relevant for those working in public dialogue on policy. The emphasis on the differences between conflict and confrontation can help practitioners to recognise the benefits of acknowledging and engaging in healthy conflict in order to allow participants to explore differences and to understand and change their own views as a result. In addition, the handbook offers a range of practical guidelines and suggestions for facilitators in order to help them develop and design dialogue exercises which embrace conflict without resulting in confrontation.

Reviews by the Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science and Innovation, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, suggest the publication could cause a shift in dialogue methodology.

III.III WORKING WITH THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Our 2011 programme of events at the Scottish Parliament, held in collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum, tapped in to a genuine desire among academics and policy makers to make a positive contribution.

Highlights included Graham Turner making the case for recognising British Sign Language as an official language of Scotland, Antonella Sorace and Bernadette O’Rourke raising the importance of bilingualism and preserving minority languages, and David Sugden and Jan Webb sharing findings from the Royal Society of Edinburgh report on Facing Up to Climate Change. All of the speakers gave relevant and interesting perspectives on complex issues and the events were well received by MSPs and parliamentary researchers.

To build on this, we explored the value of closer links between the university sector and the Scottish Parliament through a workshop with senior academic managers in higher education. Real thought was given to embedding engagement. There was consensus that if public engagement is a priority, it must be included in the staff development strategy – from recruitment to promotion prospects. This, and other key points from the workshop, were taken straight to a briefing session at the Parliament where it was agreed that closer links between the Parliament and universities would be of mutual benefit, particularly around debating and analysing public policy.
To follow up on the points raised at these events we hosted a dinner for MSPs and University Principals at the Scottish Parliament in November 2011, again in collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum. This dinner provided an informal setting to explore areas of common interest including the challenges around diversity in the student population, energy supply in a low carbon economy and how universities could engage more effectively with their local communities.

### III.IV DISCOVER BELTANE EVENT

For our 2012 Celebration events, we invited 23 people from across the Beltane network to tell a story about their experience of the project.

The night was deliberately designed to be different. On the night, each guest was given a personalised programme and had to find their storytellers, who were tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the Kingdom of the Scots gallery in the National Museum. The storytellers were briefed to engage their participants and activity included personal stories, discussion groups and allegories. In advance of the evening, storytellers were given the opportunity to attend our Storytelling Course. The goal of this course wasn’t to make poets out of professors but to provide space to be creative, to describe research and its significance in a new way. With guidance from Donald Smith and Jackie Ross, metaphor, imagery, tone; how stories are put together and when they can be used effectively were all explored. The results were inspiring.

One guest said “Having the storytelling spread throughout the museum was really excellent. Like a little adventure!” Another guest commented that “The best thing was the format, length, variety and locations of the stories. Would have liked to have listened to more! Great to hear people speaking without a powerpoint.”

After the storytelling, Sophie Dow from Mindroom gave an inspiring speech about the value of collaborations between researchers and the public. Sophie’s daughter Annie has a mental handicap, a result of a unique chromosome deletion on chromosome 1: the loss of 21 genes. Sophie told the story of how the discovery of this deletion, subsequently named ‘Annie’s syndrome’ came from an unexpected collaboration between herself (a parent and a journalist), Professor David FitzPatrick from the MRC Human Genetics Unit in Edinburgh and Professor Christopher Gillberg from The Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre in Gothenburg.
# Appendix IV - Spending Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spend</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salaries</strong> (core staff and Beltane Fellowships)</td>
<td>£78,400</td>
<td>£105,409</td>
<td>£164,169</td>
<td>£181,474</td>
<td>£529,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Costs</strong> (for example, website, events, publications, networking, travel, workshops, training, evaluation, prizes)</td>
<td>£36,526</td>
<td>£78,917</td>
<td>£123,174</td>
<td>£291,413</td>
<td>£530,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect and Estate Costs</strong></td>
<td>£34,571</td>
<td>£34,571</td>
<td>£34,571</td>
<td>£34,571</td>
<td>£138,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project costs</strong></td>
<td>£149,497</td>
<td>£218,898</td>
<td>£321,914</td>
<td>£507,458</td>
<td>£1,197,767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. The costs each year reflect the fact that it takes time to embed structures; only then can you hire the right people and begin to deliver activities and produce materials. We had significant plans to leave legacies in the final year and to ensure sustainability of the project. Due to people being well, no maternity leaves and staff turnover being low, most of our contingency was untouched and was put in to final year towards sustainability and setting up a new office in the University. Inter-institutional processes for claiming back the costs of activities were slow, meaning that the year 4 spend also includes the costs of a number of activities which took place in earlier years.
Discover Beltane

“There is virtually no part of the world where the quality of Scotland’s students, academics and universities does not reach – almost nothing else does more to put Scotland on the world stage. But universities are not only an important part of Scotland; they are important and active parts of their local communities.”

Dugald Stewart – Scottish Enlightenment Philosopher and Mathematician

Welcome to the Beltane Review

In four years of being a Beacon for Public Engagement we have a lot of stories to share. Here are just some of our highlights from different aspects of the project:

02 Being a Beacon
08 Beltane Public Engagement Fellows
12 Understanding Dialogue
16 Working with the Scottish Parliament
18 Engaging Scotland
20 Discover Beltane Stories
24 Bright Club
27 New Projects
28 Reward & Recognition
32 Looking Forward, Next Steps

“It’s what we do” Universities Scotland
“Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.”

Being a Beacon

A university can be many things. For some, it’s a centre of learning, a place of discovery, inspiring insights and international collaboration, a valuable partner in shaping our lives for the better. For others, it’s a reminder of student life: the lectures, the exams, and drinking too much in the student union. And to some, it’s just a collection of forgotten unwelcoming buildings, a place of little relevance to wider society.

To build a bridge between universities and the public, in 2008 the UK’s Higher Education Funding Councils, the Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust invested £9.2 million in the Beacons for Public Engagement programme. This four year programme comprised six beacons and a National Coordinating Centre with the remit of changing the culture in universities.

“The Beacons] will also help redefine what it means to be a university in the 21st century, making public interactions and social considerations a core part of the role of any member of staff or student in any discipline…as funders we seek ways to value public engagement activity because we believe this added dimension enriches research, broadens attitudes and ensures the relevancy of our academic community.”

Professor Alan Thorpe speaking on behalf of Research Councils UK

“I strongly believe that a piece of research is not complete until it is in the public domain. As research is funded by charities and governments, researchers should be engaging with and listening to the wider public. It’s the public who provide the cash by taxes and donations and it’s the public who are affected in their everyday lives by how research outputs are used”

Professor Mary Bownes

Professor Mary Bownes, Vice Principal of External Engagement at the University of Edinburgh and Director of the Edinburgh Beltane describes why she is committed to public engagement, and tells the story of how Edinburgh became a Beacon.

When the news of the opportunity to bid to become a Beacon of Public Engagement was published I was at once enthusiastic. Having been very engaged in events for teachers, schools, open days and science festivals as a researcher in biology since I got my first lectureship, and more recently encouraging and enabling others to do this by developing training courses for postgraduates across the University and beyond. The Beacons project was something I really believed in and wanted to see develop further.

Many of our successful projects to date have been partnerships, some within the University of Edinburgh, many well beyond it. Several years ago we established the Scottish Initiative for Biotechnology Education, supported by the Darwin Trust of Edinburgh. The aim is to take the advances in biotechnology both the science and ethical discussions around potential uses to schools and the wider public. The support of the Darwin Trust enabled us to build up a strong programme of school workshops, and to make the University presence much better placed during Edinburgh’s International Science Festival. Through the Festival, we developed strong partnerships with schools and teachers, as well as the National Museum of Scotland. We have also had a number of exciting projects funded by the Wellcome Trust, each of which drew in more people to share in the development and delivery of innovative projects, taking research beyond the walls of the University.

Our events and publications around stem cells and ethics led us into partnerships with people in other disciplines such as ethicists and lawyers; the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. These relationships significantly enhanced our research and increased the impact we had.

Based on this experience, I was keen that a Beacon based in Edinburgh should work as a partnership which crossed the wealth of disciplines at the University and a partnership with others. So we approached partners of two types: other higher education institutions in Edinburgh, together with the University of the Highlands and Islands, with their reach into rural communities; and partners who had professional contact with the wider public, such as the Royal Botanic Garden, the National Museum of Scotland. Our Dynamic Earth and more. To develop a good case we needed to bring our ambitions together and develop a theme. Being in Scotland and close to the still relatively new Scottish Parliament, we felt that a Beacon could have the greatest impact by giving citizens the opportunity to discuss with researchers how research might lead to changes in their lifestyle and welfare, enabling them to feel well informed and confident to influence policy makers. We also thought more academics could help in developing evidence-based policy by communicating directly with policy makers around Europe.

So we approached partners of two types: other higher education institutions in Edinburgh, together with the University of the Highlands and Islands, with their reach into rural communities; and partners who had professional contact with the wider public, such as the Royal Botanic Garden, the National Museum of Scotland. Our Dynamic Earth and more. To develop a good case we needed to bring our ambitions together and develop a theme. Being in Scotland and close to the still relatively new Scottish Parliament, we felt that a Beacon could have the greatest impact by giving citizens the opportunity to discuss with researchers how research might lead to changes in their lifestyle and welfare, enabling them to feel well informed and confident to influence policy makers. We also thought more academics could help in developing evidence-based policy by communicating directly with policy makers around Europe.
I also wanted the Beacon to be cross/multi-disciplinary as people outside universities and research institutions do not see the issues confined to the academic disciplines we tend to work in. Indeed, to cope with the big challenges of the future, researchers will need to be able to work together and escape from their traditional boundaries. There were many other groups across the University engaging with the public, for example in geosciences, chemistry, education, medicine, policy, in sustainability, social justice to name just a few. Ispace was also being developed as an experiment as a public space in the University of Edinburgh's new Informatics Forum. We had a good platform to build on.

Getting the partnerships together around Edinburgh went well. We asked people where there was evidence of us working successfully together in the past. My efforts to get buy-ins across Scotland to create a single Scotland-wide Beacon sadly did not come to fruition though. Universities are a key part of their local community the Scottish community, the UK and beyond, and this project had to deliver a good way of enhancing this. Pulling the bid together needed a lot of networking and support, and would not have been possible without some Edinburgh colleagues, most of whom will appear elsewhere in this story of our development, as they have supported us and had brilliant ideas throughout and no doubt will continue to do so. Going for the interviews was nerve-wracking when Patricia Erskine, Charlie Jeffery and I all travelling to London in different ways, were fog bound and stuck out of reach on runways for hours in a variety of locations. Turning our aims and concepts into reality and matching them with the ideas of the National Coordinating Centre (NCC) and other Beacons turned out to be time consuming, at times frustrating but ultimately led to a very fruitful new partnership. In the past we had chosen our partners for specific reasons, this time they were chosen for us. The Scottish Funding Council, who were part of the funding package, were extremely helpful and positive throughout. The sharing of knowledge with the Beacons has been great. It means we can officially “borrow” great ideas and implement them in our own context for instance the Bright Club for our budding stand-up comedians. In turn we were very proud to work with the NCC in the area of training where we were leading the way.

The core team and all those involved in the Beacon have made it a real pleasure to engage with. People are challenging conventional approaches and have great ideas and we are delighted that our evaluations show that we have made a real difference across the partnership.

The whole project was about culture change, but getting the wider University community to realise that what we were doing would help them develop (not just organise loads of activities) took a while. So how will we know when the culture change is complete? I guess it is when all our universities are full of people who engage and who value the time spent on doing so, and who see that it helps them develop their research as well as sharing what they are doing and why.

We decided to have a key group of practitioners to bring about culture change in different areas, for example around reward and recognition, training, and evaluation. The membership was opened to staff from all of the partner organisations, at all levels. Some of these groups took longer to function effectively than others. This was in part due to the fact that each of our higher education institutions began in a different place, had a different ethos and different research portfolios.

The time spent on getting these groups to work has been well worthwhile and cemented the partnership and achieved change. In order to bring about culture change at the University of Edinburgh, I could work through the committee structures, which as Vice Principal I am well connected with. I was delighted that we have been able to change the promotion criteria to explicitly include public engagement. To enable culture change in other University partners required different methods and Heather Rea, as project manager being seconded on two days a week to partners for a period of time made a real difference.

A lot of the time I and others, had to work hard behind the scenes to bring about change that was often thought to have miraculously happened and coincided with the Beacons aims, but people had no idea we were involved. I think this approach helps buy-in to ideas, but it does not help when people do not know what we have done for them and we are asking them to continue funding.

One of our biggest successes was our fellowship scheme. We decided that instead of having a lot of core staff, we would second researchers part-time who would then become ambassadors. They have been fantastic. The scheme has helped the researchers, shown that public engagement can influence the directions of research lead to new collaborations and new funding.

We have made so much progress, it is crucial to continue to support our researchers to be able to engage meaningfully with a variety of publics and policy makers to ensure that our research is shared with the communities we affect.

“One of our biggest successes was our fellowship scheme. We decided that instead of having a lot of core staff, we would second in researchers part-time who would then become ambassadors. They have been fantastic.”

and a lot of sharing of good practice. These are things that change culture, and of course relating to varying public groups the fellows engaged with also benefited enormously.

We have been doing our own research around public engagement during the last few years. We have encouraged researchers to take risks with new forms of engagement and in a supportive environment, letting them experiment to see what works for different groups of people and venues. This can be quite stressful – but hugely rewarding, and can lead to behaviour changes in how researchers relate to their more usual audiences of students, colleagues and other researchers and as a result get more out of them.

Rewarding and recognising people who are good at public engagement is crucial for people to feel this activity is valued by their institutions. I was especially pleased when the Royal Society of Edinburgh, collaborated with us, and gave prizes for public engagement across Scotland. The quality of the researchers who are already very much experts at taking their research to the public is amazing and I wished we had lots of prizes to give.

It was quite late on that we really got the public policy area embedded and working. We were delighted to be invited to more and more meetings with other bodies and the Government, but the breakthrough came from working with Scotland’s Futures Forum at the Scottish Parliament, where we hosted a lunch just a couple of weeks after the SNP landslide victory in the Parliament, where university principals met the new MSPs from all parties to see how we could work together to use our universities’ knowledge and research outcomes to engage with and enhance the wealth and health of communities around Scotland. Going forward we are continuing a series of small dinner dialogues around specific themes with MSPs and university principals. There are lots of ideas about ways in which we can really develop partnerships with the MSPs and their communities by discussing things in an open way about how to deal with specific long term Scottish opportunities, such as renewable energy, education and health.

Finding a single favourite memory is really hard – there have been so many highlights. Each of our annual networking events has been an experiment and each has been great fun. I think the best thing was being at a table a year or so ago where everyone wanted the Beltane activities and support to continue into the future as a partnership. We have made so much progress, it is crucial to continue to support our researchers to be able to engage meaningfully with a variety of publics and policy makers to ensure that our research is shared with the communities we affect.

Going forward we are going to be able to deliver just that. We have support from our university partners and other parties to continue as a partnership and share what we have learnt with other universities which are just now getting funding to develop their public engagement further.

Dr Patricia Erskine

John Park MSP, Professor Mary Bownes, Professor Sir Timothy O’Shan

“Finding a single favourite memory is really hard – there have been so many highlights.”

Dr Patricia Erskine
“With a culture change project, we believe the best work is done when we are being sociable. However, we also challenge people to continually raise the bar when it comes to engagement and to go beyond their comfort zone.”

The challenge of changing culture has been huge but ultimately rewarding. The key to understanding our task was to identify what we could and couldn’t change, and to realise that culture is ultimately about people.

INFLUENCING CULTURE AND BUILDING CAPACITY
Our approach to influencing culture has been to create a feeling of community amongst people who hold the same values. Heather Rea, Deputy Director of the Edinburgh Beltane, found inspiration from an unusual source: her children’s piano teacher. This teacher takes an unconventional approach to teaching classical music, based on an adaptation of the Suzuki method. Heather said “Neither my husband nor I come from musical households. It is fair to say I could not carry a tune in a bucket. But now, admittedly after many years, there is music in our house, a veritable culture of music. Our teenagers play the piano... to learn their favourite pop pieces, as entertain friends, to experience a different side of themselves before exams, for their own enjoyment... all this has come about through a series of well thought out interventions.” These interventions focused on providing opportunities to learn from experience and others’ practice to lead by example and to provide quality, bespoke training in an environment that was welcoming, supportive and fun. These are all principles we have very much tried to follow over the course of the Beltane project.

Heather said “With a culture change project, we believe the best work is done when we are being sociable. You find a warm welcome at all our events and usually some food too. However, we also challenge people to continually raise the bar when it comes to engagement and to go beyond their comfort zone.”

In terms of building capacity, we often describe our work as creating spaces to meet, to learn to reflect and to share and recognise expertise.

MEET
We bring together people from different academic disciplines and organisations to meet face to face and get to know each other. This might be at a Communications Breakfast with practical presentations over coffee and bacon rolls; a Learning Lunch, a drinks reception or smaller meetings. All these events have helped to grow a large and vibrant network. Ruth Cooper, Project Administrator said “Working at the Beltane in the first three years of the project gave me the opportunity to work with a wide range of people from many different organisations that I may not otherwise have had the opportunity to meet. Amongst those involved with the Edinburgh Beltane and the wider Beacon project I felt that there was a general feeling of being part of a wider community with everyone working towards the same outcomes.”

We always encourage working in partnership and much of our role has been to act as brokers bringing the right people together at the right time. Our networking events have been a catalyst for new projects including Non-Fiction Science, events at the Festival of History at the Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh and at the National Museum as part of their Late programme.

LEARN
We’ve worked closely with colleagues in staff development at our partner universities to create a varied programme of training events and opportunities to learn about new concepts, techniques and ideas. The cross-institution training group was a vital source of support and advice in this area. Dr Kathy Velander from Edinburgh Napier, the chair of this group said “I was delighted with the output of the training group, we worked as a partnership with everyone willingly contributing their times, ideas and skills. It was fantastic to have the camaraderie and support from such a diverse variety of people from so many institutions.”

TRY
Where possible, we link formal training courses with opportunities to practice. Some examples include attending comedy training and getting on stage at Bigie Clubs attending the ‘dialogue course’ and then facilitating at events or learning about storytelling then being invited to be a storyteller at Edinburgh Beltane. We also provide training in leadership and influencing to support people to be Public Engagement Champions in their departments. The Beltane Public Engagement Fellowship Scheme and the Public Engagement Challenges provide people with opportunities to take on larger more complex projects and to pilot new ideas. Our work with the Parliament also offered more senior academics the chance to bring their research to the attention of MSPs.

REFLECT
We strongly encourage people to reflect on their experience and focus on how the quality of what they did. Our Evaluation Group, chaired by Elizabeth Stevenson said “We were concerned about the perceptions arising from increasing the quantity of public engagement without due regard to quality and that this might actually be counter-productive to the culture change. Edinburgh Beltane enabled the group to conduct a piece of work on the concept of quality in public engagement in which we held three sets of discussions in the UK, looking at quality in public engagement at practitioner activity and organisation level.”

SHARE AND RECOGNISE EXPERTISE
We also make a concerted effort to model good practice ourselves ensuring that we foster participation in developing our programmes and ensure our events are innovative and engaging. A major element of our events programme is to provide a platform for people with experience in engagement to share their expertise and promote good practice. We’ve been particularly lucky in two counts: the sheer number of people who have something to share, and also their willingness to do so.

To recognise and value expertise in engagement; we’ve worked with individual institutions on their promotion criteria and recruitment strategy and established Public Engagement prizes.
Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellows

Over the past four years there have been a total of 15 Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellows and two Honorary Fellows. They have been recruited from a wide range of disciplines (including Social Sciences, Science and Medicine, Business and Politics and Multi-disciplinary fields), and seniority levels (from post-docs to professors). The fellowship scheme was different by design with several traditional and bespoke elements that combined to form a unique offering.

Bespoke elements of the fellowship included:

- A facilitative approach to encourage and support quality public engagement. Factors that contributed to this included trust and flexibility to develop ideas, building community among the Fellows and the capacity, skills and knowledge of the core team to support the Fellows individually and as a group.

- Dedicated time and space of one day a week plus a hot desk to work at in the Beltane offices. This provided various types of work spaces in company with other fellows, away from fellows’ regular work, a quiet environment, a space to share ideas.

- An expectation to champion public engagement while being championed as Beltane Public Engagement Fellows. This meant Fellows were part of a broader community of public engagement practitioners working towards cultural change in areas such as reward and recognition. Other more traditional elements provided an infrastructure of support including:

  - Training and support including networking events. Many of these involved fellows as recipients and contributors.
  - Opportunities for reward and recognition such as prizes.
  - Small amounts of additional funding for conference participation or additional activities.

The fellowships lead to significant impacts on professional practice of the fellows and some impact on culture change. You can read more about it in our evaluators’ report “The Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellowships” available on-line at www.edinburghbeltane.net/content/public-engagement-fellowships. We have learned a great deal from this programme, and look forward to continuing to work with past fellows to share their learning, and to recruit a new cohort of fellows in 2013.

“‘One of the things that I found useful about my Beltane Fellowship was spending time in the Beltane office rather than in my own place of work. Getting away from the ‘comforts’ of familiar surroundings and working with people from different academic backgrounds helped to challenge my thinking, as a social scientist, particularly the variety of ways that physical scientists were developing public engagement activities.’” — Dr Sue Milne – Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR), The University of Edinburgh.

“‘In my opinion the fellowship scheme is one of the most successful things that the Beltane has done. And part of the success comes from that approach, it comes from the flexibility that it gives us because each of the Fellows – we work in completely different worlds.’” — Dr Kathy Charles – Lecturer, School of Sport, Life & Social Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University.

“‘The Beltane Fellowship has been a unique opportunity for my career development. It allowed me to dedicate some time exclusively to my public engagement activities, rather than developing them in my spare time. As a consequence, I was able to kick-start several projects which are now ongoing and will be developed further in the future.’” — Dr Tim Johnson – RCUK Academic Fellow in ‘Maths and the Future’ reported by RCUK 2011.

“A major advantage of the Fellowship was the access to networking and training opportunities. Many researchers find themselves a bit isolated in their efforts to engage with the public, and the Beltane provided a link to people with the same passion for outreach. Among the training opportunities I have to mention the VOX Leadership course that I attended. It provided invaluable practical advice and information about how to lead in changing the culture within my department, and promoting engagement with the public. I have found myself putting in practice some of the techniques I learnt there on a regular basis.” — Dr Mar Carmenà – Welcome Trust Centre for Cell Biology, The University of Edinburgh.

“‘Being a Beltane Fellow allowed me dedicated time to develop my public engagement activities. My public engagement has been about explaining mathematics to very intelligent non-mathematicians, all of whom have been fascinated by hearing, from a mathematician, what mathematics is, what it does and how it can help society. The most surprising discovery I have made is that public engagement actually helps my research. Being asked a question such as why we do something in a particular way has lead me to try and understand some pretty fundamental issues about both maths and finance, and this is leading me in new research directions, directions that lead directly to one of the ‘Big Ideas for the Future’ reported by RCUK 2011.’” — Dr Tim Johnson – RCUK Academic Fellow in Financial Mathematics, Heriot-Watt University.
MICROMANIA: THE GAME THAT IS REALLY INFECTIOUS!

Dr Marieke Hoeve set out to show that engagement could be child’s play when she began developing her educational children’s card game (based on ‘Happy Families’) as part of her Public Engagement Fellowship in 2009. The scientific game deals with the subject of infectious diseases, intended to generate awareness of the importance of early knowledge exchange among important global diseases. The British Society of Immunology (BSI) funded the completion of the project, and the game was launched at the BSI Congress in December 2011.

Dr Marieke Hoeve

“MICROMANIA: THE GAME THAT IS REALLY INFECTIOUS! Dr Marieke Hoeve set out to show that engagement could be child’s play when she began developing her educational children’s card game (based on ‘Happy Families’) as part of her Public Engagement Fellowship in 2009. The scientific game deals with the subject of infectious diseases, intended to generate awareness of the importance of early knowledge exchange among important global diseases. The British Society of Immunology (BSI) funded the completion of the project, and the game was launched at the BSI Congress in December 2011.

HONORARY FELLOWS

- Alan Walker, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Particle Physics Experiment Group, School of Physics and Astronomy, The University of Edinburgh
- Dr Wendy Faulkner, Honorary Public Engagement Fellow, Institute for the Study of Science, Technology & Innovation (iSTI), College of Humanities and Social Science, The University of Edinburgh
- Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis, Principal Research Fellow, Forest Products Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University
- Dr Sue Milne, Researcher/centre for Research on Families and Relationships, The University of Edinburgh
- Dr Anne Claveloule, Lecturer/School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care Edinburgh Napier University
- Dr Mark Wright, Research Fellow, Informatics Forum, School of Informatics, The University of Edinburgh

BILINGUALISM MATTERS

Bilingualism Matters started out as an information service delivered by the University of Edinburgh researchers. There are now branches in the Western Isles, Tromsø (Norway) and Tessaloniki (Greece). Bilingualism Matters has also joined PICCOLINGO, an EU campaign to increase awareness of the importance of early language learning in pre-school children.

Dr Mark Wright

THE CHEMISTRY OF AUTUMN

Did you know that 2011 was the International Year of Chemistry and the International Year of Forests? Neither did we… until two of our Fellows (Chemist Jenny Rodgers and Timber Engineer Dan Ridley-Ellis) met at a quarterly Fellows meeting. A chance conversation turned into “The Chemistry of Autumn”, a drop-in event at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to highlight the chemistry of autumn leaves. Jenny and Dan filled the “Real Life Science Studio” (John Hope Gateway, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh) with lots of exciting, hands-on activities for all the family, including chromatography (a technique for separating leaf pigments), 3D-movies of leaf pigments and an interactive exhibition of products which come from trees.

Professor Antonella Sorace

“For me personally, being involved with Edinburgh Beltane had provided the opportunity to learn much more about public engagement, to develop new skills and make new contacts, both across the Beltane partnership and within UHI. As a Beltane Fellow I hope to continue to raise the profile of public engagement at UHI and promote sharing of experience and expertise across the UHI network.”

Kathleen McDougall, University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)
Supporting researchers to develop facilitation skills

Heather Rea came to the role of Deputy Director of the Edinburgh Beltane from a background of engineering research and science communication aimed at informing and enthusing people about engineering. Here, Heather describes why she was keen to develop a course on dialogue for researchers.

In 2008 when I joined Beltane, “Dialogue” was being described as something that needed to be done. I perceived “Dialogue” as being an almost elite event about serious topics, which brought together everyday people with policy makers, was run by people with an exclusive skill set, and was aimed at changing policy. There was also this notion that “Dialogue” was the antidote to the deficit model of public understanding of Science and the holy grail of public engagement.

With this perception I felt it was important that I, and the Edinburgh Beltane, got to grips with “Dialogue”. So I attended a week-long course run by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) as participation seemed to be a key element of Dialogue. The course was designed around dealing with public input into, and deliberations about, planning and development schemes. It was extremely interesting, but even with quite lateral-thinking I found it difficult to make the direct connections to research and I knew that this would have to be extensively adapted for researchers interested in public engagement.

Around this time Oliver Escobar, then a Research Associate in Dialogue at Queen Margaret University, applied to do a fellowship about “Dialogue in Public Engagement”. He proposed to run a course, bringing together researchers, public engagement practitioners and external practitioners with experience of participation techniques to discuss the theory of dialogue and its application to public engagement. In five half days, over five months, Oliver shared his understanding of and passion for dialogue with a small d, which was real, personal, based on respect of individuals and allowed room for conflict and disagreement. He also shared with us the numerous examples of how group dialogue was being used worldwide to build trust, resolve conflicts and generate innovative solutions to a wide range of issues, from the politics of Northern Ireland to wildlife conservation in the USA. The other participants brought their experiences of public engagement and we all developed a deeper understanding of the process and practices needed to engender dialogue.

This was a language I knew that researchers would understand. It explicitly explained and evidenced the value of a social-based approach. However it was extremely theoretical and lacked some of the practical tools and techniques that the IAP2 course provided. These were needed to translate the theory into practice. Wendy Faulkner who has experience of facilitating public engagement with STEM Cell research also attended this course and a similar course to the IAP2 and was willing to put the time into developing a two-day course aimed at researchers, combining Oliver’s theory course with the practical tips from the world of participation.

The three of us, Wendy, Oliver and myself, deliver this transformative workshop together. The course never fails to broaden the perspective of the participants, who often immediately apply their newly developed skills in personal and professional situations prior to incorporating it into their public engagement practice. One participant said “Dialogue is an invaluable tool, not only in public engagement but also in everyday dealings with friends and colleagues. Dialogue can improve many relationships and is a very effective means of communication.”

We manage to convey the ethos of an engaged practice approach which is based, more than anything else, on seeing the individual you are interacting with and respecting their experiences, knowledge and culture. Another participant said “The main learning point for me was the importance of the emotional content of dialogue, and the understanding that I need to be aware of both the emotional content and the factual content in group discussions and to be able to act on both as a facilitator.”
Conflict without confrontation

As part of his Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Fellowship, Oliver Escobar wrote a handbook on public dialogue and deliberation. The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science and Innovation, which is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, wrote the review of Oliver’s work on the opposite page.

“Monologues, confrontation and shallow exchanges are still popular rituals in public forums. We need new ways of talking. Many current complex challenges require interdisciplinary approaches capable of bringing together a range of voices and perspectives, including experts, citizens, practitioners and policymakers. It is not enough to simply call for more opportunities for public engagement. We need to enhance the quality of communications to enable collaboration, in other words, we must experiment with new ways of creating meaningful conversations that foster our collective capacity for shared inquiry and problem-solving.”

Oliver Escobar

Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre review:

Edinburgh Beltane, a beacon for Public Engagement, has recently published a handbook on Public Dialogue and Deliberation. The handbook is written by Oliver Escobar, an academic focusing on participatory policy-making. In it, he covers a range of issues relevant for those working in public dialogue on policy relating to science and technology. In particular, his discussion on the differences between conflict and confrontation could point to a potential shift in the way that dialogue is run.

Those who have trained as dialogue facilitators or who have experienced public dialogue will be aware of the pitfalls of confrontational patterns of communication emerging in group deliberations. Personal or sarcastic remarks can be unpleasant, for those engaged and for others in the group, and can put people off engaging again. Confrontation can encourage further polarisation between emerging ‘camps’ of opinion, particularly in more controversial areas of science. It can prevent people from exploring differences in a non-judgemental way. In short, it can work against the key aims of dialogue.

The danger, however, is that in attempting to avoid confrontation, facilitators and participants can also avoid engaging constructively in conflict. Unlike confrontation, acknowledging and engaging in conflict allows participants to explore differences and to understand and change their own views as a result. As discussed in a Sciencewise-ERC forum, there are different kinds of conflict, and the best role for public dialogue is in exploring conflicts arising from differences in values.

Escobar suggests that drawing a clear conceptual distinction between conflict and confrontation can be very useful in the practical design and facilitation of dialogue exercises. Ensuring the conflict does not become confrontation can of course be a challenge for facilitators. However, Escobar suggests a number of practical suggestions including shared ground rules created by participants which the facilitator can come back to if confrontational communication patterns emerge.

Although focusing conversation on common ground and avoiding difficult areas may make a dialogue ‘easier’ to facilitate, Escobar’s challenge of encouraging and engaging in conflict may enable much meatier and deeper dialogue.
Our programme of events at the Scottish Parliament, held in collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum, tapped into a genuine desire among academics and policy makers to make a positive contribution. Highlights included Graham Turner making the case for recognise British Sign Language as an official language of Scotland, Antonella Sorace and Bernadette O’Rourke raising the importance of bilingualism and preserving minority languages, and David Sugden and Jan Webb sharing findings from the Royal Society of to embedding engagement. There was consensus that if public engagement is a priority it must be included in the staff development strategy – from recruitment to promotion prospects. Other positive suggestions included sharing expertise in engagement across disciplines and between institutions – there is a lot we can learn from each other. There was a reminder that students in Scotland make a huge contribution through volunteering and student societies and perhaps most importantly, an understanding of the need to be genuine.

All of the speakers gave relevant and interesting perspectives on complex issues and the events were well received by MSPs and parliamentary researchers.

To build on this, we explored the value of closer links between the university sector and the Scottish Parliament and discussed strategies to realise the potential of engaged universities at events during UK Universities Week in June 2011.

The Universities Week events, influenced by our work on dialogue, created a space to consider how Scotland’s universities could expand the positive contributions they already make to society. The morning workshop was attended by 70 delegates, mainly senior academic managers in higher education. Real thought was given to embedding engagement. There was consensus that if public engagement is a priority it must be included in the staff development strategy – from recruitment to promotion prospects. Other positive suggestions included sharing expertise in engagement across disciplines and between institutions – there is a lot we can learn from each other. There was a reminder that students in Scotland make a huge contribution through volunteering and student societies and perhaps most importantly, an understanding of the need to be genuine.

To follow up on the points raised at the June events and at our Engaging Scotland conference (see p18), we hosted a dinner for MSPs and University Principals at the Scottish Parliament in November 2011, again in collaboration with Scotland’s Futures Forum. This dinner provided an informal setting to explore areas of common interest including the challenges around diversity in the student population, energy supply in a low carbon economy and how universities could engage more effectively with their local communities.

Jean Urquhart, MSP for the Highlands and Islands said “I think it’s important that there is a close relationship between universities and the Parliament. Not in a controlling sense, but there are so many things happening in universities which could be of real value to wider society and it’s not always easy to find out about it. I think politicians would benefit more from learning about the work universities do – but I also think universities would benefit from finding out more about how we work.”

Jean is also keen to see more involvement from students. “It would be great to see more students in the Parliament, with the range of degrees on offer at universities and the scope of issues that we work on, there are bound to be many areas where students could contribute.”

Taking a big picture view, Jean said “When we talk about engagement, whether that’s universities working more closely with their local communities or politicians trying to get more people interested in politics, what we’re really talking about is empowering civic Scotland. We might have conflicting views and opinions but it’s important to properly discuss issues which affect us all. We need to create opportunities for those discussions.”
The aims of this conference were to share best practice approaches to engagement, to provide professional development opportunities and to discuss the wider engagement agenda in Scotland. As one tweet summed up, ‘The question is no longer WHY to do public engagement but HOW to embed it in the system’.

In the opening panel discussion Mary Bownes, Director of the Edinburgh Beltane, Stuart Monro, Director of Science at Our Dynamic Earth, and Tom Devine, Professor of Scottish History at the University of Edinburgh, described their experiences of engaging public audiences and how attitudes to engagement had changed over the years. Mary made the point that “People who are good at engaging the public are often good leaders, regardless of what level they are at in an institution.” In our experience, supporting public engagement champions at every level of an organisation is vital in creating a culture where this work is supported, recognised and rewarded.

However, it’s important not to be too inward looking. Susan Morrison, a comedian and festival organiser, said “What universities really need is a giant welcome sign. From an outsider’s perspective, trying to engage with people in a university isn’t straightforward – and you don’t always feel encouraged to try.”

Delegates considered what Scotland would look like if the university sector truly embedded engagement. This generated discussion points that were followed up in other aspects of the programme. The ‘Open Space’ sessions focused on working across academic disciplines; developing skills to improve the quality of engagement and the resources required for effective engagement. Case studies on working with policymakers; involving different audiences and working with schools provided opportunities to share the challenges and best practice in a more specific area. Common principles were the importance of understanding your audience, and of being proactive and responsive to increase the benefits to both parties.

Developing skills was a major theme of the conference with taster sessions on evaluation, dialogue techniques and popular science-writing. Vox Coaching led a series of communication master classes led by trained actors. One delegate tweeted “Loving it, using drama sketches to illustrate communication challenges for collaboration and engagement”. Another said “It was a real ice breaker and I think it made everyone more willing to interact effectively throughout the day.”

To close the conference, Enimma Ochu from the Manchester Beacon chaired a panel comprising Ben Dipper from the Scottish Government, Sophie Duncan from the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, Melanie Knetsch from the Economic and Social Research Council and Ben Paechter from Edinburgh Napier University. The panellists and delegates identified crucial areas to focus on to achieve an ‘Engaged Scotland’:

**Funding:** We need to ring fence funding for engagement and remember to include it in research grant proposals.

**Career:** Public engagement needs to be in job descriptions, part of an annual review and recognised in the reward structure to be truly embedded. There also needs to be guidance on how public engagement fits in to the REF.

**Resources:** There needs to be more awareness of what’s available already – and a more realistic idea of the time and cost of different types of engagement activities.

**Access:** It needs to be easier to find relevant contacts and potential partners within universities.

**Policy:** We should be more proactive rather than reactive when it comes to working with the Parliament or other policy makers, but also to be aware of the context in which policy makers work.

**Communities:** We need to be more aware of what specific communities want and shape engagement projects accordingly.

Some of these points were discussed in more detail at a dinner with MSPs and university senior managers and continue to inform our Parliament events programme.

“"What universities really need is a giant welcome sign. From an outsider’s perspective, trying to engage with people in a university isn’t straightforward — and you don’t always feel encouraged to try.””

Susan Morrison

““The Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries and Edinburgh Napier University has made available £18,000 split evenly between its six Institutes to fund new public engagement activities this year. If the scheme goes well then it is hoped to repeated it in future years.””

Professor Ben Paechter
After the storytelling, Sophie Dow from Mindroom gave an inspiring speech about the value of collaborations between researchers and the public. Sophie’s daughter Annie has a mental handicap, a result of a unique chromosome deletion on chromosome 1: the loss of 21 genes. The discovery of this deletion, subsequently named ‘Annie’s syndrome’ came from an unexpected collaboration between Professor David FitzPatrick from the MRC Human Genetics Unit here in Edinburgh, Professor Christopher Gillberg from The Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre in Gothenburg and also, perhaps most surprisingly, Sophie Dow, a parent and a journalist. “My role was putting the two professors together; they didn’t know each other, and then nagging them to keep looking through that microscope until they found the missing deletion. But in return I do quite a bit of the work for them. I make sure ‘Annie’s syndrome’ is kept in the public eye, I write – they approve, they write – I submit, they discover – I take it to the general public.”

Sophie is not a scientist but she played a vital role in finding the cause of her daughter Annie’s handicap. Her name features on par with the two professors in a scientific paper published in Advances in Clinical Neuroscience and Rehabilitation in 2010. “The next step is now to find out what those missing 21 genes would have contributed, had Annie arrived intact. The outcome of that and this particular collaboration will then contribute to the vital Bigger Picture – which ultimately will help other Annies and families out there.”

Ending on an inspirational note, Sophie asked us to “Remember the bigger picture in whatever field you work. The very nature of research is to push boundaries, to boldly go where no-one has been before. We have so much to gain by collaborating.”

For our 2012 Celebration events, we invited 23 people from across the Beltane network to tell a story about their experience of the project.

Benefits of collaboration

After the storytelling, Sophie Dow from Mindroom gave an inspiring speech about the value of collaborations between researchers and the public. Sophie’s daughter Annie has a mental handicap, a result of a unique chromosome deletion on chromosome 1: the loss of 21 genes. The discovery of this deletion, subsequently named ‘Annie’s syndrome’ came from an unexpected collaboration between Professor David FitzPatrick from the MRC Human Genetics Unit here in Edinburgh, Professor Christopher Gillberg from The Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre in Gothenburg and also, perhaps most surprisingly, Sophie Dow, a parent and a journalist. “My role was putting the two professors together; they didn’t know each other, and then nagging them to keep looking through that microscope until they found the missing deletion. But in return I do quite a bit of the work for them. I make sure ‘Annie’s syndrome’ is kept in the public eye, I write – they approve, they write – I submit, they discover – I take it to the general public.”

Sophie is not a scientist but she played a vital role in finding the cause of her daughter Annie’s handicap. Her name features on par with the two professors in a scientific paper published in Advances in Clinical Neuroscience and Rehabilitation in 2010. “The next step is now to find out what those missing 21 genes would have contributed, had Annie arrived intact. The outcome of that and this particular collaboration will then contribute to the vital Bigger Picture – which ultimately will help other Annies and families out there.”

Ending on an inspirational note, Sophie asked us to “Remember the bigger picture in whatever field you work. The very nature of research is to push boundaries, to boldly go where no-one has been before. We have so much to gain by collaborating.”

On the night, each guest was given a personalised programme and had to find their storytellers, who were tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the Kingdom of the Scots gallery. With a little help from the guides, each storyteller was soon surrounded by a cluster of intrigued guests. The sounds of animated stories were followed by the gentle murmur of conversation before people departed in search of their next destination. One guest said “Having the storytelling spread throughout the museum was really excellent. Like a little adventure.” Despite their nerves, the storytellers were fantastic. Another guest commented that “The best thing was the format, length, variety and locations of the stories. Would have loved to have listened to more! Great to hear people speaking without a powerpoint.”

For our 2012 Celebration events, we invited 23 people from across the Beltane network to tell a story about their experience of the project.

Benefits of collaboration

After the storytelling, Sophie Dow from Mindroom gave an inspiring speech about the value of collaborations between researchers and the public. Sophie’s daughter Annie has a mental handicap, a result of a unique chromosome deletion on chromosome 1: the loss of 21 genes. The discovery of this deletion, subsequently named ‘Annie’s syndrome’ came from an unexpected collaboration between Professor David FitzPatrick from the MRC Human Genetics Unit here in Edinburgh, Professor Christopher Gillberg from The Gillberg Neuropsychiatry Centre in Gothenburg and also, perhaps most surprisingly, Sophie Dow, a parent and a journalist. “My role was putting the two professors together; they didn’t know each other, and then nagging them to keep looking through that microscope until they found the missing deletion. But in return I do quite a bit of the work for them. I make sure ‘Annie’s syndrome’ is kept in the public eye, I write – they approve, they write – I submit, they discover – I take it to the general public.”

Sophie is not a scientist but she played a vital role in finding the cause of her daughter Annie’s handicap. Her name features on par with the two professors in a scientific paper published in Advances in Clinical Neuroscience and Rehabilitation in 2010. “The next step is now to find out what those missing 21 genes would have contributed, had Annie arrived intact. The outcome of that and this particular collaboration will then contribute to the vital Bigger Picture – which ultimately will help other Annies and families out there.”

Ending on an inspirational note, Sophie asked us to “Remember the bigger picture in whatever field you work. The very nature of research is to push boundaries, to boldly go where no-one has been before. We have so much to gain by collaborating.”

On the night, each guest was given a personalised programme and had to find their storytellers, who were tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the Kingdom of the Scots gallery. With a little help from the guides, each storyteller was soon surrounded by a cluster of intrigued guests. The sounds of animated stories were followed by the gentle murmur of conversation before people departed in search of their next destination. One guest said “Having the storytelling spread throughout the museum was really excellent. Like a little adventure.” Despite their nerves, the storytellers were fantastic. Another guest commented that “The best thing was the format, length, variety and locations of the stories. Would have loved to have listened to more! Great to hear people speaking without a powerpoint.”
The importance of stories...

The inspiration for commissioning this course from the Scottish Storytelling Centre came out of professors but to provide space to be creative, to describe research and its significance in a new way. With guidance from Donald Smith and Jackie Ross, we explored metaphor, imagery, tone; how stories are put together and when they can be used effectively. The results were inspiring. Glancing round the participants, the usual polite expressions people adopt when others launch into detail about their research were replaced by rapt attention. Being a Beacon, the main aim for us was to highlight new approaches to engaging public audiences but skills in storytelling can be applied much more broadly. Professor Nigel Brown, Senior Vice Principal at the University of Edinburgh said “Storytelling is a hugely important skill for academic researchers. When I was allegedly a bright young thing I thought it was important to impress my audience with reams of data showing how I was testing and proving my hypothesis, but I now know that it was important to impress my audience with stories showing why I was testing and proving my hypothesis.” The atmosphere changed to one of thoughtful reflection. Brows furrowed in concentration and pens scribbled across fresh white paper. It was day two of the Beltane storytelling course for academics and the expedition beyond the comfort zone was going well.

The goal of this course wasn’t to make poets out of professors but to provide space to be creative, to describe research and its significance in a new way. With guidance from Donald Smith and Jackie Ross, we explored metaphor, imagery, tone; how stories are put together and when they can be used effectively. The results were inspiring. Glancing round the participants, the usual polite expressions people adopt when others launch into detail about their research projects were replaced by rapt attention. Lara label, a participant on the course, said “Even now, months later, I can still remember the stories people shared. It gave me an insight into a specialist area but also a much better understanding of why they chose to do the work that they do and why it matters.”

The inspiration for commissioning this course from the Scottish Storytelling Centre came from our events in June 2011 on ‘Realising the Potential of Engaged Universities’, part of UK Universities week. As senior managers from universities across Scotland discussed what engagement was one delegate said “We need to think about stories not messages. Really, engagement is about people connecting with people and sharing knowledge.” The idea of stories as a way to involve people resonated and there was a sense that being open and honest, and willing to listen, were important principles of engagement. Another delegate said “To build trust we need to build relationships.” Storytelling seemed like something worth exploring.

“Even now, months later, I can still remember the stories people shared. It gave me an insight into a specialist area but also a much better understanding of why they chose to do the work that they do and why it matters.”

The importance of stories...

The inspiration for commissioning this course from the Scottish Storytelling Centre came from our events in June 2011 on ‘Realising the Potential of Engaged Universities’, part of UK Universities week. As senior managers from universities across Scotland discussed what engagement was one delegate said “We need to think about stories not messages. Really, engagement is about people connecting with people and sharing knowledge.” The idea of stories as a way to involve people resonated and there was a sense that being open and honest, and willing to listen, were important principles of engagement. Another delegate said “To build trust we need to build relationships.” Storytelling seemed like something worth exploring.

“Even now, months later, I can still remember the stories people shared. It gave me an insight into a specialist area but also a much better understanding of why they chose to do the work that they do and why it matters.”

“The purpose of a storyteller is not to tell you how to think, but to give you questions to think upon.”

Brandon Sanderson

Find out more online at: www.edinburghbeltane.net/news/discover-beltane-stories-success
Some people save lives. Others build bridges and land planes. At the Beltane, our most daunting tasks have an altogether different flavour. In 2011, we had to persuade a group of academics to do stand-up comedy, and not just any comedy; it had to be based on their research. And it wasn’t just any gig. We needed them to perform at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2011, on the biggest BBC stage. ‘Hard sell’ didn’t quite cover it.

The concept of academics doing stand-up about their research, bizarre as it may seem, had been tried and tested to great success by our colleagues at the London Beacon. Steve Cross, the director, said: “We wanted an idea where academics themselves could interact with others who would never normally hear about what Universities do. It needed to be a format with an existing audience, that interact with adults who would never normally hear about what Universities do. It needed to be a format with an existing audience, that...


gig to fill up, our academic jokers were not looking good. Some were pale, a couple were shaking and one was suspiciously close to the emergency exit. And then it was time to begin.

They were sensational. The stuff of science labs and libraries provided ample comic material. As they told stories about the trials and tribulations of getting fruit flies to get it on, the unfortunate everyday application of Bayes Theorem and a crayfish inspired take on Lady Gaga’s ‘Bad Romance’, the polite giggles of encouragement gave way to belly laughs, gasps and tears rolling down faces.

Lauras Gould, one of the audience members said: “My expectations of a ‘scientists doing comedy’ evening were on a par with Big Bang-style geek jokes but I was proved wrong! Funny, witty and easy for non-scientists to understand.

Bright Club was fantastic entertainment and informative too. The performers were very professional and inspirational. I came away thinking I might give it a try too!”

Susan Morrison, our hilarious compere for the evening, was hugely impressed:

“Stand-up comedy is a really raw form of performance; You have to really connect with your audience or die painfully on-stage.”

It’s the first time I have ever seen a group of new performers do so well and I run a lot of beginners comedy nights. But I’ve also never seen a group of new performers support and encourage each other as much as this group have.”

By this point, you might well be wondering why we would put people through such a nerve-wracking challenge. As Steve Cross says: “Stand-up comedy is a really raw form of performance. You have to really connect with your audience or die painfully on-stage.”

Academics are highly qualified, smart specialists. They are often looked to for expert opinion and, despite their best intentions, they can be perceived as intimidating. With stand-up comedy, the balance of power is flipped and being sensitive to your audience is unavoidable. It’s a great starting point for public engagement.

There are other benefits too. One of the highlights for us was watching the transformation of those six performers. From the bashful modesty in the pub and the numb terror before the gig, it was incredible to see them float off stage to raucous applause. Absolutely elated. An email from one of the performers said: ‘That was awesome. It’s the best thing I’ve ever done by a mile.’

The end-of-gig euphoria inevitably wore off but the confidence boost didn’t. Things that seemed daunting before giving lectures to hundreds of undergrads, or presenting to senior colleagues, pale in comparison. Since that first gig, PhD students, post docs, lecturers and professors from nearly every discipline have taken the stand-up challenge. Bright Club has expanded across the central belt to sell-out success and is now hosted at the famous The Stand Comedy Club in Edinburgh and Glasgow. A new partnership with the National Museum of Scotland has seen Bright Club a regular part of the Museum Lates programme, they performed at The Cave Dhu during the Edinburgh International Science Festival 2012. Bright Club will be part of the BBC Fringe 2012 programme with a show on Sunday 26 August 2012.

Tempted to give it a go? Contact Dr.Ridley-Ellis@napier.ac.uk
Performers’ perspective:

Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis

I never had an ambition to be a comedian and still don’t, but I’m very glad this didn’t stop me from trying it. Why? And how? I agreed to doing it in the first place I don’t quite recall, but I do remember my initial doubtfullness fading as the date of Bright Club Edinburgh’s debut show approached. Our little gang of performers was mutually supportive, fun to be with, and being enthusiastically coached by professional comedian Susan Morrison. The more I read about how to do stand-up, the more parallels I saw with research. I’d even gone from having no ideas, to the point where I had too much material for my time on stage. I’ve done plenty of public speaking, but this was still new and frightening. Stand-up makes demands that research presentations don’t. Most obviously, there is no security blanket of PowerPoint, and comedy requires a certain sequence and rhythm to work. The audience is both more engaged and more distracted and is, of course, non-specialist – except in knowing what they find funny. The format of Bright Club allows you to be interesting in the gaps between punchlines but the real challenge lies in finding the line between just being funny with the audience not learning anything, and making the audience think so much that they don’t laugh. And it’s laugh you want – no form of audience feedback is so immediate and rewarding. I’ve never given a research presentation and then immediately felt an urge to do it again. Professional comedians talk about being on stage as being like an addiction and now I understand what they mean. I enjoyed it so much I decided to help make sure Bright Club Edinburgh continues. Not only is it the most fun way to meet other researchers, but it’s also got enormous benefits for personal development – even for experienced academics.

Dr Andy MacLeod

“I had an interview on Monday and one of the people who came up afterwards to say how much they enjoyed it – not just that it was interesting, well presented, but actually enjoyable. And that’s something else I’ve found – I enjoy giving talks, “performing”, if you like a lot more than I used to. And I think if the speaker is enjoying themselves, then it’s easier to get the audience to do the same, be that in a comedy club or an academic seminar.”

Non-fiction Science @NonFiSci

Bringing a bunch of engaging academics together was always likely to spark off new ideas. During rehearsals for Bright Club, Steve Earl, Holly Jove Harg and Dan Arnold discovered a shared hobby for scientifically questionable films. They have turned this into NonFiSci events and online media which aim to inject a little more research into Hollywood blockbusters. Steve describes their progress so far:

“I met Holly by chance through Biltane events, and what started out as random conversation grew into NonFiSci. We realised that together we could create an engagement network which would really excite researchers. Working cooperatively and creatively with different ideas has been really important for developing the NonFiSci concept.

At NonFiSci, we ask scientists and engineers to remake their favourite movie scenes into new shorts which express their own research. They are engaged because they get to contribute their knowledge in a medium which is fun for them, but also accessible to everyone else.”

NonFiSci held a “Tea and Film” day at the Informatics Forum last December. 20 academics (both science and social scientists) got together to remake the wrongs of their movie past and reproduce Jurassic Park and 2001: A Space Odyssey. Jurassic Park became “Jurassic Peck” after the only way we could reproduce dinosaurs was to effectively brew the only living relatives: Chicken! Whereas, 2001 got a contemporary twist by replacing Hal with the iPhone’s Siri and getting all the voice commands misinterpreted! You can see the videos on our website:

nonfictionscience.wordpress.com

Festival of History

At as being a professional comedian, Susan Morrison also coordinates Edinburgh’s Festival of History. The first festival was held in 2011 and through her links with Bright Club, Susan managed to involve researchers in the programme. We received this email from her:

“Hello,

Now, you may recall that earlier this year I sent you an SOS desperately seeking help to find an academic and a specialist in Scots Language to work with the history festival to stage The Flyting. Well, I thought I’d let you know how it went – what a high note to go! The message clearly got out fast and within hours I had an incredible response.

Dr Sarah Carpenter, a senior lecturer in English Literature went into overdrive, and within the week I found myself in Sarah’s office with a bunch of fantastic women, including Katie Stewart and Chris Robinson. With the help of these amazing women, we were able to pull off the most incredible event in Mary King’s Close. Katie gave the audience a flavour of the man and the court of James 4th, and Chris took us through 1,000 years of Scots language.”

Susan

Vicky Jane Young
Reward & Recognition

Experience of engaging public audiences gives people a more nuanced understanding of different audiences, a greater awareness of how their work is perceived by others and an appreciation of external (non-academic) opinions on their field. It also helps people to build confidence, develop skills and increase their networks.

Notwithstanding this, academic staff face huge demands on their time. Research, teaching and administration, not to mention writing grants makes for a heavy workload. Many academics questioned why they should devote time and energy to activities which will not influence, and perhaps even reduce their chances of promotion. With a significant number of people on fixed term contracts, securing the next role was understandably of paramount importance. However, we know the skills and interactions gained from public engagement activities enhance the research quality and individual’s leadership capabilities, as well as having the potential to lead to greater social impact.

To address this, and to stress the importance of public engagement as an integral part of an academic career a major focus of our work has been around recognising these skills in individuals. To this end we wanted to recognise the skills of those who were already involved in public engagement and create role models, through awards and prizes, to give further confidence to someone to keep up their great work for future recognitions."

Dr Stefano Padilla, Heriot-Watt University

Promotions Criteria
Public engagement activities are recognised in the promotions criteria of all of our University partners under the strands of Knowledge Engagement or Knowledge Transfer. The University of Edinburgh has further clarified this by explicitly making reference to public engagement and providing examples of strategically relevant activities for promotions boards to take into account.

Awards and Prizes
Both the University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University have established prizes to recognise staff who excel in public engagement. The Senior prize aims to recognise academics with a long standing and well recognised contribution to the public forum. The winners of this prize exemplify the successful academic career incorporating public engagement. The Innovators prize is for academics new to public engagement showing innovative approaches and the potential to become future leaders.

Royal Society of Edinburgh
Edinburgh Beltane Prize for Public Engagement

Senior Prize Winners:
2012 – Professor Tom Devine CBE FRSE, one of Scotland’s leading historians
2011 – Professor Aubrey Manning, a well established and respected communicator in his field

Innovator Prize winners:
2012 – Dr Nicola Stanley-Wall, University of Dundee
2011 – Joanna Brooks, a PhD student from the University of Edinburgh

“There is a beauty and elegance to science, it is very much part of culture – like a poem, or a piece of music. Science and scientists gain from engaging with the public – and society benefits too.”

Aubrey Manning

Annual Gathering 2011
At our annual gathering in 2011, three public engagement prize-winners – Professor Aubrey Manning, Dr Stefano Padilla and Gemma Sharp – shared their views on receiving official recognition for their engagement work, and the impact it has had on their careers. This was chaired by Professor Steve Chapman (Principal and Vice-Chancellor Heriot-Watt University) who joined in the discussions around ways in which universities can reward researchers who excel at public engagement.

These high-profile events are important to legitimise engagement, reflected in the ‘take away message’ of one participant: “I feel there is a strong support for my public engagement activities, even if it is not always recognised at all levels in my department.”

Dr Stefano Padilla – Research Associate (Heriot-Watt University) and one of three top finalists for the Heriot-Watt Principal’s Public Engagement Prize

Gemma Sharp – PhD Student (The University of Edinburgh) and 2011 Winner of “I’m a Scientist, Get Me Out of Here!”

Professor Aubrey Manning – Emeritus Professor of Natural History (The University of Edinburgh) and winner of the 2011 RSE Beltane Senior Prize for Public Engagement
Public Engagement Challenges

Beltane is keen to support engagement practitioners who push the boundaries. There isn’t a ‘rule book’ for public engagement and it’s important to leave plenty of room for trial (and sometimes a little error).

ROUND 1

In 2010, the winner was Professor Graham Turner of the School of Management and Languages at Heriot-Watt University with the BSL Knowledge Exchange Café.

British Sign Language Knowledge Exchange Café

British Sign Language (BSL) is the preferred language of an estimated 6000 people in Scotland, and is used daily by thousands more. For many English (including written English), it is a second language at best. Some research suggests that the average Deaf school leaver has a reading age of less than nine, due to issues with education. This has serious implications for the Deaf community, in terms of accessing everyday information and policy discussions.

With the Beltane challenge funding, the BSL/PIFAE project team (Heriot-Watt University) organised a Knowledge Exchange Café in August 2010, in partnership with Deaf Action, Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) and Moray House School of Education (The University of Edinburgh).

The Deaf community from all over Scotland were invited to drop in and learn how to use online research resources, in British Sign Language (BSL) and English, to achieve a better understanding of public policy issues that affect them and to then apply this knowledge and information to become more active participants in public life and learn to influence public policy-making. The café attracted around 60 visitors from Central Scotland, the Scottish Borders, Inverness and even Birmingham! The participants were primarily Deaf, but also included academics, public service workers and interpreters.

The BSL/PIFAE team went on to collaborate with Edinburgh Beltane and Scotland’s Futures Forum to run two events at the Scottish Parliament in November 2010, allowing dialogue between the public and policymakers on ‘The Future of British Sign Language in an Inclusive Scotland’.

ROUND 2

Catalina Muntheau of the Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College, University of the Highlands and Islands, won the Award for her project at the Cairngorms National Park.

There was a need for dialogue between stakeholders in the Cairngorms National Park, so they organised the Cairngorms Knowledge Exchange Event, to bring together scientists, students, community groups, NGOs and members of the public working in the Park. Interactive activities such as like presentations, workshops, posters and stands and field trips worked to increase awareness about ongoing research and make it possible to discuss opportunities for concrete activities to improve the value of existing scientific knowledge for practitioners. Importantly, the event took a significant first step in fostering coordination and communication between stakeholders.

ROUND 3

The third Award was given to Karly Kehoe, of the University of the Highlands and Islands, for her project ‘Looking back to move forward: Slavery and the Highlands’ Karly’s project engaged directly with the local community to demonstrate the process of historical research.

“We brought together historians, archivists, and community researchers to help a group of sixth-year pupils from Inverness Royal Academy research, plan and produce an exhibition that sheds new light on slavery’s connections with the Highlands and Islands. The project showed how local archival resources can be used to inform current academic research, and how universities can enhance the study of history in schools.”

Dr Karly Kehoe

Round 1 – Jean Urquhart MSP and Dr Karly Kehoe

Round 2 – Jean Urquhart MSP and Dr David Hawkey (on behalf of Professor Jan Webb)

Round 3 – Dr Stephan Matthieson, Dr Mark Eschield and James Howe

Read about all the Public Engagement Challenges we funded on line:
www.edinburghbeltane.net/content/public-engagement-challenges

“Most importantly, this project demonstrated to young people that their opinions are valid, and that they are being listened to, as well as challenging them to think about the role they may play in their region’s future.”

Dr Karly Kehoe


Professor Janette Webb, from the University of Edinburgh, for her project “Creating a Blueprint for District Energy and Sustainable Heating in UK Cities: A Workshop on Municipal Leadership and Organisation for District Energy”.


“Most importantly, this project demonstrated to young people that their opinions are valid, and that they are being listened to, as well as challenging them to think about the role they may play in their region’s future.”

Dr Karly Kehoe

ASCUS

James Howie, Dr Stephan Matthieson, Dr Mark Eschield from the University of Edinburgh and Edinburgh College of Art, for the ASCUS Science communication and public engagement through collaborative art-science-exhibitions.

ASCUS: Can art and science save the world? An exhibition in the St James Centre (near Princess Street), 20th January – 26th February 2012

ASCUS received a grant from the Edinburgh Beltane Public Engagement Challenge, and used this as seed-funding for experimental art-science collaborations. The project culminated in a vibrant installation at the heart of a busy Edinburgh shopping centre, featuring works of art which explored diverse themes such as climate change, genetics, mathematics and the science of birdsong!

To boost the visitor experience, ASCUS also integrated an events programme as part of the exhibition – including lectures, community discussion groups and creative workshops.

The funding we received from Beltane made it possible for us to facilitate and showcase art-science collaborations to a much larger and more public audience.”

Dr Mark Eschield, ASCUS Art Science Collaborative
“Scotland’s Futures Forum, The Scottish Parliament welcomes the opportunity of working together with Edinburgh Beltane to enhance inter and improve engagement between the University sector, the Scottish Parliament and the public, to benefit society both here in Scotland and internationally.”

Donald Jarvie

The Beltane project has been a success. Our evaluation indicates that the culture has changed to be more supportive of public engagement, and that those who have been involved with our work have benefited hugely.

Working in Partnership

Following the recommendation from our steering group to continue to work in partnership, we are extremely pleased that the University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Napier University and Queen Margaret University have agreed to fund the project going forward.

“Well it’s just you need help. I don’t think you can do these things alone, you cannot create [an event] done, you need to know people. Even if you create an event where do you get the public? I mean you need to know the ways you can get the public, the connections, all of that. So if there’s not a network behind it then it’s very, very difficult.”

Beltane Public Engagement Fellow

Embedding

The next phase will see us working closely with university services to embed an ethos of engaged practice into aspects such as professional development and good practice agendas, as well as supporting schools and institutes to take their public engagement strategies to the next level and meet their commitments to the Manifesto for Public Engagement.

Professional Development

In the mean time we will continue to offer formal and informal learning opportunities to researchers, staff and students including the popular courses on storytelling, dialogue, writing, voice and working with policy makers. We will also seek to develop courses in response to new opportunities and training needs.

Check out our website www.edinburghbeltane.net later this year for details of courses for Autumn 2012.

Networks

We will continue to develop both internal and external networks to encourage partnership working, sharing of best practice and lessons learned and quality engagement.

Sign-up to our mailing list to receive our e-bulletin with details of our Networking Breakfasts starting again in September. www.edinburghbeltane.net/ content/subscribe

Opportunities to Engage

We will grow and build partnerships with local and national communities, groups and institutions to promote innovative engagement opportunities for researchers as we have done in the past working with National Museum Scotland’s Museum Lates, Bright Club Edinburgh and others.

Catch our Roadshow in June and September to find out about current opportunities. opportunities.edinburghbeltane.net

If you are external to university and would like to find out how research and researchers can benefit your community. Feel free to contact us to have a talk: info@edinburghbeltane.net

Working with the Parliament

We will continue to work with Scotland’s Futures Forum at the Scottish Parliament creating spaces for university senior management and MSPs to explore mutually beneficial strategies of engagement between Scottish universities and Scottish communities. We have secured two Beltane fellowship positions to develop this area further. The first of these opportunities will be available in Autumn 2012.

Sign-up to our mailing list to be the first to hear about the application process for the new fellowships.

www.edinburghbeltane.net/ content/subscribe

Sharing our learning as a Beacon

We are committed to work at national level to share the lessons we learned as a Beacon with others trying to create culture change. We will support the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement’s efforts; in particular we will work with the RCUK Catalyst funded Aberdeen University and are open to working with other Scottish universities who share the unique advantages and challenges that come with being based in Scotland.

“Looking forward, next steps”

“The Beltane project has been a success. Our evaluation indicates that the culture has changed to be more supportive of public engagement, and that those who have been involved with our work have benefited hugely.”

Dr Jon Turner

“We look forward to working closely with the Beltane to integrate its public and policy engagement activities into the professional development opportunities available to researchers at all stages in their careers.”

Dr Jon Turner, Director, Institute for Academic Development, The University of Edinburgh.