



Dear SLA supporter,

## A summary of the SLA 2022 Debate - 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### *Managing Continuity and Change in Scotland's Landscapes*

#### *Keeping Scotland aligned with Europe and alive to world challenges affecting our landscape*

We were delighted to see so many of the landscape community come together both in person and online for the SLA 2022 debate marking the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the launch of the European Landscape Convention. The SLA Executive Committee are grateful to all our speakers and to the attendees at the event for their wider contribution to the discussions.

For those of you who couldn't make the event we are pleased to share this video link [Here](#) that covers the range of discussions exploring the landscape challenges and priorities ahead. We are committed to keeping the landscape community informed and will prepare a prioritised lists of outcomes to share with you in early 2023 but in the meantime we are pleased to set out below a summary of the debate.

In the introductory overview *Celebrating over 20 years of landscape in Scotland* Dr Sarah Govan reminded us how influential the European Landscape Convention (ELC) has been since its ratification. As well as providing shared International understanding, its development and implementation led to the emergence of a range of important methodological tools and financial instruments, such as Landscape Partnership Schemes. Sarah also reminded us, the ELC refers to all landscapes (even those most degraded or 'everyday' landscapes which most people work and live in) and that in their very essence are ever changing, but challenged us to better consider how we balance different perceptions, needs and interests of people and nature as landscapes continue to change.

The panel discussion *Managing Continuity and Change for the Future* focussed on specific aspects of emerging policy implementation and practice, which included: Diarmid Hearn's consideration of the potential adverse impacts on Scotland's landscapes from climate change and biodiversity crisis; Dr Shivali Fifield's presentation on the future importance of *Human rights to a healthy environment* and Rebecca Hughes reflections on the opportunities which further National Parks brings for some of Scotland's landscapes. Across the presentations and discussions a few key issues can be drawn out:

- Previous work delivering on the ELC and developing Scotland's Landscape Charter (SLC<sup>1</sup>) has created a good foundation, providing an important shared reference point across policy and practice, but with some key areas of implementation which could be strengthened, e.g. relating to Landscape Quality Objectives for ALL landscapes.
- Landscape is a uniquely unifying field which provides specific opportunities to help find solutions for the future needs of both people and environment.
- Informed by shared principles and values, and aware of significant questions relating to access to and ownership of land and whose landscape visions are prioritised in Scotland, means we must address issues relating to future rights and justice.

The event started with questions gauging whether there is still support for the ELC and whether there was an interest in a refreshed SLC. On balance, it would appear, among the participants of the event that there was an interest in developing a renewed vision to bring people and landscape into the foreground of future action. It is clear that both the ELC and SLC potentially have huge relevance as we go forward. But how we work together, and navigate current challenges, to re-energize around Scotland's Landscape Charter is perhaps our next conversation.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/scotlands-landscape-charter>