



Glasgow has successfully bid this year for a number of prestigious international conferences

# The dear green

**T**he Glasgow Convention Bureau (GCB) had cause for celebration this summer after over 22,000 visitors attended events in the city in May alone – an all-time record for the month. According to the GCB, the resulting £25.5m was injected into the local economy.

The GCB's focus on nurturing the partnerships between businesses and the city's longstanding academic institutions is starting to bear fruit and head of conventions Aileen Crawford claims it has been a key factor behind the successful bidding for a number of prestigious international conferences.

"In the UK, Glasgow has the largest academic community outside London and conducts world-leading research in the fields of life sciences, engineering, science and technology," observes Crawford. "Glasgow is a great example of a city that understands the relevance of its knowledge hub economy and the high calibre of our academic conference ambassadors is a reflection of the city's conventions strength."

*Four years on from hosting the Commonwealth Games Scotland's second city continues to flourish, with record visitor numbers, a slew of incoming major events driving significant economic growth to the region and a focus on environmental issues.*

**Jack Carter reports**

**“In February, the SEC Meeting Academy opened following a £500k investment, offering planners a 400-delegate auditorium”**

## Conferences on campus

The World Federation of Hemophilia and the European Sports Traumatology, Knee Surgery and Arthroscopy Congress were just two of the key academic events that were held in Glasgow in May. Both took place in the city's designated events precinct, the Scottish Event Campus (SEC), which, 18 months on from its inception, is already expanding.

In February, the SEC Meeting Academy opened its doors, following a £500,000 investment, offering planners a 400-delegate auditorium and an alternative to the nearby SSE Hydro, the SEC Armadillo and the SEC Centre, formerly the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre (SECC).

"The flexibility of the space means that we can accommodate more small to mid-sized meetings whilst offering larger events more space and more diversity in the product," says Kathleen Warden, director of conference sales at the SEC.





# place

## Going green for 2020

In 2016, Glasgow became the first city in the UK to join the Global Destination Sustainability Index, a Scandinavian initiative that ranks event destinations based on their commitment to establishing environmentally friendly practices. The GCB followed this up with the launch of its People Make Glasgow Greener campaign, while simultaneously announcing its aspirations to become one of Europe's most sustainable cities by 2020.

To remain competitive in today's socio-economic climate, Crawford argues that event destinations need to highlight more than just their capacity to host events. "Cities need to demonstrate how their destination adds value for delegates, our environment, and society overall."

An online sustainability tool kit on the GCB website makes it easy for event planners to go green, by recommending venues, hotels and even incentive activities that incorporate environmentally friendly initiatives.

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## Case study



**Peter Charlesworth**  
Perceptive Medical Education, MD



**The venue:** Hilton Glasgow

**The event:** Eyecare 2018

**Date:** 21-22 January

**Number of delegates:** 401

Opticians from around the UK have been travelling to Glasgow for the Eyecare conference annually for 21 years. The two-day event is designed to offer education and training for delegates through a series of talks and workshops, while its adjoining trade fair exhibits the latest trends and technology in optometry.

Glasgow has remained a successful host city over the past two decades for a variety of reasons, says Perceptive MD Peter Charlesworth. "Glasgow is great because it's fairly central in Scotland. It is also easy to reach by train and delegates can fly to Glasgow from any airport in the UK."

Charlesworth also believes that the friendly atmosphere found there is why delegates keep coming back and, with the Eyecare conference usually taking place around the time of the Burns Night celebrations, there isn't any better time to be in town.

What's more, the Hilton Glasgow is a perfect fit for the event, with the entirety of the hotel's conferencing floor offering enough space for a trade fair of 60 exhibitors, a lecture theatre that can hold all 400 delegates, and enough breakout areas for a diversity of workshops.

With the number of similar events in the industry continuing to grow, delivering a conference that continues to be of interest to delegates, while engaging with sponsors, is one of Charlesworth's biggest challenges.

At this year's event, a special workshop exhibited a sponsor's new ground-breaking piece of eye scanning equipment, which was tested out on delegates in the room.

"[The workshop] had genuine clinical educational benefit and, at the same time, it was showcasing a powerful new piece of instrumentation, so it worked for both delegates and exhibitors," says Charlesworth.

Eyecare 2018 was deemed a success, with approximately 25 per cent of delegates already signed up to next year's event.



The SEC Armadillo is one of three venues on the Scottish Event Campus

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## On the horizon

Glasgow has its sights on breaking more records in the coming months, with a number of large-scale conferences booked for the year ahead. In September, the World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences will be bringing 3,500 delegates to the city and contributing an estimated £7.1 million to its economy, while the International Forum on Quality & Safety in Health Care will see 3,500 delegates descend for a three-day conference in March.

## New developments

### Radisson Red Hotel

Located next to the SSE Hydro, this £30m development features 176 rooms, a sky bar, plus its own resident dog called Baxter.

### Motel One

The 374-room, £22 million hotel will open this November, close to Glasgow Central Station.

### Anchor Line Apartments

The upper floors of the 112-year old shipping offices will be converted into 64 luxury serviced apartments, with work expected to be completed later this year.

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## who to contact

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## My favourite places



**Kirsten McGuire**

Senior project manager, Hello Scotland

### VIP boardroom

A stunning venue for boardroom meetings is The Barn at Ardoch Loch Lomond. Only a 30-minute drive from Glasgow city centre, it's a modern space with floor-to-ceiling windows and a large terrace overlooking the lake. Also, because the venue acts as a foundation, a lot of the revenue it makes gets put back into community charities.

### Cocktail reception

Argyle St Arches is a very cool underground venue, located within seven large arches beneath the train station and it's a great spot for an evening reception with a difference. Plus, because it's a blank canvas, there are lots of opportunities for theming and branding.

### Gala dinner

The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is a fantastic space for gala dinners for up to 500 guests. The foyer, with its large stained glass windows, or the newly refurbished bandstand in the venue's adjoining park are great spots for pre-dinner cocktails, too.



**GCU**  
Glasgow Caledonian  
University

University for the Common Good

## GCU's stunning conference venue

Glasgow Caledonian University is located in the heart of Glasgow's vibrant city centre. Our unique facilities can accommodate up to 500 delegates and include our stunning Lantern room which can accommodate up to 70 delegates for smaller events.

For enquiries please contact:

[events@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:events@gcu.ac.uk) or **0141 331 3011**