

Scottish business sustainability leader announced as SEPA Deputy Chair

📅 17 April 2020

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) today (17 April 2020) announced the appointment of board member Michelle Francis to the post of Deputy Chair.

Ms. Francis, who has been a member of the board for six years, was appointed as Deputy Chair by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham, and will assume the post from April 2020.

With two decades of experience in environment and sustainability across the public and private sectors, the role will complement that of the Chair, Bob Downes, on the 11-strong agency board with SEPA CEO Terry A'Hearn.

An alumnus of the University of Aberdeen and Edinburgh Napier University, Ms. Francis previously held the position of Head of Environment at Network Rail, was formerly on the board of Scottish Natural Heritage and is the director of two environment and sustainability consultancies.

Bob Downes, SEPA Chair, said:

"SEPA plays an important role in the life of Scotland and now more than ever we have a critical role to play in helping support Scottish businesses adapt during this next period. More than that, we'll be helping Scotland plan for recovery. With Michelle's Scottish business sustainability experience she will play a critical role in helping our people deliver our ambitious One Planet Prosperity agenda."

Michelle Francis, SEPA Deputy Chair, said:

"It is a privilege to take on this role at a critical time where for many an extended period indoors reminds us all how important the wider environment is. I look forward to helping to ensure SEPA supports Scotland to get through the current crisis and then push forward with delivering One Planet Prosperity as part of our recovery."

SEPA's board is responsible for the overall direction and performance of the agency, including its effectiveness as a public body, and continues to meet virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appointments are made by Scottish Ministers and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland.

SEPA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at coronavirus.sepa.org.uk.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency staff support national effort to combat virus

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Key workers across the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) have stepped up to further assist the national effort against coronavirus.

- SEPA's Lanarkshire labs donate 120 boxes of gloves and face masks to public partners
- 3D printing masks for local hospitals
- Staff volunteering across communities

As well as accelerating their support to Scottish businesses adapting to the pandemic, regulating and supporting communities through flood forecasting and warning, workers across the agency are also donating time and resources to support partners and communities through this public health emergency.

In recent days, SEPA's purpose-built Lanarkshire labs have donated 120 boxes of gloves and face masks to public partners and local care facilities.

And engineer Bryce Syme (48) is using his expertise to create life-saving 3D-printed visors every day from his home in East Kilbride using the agency's 3D printers.

Each visor takes more than four hours to create, but the father-of-two has already donated over a hundred to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, University Hospital Hairmyres, University Hospital Monklands, and further afield to Borders General Hospital, where colleague Fiona Wyllie's daughter works as a medic.

Bryce said: "Working every day to protect Scotland's environment is really rewarding, but in these testing times I wanted to do even more to support our broader family of public partners. Working to make bespoke 3D-printed equipment for our labs, it was a no-brainer to step-up and create visors for frontline key workers.

"SEPA has really supported my work, providing the kit and supplies to manufacture from home. With well over a hundred made and distributed to date, the production process is taking over our home.

"It's great to see the visors in use, including by the daughter of one of our

colleagues in a borders hospital. I feel like I'm a very small part in this national effort, but knowing that these visors could help save lives is what moved me to action. And as long as there is need, I'll keep going."

Sarah Brown, Chemistry Unit Manager, who co-ordinated the collection and distribution of surplus lab gloves and masks, said: "At SEPA we're supporting Scotland's fight against Coronavirus. Sharing our personal protective equipment with other frontline public partners was one practical way we could help and the supplies were well received both by public partners and our local hospice."

Terry A'Hearn, SEPA's CEO, said: "These are hugely challenging times, and what we've seen across SEPA, across Scotland and across the world are people like Bryce, Sarah and others rising to the challenge and using their talents and resources to aid our response.

"We'll continue to do everything we can to support these efforts as we play our role in helping Scotland respond to this public health emergency."

SEPA's regulatory response to COVID-19 can be found at coronavirus.sepa.org.uk.

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