25 Years in Review

2001–2026

THE FUTURE STARTS NOW

GLASGOW SCIENCE CENTRE

Registered Scottish charity SC030809

Foreword

For twenty-five years, Glasgow Science Centre has stood as a place of curiosity, creativity, and discovery - where questions are encouraged, imagination is celebrated, and science becomes part of everyday life. As we mark this milestone, I am deeply proud of what we have achieved together: not only as one of Scotland's landmark visitor attractions, but as a leading educational charity that has inspired millions of STEM journeys across Glasgow and beyond.

Since opening our doors in 2001, the defining mission of Glasgow Science Centre has always been to create science engagement opportunities that are accessible, applicable, and meaningful for everyone.

As the organisation has evolved over the last quarter century, the way we deliver that mission has evolved with us. Our programmes now reach far into communities and classrooms, empowering people of all ages to explore science and technology in ways that shape their lives, careers, and confidence.

We have grown into a national resource – a leading visitor attraction that engages audiences from all around the world, and an educational charity committed to the belief that science has the power to transform society for the better.

What has made the past 25 years extraordinary is not just what we deliver, but the team that works to make it happen. Operating behind the scenes or out on the floors, our staff, volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters have helped to build something truly special. Their passion, expertise, and dedication are at the heart of every interaction and spark of curiosity experienced within our walls or out in the community. To everyone who has contributed to this journey, I offer my deepest thanks.

As we look ahead to the next chapter, our ambition is as bold as the opportunities of the world around us, but we know that there will also be new challenges to face. The STEM landscape is changing faster than ever. So too are the needs of the people and communities we serve. With emerging industries and world changing technologies on the horizon, the next 25 years will demand a new generation of innovators who are well equipped to harness the potential these opportunities will bring.

Ideally placed at the intersection of education, industry and academic research, Glasgow Science Centre will continue to evolve and drive forward our charitable mission - expanding our reach and ensuring that science remains a force for positive change. We will continue to grow our impact and adapt our offering so that our resources and programmes remain as relevant and real-world focussed as possible.

The future starts now. And as we step into it, we do so with excitement for the years to come, and a profound sense of purpose. Thank you for being part of our story - and for helping us inspire the next generation of independent thinkers, world-changers and scientists.

Dr Stephen Breslin
Chief Executive, Glasgow Science Centre

Scotland's STEM Legacy

For centuries, Scotland has been a nation shaped by scientific curiosity, engineering ingenuity and world-changing breakthroughs. From the Enlightenment to the digital age, Scottish innovators have transformed medicine, communication, physics and industry.

Powering of the Industrial Revolution

Developed in Glasgow, James Watt's improvements to the steam engine revolutionised global manufacturing and transport. Scotland became a powerhouse of engineering education and innovation, laying early foundations for a national culture of invention.

1760s–1770s

Lord Kelvin and the Birth of Thermodynamics

Lord Kelvin's work at the University of Glasgow defined the absolute temperature scale and advanced electromagnetism. His work on heat, energy, and electromagnetism helped establish the fundamental laws of thermodynamics and shaped much of modern physics and engineering.

1800s

The Edinburgh Seven

Sophia Jex-Blake, Isabel Thorne, Helen Evans, Edith Pechey, Matilda Chaplin, Mary Anderson and Emily Bovell became the first female undergraduate students in the UK when they matriculated in medicine at the University of Edinburgh – paving the way for generations of women in STEM.

1896

The invention of the Telephone

Born in Edinburgh, Alexander Graham Bell invented the first practical telephone, transforming global communication and laying the foundation for the telecommunications industry.

1876

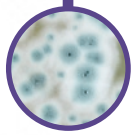
The Creation of Television

From Helensburgh to global broadcasting, John Logie Baird created the world's first working television system and the first colour TV - fundamentally changing entertainment, news and communication.

1920s

Discovery of Penicillin

Alexander Fleming's serendipitous discovery of the medicinal properties of the mould Penicillium notatum ushered in the antibiotic age, saving countless lives.



1928

The Development of Radar

Radar technology, advanced by Sir Robert Watson-Watt, shaped modern aviation, meteorology and defence. His system was pivotal during WWII and remains essential in aviation, meteorology and defence.

1930s

Glasgow Science Centre opens

When Glasgow Science Centre opened its doors in 2001, it marked a defining moment in Scotland's relationship with science. Here was a bold new landmark on the Clyde - part architectural icon, part learning engine - created with a simple but transformative purpose: to make science accessible, engaging, and meaningful to everyone.

1996

Dolly the Sheep

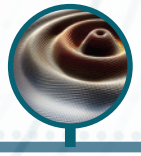
Created at the Roslin Institute near Edinburgh, Dolly was the first mammal cloned from an adult cell. This landmark in genetics propelled Scotland into global public attention and sparked conversations about biotechnology.

2001

2000s

Scotland's Renewable Energy Revolution

With its abundance of natural resources, Scotland's installed renewable capacity grew steadily from 2009 onwards, quadrupling electricity output from 8,003 GWh in 2007 to 32,063 GWh in 2020.



Gravitational Wave Detection

Professor Sheila Rowan and her team at the University of Glasgow developed ultra-precise optical technologies and suspension systems used in the LIGO detectors.

2015

2021

COP26 - UN Climate Change Conference

The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) brought together 120 world leaders and over 40,000 registered participants, including 22,274 party delegates, 14.124 observers and 3.886 media representatives.

AI for the Future

Scotland is leading the way in AI technologies, with Edinburgh seen as one of the UK's leading AI cities – often referred to as birthplace of AI in Europe due to its strengths in academic research.

2026

Into the **Archives**

Clockwise from above: Construction underway at Glasgow Science Centre's building site; 1988 Glasgow Garden Centre at the Prince's Dock; Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth at Glasgow Science Centre's opening in 2001; the IMAX building begins to take shape.

Clockwise from top left: Princess Anne visits the Science Centre on its 10th anniversary; Dr Stephen Breslin and Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon; BAE Systems engineering workshop; Installation begins on the floating wetlands; A family enjoys the sprint track on Floor 3; Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with UWS; Corporate event ceilidh in the Atrium; MathWorks participants from our local community.

Over
6.5 million
public visitors

Over
1.4 million
pupils

10 million
online visitors

Over
2,500
corporate events
attended by
600,000
delegates

Over
110,000
followers
across social media platforms

7,000
experts

12 Learning Labs

Engaged with
32 local authorities

Collaborated with over
150 organisations
to design interactive exhibits

25 years of Impact...

Over
800 community groups
70,000 participants

The Future Starts Now

For 25 years Glasgow Science Centre has broken down barriers in STEM education – making science learning more accessible, engaging and inclusive for learners of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

As we mark this milestone year, we look forward to the opportunities and challenges the future presents to us. This anniversary is not only a celebration of what has been achieved, but a launchpad for what comes next. By building on the momentum we've created, we can further extend our reach, influence, and impact for the next generation.

"At Glasgow Science Centre, our lessons come to life. The experiments and activities help me understand what we learn in school in a clear and fun way, and we get to learn more about science in the world around us."

– School Pupil, age 11

Our **Mission**

The chance to change the world

As one of Scotland's leading STEM education charities, our mission is simple: to inspire people of all ages to discover and enjoy science, and to understand how it shapes our lives, society, and future.

Championing our charity

As we mark 25 years, we're shining a spotlight on our charitable impact, and the important role we play in promoting equity in education and giving people of all ages the chance to change the world; ensuring that everyone can access STEM learning in ways that matter to them, and that make a positive difference to their lives.

Every ticket sold, every partnership formed, and every donation received helps us deliver programmes that reach the communities who benefit most.

Support from individuals, organisations, foundations, and charitable trusts enables us to:

- deliver free and subsidised learning experiences to schools and families
- take science engagement beyond our building and into communities
- invest in inclusive programming that sparks excitement and confidence
- ensure our work contributes to Scotland's national ambitions in STEM

From curriculum-aligned learning programmes designed with inclusivity and accessibility in mind, to removing barriers to lifelong learning for learners excluded from traditional education paths, our impact reaches far beyond the walls of the science centre.

"As Glasgow Science Centre celebrates 25 years, MathWorks is proud of our enduring partnership, uniting STEM engagement and industry expertise to inspire curiosity and help shape the next generation of scientists and engineers."

– Jamie Bowman, Engineering Manager, MathWorks

Membership matters

In 2025 we launched our Corporate Membership programme, which has so far seen us partner with 5 likeminded organisations, whose valued support allows us to continue delivering the charitable, community-focussed work we do.

Through joining our supporter community, businesses can build connections with Scotland's growing STEM industries and help us raise awareness of the wide range of career paths and life opportunities available.

Navigating a changing landscape

The last 25 years have brought enormous social, economic and technological shifts. Like many organisations, science and discovery centres across the UK have faced challenges ranging from financial pressures and funding shortfalls, to changing visitor behaviours to the rapid pace of digital transformation.

Glasgow Science Centre plays a key role in Scotland's science and innovation ecosystem. Over 25 years, we have built trusted relationships with government, policymakers, and public bodies across Scotland and the UK.

With the 2026 Holyrood elections coinciding with our 25th anniversary year, we're using the momentum we've built over the years as a launchpad to deliver our first manifesto, calling on the next Scottish Parliament to:

- Recognise the importance of early and lifelong science learning
- Mandate investment and public engagement on major STEM developments
- Provide parity for science centres with other cultural institutions
- Invest in developing and supporting Scotland's STEM workforce

ASDC Lobbying

As active members of the Association for Science and Discovery Centres, the network which represent over 60 of the largest publicly accessible science and discovery centres and science museum in the UK, we've contributed to sector wide campaigning that champions equitable access to STEM learning and sustained support for the sector.

Through joint advocacy and evidence submissions, and by lobbying representatives and attending parliamentary roundtable discussions, we've helped ensure the vital role of science centres is recognised in national policy discussions.

"Science and discovery centres like Glasgow Science Centre are not only cultural assets, but engines of STEM equity and engagement. Embedded in place, it breaks down barriers to participation, ignites curiosity, develops skills across a nation and nurtures interest and identity with science for all. In a future world inseparable from science and technology, the historic and ongoing exclusion of science and discovery centres from culture, education and science funding is illogical, and limits the potential of the network at a crucial time. It has been our privilege to stand with Glasgow Science Centre, leading the charge to Government for equitable recognition and support, to ensure the sector not only survives but thrives for the next 25 years."

– Shaaron Leverment, Chief Executive of ASDC

Our **Ambition**

Growing our impact through the next 25 years

Glasgow Science Centre operates at the centre of Scotland's rich and multifaceted STEM community; bridging the gap between industry, academia and the public to bring science research and opportunities to life in a meaningful way that resonates with people and makes a real difference in their lives.

We are proud of our work, and the life-changing opportunities we have delivered for the people we engage with – but there is still work to be done, and we want to make sure our next 25 years are as successful as our last.

"For 25 years Glasgow Science Centre has made science accessible for all ages, played a key role in supporting STEM learning, and provided a platform for Scotland's world leading researchers to showcase their work to the public. Science centres help inspire our next generation of scientists, ensuring that Scotland continues to achieve its ambitions as a Science Nation."

– Professor Callum Semple, Chief Scientific Advisor, the Scottish Government

Inspiring the next generation

Looking ahead to the next decade, we're focused on shaping the next chapter of Glasgow Science Centre's journey with ambition, responsibility and purpose. From our unique position, the next phase of our journey will allow us to:

- **Strengthen our long-term financial sustainability** by developing a renewed fundraising strategy that includes cultivating multi-year philanthropic partnerships, engaging high-value donors, and securing transformational grants that can drive forward major capital and programme ambitions.
- **Deepen partnerships across industry** and academia to invest in strategic initiatives that address national challenges. By collaborating on priorities like climate transition, health innovation and skills development, we can ensure our work delivers societal impact while supporting organisational growth.
- **Invest in new exhibits and experiences** that reflect emerging science and global priorities, ensuring we remain at the forefront of public engagement.
- **Expand our role as a national leader in inclusive science engagement** by embedding long-term community partnerships, expanding outreach and developing programmes that empower underrepresented groups.
- **Support our local communities through relevant and timely science engagement** that prepares people to be active members of Scotland's future society.

Designing our STEM Nation

Our skilled Experience Development Service creates hands-on, story driven experiences both inside the science centre, and for our partners. Over the next 25 years, we want to continue to help others, across Scotland, create quality science engagement experiences for the benefit of all audiences.

"Working together with the Experience Development Service team at the Glasgow Science Centre to design Elgin's STEM Discovery Centre exhibition has been an enjoyable and straight forward process. From conception to reality, the team have helped us create a fun and inclusive space for children and staff to get involved in curriculum aligned and industry related STEM experiences, as well as offer accessibility to parents, employers, and the wider community."

– Hazel Sly, Service Manager - Early Years, Moray Council

Our **Voices**

"We want every young person to experience the spark of discovery."

– Ian Laird, Glasgow Science Centre Trustee

A leader in business and chartered engineer for over 30 years, Ian has served on Glasgow Science Centre's Board for two years, having driven innovation and growth within manufacturing businesses across Scotland.

When Glasgow Science Centre opened, I was excited – I had 3 young children, and this provided such a stimulating and exciting environment to try new things and learn. It was a world of discovery; from learning about the power of gases to propel a potato through a tennis racquet; through to design and build competitions to keep an egg from breaking when dropping off a balcony.

STEM is only increasing in importance, from climate solutions to health, energy and new industries. Glasgow Science Centre can help young people understand those challenges and see themselves as part of solving them - helping stimulate the skills that we know will be required. The science centre has a great role to play in this nationally, and I'd love to see it continue to expand its reach, working with more schools, more communities and more partners across Scotland.

We want every young person to experience the spark of discovery that Glasgow Science Centre can create and enable. And that will help Scotland to thrive.

"We help young people see the relevance of STEM in their lives and futures."

– Dr Emma Plato, Fundraising Manager

Emma joined Glasgow Science Centre nearly a decade ago as a Science Learning Coordinator, and now works as our Development Manager, leading our fundraising strategy and working collaboratively with stakeholders.

Glasgow Science Centre is special because it sparks curiosity and nurtures creativity, empowering learners to take ownership of their own learning journey from wherever they are starting.

We connect Scotland's STEM industries, and their evolving skills needs with the next generation of scientists and innovators. Through immersive learning experiences focused on cutting-edge technologies, we help young people see the relevance of STEM in their lives and futures, while supporting the development of skills that are critical to Scotland's economic growth.

By partnering with us, organisations can help support our mission to widen access to STEM Learning - shaping the future workforce and nurturing the skills, confidence and curiosity young people need in a rapidly changing world and economy.

“I get to feel like a science expert!”

– Karen Woods, Teacher

Primary teacher Karen Woods from St Marthas in Glasgow has been visiting Glasgow Science Centre with her pupils for almost 10 years – and since 2021 she’s been using our Learning Lab programmes to inspire her classes.

As a Primary Science teacher, I believe we have a huge responsibility and opportunity to influence the futures of our students. The learning programmes are hands-on, practical and playful, and I can see the spark of interest and awareness as the lesson flows.

Pupils want to engage in science. The teaching through Glasgow Science Centre makes that engagement thrive and improve. The subjects have interesting and endless possibilities to inspire pupils – empowering the future STEM workforce to speak in their classrooms with confidence. It is a joy to behold!

What makes the Learning Lab programmes stand out is that they have reduced the preparation time for our busy teaching staff by finding the science knowledge and summarising it for the non-specialist. They have retained the fun and the play element of science which are vital for our learners’ journey.

“I don’t just talk about how great the Science Centre is... I talk about the brilliant people who work here.”

– Derek Gillespie, Lecturer at Cardonald College

Derek and his students have been involved with the University of Glasgow’s Gallant Project at Glasgow Science Centre, engaging diverse young people in sustainability and environmentalism.

We’ve been lucky to participate in the GALLANT project here at Glasgow Science Centre. We had already done a bit of prep work with these students as we were doing eco awareness within the campus, and we do a lot of sustainability projects, engaging in the broader student community.

The GALLANT project was particularly significant because it allowed us to engage with and react to what we were learning. We’ve taken what we learned back to the campus and created reflective portfolios of some of the projects and activities we were involved in. The range of activities kept things fresh, stimulating, and kept the boys full of vigor. They were socially conscious and aware of what’s going on in their environment.

I don’t just talk to other people about how great the Science Centre is, and the fascinating projects that we’ve been involved in. I talk about the brilliant people who work here. The people that make you feel welcome. The people that make you feel like a part of things. My students have really enjoyed taking part in GALLANT, and in their reflective practice, they are bursting with pride at all the outcomes that they’ve achieved.

Our **Supporters**

AAC Clyde Space	BAE Systems	Bloomberg	Boeing	British Endodontic Society	Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Clyde River Foundation	Drax	East Renfrewshire Council	Edina Trust	Education Scotland	EPSRC
European Institute of Innovation & Technology	Farrans	Fraunhofer UK	Garfield Weston Foundation	GE Caledonian	Glasgow Caledonian University
Glasgow City Council	Glasgow City of Science and Innovation	Glasgow Life	GSK	Heriot Watt University	Historic Environment Scotland
HM Government	Imperial College London	Institution of Civil Engineers	JMB Trust	JP Morgan	Marine Conservation Society
MathWorks	Merck	Morrison Construction	National Physical Laboratory	NHS Scotland	NMIS
OPITO	Photonics & Quantum Accelerator	Primary Science Teaching Trust	Royal Academy of Engineering	RZSS Highland Wildlife Park	Scottish Association for Marine Science
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	The Scottish Government	Scottish Space School	Scottish Water	ScottishPower	ScottishPower Energy Networks
ScottishPower Renewables	Space Scotland	SSEN Transmission	Sustrans	Thales	The Association of Science and Discovery Centres
The Hugh Fraser Foundation	UK Space Agency	University of Dundee	University of Edinburgh	University of Glasgow	University of St Andrews
University of Stirling	University of Strathclyde Glasgow	University of the West of Scotland			

Everything we have achieved over the last 25 years has been made possible through the support of our valued partners and visitors.

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