Meet our Q&A panel

David A Kerfoot MBE DL, Chair of the York & North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Deputy Lord Lieutenant North Yorkshire. David founded The Kerfoot Group jointly with his wife Elizabeth in 1980 using £300 capital and which grew to sales of over £80 million on a global basis exporting to over 50 countries. The group's main markets are food manufacturing, cosmetics and aromatherapy, its head office being in Northallerton. The Group was sold to French agricultural giant Avril in 2015.

As a passionate social entrepreneur, David has a long history of community service. Currently he serves as Chairman of the LEP, Chairman of the Pendragon Community Trust, trustee of a food bank and founder of an initiative called Smile for Moldova which supports people in the poorest country in Europe. He is also a patron of the Samaritans and a lifelong activist in the Prison Service as well as being a trustee of Breadline. He is a Deputy Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and High Sheriff of North Yorkshire 2020/21.

David is passionate about helping small business and developing our regions, recently giving evidence at Parliamentary Committees on these subjects.

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Mel Bonney is Chief Executive Officer of Coast and Vale Community Action (CaVCA), a not for private profit company and charity working to develop positive social and economic action amongst local communities on the North Yorkshire Coast and rural hinterland.

Prior to working in Scarborough, where she has been for the past eight years, Mel was Chief Officer of a similar organisation on the south coast and has also worked as Regeneration Manager within a coastal local authority. Mel is passionate about enabling the voices of 'ordinary' local residents to be heard in the making of decisions that may affect their lives, and also about enabling people to achieve their potential.

Listening and learning are key to this, and CaVCA prides itself on being a positive enabler through creating opportunities for people to share their ideas and challenges with others, and linking them with the tools they need to make things happen.

Outside of work, Mel loves being outdoors and spends as much time as possible with her son enjoying fell walking in the Lake District, hiking on the coast and moors, and cycling. She is also learning to climb.

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Juliana Delaney FTS (Fellow of the Tourism Society), CEO Continuum Attractions Group. Juliana has a 35-year track record in the leadership and commercial operation of visitor attractions across Britain and beyond. In 2008, Juliana became the CEO of York-based Continuum Group leading the group to become a £19+m turnover business, with annual double-digit growth and a commercial entertainment business based on excelling in visitor experiences and delivering great commercial facilities from events, retail and food and beverage.

Juliana's absolute passion is in creating not just great but outstanding guest service brands.

"I believe the industry works best when it works in collaboration and I'm especially supportive of regional collaboration such as seen in this event organised by York and North Yorkshire LEP. When great creative and organisational minds come together – big challenges can be turned into opportunities."

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Professor Charlie Jeffery has been Vice Chancellor and President of the University of York since September 2019. He was previously Senior Vice Principal at the University of Edinburgh. He has a strong interest in the role of universities in economic development. He was a central figure in the negotiation of the £1.3B Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and is currently working with further and higher education institutions, private sector partners and local authorities in and around York in shaping economic development programmes in the field of biotechnology and around York Central, one of the UK's biggest brownfield development sites. He has an abiding concern for access to higher education locally and globally.