



NEWS RELEASE

Friday, March 22nd, 2019

CHANCE TO HEAR FROM FORMER MEP THE NIGHT BEFORE BREXIT AT GROWBIZ XCHANGE

Catherine Stihler, who represented Scotland in the European Parliament for 20 years, is the guest speaker at this month's GrowBiz XChange networking meeting, which takes place in Kinross next week, on the night before the UK is due to leave the European Union.

Catherine stood down as an MEP in January of this year and is now the CEO of Open Knowledge International (OKI), a global, not-for-profit organisation working on the benefits of open data for civil society.

She has been invited to speak at the XChange network meeting by rural enterprise support organisation GrowBiz, organisers of the Thursday, March 28th event at Loch Leven's Larder, which is open to anyone starting up or running their own small business.

The GrowBiz XChange events take place every month at various locations throughout Perthshire and provide an opportunity for local entrepreneurs to get together, network and exchange business cards and hear from inspirational speakers in an informal setting.

During her time as an MEP, Catherine held many and varied roles – from editor of the parliament magazine to deputy leader of the European Parliamentary Labour Party. She has been recognised as an ambassador for accessibility, consumer and citizen rights, and was vice-chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and worked on digital policy, prioritising the digital single market, digital skills, better accessibility of digital products for the disabled and citizen online data protection and privacy.

She also served as the 52nd rector of the University of St Andrews – only the second woman in 600 years to hold the position.

As well as a presentation by the inspirational guest speaker, the meeting will incorporate GrowBiz's AGM with a short review of the organisation's work and achievements in 2019. There will be a question and answer session at the meeting.

GrowBiz CEO Jackie Brierton is looking forward to welcoming Catherine to the meeting.

She said: "Whatever happens on March 29th, this opportunity to hear from such an engaging speaker as Catherine, with the wealth of experience that she has, is one not to be missed.

"As well as the perspective on European matters that she will bring to the meeting, Catherine says that digital skills and data use have always been a personal passion of hers and that she sees it as a privilege to be part of an organisation such as OKI that has set the global standard for genuinely free and open sharing of information.

"Digital connectivity and upskilling are going to be key to the resilience of businesses and enterprises in the coming months in what are likely to become quite challenging times and are something that GrowBiz will be focussing on in the years ahead.

"I am delighted that Catherine is able to come and share some of her insight with us in what is sure to be a very informative session."

The XChange meeting takes place on Thursday, March 28th from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Loch Leven's Larder on the outskirts of Kinross. A light buffet and refreshments will be provided.

For further information on GrowBiz or to book a place at the March XChange or any of the free events run by the enterprise support organisation, please see the website at www.growbiz.co.uk.

For media enquiries, contact Clare McMicking on telephone 07514 343042 or email clare@growbiz.co.uk

Notes to Editors

- GrowBiz Scotland is a Company limited by guarantee number SC341655, and a Scottish Charity number SC043278, with registered office at 1 Perth Street, Blairgowrie PH10 6DQ
- GrowBiz is funded by Perth and Kinross Council, Scottish Enterprise and The Scottish Government, and the Enterprising Rural Perthshire project is supported by the Rural Perth and Kinross LEADER Programme 2014-2020: The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas. For more on LEADER go to www.pkleader.org