

A Leadership Development Programme from SAOS



Applicant Invitation
and Information
2026/27 Intake

Leadership that strengthens people, businesses and industries.

SAOS, together with partners **NFU Scotland** and **Tack TMI Leadership Factory**, would like to invite you to apply for **Growing Tomorrow's Leaders**.

Scotland's agri, food & drink and land-based sectors are facing increasing complexity, change and opportunity. Strong leadership has never mattered more.

Growing Tomorrow's Leaders (GTL) is an industry-led leadership development programme designed to help individuals better understand themselves, strengthen how they work with others, and lead with greater confidence, clarity and impact.

Now entering its fifth year, the programme brings together people from across industry to explore leadership in a practical, honest and collaborative way.

Grounded in real-world experience, GTL combines leadership theory, reflection, discussion and coaching to help participants strengthen communication, navigate challenge, build resilience and think more strategically about the future.

Participants leave with stronger self-awareness, practical leadership tools, valuable peer relationships and a clearer understanding of the kind of leader they want to be.

Tim Bailey, SAOS Chief Executive



“ Since completing the programme, I have been appointed to the board of Quality Meat Scotland and I feel that Growing Tomorrow's Leaders was a key cog in the wheel that enabled me to take the plunge and apply for that role. ”

— Jilly Duncan Grant, Co-founder and CEO of Herd Advance and Growing Tomorrow's Leaders graduate



**Equipping tomorrow's leaders
for today's challenges**

Who we're looking for

Growing Tomorrow's Leaders is designed for people who:



Influence people, projects or decisions

and want to strengthen how they lead, communicate and work with others.



Are leading at a mid-to-senior level

whether through managing teams, leading projects or creating change across organisations and partnerships.



Want space to reflect, grow and challenge themselves

developing the confidence, self-awareness and resilience needed to lead in an industry facing change.



“There was a level of honesty that stood out. People were open about what they were finding difficult, not just what was going well. That’s what made it so useful”

— Celine Delabre, Agriculture Officer at NatureScot and Growing Tomorrow's Leaders graduate



“I nominated John for the Growing Tomorrow's Leaders programme for two reasons. Firstly for John himself, to help develop in his job and give him a more rewarding career, and secondly, it was about succession planning. I need the best people working in the organisation so we can develop from within.”

— Andy McGowan, Director of Scottish Pigs, United Pig Cooperative

What participants gain



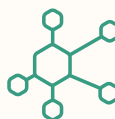
A deeper understanding of themselves as leaders strengthening self-awareness, communication, decision-making and confidence.



Practical tools to navigate challenge and change - building resilience, adaptability and clarity under pressure.



Space to reflect, discuss and learn with others through honest conversations, coaching and shared industry experience.



Stronger networks across industry building relationships, sharing perspectives and developing a deeper understanding of the people, businesses and sectors that make up Scotland's rural economy.



Carol McLaren ARAgS
Chief Executive of RSAB

“Growing Tomorrow’s Leaders gave me the space to step back from the day job and empowered me to look at building in a series of small but significant changes to improve my leadership skills.”

Reflections from Growing Tomorrow's Leaders graduates

“What a journey! Growing Tomorrow's Leaders gave me the chance to meet new people, challenge how I think and work and shift my perspective. It's allowed me to grow as a person and better understand different ways of working and I've already introduced a tool from the programme that's helped how we do things in the organisation.”

— Bryce Elgin, Assistant Training Manager at Ringlink (Scotland) and GTL graduate



“Growing Tomorrow's Leaders helped me reflect on the kind of leader I want to be and the values I want to lead with. It's helped me spot gaps, boost morale and think more intentionally about how I behave and influence others, becoming a more rounded and impactful leader in the process.”

— Jennifer Jones, Vet at Thrums Veterinary Group and GTL graduate

Our graduates are from across Scotland's rural and natural economy including:



- 5 years running
- 60 leaders developed
- Cross-sector national network
- Representation from agriculture, food & drink, research, environmental and rural sectors

Leadership Curriculum

September 2026 – March 2027

50+ hours of in-person and virtual development



Practical leadership skills to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead

Equipping tomorrow's leaders for today's challenges

Course Content

Five Leadership Modules



Team coaching and real-life examples will be used throughout the programme to embed learning.

Learning Outcomes

Modules 1 and 2



Leadership

Leading
through coaching

1

The Leadership module focuses on leadership models and principles. It will help participants understand how to adapt their leadership styles by:

- Exploring the building blocks of Intent Based Leadership
- Reflecting on what kind of leadership behaviours and mindset your team needs
- Understanding and learning to manage the creative tension of competing priorities

2

Leading through coaching provides tools and skills for effective coaching to support staff to grow and improve productivity by:

- Building self-awareness of listening skills and grasp their value in leadership
- Understanding the importance of powerful questions
- Using coaching skills to strengthen relationships and effective management

Learning Outcomes

Modules 3 and 4

3 **Strategy and competitive environment** explores the major forces affecting agriculture, the competitive choices available, and how these can be managed.

- Learn to value the three modes of thinking and the importance of strategic perspective
- Understand the significance of strategic leadership and 'T' shaped leadership
- Intro to the red ocean and blue ocean strategy

4 **Creating and leading change** examines the role of leaders in identifying the areas of change and improvement across organisations and industry.

- Consider where change is required in your team or business
- Explore how to engage people in the change process and how to overcome barriers to change
- Learn to feed back using the AID model bearing in mind differing personality types



**Strategy and
competitive
environment**

**Creating and
leading
change**

Learning Outcomes

Modules 5



Team Building and collaboration

5 **Team building and collaboration** uncovers how to create, manage, and lead high-performing teams to collaborate and innovate in response to challenges.

- Identify what makes a great team
- Learn the five disciplines of a highly effective team
- Maximise a team's existing skills and encourage collaboration

Team Dynamics in Practice

A chance to deepen your learning and apply it in practice

This session is designed to help participants build on the leadership themes explored throughout the programme by applying them in real-time team environments.

Through experiential activities and collaborative challenges, participants will explore how individuals respond to uncertainty, communicate under pressure, contribute within teams and approach problem-solving in different ways.

- Designed to both support and stretch participants, the day creates space to strengthen relationships across the cohort, build trust, reflect on different leadership approaches, and experiment with new ways of working together.
- With a focus on collaboration, communication and adaptability, the session encourages participants to move beyond theory and deepen their understanding through shared experience, discussion and reflection.

Format: An immersive in-person session combining collaborative challenges, discussion and experiential learning.



Expert Masterclasses

Designed to enrich your learning journey

Supported by a lineup of distinguished speakers from both the agricultural sector and other industries, our masterclasses bring a fresh perspective and provide a platform for immersive learning, engaging discussions, and thought-provoking debates.

Each masterclass delves into a specific theme, offering invaluable insights and practical knowledge to help you excel as a leader including:

- **Growing Yourself as a Leader:** Discover strategies for personal growth and development, learn how to make a lasting impact, and gain inspiration from leaders who have successfully navigated shifting landscapes.
- **Growing a Wider Perspective:** Engage with industry experts as they share their experiences and shed light on their leadership styles, highlighting the challenges they've faced and some of the key strategies they've employed.

Format: Online, interactive discussion, two hours of enriching content and inspiration.



2026/27 Masterclass Dates

Masterclass 1 (online) - 24 November

Masterclass 2 (online) - 10 February

Insights from our programme partner

“ Leadership isn’t just about managing people, it starts with understanding yourself.

The biggest shift for many leaders comes when they realise that their success depends on how well they understand and work with others.

Growing Tomorrow’s Leaders provides a space for experienced professionals to develop the awareness, relationships, and strategic insight needed to lead with confidence.

”

— Stephen Hibbard, TMI Leadership Factory



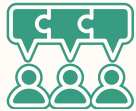
Leadership Timeline

Lifetime Access



Growing Tomorrow's Leaders is supported by a learning portal providing access to bespoke content specific to the key topics of the programme e.g. learning materials, videos, presentations and podcasts.

#GrowingTogether



The hybrid structure has been developed not only to stimulate individual participants, but also to promote working collaboratively in pairs and teams. No one has all the answers, working together means we get better outcomes.



2026/27 Key Diary Dates

Launch - 23 September

Workshop 1 - 7 October

Workshop 2 - 28 October

In Practice Day - 17 November

Workshop 3 - 13 January

Workshop 4 - 27 January

Workshop 5 - 24 February

Reflection Day - 17 March

Who's behind the programme?

For decades, **SAOS** has supported people and businesses across Scotland's rural sector through leadership development, collaboration and industry learning.

Growing Tomorrow's Leaders was developed in response to feedback from members and industry partners who wanted more opportunities to strengthen leadership capability within their organisations.

Tack TMI Leadership Factory has a proven track record in delivering targeted leadership academies by applying the science of learning. We've also called on our steering group, key industry figures and experts, to ensure that the content is relevant and stimulating to bring out the best in our growing leaders.

We are grateful to **NFU Scotland** for supporting the programme and investing in the future leadership of our industry.



“Developing confident, capable people within organisations across Scotland's agriculture, food and drink and wider land-based industries is essential if we are to respond effectively to both immediate and longer-term challenges.

Programmes such as Growing Tomorrow's Leaders provide a valuable opportunity to invest in the people who will help shape the future of our industrie”

– **John Davidson, CEO, NFU Scotland**

Apply Now

Applications are now open, and we offer two options for participation: you can either apply directly to the programme or nominate a leader for consideration.

Closing date Friday 31 July.



We deliberately limit intake to small numbers each year to maximise the benefit to participants and recommend submitting applications early.

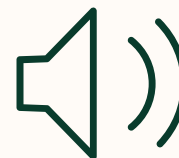
Investment per person

SAOS members £1745 + VAT

Non SAOS members £1895 + VAT



More info



[Listen](#)

Equipping today's leaders for tomorrow's challenges

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