

Leader's Report

The City of Edinburgh Council

25 August 2011

1 Summer Festivals

As I put the finishing touches to this report, with my windows open, there is no doubt that Edinburgh's summer festivals are well underway. Shouts, yelps, cheers, clapping and the occasional burst of song or music from the High Street warn me that it will take twice as long this month to get from the City Chambers to the bus stop.

In my last report I referred to the recent Festivals Impact Study on the effect that Edinburgh's 12 main festivals have on Edinburgh. If you have not had an opportunity to read this, it is well worth doing so. It can be found at www.festivalsedinburgh.com/downloads. There's no doubt the festivals bring money and jobs to Edinburgh, with our population doubling in August. They also enhance our reputation as a great place to be.

So far, I've enjoyed everything I've been to and have much more to look forward to. Whether you want home-grown talent or the best of the world to entertain you, you will find something worth going to. Whether your interest is in music, drama, opera, dance, comedy, cabaret, literature or combinations of genres, you will be spoiled for choice.

Well done to all those who work so hard all year round to bring us such riches for a few weeks each summer.

For those who have not yet been to the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo this year, have no fears about cramped, uncomfortable seats. The new stands, which can be put up and disassembled in half the time of the old ones, offer a much more civilised experience with 35% more legroom.

I hope everyone enjoys the rest of the summer festival season.

2 *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital*

It was great to be in Southampton at the end of July to name *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital*, Edinburgh's fully sponsored yacht in the Clipper Round the World Race 2011-12.

Huge thanks to Deirdre and Douglas Kinloch Anderson, of well-regarded and Royal Warranted Edinburgh family company, Kinloch Anderson, for participating so fully in the race departure weekend and for their very generous provision of kilts for the crew. The *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital* crew looked magnificent in their City of Edinburgh tartan. They caused a sensation in Southampton and did the same at Madeira, the first brief stop on their 40,000 mile journey round the world.

For a fascinating insight into life on board, read *Evening News* reporter Sue Gyford's account of her voyage with the yacht from Southampton to Madeira at her blog: <http://edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/Sue-Gyford's-Clipper-blog.6808317.jp>

3 National Armed Forces Day Weekend 23-26 June

I would like to take this opportunity to mark Edinburgh's success and thank those involved in delivering National Armed Forces Day in June. The weekend of activities began with Naval themed events at Leith, including guided tours of HMS Portland, a Royal Navy Field Gun race and 'The Flying Gunners' Royal Artillery Motorcycle Display team. A full aerial display by the Red Arrows, the first over Edinburgh for 23 years, brought Friday's activities in Leith to a close. On Saturday 25 June over 2,500 serving personnel, veterans and cadets marched down the Royal Mile to Holyrood Park to join 100,000 people who enjoyed the music, entertainment and military displays.

The Armed Forces Day parade was widely televised and the City looked wonderful, demonstrating again Edinburgh's excellent record in delivering high profile, large scale events. I would like to extend my thanks to all those involved in planning and delivering Armed Forces Day, particularly during what was an extremely busy weekend full of other events.

4 The Royal Regiment of Scotland

The Council was also involved in arrangements for the Royal Regiment of Scotland's Colours Parade on 2 July. This was an historic event for the Regiment and I am delighted that the Council has received a letter of thanks concluding with "the Council has been absolutely brilliant".

5 Royal Wedding a Huge Success

The Council worked closely with the Police to plan and deliver key aspects of the wedding of Zara Phillips and Mike Tindall at the Canongate Kirk. This involved coordinating road closures, medical cover, stewarding, removal of bins on grounds of security, protocol for dealing with noise complaints, crowd management and public safety issues as well as liaising with the media. My thanks to all involved in ensuring that the wedding, which attracted a crowd in excess of 6,000, was a huge success.

6 Property Conservation Investigation

Members will be aware of the ongoing investigation into certain aspects of the Property Conservation Service. I have taken this opportunity to provide an update on this matter.

Deloitte have been appointed to investigate these matters and are currently undertaking investigatory interviews with staff. They have completed a detailed financial analysis and are near completion of the sample of property surveys. The Police investigation is on-going and is likely to continue for some considerable time.

In terms of the service itself, only urgent work is currently being undertaken. This has led to a very dramatic reduction in the volume of work on site. I am aware that some residents are unhappy that notices are not presently being issued for non urgent cases. The Director of Services for Communities is committed to bringing investigation to a conclusion as soon as possible and is grateful for the continued patience of Councillors and residents.

7 A Clean Green Safe and Environmentally Sustainable City

Dealing with Graffiti

Community Safety staff and the Police have recorded an important victory in their efforts against illegal graffiti. In an operation that has been running since mid-April, 113 people have been charged with graffiti offences in the South West Neighbourhood.

Zap Graffiti and Friends of Roseburn Park, supported by a grant from the Western Neighbourhood Partnership, hosted a community project to highlight how graffiti can create a work of art and assist in reducing vandalism. On 13/14 July, the Armoury wall in Roseburn Park was turned into a colourful mural featuring activities including rugby and cricket, as well as the natural side of the park such as trees, ducks and the Water of Leith.

Green Flag Awards

The city has once again fared well in Green Flag Awards scheme with 20 sites now qualifying, including 8 new sites: Hailes Quarry Park; Hermitage of Braid & Blackford Hill; Morningside Park; Muirwood Park; Princes Street Gardens; St Margaret's Park and Victoria Park. Edinburgh now has well over 50% of all Green Flag Awards in Scotland.

The Friends of Corstorphine Hill were also successful in retaining a Green Flag Community Award for the Corstorphine Walled Garden which they manage on behalf of the Council.

New Play Equipment for St Margaret's Park

Robinsons Fruit Shoots provided new play equipment in St Margaret's Park in Corstorphine. The play area reopened on 2 August. This was followed by the raising of the park's recently awarded Green Flag on 11 August.

Seafield Odour Improvement Plan

Scottish Water has recently completed a £20m project at Seafield Sewage Works designed to reduce odours. The Council will now undertake a monitoring programme to assess the effectiveness of these improvements. Community involvement is a key aspect of this assessment. Leaflets have been delivered providing information on the monitoring process.

8 East Edinburgh and Craigmillar Office and Community Library

I was delighted to help mark the start of the new East Neighbourhood Office and Library in Craigmillar on 11 August 2011. The office, scheduled to open in early 2013 and costing over £8 million, will bring staff together from Council departments and partner agencies. This will improve and encourage joint working, making it easier for the community to access the services they want and need. As well as new community space there will be a modern library delivering a wide range of activities for all ages. The new building supports the regeneration of Craigmillar and will be at the heart of the new town centre. The project is the second Hub South East Scotland project in Edinburgh – the first, Drumbrae Library and Community Hub, is progressing well towards completion early next year.

9 Looking after Edinburgh

Niddrie Burn Restoration Project

The first phase of work began this month on the Niddrie Burn restoration and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary link road project. The burn work is funded by Scottish Enterprise. The Council is funding the road work and managing the overall project to create a new public transport link road, footpath and cycle way connecting Greendykes Road with the Royal Infirmary.

Restoring the burn to its original course through Hunters Hall Park will enable the planned housing development at Greendykes to go ahead and stimulate further economic growth of the BioQuarter by managing the area of flood risk.

Preparatory works have been underway since January, including infilling of old mine workings and carrying out an archaeological survey. Due to be completed in the autumn of next year, this project is a fine example of partnership working between Scottish Enterprise and the Council.

Original Plans for New Town on Display

Original plans for Edinburgh's New Town, owned by the [Museum of Edinburgh](#) in the Canongate, are going back on display in the museum having been painstakingly conserved by a specialist paper conservator.

The plans, drawn by architect James Craig, provided a vision for the New Town, and are key to Edinburgh's World Heritage status. Two drawings by James Craig have been conserved, one known as the 'Adopted Plan' signed by the Lord Provost in 1767, and the 'Circus Plan' showing an alternative vision for the New Town.

The original plans are to be on display for two hours daily, from 12noon to 2pm, to protect them from the damaging effects of light.

Outwith these hours, visitors can view copies on lowered black-out blinds commissioned and funded by the Council's Museums and Galleries Service.

Great Street Award

Cockburn Street has been short listed for the Academy of Urbanism's Great Street Award 2012. The aim of the Academy of Urbanism is to identify, learn from and promote best practice in urbanism. The winners of The Urbanism Awards will be announced in November.

Royal Town Planning Institute Awards

Two Edinburgh projects – the Planning Concordat and Grassmarket Improvements - have been short listed in the UK-wide awards. I look forward to the winners being announced in April 2012.

Civic Trust Awards 2012

Edinburgh has been selected to host the 2012 Civic Trust Awards ceremony on Friday 2nd March 2012. Established in 1959, the Civic Trust Awards recognise the very best in architecture, urban design, landscape and public art. Awards are made to projects of the highest quality design which have made a positive cultural, social or economic contribution to the community.

Services Recognised for Excellence

The Council's Asset Management Energy Management Team has been short listed for an award in the 'Best Efficiency' category at the APSE Annual Service awards. The Award presentations are on the 8th September in Bristol and I wish the Team every success.

10 Promoting Culture, Sport and Leisure

Church Hill Theatre

I am pleased that the Council has been able to offer offenders an opportunity to provide meaningful reparation to the community, through decorating the dressing rooms and the Studio in the Church Hill Theatre. This was an interesting challenge for everyone involved but very worthwhile. The offenders could see the difference their work made to the venue, and many even volunteered to do extra shifts. Although some of the offenders involved had no prior experience of painting and decorating, they achieved a high quality finish. If you have a project which could offer a similar opportunity please contact Community Service on 0131 442 4131.

David Mach - Precious Light

Last month saw the opening of the City Art Centre's highly anticipated summer exhibition, David Mach – Precious Light. An internationally renowned artist and Turner Prize nominee, Fife-born David Mach is famed for his large-scale collages, sculptures and audacious installations. Precious Light tackles his biggest subject yet: the King James Bible in its 400th year.

The exhibition, which has received rave reviews, spans five gallery floors and showcases over 70 new works. You may even catch a glimpse of David and his staff hard at work on a mammoth decoupage of the Last Supper, which will be unveiled on 20 September.

I went to the exhibition expecting to find it interesting and exciting but I was taken aback by just how enthralling it is. It would be easy to spend hours looking at just one collage. Well worth a visit!

Older People's Day of Activities

The King's Hall was packed out with over 150 older people on Thursday 16 June for a South Central Neighbourhood Partnership event. Activities featured exercising, salsa dancing, health checks, a sing-a-long and Wii games. Alongside the activities, many agencies and partners provided information, support and advice on a range of topics of interest to local older people, their families and carers, raising awareness of

services and issues. Thanks to all involved including Age Scotland, Edinburgh Leisure, Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project (MECOPP) and Alzheimer's Scotland.

The Touch Rugby World Cup

The Touch Rugby World Cup took place during June at Peffermill Playing Fields. This was the first time the event had been held in Europe, and it attracted over 1500 participants from all over the world.

Australia dominated the competitions, demonstrating their speed and skill in this fast-moving non-contact sport. A local youth event held at the same time provided over 300 of schoolchildren with the opportunity to play the sport and get some coaching from some of the world's greatest exponents of the game.

Golden Oldies Hockey Festival

Peffermill also hosted the 15th Air New Zealand Golden Oldies Hockey Festival in July, with over sixty teams from fourteen different countries, including Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand and South Africa, taking part in the competition. The philosophy of these international festivals is to provide an opportunity to travel to different places throughout the world for a fun week with like-minded veteran enthusiasts of the sport.

The teams thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Scotland, with the teams treated to a picnic day at Traquair House, a distillery visit, and a ghost tour of Edinburgh. As with the Touch World Cup, an economic impact assessment for this event will be published soon, which will demonstrate the significant benefit these events bring to the local economy.

11 Providing a Modern, Effective, Integrated Transport System

Tram

It has been some time since I have been able to report separately on the tram project. As you know, following a five hour debate on 30 June, Council took a decision on the way forward.

While every Group had their own views, the proposal which was eventually carried means the first phase of the route will, subject to Council's approval of the arrangement with the consortium, run from Edinburgh Airport to St Andrew Square as a precursor to extending the line in the future to Newhaven.

It is critical that we see a comprehensive plan on how the additional funding requirement will be met. This is the next step and a report is to be considered in this August Council meeting covering the ongoing governance of the project, the work programme and details around the amended contract. In the meantime, progress on priority sections of the tram route are clearly visible at sites such as Haymarket, where the lines of newly laid tram tracks are a physical portent of the final product - a fast, efficient and reliable mode of transport which cuts right to the heart of the city's desire to establish itself as a world leader for investment and sustainability.

12 Investing in our Children and our Schools

Exam Success for the City

Congratulations to Edinburgh's students and their teachers for achieving our best ever exam results. A huge amount of hard work goes into achieving these results and everyone involved should be proud. I am particularly pleased that the 4th year results were very positive as this was a priority improvement area. Performance in Higher and Advanced Higher has also been improving in recent years and this year's results are very strong.

Summer Holiday Programmes

While many of us were away during July or August enjoying a well deserved rest, staff in the Sports and Outdoor Education Unit were busy with the delivery of the summer holiday programmes. They organised a broad and diverse range of activities - everything from football to mountain biking and the Elie Chain walk (which sounds a bit painful but I'm sure is great fun!).

A multi-sports holiday camp at the Forrester & St Augustine's Campus was very successful. It was very encouraging that over sixty children attended. The Forrester/St Augustine campus has recently been designated as a 'Community Sports Hub' and this initiative captures perfectly the spirit of the sports hub concept.

Creative Learning

Education Scotland, working with Creative Scotland, has developed a Creative Learning Network (CLN) to embed creativity in and across the curriculum. The Children and Families department has been awarded £9,500 and is developing Creative Conversations which will take place with education, arts and cultural professionals between October 2011 and February 2012 across the city.

The objective is to develop a common language and understanding of creativity within the overarching context of Curriculum for Excellence; and to explore the role of the arts and cultural sectors contribution to creativity within the curriculum.

An event will be also be organised by young people in Edinburgh schools to consider the pledge drawn from the Creative Conversations and explore how to develop their creativity within and outwith school.

Family Based Care Music Project

'Fostering a Love of Music', the Arts and Learning project with Family Based Care, delivered in partnership with Live Music Now, will be presented at the 4th International Music Council World Forum on Music in Tallinn, Estonia in September.

'Fostering a Love of Music' was funded from Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative, and through music brings foster children and their families together for a weekend of creative music making followed by a summer workshop for the children. Feedback has been hugely positive and there will be further projects taking place over the coming year reaching more foster families.

The project beat strong international competition and was selected for reflecting the theme of the forum, 'Music and Social Change'.

New Playground Equipment for Murrayburn

Murrayburn Primary School has won £30,000 of playground improvements in a Facebook competition run by Ronseal where people had to vote for the school they wanted to win.

A huge amount of credit for the success must go to the Parent Council at Murrayburn Primary and the Sighthill community who put great effort into campaigning for their local school. The Council was happy to support this campaign, promoting it on our website and through our own Facebook and twitter accounts. Thanks must also go to the local media for their support. I am sure there is great excitement in Murrayburn Primary as pupils and staff return from holidays and hear about the plans for the playground improvements

13 Emergency Planning

The Council is the first urban local authority in the UK to gain a quality standard for its emergency preparation. The 'business continuity management' accreditation, awarded by the British Standards Institute, recognised our efforts to maintain critical services during an incident or emergency. Earlier in the year the Council underwent a rigorous audit of the continuity processes and resources it has in place to keep its essential services running, following two years' intensive work to prepare the organisation for threats to its business continuity.

We provide a huge range of vital services so it is incredibly important that we take steps to maintain 'business as normal' despite events beyond our control. Inevitably, situations occur that disrupt life in the city, but the preparations we have taken will minimise that and provide reassurance that we are able to provide the most essential services.

14 Promoting and Celebrating Edinburgh's Festivals and Events

When the finalists were announced for the Scottish Events Awards 2011, Edinburgh's Christmas was one of five Council entries. It is now short listed for the Best Large Festival category of the UK Event Awards. Congratulations to Culture and Sport and She's Gott It, the company contracted to deliver Edinburgh's Christmas, and best wishes for the awards ceremony.

15 Christina Burnett Retires

Although I mentioned her in my update at the last Council Meeting, news of Christina Burnett's retirement did not make it in time for my written report.

Christina Burnett retired in July as Head of Service: Support for Children and Young People in the Children and Families Department after 34 years in local government social work. Christina was highly respected by colleagues within and well beyond her department, playing a significant role in the formation of the new Department of Children and Families. I wish her a long and happy retirement.

Councillor Jenny Dawe
Council Leader