



August 2014

Games set gold standard



Having personally sampled the fantastic atmosphere and organisation of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, I can only echo the praise heaped upon the organisers – and with a record haul of 53 medals, TeamScotland did the country equally proud.

Edinburgh, of course, also played its part. Thousands took to the streets to welcome the Queen's Baton Relay back in June, setting the tone for an unforgettable three days of diving competitions in the 'Commie Pool', including career best performances from local divers Grace Reid and James Heatly.

All in all, around 80 Edinburgh born, based or trained athletes took part in the Games, bringing home 15 medals, and the Council is planning to recognise their achievements with a public celebration later this month.

Exams success

And speaking of success, congratulations to Edinburgh's school pupils on gaining excellent exam results yet again this year. The number of S6 and S5 pupils (61% and 54% respectively) who achieved one or more Highers improved on last year and over 23,000 awards were given out for the new National exams.

It's been a challenge for pupils and our teaching staff to prepare for these new exams but I think the results speak for themselves. Last week's figures also reinforce recently published statistics from Audit Scotland that Edinburgh is outperforming similar city and neighbouring authorities when it comes to S4 results.

In addition to exams, another key aim of the Capital Coalition is to make sure all school leavers enter a positive destination of employment, training or further education through initiatives such as the Edinburgh Guarantee – and this year a record 91% of young people achieved this.

Greener Edinburgh

Another priority for the Council is to make Edinburgh a greener city, and next month we'll be making it easier for residents who use our wheelie bin service to recycle. This new service will help us meet our target of recycling 70% of our waste.

The range of things residents can recycle will increase, resulting in less waste being sent to landfill – allowing us to reduce both our carbon footprint and the amount of landfill tax we pay.

The service will be rolled out in phases to 140,000 households over the next year with the first 20,000 starting in September. If you're in Phase 1, you will shortly receive information in the post, including a new collection calendar. You can find out more by visiting the [Council website](#).

Tram latest

This month, Edinburgh welcomes the world, with hundreds of thousands of people thronging the City to enjoy the festivals. And for the first time since 1956, Festival-goers can again travel in the Capital by tram.

Trams continue to attract an average of over 90,000 passengers per week. We're very pleased with this consistent performance, which is in line with the business model, but we will continue to work closely with [Transport for Edinburgh](#) to ensure that any issues are picked up on and resolved swiftly.

Two Celtic European Games at the BT Murrayfield Stadium went well, with thousands using the trams to get to and from the games. These events certainly put the Edinburgh Trams team to the test but I'm pleased to say they coped admirably with the large crowds.

EdinburghApps

Next month, EdinburghApps will once again challenge residents to come up with high-tech solutions to help improve the lives of people visiting, living and working in Edinburgh.

The first of its kind in the UK, the competition lets teams and individuals use Council data to create ideas and concepts for the benefit of the city. In its first year, it attracted a range of innovative entries, including an app to help Council lorries operate more efficiently and another helping residents locate their nearest recycling point.

This year's event has two themes: Culture & Sport and Health. If you are interested in taking part, please visit the [EdinburghApps website](#) or email edinburghapps@edinburgh.gov.uk.

Don't lose your vote

This week, more than 350,000 registered voters in Edinburgh (over 4m across Scotland) will begin to receive poll cards for the Scottish Independence Referendum, providing them with details on how and where they can vote on 18 September.

This is set to be the biggest poll in Scotland's history with a turnout of more than 80% predicted. But only people who are registered to vote, and are aged 16 or over on the 18 September, are able to take part. That's why it's essential that you register by 2 September.

I would urge all those who want to take part in this historic vote to check their details are on the register by visiting [Lothian Valuation Joint Board's website](#) or calling 0131 344 2500.

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