



May 2015

New Chief Executive appointment



I am delighted to announce that Andrew Kerr is our preferred candidate to replace Sue Bruce as Chief Executive.

It was essential we chose the right calibre of person for this important and challenging leadership role and we ran a rigorous, competitive recruitment process with a strong field of candidates.

Currently Chief Executive of Cornwall Council, Andrew will bring a wealth of local government experience and enthusiasm at a time when we face many unprecedented challenges and opportunities. I am confident that his energy and drive will play a central role in shaping the continued success of Edinburgh as a 21st century capital city.

Following approval at next Thursday's council meeting, Andrew will take up his post later this year with the exact date to be confirmed in due course.

Stability restored at Lothian Buses

I am also pleased to announce the appointment of several new non-executive board members to Transport for Edinburgh, Lothian Buses and Edinburgh Trams, for which the Council is majority shareholder.

While recent issues at management level within Lothian Buses have caused uncertainty, we welcome the results of KPMG's independent report, which demonstrates that the Council acted consistently and in accordance with the proper governance procedures in dealing with the situation.

I am confident that the latest appointments to the board will now allow us to look to the future of public transport in Edinburgh, building on the work of outgoing Chair, Tony Depledge, to ensure stable and effective management, and providing the first-class, integrated service the city deserves.

Elections success

I want to put on record my thanks to Sue Bruce, in her final shift as Returning Officer, and her team in delivering yet another slick and efficient election on 7 and 8 May. It doesn't take a mathematical genius to work out that the smooth-running of such an event is a massive undertaking and involves a huge effort by many hundreds of dedicated public servants over a number of weeks and months.

It was a real pleasure to have the count in the EICC for the first time and I have heard many comments from fellow politicians, the media and our own staff about how impressed they were with the facilities.

My congratulations also to my coalition colleague and Deputy Lord Provost, Deidre Brock, in becoming the MP for Edinburgh North & Leith, a constituency I am sure she will represent extremely well in Westminster.

Nepal earthquake

Shortly after my last Leader's Report, Nepal was struck by a devastating earthquake followed by a second one, almost as severe, ten days ago.

Since the initial quake and the humanitarian crisis it caused, we have been working closely with our aid partner, Mercy Corps. Our actions have included a [candle-lit vigil](#) led by the Lord Provost, turning the Melville monument red (the colour of the Nepalese flag) to promote the appeal as well as work with schools and charitable street collections.

Mercy Corps' hard work continues in Nepal; focusing on reaching people in parts of the country so far overlooked and ensuring they get much needed clothing, food and hygiene supplies. You can read more about the work in Nepal and [make a donation to support the ongoing relief](#) effort on Mercy Corps' website.

Housing development sails off with top award

Well done to all involved in [The Sailmaker Apartments](#) project in Leith, which was awarded *Best Partnership in Affordable Housing* at the prestigious Homes For Scotland Awards 2015.

The development, consisting of 145 affordable homes, was built through the National Housing Trust scheme in a partnership between the Council, Scottish Futures Trust, Hillcrest Housing Association, Cruden and Rettie and Co.

Also commended in the same category was Merchant's Court in Liberton and the Greendykes C development in Craigmillar, both of which delivered much-needed social rent and mid-market rent properties.

Volunteering champions

Edinburgh wouldn't be the city it is without its army of volunteers, working tirelessly to support the homeless, vulnerable, young, elderly and disabled.

Every year, we get the opportunity to thank this community at the annual Volunteer Awards, organised by the [Volunteer Centre Edinburgh](#) and presented by our volunteer ambassador, the Lord Provost.

This year's awards will also feature our new Honour Board, a lasting tribute to those who receive the *Lord Provost's Inspiring Volunteer of the Year Award* each year. This will be unveiled at a special ceremony on 3 June as part of [National Volunteer Week](#).

No place for intolerance

In many countries around the world, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people are still subject to ostracisation, imprisonment and execution merely for whom they love. Although Scotland has made progress towards equality, there remains much work to be done.

Last Monday, 17 May, was International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia and, to mark this, [LGBT Youth Scotland](#) launched a new report on Life in Scotland for LGBT Young People (aged 13–25), focusing on their social experiences and acceptance in their families and wider communities.

While the research does demonstrate progress here, it does also show that many LGBT young people still face high levels of discrimination and experience barriers to feeling included.

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