



September 2016

Celebrate the Great



It's not often you get the chance to rub shoulders with Olympic and Paralympic stars, so do please make sure you get Wednesday 28 September in your diary.

That's when the public will get the unique opportunity to meet our Scottish heroes after all their outstanding sporting achievements in Rio.

The Council has held very positive discussions with sportscotland over the best way of allowing the public to celebrate the athletes' medal successes and an event (still in the planning) in Festival Square promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

So don't miss this amazing chance to take photos and mix with your sporting stars; hotfoot it to Festival Square between 3pm and 4pm on 28 September to meet your Rio heroes and show your appreciation for all their efforts.

Keep your eye on the Council website and local press for [further event details](#).

Keeping Edinburgh clean

Edinburgh is one of the world's most beautiful cities and I know all of us want to live in a place where the streets are kept as clean as possible and waste is disposed of responsibly.

Our staff worked extremely hard at Festival time to keep the city litter-free and our specially branded Our Edinburgh bins collected 60% more litter during August, showing that the public are definitely doing their bit to help Edinburgh look her best.

Refuse collection is another major priority as we strive to recycle more and send far less to landfill. Every year we carry out over 26 million waste collections, the vast majority of which happen without any issue. However it is only right we constantly review and make improvements to our services as we have done in recent years.

There has been increased recycling (now almost 45%) and a corresponding drop of 10% in the amount of waste ending up as landfill, which saves us £84.40 in landfill tax per tonne – or £1m a year! We've also invested in new vehicles, implemented daily bin collections, extended communal bins, rolled out food waste collections and trialled new technology, such as sensors on litter bins to monitor how full they are.

A warm Edinburgh welcome for Syrian refugees

Nobody could fail to be moved by the plight of the millions of Syrian refugees forced to flee their war-torn homeland and last year the Council was delighted to sign up to the Scottish Government's response to the refugee crisis.

I'm delighted that we have met our target of welcoming 100 refugees to the Capital within the first year of the relocation. Kindness and generosity are part of the DNA of this city and residents have extended a sincere and heartfelt welcome that does us all proud.

The Council is committed to building on the success of our Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme and we look forward to working with the Scottish and UK governments to ensure the continued resettlement and successful integration of refugees in Edinburgh.

Saying no to cold callers

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their own homes but sadly there's a minority of pretty unscrupulous people out there who prey on the most vulnerable in our society.

That's why it's fantastic news that we've now established more than 100 special 'no cold calling zones' across Edinburgh to help stamp out doorstep crime. These zones give communities a strong voice against bogus callers and rogue traders and empower residents with the confidence to say no to unwanted callers.

Cold callers can often be a precursor to doorstep crime so the Council's Trading Standards team work very closely with Police Scotland to combat the problem. An incredible 100% of residents in existing zones are satisfied with the measures and 92% have noticed a drop in cold callers – proof that No Cold Calling Zones are having the desired effect.

Encouraging signs for Edinburgh's air quality

Tackling air pollution is a major challenge for all urban authorities. Here in Edinburgh we're acutely aware of the issue and work extremely hard towards improving air quality and making the city a cleaner, greener place for everyone.

While we certainly can't be complacent, early nitrogen dioxide data for 2016 from our fixed monitoring sites do prove satisfying reading, with emissions down a full third at St John's Road and more than a fifth at the Newbridge Roundabout.

It's tricky to pinpoint all the factors contributing to this fall in emissions, but it seems likely that the wide range of actions we're taking to improve air quality – such as our £200,000 investment upgrading the traffic signals to reduce queuing at Newbridge – could be starting to bear fruit. I know every effort is being made to ensure this positive trend continues.

Calling all community champions

It's elections time again! We're looking for people from all over Edinburgh who care about their community to put themselves forward as potential community council members.

Community councils play a really important role in the life of this fine city and they're a great way for people to help shape their local community and make a real difference to their neighbourhood.

If you think this sounds like your cup of tea, don't delay - nominations close on 26 September! Candidates must be 16 or over and registered to vote. [Nomination forms can be found on the Council's website.](#)

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