

# Latest News

Culture and Communities Committee  
10.00am, Tuesday 16 November 2021



## Community Event at Royston Wardieburn Community Centre

On Thursday 7 October, 45 local people attended a heart-warming community event at Royston Wardieburn Community Centre. A celebration of the re-opening of the centre, the hard work the Time for Change Project did on the centre's garden, and a special tree planting ceremony for all past, present and future local activists including Roberta Blaikie.



Mizan, (chair of the Management Committee), welcomed and introduced the event including the Nevis Ensemble Orchestra, a Festival Favour from the Edinburgh International Festival. They gave a fantastic performance, enjoyed immensely by everyone.

Outdoors, Dave Pickering (North Edinburgh News), led the tree ceremony and tributes in memory of Roberta and all past, present and future activists from North Edinburgh. A cherry blossom tree is now at the front of the centre with two beautiful benches made by folk at The Community Shed. Further words and poems were spoken by Jane Jones, Linda Garcia, Mary Mbae, Lydia Markham and Lynn McCabe. Wee ones and bigger ones added a trowel of soil to the tree hole.

A really positive day and heartening to see so many people together in the centre again for a community event; having tea and scones, meeting up to connect, chat and remember.



Comments from Roberta's daughter Donna:

*"A beautiful tree ceremony for my Mum yesterday at Royston Wardieburn Community Centre. I would like to thank everyone who put this together and for all who attended. My mum was an amazing inspirational woman and the tree represents past, present and future activists. The performance from Nevis Ensemble was absolutely amazing and thanks to the Edinburgh International Festival for arranging them to play."*

Huge thanks to Roberta's family and friends, Spring Chickens, Time for Change, the Centre's Management Committee, and local people who came along.



## Jack Kane Community Centre – CLD Standards Mark Approval

Our Schools and Lifelong Learning Department, and one its partners, has received some great news.

For many years the City of Edinburgh Council alongside the Jack Kane Community Centre have been working to hone volunteering experiences for young people. Listening and acting on their volunteering stories enabled a successful 3-year funding award to be secured through BBC Children in Need. From this and after lots of hard work, the centre and our work has been recognised for its quality of providing educational experiences which are viewed as being of a high standard. It was acknowledged that the core principles and values of CLD competencies are embedded in the work which we carry out with young volunteers and for other work across the centre.

Achieving this standards mark during the pandemic has been challenging, and it is a testimony to the commitment and drive from staff and partners that we have continued to provide wonderful educational volunteering opportunities to the young people and in that time have had more of a positive impact on the wider learning community. It is believed that the Jack Kane Community Centre is the first community centre in Edinburgh, and Scotland, to gain the CLD standards mark.

## Edinburgh Million Trees City Project, Wee Forest and Tree Time Initiative



The official launch of the Edinburgh Million Trees Project took place in Lauriston Castle Gardens on 13 October. The event featured the Lord Provost planting a ginkgo tree at a specially selected site in the gardens, assisted by Donald Wilson, Convener of Culture and Communities Committee. Members of the project forum were invited including representatives from Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust, Woodland Trust and Nature Scot. Friends of Lauriston Gardens conducted a tour of the gardens and planted two further ginkgo trees in specially selected locations in the Japanese garden. The ginkgo trees were grown from seed taken from a surviving ginkgo tree from Hiroshima, Japan.

During the launch week and marking a start to the 2021/22 winter planting season, a Wee Forest was planted in West Pilton Park. This was arranged in partnership with the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and funded by *Nature Scot*. A further Nature Scot Wee Forest is planned for Peacocktail Close Park, Craigmillar, and five Earthwatch UK funded Wee Forests are currently progressing for East Pilton Park, Granton Crescent Park, Gyle Park, Mount Vernon greenspace, and Hailes Quarry Park. A Wee Forest is small area of densely packed, fast growing native trees aimed at halting the loss of local biodiversity in urban areas, decreasing the impacts of climate change and increasing the frequency of nature in urban areas for people to enjoy and appreciate.



There was additional community tree planting by The Conservation Volunteers and the local primary school at Redwood Park, Colinton Mains. The park is adjacent to the school and a mix of native woodland species was selected to enhance biodiversity, create habitats, and fruit and nut food sources for wildlife as well as provide a quality recreational greenspace for the local



a one year jump not two.

Overall, parks quality continues to improve, with the average parks quality score now sitting at 69 out of 100, rising one point from 2019. The average Park Quality Score increased four points across North East Edinburgh to 68 and one point across North West Edinburgh to 67. South East and South West Edinburgh average scores remained static but South East Edinburgh retains the highest average score of 71, closely followed by South West Edinburgh with 70. Areas of improvement since 2019 include equal access, dog fouling, litter management, horticultural maintenance, arboricultural maintenance and biodiversity. The conservation of landscape and buildings were judged to be poorer than in previous years.

94% of parks now meet the Council's minimum quality standard, leaving only eight sites across the city to be brought up to this mark. Of the 141 parks assessed, Edinburgh has six (4%) at Grade A; 59 (42%) at Grade B; 68 (48%) at Grade C; eight (6%) at Grade D; and no Grade E parks. Compared to those previously assessed, 25 improved a grade, 10 dropped a grade whilst 106 retained their quality status.

The city's "top five" scoring parks in 2021 are:

1. Starbank Park
2. Easter Craiglockhart Hill Local Nature Reserve
3. Pentland Hills Regional Park
4. Seven Acre Park
5. Figgate Park

Notably, all have a very active Park Friends Group.

It was pleasing to note that the two parks judged in 2019 as Grade E have improved to Grade D, joining six others that will be targeted for attention along with Dovecot Park and Coates Crescent, which saw their quality score drop the most.

A copy of the Park Quality Assessments for 2021 can be found [here](#).

## Nature Restoration Fund

Scottish Government and Local Authority Leaders have reached an agreement on the proportion of allocation of the newly established Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) to Scottish Local Authorities. The purpose of the NRF is to support actions that help nature recover across Scotland.

"Making Space for Nature" is that element of the NRF that focuses on urban nature-based solutions for biodiversity and climate change. The City of Edinburgh has been allocated £264,000 of the £5 million of capital funding to be spent in 2021-22 by local authorities to support new, or to enhance existing approaches to restoring biodiversity. Officers are presently identifying suitable capital projects that meet the fund criteria, including enhancement of woodland, wetland and wildflower grassland ecosystems across the Council's green space estate.

Additional funding from the competitive element of the Nature Restoration Fund was secured for Edinburgh in partnership with members of the Edinburgh Living Landscape Board. Specifically, £30,100 in partnership with the University of Edinburgh for the "DaisyChain: a coastal meadow network for Edinburgh urban pollinators" and £114,767 in partnership with the Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust for habitat enrichment at Cammo Park, Craigmillar Castle Park and a

section alongside the Tramway between Balgreen and Edinburgh Park.

## Renewal of Play Parks

The Scottish Government is to allocate £60 million to renew play parks across Scotland, so that all children have access to quality play in their own community. For 2021-22, initial funding of £5 million capital funding has been distributed between the 32 local authorities based on a funding model of 95% on population and 5% on rurality. The City of Edinburgh has been allocated £414,000 of this initial sum and officers are presently identifying the most suitable play improvements that meet the funding criteria. The funding profile of the remaining £55 million across the remainder of the Parliamentary term is being considered and we will be informed of any decision when this is agreed.

## Christmas Lights

Our Community Christmas Lights Switch on Ceremonies return this year to bring some festive cheer to the city. The schedule can be found on the Council Website - [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/christmaslights](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/christmaslights)

We have also been able to support the new Royal Hospital for Children and Young People by installing their gifted 6m Christmas tree outside the front entrance. We will also be installing giant light up reindeer which can be seen from the children's intensive care unit.

## City Centre Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) Update

The UK terrorist threat level is currently "substantial" which means an attack is "likely".

The Council's counter-terrorism lead officer received a letter from the National Vehicle Threat Mitigation Unit earlier this year intimating that hire charges will start to be levied on the Council for the National Barrier Asset remaining in the City from June 2022.

The city centre HVM working group met last month, led by public safety, and consisting of officers from a variety of council teams including resilience, roads, planning and procurement as well as a representative from Police Scotland's Counter Terrorism Security Advisor team. Actions agreed at the last meeting include;

- investigating options to augment current temporary assets with rated alternatives;
- identifying potential funding streams; and
- formulating a refreshed city centre plan for permanent fixtures to ensure we are considering the latest technology available whilst also aligning with the council's latest public realm plans.

This work is continuing and the group aims to set up a briefing and/or presentation for key senior officers and elected members for early 2022

## Edinburgh Multicultural Festival 2021

Supported by the City of Edinburgh Council, the 2021 [Edinburgh Multicultural Festival](#) LIVE! Programme edition was hosted on 1, 2 and 3 October 2021 at Granton:hub, PASS Theatre (Edinburgh College) and Starbank Park (Newhaven). This year's festival offered creative writing and visual literacy workshops, poetry, dance and new work showcase events as well as intimate and outdoor music experiences curated with audiences across age groups, backgrounds and identities. The festival featured 35 independent visual and performance artists and a further 10 bands, including Dance artists TuFlamenco duo Inma Montero and Danielo Olivera, Anu Joseph, Divine Tasinda and the Ubuntu Vibes Dancers; Musicians and Music acts: Oli Jan, Diljeet Bhachu, Davie Luhanga aka Street Rat, Lone Bear Duo, The Spinning Blowfish, Jit Jive Duo Motown Brothers – Wayne and Morgan, DopeSickFly, Mio Shudo, Alec Cooper and Mike Black, Roo Geddes, Africa Sound Ensemble, Mother All Mighty, Lone Bear Trio and Shona the Musical Choir; Poets Rumana Sayed, Roshni Gallagher, Sanjay Lago, Esra Hussain, Timothy Carlsen, Jeehan Ashercook, and Safeera Ahmed, as well as Storytellers Joan Hephzibah and Ebony Pollard; and Visual Artists Jose Luis Cote, Harry Mould, Magdalena Adamow and Kate Soltan.

Playwright and actress Catherine Bisset and Fronteiras Theatre Lab in collaboration with The Colonial-Era Caribbean Theatre and Opera Network (*CECTON*), stand-up comedian Lubna Kerr, and poet Sean Wai Keung in collaboration with filmmaker Jinling Wu shared their work in development by presenting extracts from stories and scripts addressing lived experiences of post-colonialism, racism and prejudice supported by the City of Edinburgh Council's Diversity and Inclusion: Collaboration, Research and Development Fund 2020/21.

The Edinburgh Multicultural Festival also hosted its 'It Comes Down to People' AV Story campaign featuring eight local artists: Tony Mills, Harry Mould, Jose Luis Cote, Lubna Kerr, Mio Shudo, Morgan Njobo, Jinling Wu and Sandino Borges Leiato. The stories were filmed and edited by Jinling Wu; portraits were taken by Kate Soltan. The stories are available at [Edinburgh Multicultural Festival YouTube Channel](#). A summary report of the event is attached to this Bulletin.

## Story Valley – First Meeting Hosted by Edinburgh

From 27 – 29 October, Edinburgh held the first meeting of a unique European partnership group, [The Story Valley](#) initiative, to coincide with the [Scottish International Storytelling Festival](#) and the 250th anniversary of the birth of [Sir Walter Scott](#). The City of Edinburgh Council, together with Edinburgh College, welcomed Story Valley partners from three other European [UNESCO Cities of Literature](#) – [Leeuwarden, in the Netherlands](#), [Ljubljana, Slovenia's Capital](#) and [Nottingham, UK](#) – as the group came together to create new policy ideas. This is part of its manifesto to use storytelling to improve literacy skills, while preserving and enriching cultural heritage through collaboration.

As part of the visit, the programme has brought together the city's literary sector and cultural partners - Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, Scottish Poetry Library, Edinburgh International Book Festival (EIBF) and Scottish Storytelling Centre – and showcased the exciting work and projects taking place in Edinburgh. During the three-day programme Story Valley partners visited Edinburgh College to see the project in action, share best practice and explore potential collaborations, visited the Scottish International Storytelling Festival and spoke to representatives

from innovative projects happening across the city. These included: [Super Power Agency](#), a creative writing programme, using writing for confidence building amongst hard to reach 8-18 year olds in Edinburgh; the [Creative Words for Well-being](#) project by the Scottish Poetry Library; [Street Reads Library](#), a safe space connecting homeless people with books; and the [Digital Storytelling](#) project by the Scottish Book Trust. The programme was topped off by a light display as the [Granton Gasholder](#), recently brought to life in partnership with Edinburgh College, as part of the [£1.3billion Granton Waterfront project](#), was lit up in Story Valley colours.

Further details can be found at: <https://cultureedinburgh.com/culture-partners/story-valley> and <https://www.storyvalleyacademy.com/>



## Tour of Britain 2021

Edinburgh hosted the finale to stage 7 of the [AJ Bell Tour of Britain](#) on Saturday 11 September. The riders arrived into the city in the afternoon sunshine in front of large crowds having left Hawick earlier that morning. Against the backdrop of Arthur's Seat and Holyrood Park, a three-man break away raced to the finish with Yves Lampaert of Deceuninck-Quickstep taking the stage victory, reaching the line a couple of minutes ahead of the peloton. This is the third occasion in recent years that Edinburgh has hosted the Tour of Britain and marks a successful repeat partnership between the Council and Britain's premier road race. Photos from stage 7 can be viewed [here](#); highlights can be viewed [here](#).



Photo Credit: SWpix

## Tynecastle Delivers on Cycle Training



The Tynecastle Active School's Co-ordinator, Ricky Karoyan, has been busy working with cluster P7 pupils, delivering the Cycling Scotland Programme: Bikeability Scotland Level 2. Being supported by Mark Symonds, Active Travel Co-ordinator, two P7 Craiglockhart schools classes and two Balgreen Primary School classes have completed their Level 2 receiving their certificate and badges, and have left with more on road cycling experience and knowledge to keep them safer in the future. Dalry Primary School and Stenhouse Primary School will be next to receive their training this academic year, then work will begin with the P6 and P5 classes retrospectively.

Despite the pandemic over 30 primary schools received cycle training last year, a feat which the Active Schools team aims to build on in 2021/22.

## Edinburgh's Community Sports Hubs (SCH) Using Sport and Activity to Intentionally Bring About Positive Changes for People

As a partnership, Meggetland Community Sport Hub, Edinburgh Young Carers and Edinburgh Schools Kayak Club recognised that there is always a clear need for physical activity opportunities for young carers over the summer period. This has only been heightened because of the strain on resources the last year has brought.

The project gave just under 100 young carers the opportunity to kayak, paddleboard (and sometimes swim!) along the Union Canal. For many, this was an introduction to outdoor watersports and for some, their first chance to meet other young carers of similar age. Participants reported an increase in their confidence and how being on the water positively affected their mood for the day.

EDINBURGH  
**YOUNG  
CARERS**



## Usher Hall Events

### *Forthcoming events:*

Average White Band – Wednesday 10 November

Tim Peake: My Journey To Space – Thursday 11 November



RSNO Schönwandt Conducts Scheherazade – Friday 12 November

Seasick Steve – Saturday 13 November

Jason Donovan - 'Even More Good Reasons' – Sunday 14 November

Marillion - The Light At The End Of The Tunnel – Monday 15 November

RSNO Søndergård Conducts Sibelius Two – Friday 19 November

The Australian Pink Floyd – Saturday 20 November

Glass Animals – Monday 22 November

UB40 2021 – Wednesday 24 November

RSNO Kim Plays Brahms Piano Concerto No1 – Friday 26 November

Idlewild – Saturday 27 November



BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra Beethoven's Violin Concerto – Sunday 28 November

The Libertines – Wednesday 1 December

The Muppet Christmas Carol - Film with Live Orchestra – Thursday 2 December

RSNO Chan Conducts The Nutcracker – Friday 3 December

Children's Classic Concerts and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra - Santa's Postbox – Sunday 5 December

Love Actually In Concert - Film With Live Orchestra – Monday 6 December

Deacon Blue – Wednesday 8 December

Christmas with Il Divo – Sunday 12 December

Enter Shikari – Monday 13 December

Bootleg Beatles – Tuesday 14 December



SCO: Benedetti Plays Mozart – Thursday 16 December

Del Amitri – Friday 17 December

Sir Ranulph Fiennes: Living Dangerously – Saturday 18 December

RSNO Christmas Concert featuring The Snowman – Sunday 19 December

Skipinnish – Wednesday 29 December

Scottish Fiddle Orchestra - Hogmanay Celebration – Thursday 30 December

For full details of these and future events please visit the website – [here](#).

## Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review

The independent Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Review Group met for the fourth time 24 August 2021.

Between the June and August meetings, a small working party of both Review and Advisory Group members met to continue to refine the list of features in scope and to draft contextual information for public presentation.

The August meeting discussed the outcome of the working group discussions, the proposals emerging for headline recommendations on potential future action and feedback from organisations which manage or own some of the features. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive with many welcoming the opportunity to help profile the city's work on this and confirming their support for it. The Review Group also welcomed confirmation of intern support from the University of Edinburgh to carry out and/or collate research on features of shared interest.

The online consultation survey went live on [date to be added] and will run on the Consultation Hub for 12 weeks. This is being supported by a Communications plan and web pages to provide information about the background and aims of the review.

In addition, a schools' engagement plan has been developed (focused on P5-S6 pupils) and a series of discussion sessions with target community groups and schools will take place through the Autumn/Winter period.

## Big Scottish Story Ripple

Museums and Galleries Learning and Public Programme Manager, Margaret Findlay, has been working with the Scottish Storytelling Centre on the Big Scottish Story Ripple to deliver digital

storytelling sessions inspired by our venues Lauriston Castle and the Museum of Childhood on the theme of Christmas. The sessions will be streaming live on the Lauriston Castle Facebook page @lauristoncastleedinburgh.

The Scottish Storytelling Centre are funding the sessions but we need to pay back a good deed in return, and we have arranged for Sainsbury's to deliver £100 of treats (absorbed by them) to North Edinburgh Arts for the kids that attend (Christmas treats and some healthier snacks).

## Reflections: The Light and Life of John Henry Lorimer

Step back in time to a world of Victorian and Edwardian elegance with the City Art Centre's new exhibition which features the work of John Henry Lorimer (1856-1936). It is the first ever exhibition of Lorimer's work, and encompasses his paintings, drawings, watercolours, furniture and personal effects. Over 50 works are being assembled from collections across the UK and France.

Lorimer's paintings are bound to lift our spirits across the winter months. Full of colour and light, they transport us into a world of style and sophistication. In 1878 the Lorimer family took a lease on Kellie Castle in Fife (now a property managed by The National Trust for Scotland), and over the years set about transforming what was a derelict ruin into a grand family home. Many of Lorimer's paintings were painted inside the castle rooms and feature members of his family.

A new publication and a varied events programme accompany this free exhibition. This exhibition is another example in a long line of recent displays which throw a spotlight on to some of Scotland's overlooked artists. Leave the dreich Scottish winter behind for an hour or two and be enthralled by this richly talented artist.



Credit: J H Lorimer, *The Flight of the Swallows*, 1906. City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries

## Where We Are...

Earlier this year, Museums and Galleries Edinburgh together with Edinburgh Young Carers, was selected as a Key Partner by the British Museum for their innovative new UK-wide youth programme, *Where We Are...*

We're working with a group of young adults aged 18-24 who have caring responsibilities, to create an artistic output based on their interests and perceptions of culture. So far they have been engaged in two sessions where we've discussed things that are important to them, created a collage, gone on a city walk and identified places in Edinburgh that are special to each member of the group. Over the coming weeks the young people will work with a creative practitioner to turn these ideas into an artistic output. The project is an opportunity for the young people to engage with their peers, to develop skills such as communication, team-work and problem solving, and to have fun! Watch this space for more information and to see the final result.



## Scottish Children's Parliament Year of Childhood

Curators of the Museum of Childhood, Susan Gardner and Lyn Stevens, have recorded a film for the Scottish Children's Parliament Year of Childhood programme. They discuss how children have been portrayed in books and how that may have impacted on the child reader. You can find out more about the Year of Childhood here [What's On - Children's Parliament \(childrensparliament.org.uk\)](https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk) and listen to the discussion in the video on this [page](#).

## Tapestry: Changing Concepts – City Art Centre, 13 November 2021 – 13 March 2022

This winter the City Art Centre presents a group exhibition featuring work by 19 contemporary artists associated with the former Tapestry Department at Edinburgh College of Art, either as graduates or lecturers. From the early 1960s to the 2000s the department was a hotbed of artistic invention. There was a strong emphasis on drawing, and all students learned to weave, yet at the same time were encouraged to explore different media to express their ideas. Tapestry was taught on an equal footing to the other fine art disciplines at the college and this ethos continued for almost 50 years, as the course gradually changed direction and eventually became Intermedia. Many of the alumni who originally trained in tapestry went on to develop a professional practice in an area which bore little or no relation to warp and weft.

*Tapestry: Changing Concepts* reflects the unconventional approach of the Tapestry Department. On display are drawings, installations and sculptures alongside works made of textile - all presented under the banner of tapestry. People often think of tapestry as a traditional artform, in terms of

technique, subject matter, or both. This exhibition aims to challenge this preconception and broaden the understanding of what a tapestry is or can be. Where it was once seen as a craft, it is now considered an artform in its own right, underpinned by ideas as much as technique. These works break with convention, looking to the future rather than the past. Artists include: Jo Barker, Archie Brennan (1931-2019), Gordon Brennan, Sara Brennan, Henny Burnett, Amanda Gizzi, Linda Green, Stephen Hunter, Fiona Hutchison, William Jefferies, Tessa Lynch, Fiona Mathison, Jo McDonald, Susan Mowatt, Ann Naustdal, Matteo Rosa, Cristina Sobrino, Joanne Soroka and Lesley Stothers.

Exhibition in partnership with STAR\* (Scottish Tapestry Artists Regrouped).



## City Art Centre Reveals Recent Acquisition

In October 2021 the City Art Centre opened a new exhibition showcasing artworks recently acquired for its fine art collection. *Incoming: New Acquisitions at the City Art Centre* presents fifty artworks by a range of historic and contemporary Scottish artists.

The exhibition includes paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and sculptures by artists such as Kate Downie, Rachel Maclean, Alison Watt, David Eustace, Peter Howson, Anthony Hatwell and Ian Hamilton Finlay. All of the artworks have been acquired within the last ten years, and many of them are being displayed at the City Art Centre for the very first time.

The City Art Centre's collection of fine art is recognised as nationally significant. Containing over 5,000 individual artworks, it traces the remarkable history of the visual arts in Scotland from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to present day. The collection continues to grow every year through purchases, donations and bequests. All purchases are made using the Jean F. Watson Bequest Fund, a fund established in the 1960s by Edinburgh resident Jean F. Watson. This bequest was created for the sole purpose of building an outstanding collection of Scottish art for the City of Edinburgh, and it remains key to developing the collection today. Additional funding is sought through external bodies such as the Art Fund and the National Fund for Acquisitions, as well as the Friends of the City Art Centre and Museums. Artworks also regularly enter the collection as donations or bequests. These are generously offered by artists, their estates, arts organisations and members of the public.

*Incoming: New Acquisitions at the City Art Centre* reveals the most recent additions to the collection, offering Edinburgh residents and visitors the chance to enjoy the city's art afresh. Featuring a wide variety of work by well-established artists and emerging talents, this new

exhibition has something for everyone. *Incoming: New Acquisitions at the City Art Centre* is scheduled to run until spring 2023. Admission is free. For visitor information see:

<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/whats-on/incoming-new-acquisitions-city-art-centre>



Credit: Kate Downie, *Conversations Part I*, 2005. © the artist

## Black History Month – October 2021: Museums and Galleries

Annually Learning and Programmes in Museums and Galleries Edinburgh work in partnership with CRER (The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights) to host Edinburgh based lectures to mark Black History Month.

CRER has co-ordinated a uniquely Scottish Black History Month during October since 2001. This encompasses the history of African, Caribbean and Asian people in this country; people who often have a direct link with Scotland through slavery, colonialism and migration. Black History Month focuses on people whose sacrifices, contributions and achievements against a backdrop of racism, inequality and injustice are often forgotten about.

CRER strive to work with a range of partners from across the community, voluntary and public sectors and has helped to collaboratively create a Black History Month Programme that includes an exciting range of events from talks, concerts, workshops, film screenings, exhibitions and more.

This years lectures, which took place digitally throughout October were on the themes of “Emancipated African Children in Scotland”, “Addressing the Legacy of Slavery and Empire at the National Trust for Scotland”, “Scotland’s Slavery Legacies” and “Come Alive Black Man! Telling Our History of Transatlantic Slavery”.

## Black History Month – October 2021: Libraries

Black History Month was celebrated in various ways across libraries during the month of October. Online, three collections of books were available on the Libby/Overdrive service - **Black History Month** – a collection of adult non-fiction titles about the lives and experiences of British and American people (<https://edinburgh.overdrive.com/collection/1253377>), **Teen novels by Black writers** – some great fiction reads for teens by amazing writers (<https://edinburgh.overdrive.com/library/teens/collection/1253376>) and **Black History Month for kids** – non-fiction focussing on the Little People, Big Dreams series as well as titles about African American history (<https://edinburgh.overdrive.com/library/kids/collection/1253375>). Daily Book recommendations featuring Black authors, characters and inspirational figures were shared daily at 11am on our Children and Young People Facebook Page.

### In schools:

- Wester Hailes Education Centre - The library had a new display for Black History Month and supported the pupil led Equalities group to plan and deliver a day of activities across the school as part of Show Racism the Red Card day on 15 October.
- Queensferry High School - The school created and shared with school libraries across the city some Why Don't You challenges recommending books and suggestions on how pupils can be involved in celebrating Black History Month.
- Firhill High School - The school had a display featuring Black and Minority Ethnic authors and titles with prominent black characters alongside some history books. Artwork produced for BHM last year was shared across the school.
- Craigroyston High School - The school shared a series of Facebook posts about great reads and resources available in the library that focus on black authors, black protagonists and black history. The Craigroyston Equalities group have been working with the pupil leadership scheme on a film club in partnership with North Edinburgh Arts. This year's budget allocation has been used to develop our collection with resources that support antiracism.
- Royal High School - The school had a display of Black Person of Colour (BPOC) books, fiction and non-fiction in the library. Both the senior and BGE bookgroups have chosen to read titles this month that feature BPOC characters. Across the whole school each department highlighted a British historical black figure or person of colour who has contributed to their subject and the library chose to highlight Ignatius Sancho who was the first known person of African descent to have writings published in Britain and to vote in a general-election.
- Holyrood High School - Promoted their favourite #BlackHistoryMonth reads across the school each week.
- Tynecastle High School - Along with a Black History Month themed book display which starred the winners of a whole school vote to find the best book written by a Black author, a prize was up for grabs for the best review of a book written by a Black Author. As part of Libraries week, the pupil's council helped select new titles for a BAME collection.

- St Thomas of Aquins - Along with a display the library worked with the music department to promote music by black authors around the civil rights movement. Another highlight was the BHM quiz for S1-S3.
- Castlebrae High School - The school were lucky enough to win the Litincolour challenge by Penguin books and look forward to 100 titles by people of colour arriving into the school library this month.
- Forrester High School - The school had a display supporting BHM and a BHM power point that was shared with pupils across S1-S3. Forester Library were also lucky to receive the 100 Litincolour titles from Penguin books.

### **In Community Libraries:**

- Art and Design and Music Departments (Central Library) - Art and Design and Music had displays celebrating Black artists and musicians and shared blog posts promoting the work of black artists and musicians represented in their collections.
- Piershill Library - Piershill had displays showcasing black authors in both their adult and children's areas.
- Blackhall Library - There was a BHM themed display in the foyer and there were some BHM themed posts on facebook.
- McDonald Road Library - The library had a display featuring a range of books by Black authors.
- Gilmerton Library - The library had a foyer display celebrating BHM.
- Craigmillar Library - The library created a book display and some A4 posters to signpost readers to digital titles suitable for different audiences.

To close the month Edinburgh Libraries partnered with the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Scottish Writers Network to co-create "Proud to be Telling our Stories" – a panel event with [Jeda Pearl](#) Co-director of Scottish BAME Writers Network as Chair and panellists [Lisa Williams](#), [Clementine E Burley](#) and [May Sumbwanyambe](#) telling their stories. The event took place on Thursday 28 October in the Central Reference Library.

## **COP26 – Glasgow: 1-12 November 2021: Becoming a Responsible Activist and Creating Protest Materials**

This event/activity has been supported by the #COP26Conversations fund developed in partnership by Museums Galleries Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Libraries Information Council." Edinburgh Libraries were successful in securing funding of £800 for this project to take place. The event was designed to take place over September to coincide with Scotland's Climate Week (13-19 September) and continue into COP26. Young Friends of the Earth Scotland (YFoES) is a grassroots network of young people aged 16-30 from across Scotland working collectively for environmental and social justice. Catrina Randall kindly volunteered to be filmed hosting some excellent questions for our school pupils. [Click here to view.](#) The film was shown to ECO groups in two schools in our four localities. It was followed with a workshop on design and creating protest materials. Schools then shared the messages created by our young people through displays in their school or community library and on social media as

part of a takeover of the Tales of One City Twitter during COP26 and Edinburgh Collected will keep the photos for our Archives.

## Central Library Transformation

Following the [Culture and Communities Committee 12 November 2019](#), a small Project Team of Culture, Library and Estates Optimisation Officers met to explore possible next steps in the development of Central library. Influenced by the successful approach adopted for the Assembly Rooms development, the team concluded that options for the next steps centred on the Council procuring the services of an organisation which specialises in creating development and funding plans for historic cultural assets. This work was paused in March 2020 and the Project Team will reconvene to pick up where they left off.

The Bennetts Feasibility design (2015) presents an imaginative vision for Central Library, cherishing the wonderful Victorian George Washington Browne design while making it more accessible and inclusive for 21<sup>st</sup> century generations and beyond.



## National Poetry Day – 7 October 2021

Stockbridge Library organised [Janette Ayachi](#), who is a Scottish/Algerian award winning poet and performance poet, to run outdoor poetry workshops for P5 classes from Stockbridge PS in the local park (George V). . Janette used prompts to connect the children with poetry and nature. The children then wrote their ideas on leaf templates which were attached with twine to the surrounding trees. Janette also planned to capture their words in sound/and written form and create a piece of work for National Poetry Day on 7 October. Posters were created with words, and QR code to link into recording on Soundcloud (or similar), which were dotted around the park from 7-10 October for all to enjoy. [Click here](#)

To celebrate National Poetry Day South Queensferry Library made an online interactive box of chocolates to tie in with the theme of 'Choice'. An image of a box of chocolates was overlaid with clickable buttons which linked to quotes from library visitors. The idea was to capture as many voices as possible in a playful collage poem on the theme. People were given a series of prompt

questions such as 'hard centres/soft centres/fudge/truffles' (displayed online and in print form) and invited them to respond, either in person or online, as creatively as they liked. Both adults and children were unfazed by the activity in the library and were happy to join in on the project! The best and most responses we gathered were from conversations about the project, with reassurance that 'there was no wrong answer' and 'being good at poetry' was not important. Responses ranged from discussions about dogs, squirrels, textures, and nostalgic memories. Some people gave us single lines, whilst others gave us full poems! We created the final image on the free platform Genially and shared it through [social media platforms](#).

## Poetry Poos

Starting as a fun way to share rhymes during lockdown the popularity of McDonald Road's 'Poetry Poos' just kept going. Now with their own YouTube Channel, staff member Lynne Henderson felt that using the poo emoji toys were a fun way to catch children's attention, and have gone on to share rhymes, poems and crafts. [Poetry Poos - YouTube](#)

## Wellbeing and Public Libraries

Wellbeing is increasingly important in policy planning, evaluation and understanding the impact of public services on people's lives. It has also emerged during Covid as a strong social theme both locally and nationally. Public libraries contribute to all aspects of wellbeing as part of their daily activities and services. Edinburgh City Libraries worked with a researcher and library colleagues from Shetland, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and West-Dunbarton, to develop a resources toolkit with the potential to raise awareness and promote this aspect of libraries.

Four aspects of wellbeing are considered: social, cultural, economic and health. The resources in this Toolkit can be used with different audiences including library staff, customers and potential customers, the public, stakeholders, elected members, partner organisations.

It remains our priority to reopen our public services, albeit in a careful, cautious and sensible way. It has never been clearer that access to free public library services is vital to community and individual wellbeing.

<https://scottishlibraries.org/advice-guidance/toolkits/wellbeing-and-scottish-public-libraries-toolkit/>

## Portobello Book Festival in Portobello Library

The 13<sup>th</sup> Portobello Book Festival took place in Portobello library between Friday 1 and Sunday 3 October. The library hosted 16 events with local and critically acclaimed authors including Val McDermid, Christopher Brookmyre and Andrew O'Hagan in conversation with the First Minister of Scotland. Another highlight was the Friday evening book launch, which celebrated local writing on the Pandemic. The launch of *Pandemic Portobello* featured readings from the book by actor Cal MacAninsh. Free copies of *Pandemic Portobello* are currently available from Portobello library.



*Cal Mac Aninch with a group of Community Nurses from the SEEDs project who contributed to Pandemic Portobello*



*Author Andrew O'Hagan in conversation with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon*

The 13<sup>th</sup> festival featured the first live events held in Edinburgh Libraries since March 2020 and the library played a key role in the delivery of this free local event, including:

- Identifying and contacting specific authors and contributors;
- Promoting the festival on Social Media;
- Acting as a collection point for tickets to events;
- Supporting the delivery of events as chairs and contributors;
- Ensuring that the library was Covid safe at all points in planning and delivery; and
- Providing technical support where required.

This was acknowledged by the Portobello Book Festival organising committee on the Portobello Book Festival website:

*“A huge thanks to Paul, Lesley and the staff of Portobello Library, a fantastic resource on our doorstep, without whose help and time we would not be able to run our festival. Special mention to Ian for spending his whole day off making sure our last minute tech requirements for the unexpected zoom event could be met.”*



*Christopher Brookmyre and his wife Marisa Haetzman (writing collaboratively as Ambrose Parry) and the author Doug Johnstone*

## Libraries Week – 4-10 October 2021

On Friday 1 October Drumbrae Library Hub took place in the “Fun Palaces Weekend of Action” which saw hundreds of organisations host a range of events across multiple countries. Fun palaces is all about bringing together communities to build something to benefit them in some way. At Drumbrae Library we utilised our online platforms and knowledge of Minecraft to bring young people together to build our Fun Palace in a digital space and live streamed the build on our Twitch channel ([twitch.tv/drumbraelibrary](https://www.twitch.tv/drumbraelibrary)) for anyone who wanted to watch or get involved. Together with staff from the Library the young people who took part were able express their creativity and build their own mini games, the world in which these were built will be made available for download for anyone to add to, play in or improve as they wish. We consider the event to have been a success with the young people expressing an interest in taking part in future events of this nature and links being formed with new organisations and community partners.

## Maths Week Scotland 2021

Libraries celebrated this years #MathsWeekScotland with events all week long. With funding received from Maths Week Scotland highlights included a number themed outdoor bookbug with counting rhymes and games, a pattern making workshop for an adult craft group and a games master evening with the teen bookgroup including fractions with pizza! Other events across the city included a family Maths circle at Fountainbridge library, Number themed Bookbugs at Moredun, Fountainbridge, South Queensferry and Kirkliston Libraries, a counting story session at Moredun Library, Maths book displays and promotion of our digital Maths books that were purchased last year after a donation from Maths Week Scotland, a kite making activity with skip counting at Balgreen Primary School, and an online event on teams delivering an activity of making a multiplication circle (attended by nine families).

## Edinburgh Libraries Delivering for Kirkliston Primary School

Old McDonald had a great time presenting his Farm Big Book to Kirkliston Primary School. On a super sunny day the children all helped to gather the harvest into the barn, naming many fruits and veg on the way. Two farmhands were chosen to work closely with Mrs Pig and to build three pop-up houses. The audience all worked together to finally chase the wolf away, never to be seen again.

The school's basketball court and the Booster Story Car were used to set the stage. The children all sat in their bubbles on PE mats to keep them comfy. The outdoor setting was a really good idea and helped make this a unique opportunity for the children to see a live performance. Lots of the audience said how much they had enjoyed themselves and their big happy smiles said it all. A successful treat for all of us all in these strange times.

## Family Fun Day at Wester Hailes Library

A fun-filled Family Day took place outside Wester Hailes Library on Friday 20 August, with 14 children and eight adults attending (numbers were limited due to Covid safety guidance). The event was supported by National Lottery funding (adapted from a project that had been planned to be run pre-Covid). Everyone enjoyed a lively session of storytelling and songs with Fergus & Ron from 'Macastory' - especially the bits where we could all join in. All the children were given a picnic bag of fruit, snacks and juice to feast on; and a celebration cupcake (enough for the adults to enjoy too). The session continued with some fun outdoor games: skittles was the favourite, and the most competitive! And some craft activities: making ladybirds and fish with moving mouths (inspired by the theme of this year's Summer Reading Challenge: Wild World Heroes)

And everyone was welcomed inside in turns after the event to join the library (if they were not already members) and to browse and borrow books as well! It was great to get families in the community together: to celebrate the end of school holidays and children completing the Summer Reading Challenge. Whilst we are continuing to expand Library services and begin to resume certain activities and events inside, it has been a great benefit to use and enjoy the improved outside space for events such as this; including ongoing fortnightly outdoor Bookbug Sessions for babies and toddlers.



## Culture and Communities Committee



### **Convener**

Councillor Donald Wilson



### **Vice-Convener**

Councillor Amy McNeese-Mechan

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## Members

Councillor Wilson (*Convener*)  
Councillor McNeese-Mechan (*Vice-Convener*)  
Councillor Booth  
Councillor Brown  
Councillor Doggart  
Councillor Doran  
Councillor Key  
Councillor Mitchell  
Councillor Osler  
Councillor Staniforth  
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