

Latest News

Culture and Communities Committee
10.00am, Thursday 29 February 2024



20 Minute Neighbourhood Strategy Update (Wards Affected - All)

On 10 August 2023, Committee [agreed](#) an updated 20-Minute Neighbourhood Strategy, and requested key updates be provided every six months.

Since August, work has continued to communicate the aims of the Strategy and address any concerns or misinformation. The Council's website has been updated with [dedicated pages](#) and a short video uploaded to help explain the purpose and scope of the Strategy. In October 2023, an overview of the Strategy was presented to the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils.

Working with communities is one of the Strategy's strategic actions. The Council has recently partnered with NHS Lothian to support children and teenagers living in Craigmillar to develop their own neighbourhood plan, setting out priorities for improvements. The findings of the recent [Edinburgh Partnership Survey](#) will be used to help develop strategy further.

To promote the development of Local Place Plans, information and resources are now available on the Council website. These are an opportunity for communities to create their own plan or proposals for the development and use of land. The [Wester Hailes Local Place Plan](#) was the first to be registered in Scotland and reflects the 20-minute neighbourhood concept.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has been integrated into the Council's Corporate Property Strategy with 'live well locally' a key theme. This means that where property projects are being delivered, opportunities will be considered to improve integrated service delivery at the heart of a community, integrating (where appropriate) the learning estate, community spaces, libraries, GP surgeries and Council services. Key property projects under construction include the MacMillan Hub, the new Currie High School, Liberton High School, Wester Hailes High School and Maybury Primary School. Other projects in early stages of design and development where these principles will be followed include St Catherine's RC Primary School and Queensferry Primary School.

The Strategy will also be a key consideration in the development of the Community Centre Strategy and Future Libraries strategy and vision, as well as a planned review of public toilets in town centres.

The Strategy aims to improve town and local centres as they have many of the services, facilities and local businesses needed to meet daily needs. Further consultation and engagement is planned in 2024 in relation to emerging plans for Craigmillar, Portobello and Dalry. Small “quick win” improvements will be delivered where possible (such as a proposed School Zone with placemaking and public art interventions around Dalry Primary School). Improved active travel connections to the redeveloped Pennywell local centre are also planned.

The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has been further integrated into the recently updated [City Mobility Plan](#) implementation plan and [circulation plan](#) with the aim of improving sustainable and active travel access to local services and facilities. A programme of area-wide “Liveable Neighbourhood” initiatives is proposed, focussing on simple measures like dropping kerbs, narrowing side roads, better pavements around local shops and new crossings.

The Granton Waterfront development is progressing, and the West Edinburgh masterplan (which aims to deliver ‘a strong sense of place through the 20-Minute Neighbourhood principle’) has been approved following consultation. Work continues on the preparation of a brief for the development of Seafield, and early community engagement is underway in relation to the redevelopment of the Liberton Hospital site.

Update on work by Alzheimer’s Scotland and the Forget Me Not Trust at the Gatehouse at Lauriston Castle (Wards Affected – 1, Almond)

Over recent months, Alzheimer’s Scotland and the Forget Me Not Trust have worked with the Council to review and refine plans to progress work on the renovation of the Gatehouse at Lauriston Castle.

An Outdoor Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre will be established there by Alzheimer’s Scotland. Alzheimer’s Scotland will invest in a Centre Manager and a Co-ordinator to be based in the building to oversee a programme of outdoor therapeutic and creative group experiences for people with dementia, their carers and families. The team will run traditional gardening and horticultural sessions with ongoing support from the Forget Me Not volunteers, enabling activities (such as Mindfulness Sessions, Outdoor Relaxation, Reminiscence Sessions, Cognitive Stimulation activities, Peer Support, Outdoor Dementia Café sessions and discussions, Brain Health and Prevention Sessions) to take place.

Alzheimer’s Scotland will take on the lease for the site, and the Forget Me Trust will wind up its charitable operations. Construction work is due to begin this spring, with the new facility opening to the public in summer 2024.

Stockbridge Clocks – St Stephens and Deanhaugh Street Clocks (Wards Affected – 5, Inverleith)

The Council are responsible for the illumination and maintenance of the city’s public clocks as stated in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982.

Contracted specialist clockmakers, Smith of Derby, carry out annual servicing and maintenance of the 26 public clocks as well as the internal clocks within the City Chambers. Smith of Derby also

respond to call out requests. A call out is usually required when notification is received that a clock displaying an incorrect time, for example. Stockbridge is home to two public clocks, St Stephens Church and at 1 Deanhaugh Street. Over recent years both Stockbridge clocks have been upgraded, with St Stephens having an auto-wind function installed and Deanhaugh Street clock face receiving an LED upgrade.

Public clocks are inspected annually, and a report is issued to identify the current condition of the clock, with recommendations as well as the timescale for any additional work to be completed. However, call outs in between these annual inspections are expected. St Stephens clock was last serviced in October 2023 and Deanhaugh Street in September 2023. Various actions have been put in place to try and reduce the likelihood of the switches being tampered with (such as notices within the clocktower and reminders when inspections take place). Moving forward, officers are working with Smiths of Derby to develop a more sustainable solution to reduce call out frequency by installing alternative switches which can only be turned off by a maintenance engineer. A Council electrician will be undertaking an inspection at both sites to identify any electrical faults.

It can be difficult for the public to know who to contact when they notice a clock at the wrong time or when there is a problem, it is equally difficult for officers to become aware of issues when they aren't reported directly. In the coming weeks, there will be a 'report it' function online via the Council's website where the public will be able to report faults with any of the clocks within the city which will come directly to a dedicated email address (ceccllocks@edinburgh.gov.uk) at the time of reporting. This should reduce the delay in information getting to officers and will ensure call out and response to faults from our contractor are prompt.



Meadows Jawbone Arch (Wards Affected – 11 City Centre, 15 Southside/Newington and 10 Morningside)

Officers have researched, within reason, opportunities for relocation and found no interested parties. This is a reflection of the state of the jawbones and ongoing responsibilities required for safe display and maintenance. These issues were outlined in the August 2023 [report](#).

The recommendation to explore alternative use by artists also hit a buffer as the whale jawbones

are classified as hunted species and therefore protected – artists would not be allowed to sell any work containing such material.

Further dialogue is required with Edinburgh World Heritage which is opposed to the report findings and recommendation, and no final disposal decision will be actioned until those concerns have been discussed in more detail.

Response from the local community has been muted. There was little appetite for a replacement as recommended in the report, and officers will move to suggest the installation of a jawbone arch interpretation panel with (potentially) a surviving section.

Physical Activity and Sports Strategy (Wards Affected - All)

The development of a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy continues to make progress. Pre-consultation engagement work with Council services, key stakeholder groups and equality groups has concluded, and the information gathered has been collated and reviewed.

The public consultation will begin formally in early March and will continue for 12 weeks. Once the public consultation has concluded, the feedback and data will be reviewed, and a draft strategy will be prepared for Committee in the autumn.

Nelson Monument (Wards Affected – 11, City Centre)

Repairs to the mast and timeball in the Nelson Monument are due commence works in February 2024, with works due to be completed by October 2024. As much of the work will be completed offsite, public access will be possible from April 2024.

Phasing of the work will see the design and erection of a scaffold and cover capable of providing the relevant support for the mast and time ball removal and re-fitting, along with the facility to allow any works to be undertaken to any damaged stone etc. on the monument.

Partial removal of the scaffold below the viewing gallery level will allow public access onto the gallery while the infrastructure is removed, repaired and re-installed. The plan is to install a mesh around the scaffold with an image of the underlying monument to reduce the visual impact of the scaffold.

In addition, officers are working on updating the heritage offer, improving the visitor experience and increasing footfall/income once the monument works are complete.

Revamp of Museums and Galleries Website (Wards Affected - All)

A contractor has been identified to undertake a review and redesign of the websites that cover the cultural venues, museums and galleries. Subject to a successful navigation through the digital procurement process (security impact assessments, etc), an appointment will be made in February with a view to bringing the various sites together to provide a more coherent customer

experience for the wider service and provide ticketing and other income opportunities such as donations and retail. Currently, a collection of individual websites is costly in terms of maintenance, hosting and design. The new approach aims to provide a modest saving as well as offering better data about the overall audience profile. Existing digital platforms, such as online ticketing, need to be integrated into the new site architecture. The target date for completion is December 2024.

Future Libraries Strategy and Vision Update (Wards Affected - All)

At its meeting in December, Committee agreed to establish a time limited All Party Oversight Group (APOG) to oversee the development of the Future Libraries Strategy and Vision.

The first APOG meeting took place on 8 January 2024 and was chaired by the Convener of Culture and Communities Committee, with membership including representatives from each political group. The remit of the APOG is to “receive and consider update reports from the service developing the strategy and shall advise, support and inform the work and recommendations as it progresses”. The APOG will meet on a two monthly basis.

The Future Libraries engagement phase was launched by Council Leader Cammy Day and Culture and Communities Convener Val Walker at a site visit to the new MacMillan Hub in the north of the city on 17 January.

Grass Cutting Standards (Wards Affected - All)

The Council is currently considering how to manage and maintain greenspace by adopting a more ecological and wildlife-friendly approach, by reducing the mowing frequency across the city (in parks, greenspaces and highways). This recognises that routine mowing has a negative effect on wildlife, eliminating habitats, reducing the number of pollinators and reducing biodiversity.

Creating ‘Edinburgh’s Flowering Lawns’ recognises that if mowing regimes are relaxed, this encourages a more diverse mix of grass species which in turn supports a wider range of animals and insects. The approach will consider parks, greenspaces and highways on a site by site basis. For highways, this will take account of Health and Safety considerations, particularly maintaining sight lines at junctions and roundabouts.

Five new site categories are proposed:

- Conservation Area - space which is significant for natural conservation (including living landscape sites);
- Nature Corridor/Greenway - green vegetation area along roads, watercourses etc;
- Residential Flowering Lawn Area - greenspace within a residential area but not highly used by the community;
- Community Greenspace - public park or greenspace area near a residential area which is used by community; and

- High Amenity/Recreational Area - multi-purpose, high public use including sport provision.

In 2024, it is proposed to pilot this approach in a small number of sites. This will allow development of the concept, and will help to identify what works and what doesn't. It will also allow time for machinery to be updated, for staff training and for communication on the changes. There will also be a focus on improving the accuracy of the data held and to development of mapping tools to help with planning and future development. A monitoring and evaluation process will also be developed, with outcomes and targets set.

In addition to reducing mowing frequencies, features to improve biodiversity will also be introduced. This will include greater use of wild flowers in grass areas (e.g. use of clover, yellow rattle, common knapweed, must mallow) and increasing the use of pollinator-friendly plants (e.g. field scabious, teasel, meadow cranesbill, cowslip and meadow buttercup) and greater use of perennial plantings and insect encouraging plants within flower and shrub areas.

A report on the outcomes in 2024 will be presented to Committee in autumn/winter 2024.

Bowling Greens at Victoria Park and St Margaret's Park (Wards Affected – 4, Forth and 6, Corstorphine/Murrayfield)

Options for re-purposing the bowling greens and pavilions at Victoria Park and St Margaret's Park (following their return to the Council by Edinburgh Leisure) are currently being developed, with Atkins Realis appointed to develop high level ideas for the spaces. Ideas range from spaces which include café, public toilets, sensory gardens and outdoor education areas to lawn games and fitness areas with social seating elements. This will form the basis of discussions with key stakeholders and the local community.

A first online consultation workshop was undertaken in October 2023 with two major stakeholder groups of Victoria Park, Friends of Victoria Park and Trinity Community Council. The workshop was to gauge the general attitude towards the disused bowling greens and determine what people want the space to become.

A similar workshop with the key stakeholders of St Margaret's Park will take place in February 2024.

Local ward councillors, as well as the community councils for both parks, have been kept informed throughout and are feeding into the consultation process.

A series of public drop-in sessions and targeted workshops for school children, teenage girls and the older community are taking place between 12 February to 8 March. Details of dates and consultation material are available at <https://www.thrivinggreenspaces.scot/>.

The next step will be to analyse the consultation feedback and develop outline proposals. Feedback from key stakeholders and the public will also be sought through online meetings and the Council's consultation portal. Proposals for how to take these schemes forward are expected to be presented to Committee in May.

Timeline

- Victoria Park – Key Stakeholder Initial Consultation: Completed October 2023
- St Margaret's Park – Key Stakeholder Initial Consultation: February 2024 (rescheduled)
- Both parks - Public drop-in sessions and targeted workshops: February to March 2024

- Consideration of feedback: March 2024
- Development of Outline proposals: March 2024
- Report to Committee with recommendations for next steps: May 2024.

Draft Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan 2024 – 2030 Consultation (Wards Affected – All)

The Council's Policy and Sustainability Committee approved the draft Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan for consultation on 15 December. The Plan details how the city must adapt to deal with the shocks and stresses caused by climate change, and includes actions on adapting Edinburgh's cultural sector, increasing the adaptive capacity of venues, events and collections and supporting the climate resilience of Edinburgh's festivals.

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and a Nature Emergency in 2023. A key ambition of Edinburgh's 2030 Climate Strategy was the development of the Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan to continue the process of adapting the city to the impacts of climate change. The Edinburgh Adapts Partnership has led this work on behalf of the city.

The draft Plan has 8 priority themes:

- Planning and the built environment
- Water management and resilience
- Coastal adaptation
- Sustainable transport
- Safeguarding and enhancing our natural environment
- Strong, healthy community and economy
- Building understanding of climate risk
- Governance and risk

A 12-week citywide public consultation on the draft Climate Ready Edinburgh Plan 2023-2030 was launched in mid-January. During the consultation period, a number of engagement exercises will be held, including workshops targeting the city's public, private and third sectors and internal partner workshops to ensure that the actions in the plan assigned to them are correct and align with their organisational priorities.

A final version of the plan will be presented to Policy and Sustainability Committee for approval following the consultation period. The consultation launched on 15 January 2024 and responses can be submitted using the following link: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/climateadapt or using the below QR code.



Signage for Buskers

Wards Affected – 7, Sighthill/Gorgie; 11, City Centre; 15, Southside/Newington

Busking Legislation

Edinburgh welcomes responsible buskers who brighten up the city. However, as reported previously to Committee, it is a challenge to properly manage buskers who do not busk responsibly by adhering to the Council's and Police Scotland's ['Hit the Right Note'](#) busking guidance. Police Scotland have the enforcement powers, but not the resources, to consistently respond to irresponsible busking.

The Convener wrote to the Minister for Local Government Empowerment and Planning in November 2023 seeking his support to amend Section 54 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 to extend the enforcement powers (which are currently only available to Police Scotland, to Local Authorities.

The Minister responded that, while amplification of sound is a source of considerable concern in some areas, it is not of a scale that requires action at national level. His response also references Sections 112-118 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 that provide local authorities with the power to make management rules to regulate the use of, and conduct of persons while on or in, any land or premises which are owned, occupied or managed by the local authority. Under these sections an authorised officer of a Local Authority may expel someone from the land or premises if they have reasonable grounds for believing that a person has, is, or is about to contravene a management rule. Exclusion orders can also be given to a person who has persistently contravened or attempted to contravene management rules. Failing to leave land/premises when required to do so by an authorised officer, or entering if they have been excluded, are criminal offences that are enforceable by Police Scotland.

Officers are considering the option to introduce Management Rules however, while they are currently used in parks and cemeteries, they have never been used for public owned open space (such as pavements or squares). In addition, while authorised Council officers have the power to robustly encourage adherence to Management Rules, if any person fails to follow the instruction of the authorised officer, enforcement must be carried out by Police Scotland.

Extra resources for Street Enforcement would be useful for combatting irresponsible busking, but until the Council has enforcement powers this would be of limited benefit. Even if enforcement powers were granted, any additional resource may not be fully effective without corresponding supportive resource from Police Scotland being made available.

In the interim, employing seasonal staff could help to tackle the issue at peak times, with additional resources deployed at peak times in order to cover both day and back shifts and deal with irresponsible busking at the key times it affects the city's residents and businesses. The cost per annum of a Street and Environmental Enforcement Officer is between £35,444 and £40,359 (including on-costs. An additional four to six people would cost between £141,776 and £242,154 on a full time basis, with costs reduced if seasonal appointments were made.

Advisory Signage

Signage in the form of 'lamp post wraps' advising buskers of the Council's and Police Scotland's

[‘Hit the Right Note’](#) busking guidance, have been well received by residents, responsible buskers, visitors and the business community.

Officers have identified 10 locations initially for ‘lamp post wrap’ or other signage in 2024. The locations identified are:

- High Street
- Hunters Square
- Grassmarket
- Lawnmarket (lamp posts not available for wraps)
- Rose Street
- Telfer Subway
- Bristo Square
- Waverley Bridge
- Mound at National Galleries
- Chambers Street

The cost of signage is circa £13,000 and provides for multiple signs, installation, monitoring, replacement and removal of signs. If deployed, signage (and associated monitoring) would be in place from May to October each year.

Pantosaurus Doing the Round in Edinburgh Libraries (Wards affected – All)

Developed in consultation with children, parents, carers and teachers, Talk PANTS helps children understand their body belongs to them, and they should tell a safe adult they trust if anything makes them feel upset or worried.

At Leith Library’s Bookbug Session, Annie read us all the story ‘Pantosaurus and the Power of PANTS!’. Pantosaurus then met everyone, and even made friends with our little Bookbug mascot! Parents and carers were given Talk PANTS guides to take home, promoting simple conversations to help keep kids safe.

This session was attended by approx. 30 families, and the Talk PANTS team are continuing to visit library locations across our service.



(Wards affected – All)

Council venues such as libraries, community centres, museums and galleries, alongside partner and community spaces, have free activities for a variety of age groups and provide a space where people feel safe, warm, and at ease. The Warm Welcome initiative was relaunched this year in Central Library, in a dedicated space where the Wednesday Knit and Natter and the Friday Film Club meet. Councillor Val Walker, Convenor for Culture and Communities Committee kindly attended the group to welcome the attendees.



Edinburgh Libraries – 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Base Violence (Wards Affected – All)

This campaign is an annual international campaign that began on 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and ran until 10 December 2023 (Human Rights Day). On 5 December 2023, Edinburgh Libraries held special Bookbug sessions celebrating women across history, literature, science and the arts in 10 city libraries. Approximately 150 children and 125 adults attended across the city.



International Visit – FabConnectHer (Future Female Innovators in STEAM) (Wards Affected – All)

FabConnectHer is an ERASMUS project with partners from Leeuwarden (NL), León (ES), Porto (PT), Dundalk (IE) and Reykjavik (IS). The project aims to close the gender gap in STEAM through the creative use of Fab Labs by girls and young women. In Edinburgh, the Council is partnered with the Creative Industries school at Edinburgh College. Feedback from the visit is included in Appendix 1.



Convener

Councillor Val Walker

Members

Councillor Walker (*Convener*)
Councillor Cameron
Councillor Glasgow
Councillor Heap
Councillor McFarlane
Councillor McNeese-Mechan
Councillor Mitchell
Councillor Munro
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International Visit - Feedback Form

Event Title	FabConnectHer 
Event Location	Leeuwarden, Netherlands
Event Organiser	ERASMUS via Learning Hub Friesland
Date (s)	30 November – 1 December 2023
Report by	David Waddell
Purpose of Attending	<p>This was the initial meeting of the FabConnectHer project partners. FabConnectHer is an ERASMUS project with partners from Leeuwarden (NL), Leòn (ES), Porto (PT), Dundalk (IE) and Reykjavik (IS). The project aims to close the gender gap in STEAM through the creative use of Fab Labs by girls and young women. In Edinburgh, the Council is partnered with the Creative Industries school at Edinburgh College. This initial meeting was to meet the project partners, allocate work streams and develop the outcomes for the project.</p>
Key Areas which were particularly useful	<p>Establishing the workstreams and allocating partners with other cities to develop plans.</p> <p>Testing how the project aims can be delivered within Edinburgh, identifying local partners to roll the project out, e.g. through Edinburgh schools? How can we collaborate with the Science Festival and their STEAM projects?</p> <p>Learning from other cities how (or if...) they work with their host local authorities and the role of the city's creative industries in supporting a greater representation in STEAM.</p>
Benefits of attending	<p>As an Associate Partner, Edinburgh will be used as a testing ground for the project outcomes, developing new ways of attracting and retaining girls and young women in STEAM. In Edinburgh, this will have a focus on the Creative Industries.</p> <p>Participation in European projects reinforces Edinburgh's position in Europe and allows partners to collaborate with us who otherwise might not have done.</p> <p>Edinburgh's participation brings value and a different approach to the project as we are the only partnership between a Local Authority and Further Education institute.</p>
Follow up actions	<p>Follow-up meetings to be held with Edinburgh College, the Edinburgh Science Festival and the Council's Creative Learning team to develop implementation plans for Edinburgh.</p> <p>The next partner meeting is in Leòn in May.</p>

Upcoming Exhibitions and Events

Usher Hall, Assembly Rooms and Church Hill Theatre Upcoming Events (Wards Affected: All)

Details of the upcoming events at the Usher Hall can be found here -

<https://www.usherhall.co.uk/whats-on>.

Details of upcoming events at the Assembly Rooms can be found here -

<https://www.assemblyroomsedinburgh.co.uk/whats-on>.

Details of upcoming events at the Church Hill Theatre can be found here -

<https://churchhilltheatre.co.uk/whats-on>:

Recent Events and Activities

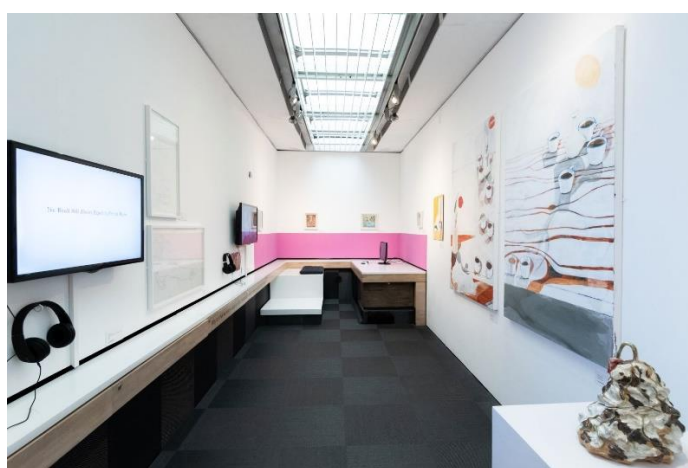
Travelling Gallery (Wards Affected – All)

Travelling Gallery finished 2023 with a successful tour of the Ayrshires, Dumfries and Galloway, and Inverclyde. Bringing our diverse group show, *Take Care*, to Universities, Colleges, Schools, community centres and local High Streets.

Take Care showcased a group of international artists exploring our relationship to the non-human things we care for in an often isolated society, including plants, pets, and baking. As ever, we were humbled by the positive feedback and high level of engagement with the exhibition.



Travelling Gallery exhibition launch on a rainy Calton Hill



Installation view, *Take Care* exhibition, Travelling Gallery

In total, our *Take Care* exhibition visited 19 venues, received 1732 visitors, 776 of which were school pupils. The Travelling Gallery team delivered 83 exhibition talks to various groups.

We're now gearing up for our 2024 tours which will all be themed around The Rural. With the first exhibition launching at the start of March.

Check our website for more information <https://travellinggallery.com/>.

Collections Centre Update (Wards Affected – All)

The Auld Reekie Retold project might be wrapped up but work to inventory and catalogue the collections continues. We have recently recruited five new volunteers to help support the team. We are now delivering on average three public tours a month, and feedback has been positive. In 2023, we have worked on jigsaw puzzles and miniature books from the Museum of Childhood, material from Edinburgh's important printing industry, woodworking tools used in construction of the Forth Rail Bridge and taken over 2000 photographs of collection items.

Filming Shines a Spotlight on Balerno (Wards Affected – 2 Pentland Hills)

Balerno was the star of the show in November 2023 when feature film 'The Fall of Sir Douglas Weatherford' arrived to film key scenes in Main Street. The independent British feature film,

starring Peter Mullan as the guide of a Scottish Highlands visitor centre, chose Balerno Community Centre as the location for the visitor centre, with neighbouring businesses also included: the local hardware store was transformed into a camera emporium, the contents of the store replaced with camera equipment; and the Grey Horse Inn, Balerno Inn and the local chemists saw adjustments to exterior signage.



Filming at Balerno Community Centre (photo by Film Edinburgh, Nov 2023)



Balerno Hardware Store transformed into a Camera Emporium (photo by Film Edinburgh, Nov 2023)

With the Community Centre closed for three weeks to allow for dressing, filming and de-rig, the production hired spaces in the bowling club and church hall to accommodate the activities that were relocated. In total the production spent over £25,000 with local businesses during their time in the community. The film provided full-time employment for 14 Edinburgh-based production practitioners for three months of the autumn. In addition, five new entrants registered with Film Edinburgh were given work experience opportunities and seven trainees through Screen Education Edinburgh were offered the chance to shadow crew.

“The filming in the village has caused much excitement!” reported Dean Park Primary School head teacher. One of the pupils from the primary school was stirred to write to the producers with an idea for a movie. And on the last day of filming, a group of toddlers from the pre-school came out with cards and chocolates for the producers, bringing one of the producers to tears!

Museums and Galleries Learning and Public Programmes Work Update (Wards affected – All)

British Sign Language (BSL) - the final venue digital BSL tour is currently under production, for the Scott and Nelson Monuments. When this has been completed there will be a fully BSL signed tour for each venue on our website [\[link\]](#). Funding is being sought to produce a digital BSL tour for the forthcoming Adam Bruce Thomson exhibition.

School Inclusion Workshops – school workshops have been delivered for seven schools in North Edinburgh, including working on lesson plans in advance due to a large proportion of neuro-diverse children in these groups.

Learning Space – a series of books in community languages has been added to learning spaces in venues. This has been possible due to grant funding by the Old Town Trust.

Windrush Legacies Anthology – the main output created from the Windrush Legacies exhibition has been distributed to every primary and secondary school in Edinburgh.

Visibility Scotland Training Sessions at the City Art Centre (CAC) – these sessions took place in January and are called Positive Outlook. These sessions are for service users to learn skills to self-manage their sight loss in the long term. This includes offering emotional support and

practical advice to patients attending the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion. Plans are in place to deliver Visually Impaired Tours of one of the exhibitions at the CAC and will be used as an example of how sight loss can be managed.

Lauriston Castle Programme - the 2023 Lauriston Castle Public Programme was completed at Christmas with a busy Festive period of workshops. This was the first full programme year since the Pandemic, and was successful in terms of generating income, bringing pre-pandemic audiences back and engaging with new partners and visitors.

CAC Programme - the autumn and winter programmes at the CAC have had a diverse and busy accompanying public and school programme. Almost every event has been fully booked. The current programme continues up until end of February with two keynote Victoria Crowe lectures and a keynote Joan Eardley lecture being fully booked. The lecture programme also focuses on well-known artists like William Gillies, Jon Schueler, and Wilhelmina Barnes-Graham.

Edinburgh College collaboration and Student Fashion Show – the end of the winter programme is marked by the Student Fashion Show. The students this year are exploring sustainable fashion inspired by our exhibition 'Deep Rooted'. The garments they will model in the Public Show at the CAC are the result of this learning. We have also had a series of family sessions exploring Climate Crisis and recycling. In one series of workshops families have studied ancient historical woodlands in the city with an environmental artist and have had the opportunity to plant a tree to take home in a pot. This has linked in with the Million Tree City project.

In Conversation Event - the autumn programme saw a very popular In Conversation Event at the CAC with writer Sir Ian Rankin, marking the 50th anniversary of Makars' Court with a special event talking about his influences from the history of Scottish Literature. It also involved the Makar, Hannah Lavery, and writer Sara Sheridan. This event was recorded for posterity and will be re-used on landmark Scottish Literature Celebratory days.

Libraries Activities and Events (Wards Affected – All)

Book Week Scotland – Edinburgh Libraries celebrated Book Week Scotland across the city, here are some highlights.

Stockbridge hosted local author Barclay Price, with his new book, 'A history of Stockbridge' (including a special mention of Stockbridge Library), and for Bookbug customers, a book display featured local authors and illustrators Debi Gliori, Madeline Pinkerton and Catherine Rayner.

Wester Hailes took some of their youngest readers on an exciting adventure. Groups of under 5s attending Bookbug sessions and visiting the library with their nursery classes joined in a treasure hunt around the library.

Boroughmuir High School were delighted to have a visit from Rossie Stone of Dekko Comics to deliver a workshop to 14 S2 pupils. Rossie spoke about his experiences of Dyslexia when he was at school.

Castlebrae and Drummond High Schools were also part of the Dekko Comic tour, each hosting highly successful events.

Oxgangs hosted local authors group 'Ox Pen Writers' launching their new book title 'Love from Oxgangs: A Drama in 12 Postcards'.

Drumbrae Library recreated Treasure Island, working closely with service users from three weeks to 80 years old. In the middle of the library floor a pirate boat proudly stood, made by the P5-P7 Crafters group, where many library visitors (young and not so young) play, sit and read.



Oxgangs Library, Afghani ladies and families end of year celebration - The Welcoming Association, the Council's Refugee Integration team, and Oxgangs library brought together a multi-generational group of women with their children who are settling in our community, for an end of year celebration at Oxgangs Library. The library provided some Scottish festive food mince pies, shortbread and tablet and a warm cuppa which went down a treat! While their mums were busy, the children used our library resources to read, make art and built with LEGO duplo.

Central Library, celebrating 10 years of community involvement in the West Port Garden - An exhibition ran in the Central Library during November and December 2023 on the West Port Community Garden in Edinburgh. The West Port Garden has recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of local community association [GRASS: The Grassmarket Residents Association](#) taking on its organisation and upkeep.

Central Library exhibition - A Winter exhibition created by Ray Pattie, talented artist and Library Adviser at Central Lending, ran through December and into January and was about "capturing the essence of nature and how important it is to our daily lives," says Ray, who graduated from Edinburgh College of Art with a BA Honours in Painting.



The Digital Team - are continuing their connection with Edinburgh Libraries' twinned library service in Lisalmi, Finland by starting a new monthly exchange of text and images for sharing with our readers on social media.

Unicorn's Galore with Living Knowledge Network Partnership – Realms of Imagination - The unicorn crafting fun continues in our libraries, as part of Edinburgh Libraries' contribution to the Living Knowledge Network current exhibition theme of Fantasy: Realms of Imagination.

Currie Library hosted a whole day of unicorn themed activities including a special Bookbug with crafts galore.

At Sighthill Library children have been decorating loads of unicorns ready to send to Central Library for the 'Blessing of Unicorns' exhibition next year and they had a fantastic display of unicorn themed reading suggestions.

At Oxgangs Library, everyone had great fun at Tiger Tales reading fantastical stories about unicorns and making fabulous unicorn masks!

Stockbridge Library hosted unicorn mask making craft activity with their craft table was turned into woodland with paper trees!



Birds of Feathers drawing workshop and author event - Stockbridge hosted an illustrator, storyboarding artist and a writer, for a creative drawing workshop. Children and families were encouraged to think about the birds they find in Edinburgh and the birds they have found in their countries/cities of heritage or origin.



Edinburgh Libraries – Mobile Libraries - Our mobile service took part in the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) photo competition for Mobiles Awareness Day. Our service visited Juniper Green Nursery. And the photo won first place!



Our Winning Entry!

Volunteer celebration thank you for Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) and Macmillan Cancer Care - Edinburgh Libraries are privileged to have volunteers who give up their time for our service users. We hosted a small gathering of RVS volunteers in Central Library Boardroom for a small thank you Christmas Party.

Author Event @ Gilmerton - Tom Woods came to Gilmerton Library to talk about his new book Ruxton. Tom is a former Detective inspector, who was involved in the world end murder case in Edinburgh.



Christmas @ Gilmerton - The run up to Christmas was celebrated with two Christmas films showings and four craft events, with some very excited attendees.



Morningside library – Greek Storytelling sessions - This is bilingual storytelling session, puppet show and craft event. The aim is to provide a monthly activity concentrating on literacy and language skills. One that would offer something for the Greek community in Morningside but also a chance to expose children to other languages and cultures at a young age.

