

Get up and go with 2011

Yes it's January, the month of the credit card bill, the tax bill and other doom and gloom. But here at The Edinburgh Reporter we have no time for standing still and feeling sorry for ourselves.

So let's look forward to the year ahead and decide now a few of the things that we can all do to cheer ourselves up, help some of the organisations in Edinburgh and also make this city a better place to live and work.

Volunteer for a charity. There are loads of them. Whether or not you are in employment it might help you add to your CV and introduce you to something new. Have a look at this [website](#) for inspiration. Biodiversity Volunteer, Library Volunteer, Visual merchandiser, volunteer tutor – the list is really endless and the benefit to you might be priceless.

Join a gym. But really join it. Don't just pay for the membership and then forget to go after the end of January. We also recommend that you try out British Military Fitness ([BMF](#)). They have classes in a few locations in Edinburgh's parks. Yes that's right you exercise outside in the fresh air for an hour at a time, and are instructed on what to do by ex-military personnel. It is hard work but very rewarding.

Here's video to whet your appetite!

Enrol your company in the [Bike to Work](#) scheme which is a tax efficient way for employees to use bikes to get to work. You can save half the cost of buying a bike. (But please, please have showers installed in your office building too...)

Buy a membership for Edinburgh Zoo. According to reports the zoo is in some financial danger. Until 8th January the cost of a ticket for the Zoo is £5 per person. But otherwise you can

get a membership by applying [here](#) and you will be able to go four times this year to the Zoo by which time your membership will have paid for itself. You can also use your membership to go to the Highland Wildlife Park and you can skip the queues at the gate! Have a look at what you might see of the Budongo Trail webcam [here](#). Or if you are already fit from going to the gym you could enrol in the Edinburgh Half Marathon and run for the Zoo – see [our article here](#).

You can help Lothian Buses keep their lovely buses on the road by buying a [Ridacard](#) for the bus – but actually Lothian Buses and other transport companies could it be a bit more like an Oyster card? It would make it so much easier to use the buses – could it be integrated with Lothian and First as well as the Aircoach – oh and could the trains form part of it somehow too?

Stop using plastic bags completely this year. Italy has just banned these completely. Perhaps we could start with our capital city? We are already aware that it costs us to use the bags in all our large supermarkets. All we have to do is carry a little fold-up bag in our pockets when we go out and bingo – no need for any plastic bags. If you need convincing of the environmental impact of all this plastic then look at this – [The Great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch](#) – and if that is not enough then watch this video! Who is to say that the plastic bag that you have used does not end up there? Apparently the average plastic bag is used for 12 seconds.... And of course not to be outdone the Atlantic is getting its own garbage patch according to this report in [The Independent](#).

Recycle your food waste. You can read our [earlier article](#) about the Kitchen Canny project which Changeworks are running. This involves keeping a separate caddy for food waste which would allow you to measure how much food you throw out in a week. But as well as that there is a food waste service

which is planned by the council to help cut the cost of landfill. The Council say:-

“The new strategy will work towards increasing recycling in Edinburgh to 75% by 2020.

We are launching two new schemes in 2011 to encourage people to recycle more waste:

- Residents will be able to recycle plastic bottles using kerbside recycling services early in 2011.
- A new pilot scheme will be introduced in Spring 2011 to collect food waste from 20,000 households in the city centre and east areas of Edinburgh.

The pilot will cover a variety of housing types to test the service before food waste collection becomes available to around 250,000 houses in the rest of the city.

We will also hold consultations with residents in the World Heritage area to look at waste services which best suit the property types and preferences.

As we introduce more opportunities to recycle across the city, particularly for households with kerbside collections, less waste for landfill will be produced.”

✘ And there are many free things to do in Edinburgh. The National Museum of Scotland is one big favourite on our list, especially now that they have Jackie Stewart’s car in the entrance hall.

To find out what else you can get up to then you can watch out for our weekly What’s on feature which is published every Monday morning. Otherwise we plan a new weekend feature each week the first instalment of which should be ready tomorrow. Also there is The List, Edinburgh Spotlight, Informed Edin.... Any others? Let us know!