

Five things you need to know today



Edinburgh is certified a Fair Trade city – Edinburgh shops buck national trend – Nuisance calls campaign – The Soundhouse – STV Edinburgh

It is official. Edinburgh has been designated as a Fair Trade City, and now has the certificate to prove that this has been the case for the last ten years. The Lord Provost, the Rt Hon Donald Wilson accepted the certificate yesterday in a short ceremony on the High Street. Rachel Farey, Chair of Edinburgh Fair Trade City Group presented the certificate to represent the hard work carried out over a number of years to ensure that the city promotes Fair Trade items across the capital.

Ms Farey said afterwards:-“Achieving 10 years of Fairtrade City status for Edinburgh is a great success story and recognises the hard work put in by countless volunteers across the city. Faith groups, schools, universities, shops, businesses, campaigners, politicians, counsellors and voluntary organisations have all worked together to raise the profile of Fair Trade in Edinburgh. Encouraging everyone to purchase an everyday Fair Trade item such as tea, coffee, bananas or craft products has helped to lift thousands of people out of poverty in the developing world.

“In 2003 Mark Lazarowicz MP and others first met to instigate the idea of forming a group to make this happen and by March 2004 the status of Fairtrade City was achieved for the first time. Working with established Edinburgh fair trade companies like Equal Exchange and One World Shop and with strong grassroots support we were building on strong foundations and it has grown rapidly from there.

“The steering group meets regularly and organises public events, lectures and family activities with farmers and producers from overseas telling us first hand just how much

fair trade has made a difference in their lives and in their communities.

“Fairtrade status is organised by the Fairtrade Foundation in London and sets criteria for villages, towns and cities based on the size of the population. We have to submit detailed renewal forms and evidence each year in order to gain renewal status.”

The Lord Provost said:-“There’s still time to nominate for the Lord Provost’s Fair Trade Awards 2014. Now in their eighth year, the [awards](#) recognise the difference that residents, businesses and schools make in promoting fair trade in Edinburgh.

“I am inviting [nominations](#) in four categories: Achievement Award; Newcomer Award; Faith Community Award; and Fair Trade Schools Award. The closing date is next Friday, 24 January.

“All those nominating will be entered in a draw to win a Family ticket for Edinburgh Zoo or the Highland Wildlife Park, courtesy of fair trade supporters, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland.

“The awards will be presented at a special ceremony in City Chambers on Monday 24 February, the start of Fairtrade Fortnight 2014. I am very proud of Edinburgh’s long-standing commitment to fair trade and these awards provide us with an excellent opportunity to praise the generous contribution individuals and businesses are making to fair trade throughout the city.

“Have a think about where you shop or where you eat and whether that business or organisation promotes fair trade – and, if so, get nominating!”

Councillor Frank Ross, Economy Convener, commented on an increase in footfall figures for December in Edinburgh for the same time the year before.

[“Despite recent media coverage](#) about retail sales in Scotland and the UK, early indications show retailers in Edinburgh have bucked the national trend and had a bumper Christmas as footfall in Edinburgh was up by 7.6 per cent in December and in Princes Street by 16.8 per cent on the same time last year.

“Although, the official sales figures will not be finalised for a few weeks, early indications are that both retail and hospitality sectors traded well through December. For retail, this was especially toward the end of the month where I am informed there was a late burst of Christmas shopping leading into a strong sales period.”

Edinburgh’s Liberal Democrat MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Nuisance Calls, Mike Crockart, will continue his campaign against nuisance calls during a debate in the House of Commons.

During his speech, Mike will build on the recommendations of the APPG on Nuisance Calls’ report and push the Government to take action in the following areas: the way consent is given and used, the threshold of proof which the ICO needs to prove in order for them to take enforcement action, encouraging the industry to act responsibly and protecting vulnerable consumers.

The debate was selected by the Backbench Business Committee after representations made by Mike and his fellow Co-Chair Alun Cairns MP.

Commenting on the debate, Mr Crockart said:-“Today and every other day this year, over 2 million nuisance calls and texts will be made causing annoyance to some but distress and

financial harm to others.

“The pressure has been building for the last few months with the launch of reports from my All Party Group and the Culture Media and Sport Select Committee. We’ve done the work. We’ve established the facts. It’s now down to Government to act. 2014 will be the year they are judged on that action.”

The Soundhouse Organisation which is as yet a virtual music venue has been awarded [charitable status](#) and will be starting some serious fundraising very soon.

Meantime they will be hosting some of the overspill from Celtic Connections at the House @42 including Cera Impala and the New Prohibition Band on Friday, Jenny Ritter on Sunday 19 January and the Jim Snidero Band on Tuesday 21 January 2014.

So how do you get an invitation to the House? Douglas Robertson explains:-

“You are welcome to join us for any of these musical evenings, but please bring your own drink. There is no entry fee here, but we do ask that our guests give a donation to the musicians (£10 is the usual amount). As you know, every penny that we raise goes direct to the musicians. Music starts at 8pm (doors open at 7.30pm).

Email: 42music42@musician.org YouTube: [houseconcerts42](#)”

STV Edinburgh have highlighted something for you to get up to on Friday evening. They suggest you go along to Summerhall and get involved in the disco on skates in the Dissection Room! 80s music will complete the scene.

If you haven’t downloaded the STV Edinburgh app then you can do so [here](#). It is a kind of live blog of what is happening in

the city each day and a good read!