

Five things you need to know today



Cyclist injured on Morrison Street

Mardi Gras today!

New look for street cleaners

Airport sponsoring Jazz Festival

Blind people swap places with bus drivers


A cyclist was injured in a collision with a lorry yesterday afternoon causing the closure of Gardner's Crescent for some time.

The cyclist was taken to hospital after being treated for his injuries at the scene.

The Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival has begun and today at a variety of venues there will be lots of free music!



An army of street cleaners have taken to Edinburgh's streets to join the city's fight against litter.

 Stepping into their uniforms for the first time, the team of 30 gathered in Princes Street Gardens to blitz street clutter.

The new staff are some of the 75 street cleaners recruited to

help tackle the issue of litter in Edinburgh over the city's busy summer months.

Armed with litter pickers and bin bags they will patrol the city centre and other popular locations throughout July and August, cracking down on problem areas.

Additional resources will help the City of Edinburgh Council deal with the massive influx of visitors during the summer months, particularly August, thanks to a packed festival programme and world-class attractions.

With an increase in population and more people spending time outdoors during the warmer weather, litter and overflowing bins can be a visible issue in Edinburgh's streets, parks and open spaces.

Environment Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, said: "Summer is a fantastic time for Edinburgh and I look forward to welcoming the thousands of people who are set to enjoy the capital.

"However, there is no doubt the influx of tourists and other members of public making the most of the city have an impact on our surroundings.

"That's why it's essential that we focus resources on keeping the streets clean and tidy for both residents and visitors, and I'm sure our new cleaning force will do a great job."

Dedicated staff will cover areas like Princes Street Gardens, Calton Hill and Regent Road Park, while additional street cleaners will be deployed to parts of the south of the city, including the Pleasance, Tollcross and the Meadows.

They will also work with the Fringe Society to target problem spots on the High Street, as well as liaising with businesses to resolve the problem of overflowing trade waste bins.

In addition to an increase in street cleaners, the Council will be adding extra litter bins around the city to cope with the anticipated rise in rubbish. Among these will be a batch of extra large bins, to be located in areas like George Street, Waterloo Place and the foot of Calton Hill, plus a further 25 super-sized bins for placement in popular locations such as Portobello Promenade and the Meadows.

But while the Council is committed to providing sufficient resources to help ensure the world's favourite festival city runs smoothly over summer, the public have also been urged to take pride in their surrounds.

For the second year in a row, Edinburgh Airport is getting musical as a proud sponsor of the city's Jazz and Blues Festival which starts this weekend.

To help launch the festival, the airport gave passengers a musical treat in the shape of a 12-piece Italian brass band called BANDA KADABRA yesterday afternoon which entertained thousands of people travelling through the terminal with some foot-stamping Latino jazz beats.

The band played a fantastic three-hour live set in the airport's terminal this morning, giving passengers a taste of what they can expect at this year's festival which runs until 27 July.

It's the second year in a row that Edinburgh Airport has sponsored the festival and reinforces the airport's commitment to supporting a wide range of cultural and community events in and around the capital.

As well as being a major sponsor of the Royal Highland Show, the airport remains very active in supporting local organisations through its Community Fund which awarded almost £100,000 to deserving causes in 2013.

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, said: "This is always a really exciting time of year as our city comes alive with music, dance, art and comedy. As a big jazz fan I'm very happy we could give our passengers a taste of what the city has to offer over the next few weeks. There really is something for everyone.

"We're delighted to be supporting the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival again this year and encourage everyone to experience Edinburgh when it's at its very best."

Fiona Alexander, Producer of the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival, said: "We're very happy to be partnering with

Edinburgh Airport for a second year. We have hundreds of performers coming through the airport for concerts across Edinburgh from 18-27 July, and it's fantastic to know they are so warmly received."




A group of blind and partially sighted young people swapped places with bus drivers in Edinburgh to demonstrate the barriers they face when travelling on buses.

The event marked the launch of a UK-wide campaign fortnight of action to make bus services more accessible to people with sight loss by the charity RNIB.

The young people, members of the charity's 'Haggeye' youth forum, met with drivers at Lothian Buses' Annandale Street depot in Edinburgh so each can get a better appreciation of the difficulties faced.

A RNIB survey of blind and partially sighted people revealed a number of barriers:

- * 9 in 10 people with sight loss cannot see an approaching bus in time to hail it
- * 8 in 10 people with sight loss say they miss the bus they want
- * 6 in 10 people said buses which stopped away from the official bus stop caused them to often miss their bus or step off the bus into hazards such as bins and lampposts
- * Over half of respondents said they had difficulty obtaining spoken information from the driver such as the bus number and destination.

 Drivers, wearing specially darkened glasses to mimic sight loss conditions, tried tasks such as boarding a bus and paying for a ticket, experiencing first-hand the barriers their blind and partially sighted customers face when

travelling.

Katrina Thomson (21) from Hawick said: "Living in the Borders and having a visual impairment, I rely on buses to get around. I find it easier to get a bus from one of the main stops as it is hard to see them coming otherwise and to flag them down. Reading timetables at the bus stop is also a problem as they are usually in tiny writing. So I tend to rely on my phone and the internet."

Older users experience the same problems. Derek Macdonald (75) from Morningside in Edinburgh has the eye condition macula degeneration. "I rely on buses all the time to get around but can't see the number until the bus arrives at the stop," he said. "However, Lothian drivers do always call out the number to me when they see I have a white symbol cane. Members of the public are very helpful but usually busy, and without the drivers telling me the bus number I would be quite lost."

Natalie Doig, campaigns officer with RNIB, said: "Being able to travel easily is key to taking part in society. For people with sight loss, their local bus service can be a lifeline for getting to work, to the shops and for keeping up with family and friends. If you are unable to drive or cycle, and can't afford taxis, the bus is the only way of getting around."

"We were pleased to launch our 'Stop for Me, Speak to Me' bus campaign fortnight of action in Scotland with the young people from Haggeye and Lothian Buses."

Ian Craig, chief executive officer of Transport for Edinburgh, said: "We are delighted to be able to play our part in breaking down the barriers that prevent people from travelling, and that's why we're right behind this campaign."

"We work hard at Lothian Buses to make our buses as accessible as possible, for all passengers. Our newest buses all have next stop information announcements on screen and in audio."

Join the RNIB campaign. If you think blind or partially sighted people shouldn't be left behind at bus stops visit www.rnib.org.uk/bus or call RNIB's campaigns hotline on 020 7391 2123.

Our photo today was taken from Camera Obscura and World of Illusions – thank you for the use of your roof terrace!