

Cardownie hands over the baton

✘ Councillor Steve Cardownie has tonight given up his position as Group Leader and Deputy Council Leader at the SNP Group AGM, when he did not seek reelection.

Cardownie is staying on as representative for the Forth Ward, but he admits that the old saying 'I want to spend more time with my family' really does apply to him. He wants to be able to spend more time with his 10 year-old son, and hopes that by taking a backbench role he will be able to do just that.

But the councillor also told The Edinburgh Reporter tonight: "I will of course be seeking some employment elsewhere, but I felt it was time to hand over to someone else. I have had a good kick of the ba'! "

Councillor Sandy Howat will take over as Group Leader. Councillor Howat represents Meadows and Morningside Ward.

Council Leader Andrew Burns said: "At a personal level, I've really enjoyed working with Steve, and will be sorry to see him return to the SNP backbenches. Politics is though a pretty rough trade, and internal change does sometimes happen.

"Most crucially, despite any changes at an individual level, the local Labour/SNP Coalition will continue; as we collectively understand the importance of continuity and stability for Scotland's Capital City.

"And I do now look forward to working with Sandy, who I've known well since 1996/7, and both of our Groups continue to have every intention of ensuring this unique Coalition remains in place right through to May 2017. Our Coalition-agreement remains completely unchanged, and our focus remains on doing what is best for Edinburgh."

Councillor Richard Lewis will take over as Festivals Champion which involves being at all the launch events of the festivals that the council supports, as well as ensuring that the council face is put on all the cultural events that take place across the city from the fireworks to Edinburgh's Christmas.

The SNP Group hold their AGM in March but other groups hold theirs later in the year in May.