

Five things you need to know today



More recycling than ever across Scotland

Scottish Greens to have their own trade union group

More Scots living longer

Keep Scotland Beautiful

Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year

Less than half of Scotland's household waste was sent to landfill in 2014 – the first time it's ever dipped below the 50 per cent mark.

Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead has hailed the achievement as a 'significant milestone' but made clear that further improvements are needed from councils to meet recycling targets.

New figures published today by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) also show a slight increase in Scotland's recycling rate – reaching 42.8 per cent in 2014 – whilst the total amount of household waste generated that year was 2.46 million tonnes. That's a drop of 18 per cent since 2007 when 3 million tonnes of household waste were generated.

And although 2014 saw more councils recycling the majority of their household waste, less than half of local authorities managed to achieve 50 per cent.

The Environment Secretary said: "For the first time, Scotland has sent less than half of its household waste to landfill – a significant milestone as we journey to becoming a zero waste

nation. In 2007, almost two thirds of Scotland's household waste ended up in landfill so today's figures are great news for the environment and highlight the progress being made.

"The 12 of Scotland's 32 councils that have met or exceeded 50 per cent recycling, and those that have substantially improved their performance, are to be congratulated. They have set a benchmark and other authorities must now follow that lead.

"The Household Recycling Charter the Scottish Government is working with local authorities to develop should help achieve this. Bringing in consistent practices across Scotland should also make it easier and less confusing for people to recycle potentially valuable materials including paper, card, glass, plastics and food waste.

"We are also consulting on how best to make the most of valuable materials by creating a more circular economy."

Iain Gulland, Chief Executive, Zero Waste Scotland, said:

"It's great that our national recycling rate continues to rise and that our reliance on landfill is at an all-time low. The amount of food waste being recycled has doubled since 2011, showing that many householders have embraced the addition of food waste recycling to their collection services. Over 60 per cent of households now have access to food waste recycling, thanks to our Food Waste Programme which supported local authorities to make the changes.

"While the trends show that a change in mind set is taking hold, and we are recognising that material we once thought of as waste has value as a resource which can create economic opportunity for Scotland, there's still more to be done. Sustaining our good recycling habits, and encouraging others to take them up, is a commitment we can all easily make, with high rewards waiting for Scotland – both economically and environmentally – if we do."

Scottish Greens meeting at their biggest ever party conference on 10 and 11 October at the SECC in Glasgow will launch their own trade union group and have announced Grahame Smith, General Secretary of the STUC, as a keynote speaker.

Membership of the Scottish Greens now stands at 9,000, with consistent polling suggesting Green MSPs will be elected from across Scotland's eight regions at next year's Holyrood election. The Scottish Greens have been tipped to rival the Conservatives as the third largest party at Holyrood.

Sarah Beattie-Smith, Scottish Green MSP candidate for South of Scotland in 2016 and the party's spokesperson on infrastructure, said:

"The Scottish Greens have long had positive relations with Scotland's trade union movement and the launch of our own trade union group shows the importance we attach to workers' rights. Working people need an active trade union movement to represent their interests and tackle exploitation and poor treatment.

"There are challenges and opportunities as we head towards the 2016 election. A strong Green voice is essential so we can resist the anti-trade union legislation coming from the Conservatives at Westminster. And we have huge potential in Scotland to create more and better jobs by investing in sustainable industries and encouraging employers to work more closely with workers and communities."

Other speakers at conference including Green MP Caroline Lucas, food poverty campaigner Jack Monroe and Scotland's former chief medical officer Harry Burns.



The number of people in Scotland living for more than a century continues to grow.

Figures published by the National Records of Scotland estimate that in 2014 there were 910 centenarians living in Scotland.

NRS Chief Executive Tim Ellis said: "The number of people in Scotland aged 100 or more has been steadily rising. Between 2004 and 2014 the numbers rose from 510 to 910, a growth of 78 per cent.

"In 2014 there were 17 male centenarians per hundred female centenarians, an increase from 11 in 2004, reflecting a narrowing of the gap in mortality between men and women for this age group.

"Estimates of the number of people aged 90 to 99 show relatively big increases between 2010 and 2012. This is partly due to births in the years following the First World War being much higher than in the preceding years. The number of births in 1920 was the highest since the introduction of national registration in 1855."

A century ago living to a hundred was very uncommon, but this changed at the beginning of the 21st century when estimates showed there were over 500 people aged 100 years old and over in Scotland. The number of centenarians has been increasing ever since.

The overwhelming majority of centenarians are women. In 2014, women accounted for 780 of Scotland's centenarians (86 per cent) while 130 men had reached the milestone. Although the male population aged 90 to 99 increased from 2013 to 2014, almost three quarters of people in their 90s are women (72 per cent).

Since 2004, the number of centenarians relative to the rest of the population has increased. But there are still less than 2 centenarians for every 10,000 people (1.7 per 10,000).

Within Scotland, South Ayrshire had the highest proportion of centenarians and Clackmannanshire had the lowest. Glasgow City had the highest absolute number of centenarians and Clackmannanshire the lowest.

Keep Scotland Beautiful reminds the public that its Young Reporters Scotland programme is still open for entries. The response following the launch in May has seen young people from 22 local authorities across Scotland register to take part in the competition, but there is time for more submissions which investigate an environmental problem or sustainability issue.

The programme is linked to the international Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) programme which is in operation in over 25 countries. It is coordinated internationally by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and is managed in Scotland by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

Young Reporters Scotland is an exciting opportunity to raise awareness of the sustainability issues young people care about, to tell people about exciting projects happening within their communities and to showcase their creative talents. The programme builds life-changing skills in young people and allows them to be part of an international community taking action and becoming advocates for a sustainable world. It is open to all young people aged 11 to 21, with participation registered through the Keep Scotland Beautiful website. Entries can be in a range of different media, including articles, blogs, videos, animations and photographs. Young people can register to take part either as individuals, through a community group or school.

Derek Robertson, Chief Executive of Keep Scotland Beautiful, said:

“Keep Scotland Beautiful is delighted with the response so far

to this year's Young Reporters Scotland programme call for entries. The investigations of these young people inspire us and help us work with young learners to encourage them to build a deep, rich and connected understanding of climate change and climate justice in a global and local context.

"We want more young people to share their environmental and sustainability knowledge, giving them key skills for living and learning, by submitting an investigation to the competition, so that everyone can learn and raise awareness of these issues in their communities."

Entries are now open for the annual Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year competition.

The photography competition now in its second year celebrates the beauty of Scotland's breathtaking scenery is the brainchild of Fife-based landscape photographer Stuart Low. Building on the success of the inaugural competition, it now boasts an increased prize fund of £14,000 and has attracted new sponsors such as by Academy Class, Caledonian MacBrayne, Calumet Photographic, Fotospeed, Scottish Natural Heritage and Formatt-Hitech. The competition has been timed to coincide with the spectacular colours of the Scottish autumn.

Competition founder, Stuart Low said: *"I'm absolutely delighted that the competition is continuing again this year. The competition is all about promoting photography and tourism, and the inaugural competition has proved to have been a great success. The book we produced is a best seller in the shops and the exhibition of winning images was so popular that they had extended runs at various galleries across Scotland. The exhibitions have been a notable success of the competition.*

"In this day and age we're used to seeing images on a screen, but seeing the winning images printed and hanging on a wall

has seen several of the photographers earn sales and many visitors have been inspired by their work to take up photography too. The exhibitions have also been good for tourism because they've raised the profiles of the places in the images and encouraged tourists to visit these places during their stay. I'm really excited about seeing this year's entries and hoping to build on that success once again."

The competition has been endorsed by VisitScotland, Scotland's national tourism organisation.

Malcolm Roughead, Chief Executive of VisitScotland said: *"We welcome the return of the Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year competition. With over 11,000km of coastline, hundreds of islands, majestic mountains and beautiful canals, rivers and lochs, Scotland's landscape and distinct geography makes for the perfect photographer's playground.*

"From the Scottish Borders to the Shetland Islands, we have a worldwide reputation for our natural beauty which has inspired both photographers and filmmakers alike to come to our shores and take in our spectacular landscapes. They say a picture paints a thousand words and we look forward to seeing 'essays' of wonder from entrants once again."

The competition is open to amateur, professional and young photographers from the UK and overseas. Submissions close on 14 November.

For more information about the competition, go to <http://www.slpoty.co.uk> or email Stuart Low at stuartlow1202@googlemail.com

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