

Lessons from the moon landing could be applied in Edinburgh

By Councillor Scott Arthur Labour councillor for Colinton/Fairmilehad Ward and a member of the council's Transport and Environment committee. Professor Arthur is a member of the The Institute for Infrastructure and Environment and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Heriot-Watt University.

Today marks 50 years since Apollo 11 landed on the moon.

I have been trying to recreate the moon landing in Lego (set 10266) this week. However, the Lego rendering of the moon's surface was not realistic enough, so Edinburgh's Bonaly Drive became my Sea of Tranquillity.

Using the Lego Lunar Module to amplify concerns people in my Ward have about the state of roads and footpaths was perhaps a bit of fun, but it has a serious side to it too as the road in question is in urgent need of remedial work.

I tweeted at the weekend about how I was recreating the moon landing in Lego (set 10266). However, the Lego rendering of the moon's surface was not realistic enough, so Edinburgh's Bonaly Drive became my Sea of Tranquillity. [#Apollo50th pic.twitter.com/MaDAN6JZWb](https://pic.twitter.com/MaDAN6JZWb)

– Cllr Scott Arthur (@CllrScottArthur) [July 16, 2019](#)

I must confess that Project Apollo does have a strange hold over me.

I was born just a few days before Apollo 11 was launched and grew up when it and the other missions were still very much spoken about. In 2017 I visited the Apollo 11 launch site to see another rocket being launched, and really was struck by the scale of what was achieved after JFK said “We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard” in 1963.

When I returned from Florida I read a book by Gene Kranz called “Failure was not an option”. This was not fiction, but it did tell the amazing true story of how around the time I was born in 1969 approximately 400,000 people worked together to build the 2,800 tonne Saturn V rocket that took men to the moon (there were no women astronauts then!).

That book told me that when we work together, we can achieve anything. Potholes don’t need a “Project Apollo”, but tackling poverty and climate change does.

We need to take Apollo’s “For All Mankind” slogan, and use it to challenge humankind to tackle these things – not because they are easy problems, but because they are hard.



Photo Scott Arthur