

A year of change ahead for Edinburgh Leisure

by June Peebles, CEO, Edinburgh Leisure

2020 was memorable (for all the wrong reasons) and 2021 proved to be equally memorable as we continued to navigate our way through this pandemic. Coronavirus just keeps on giving...

However, it's important we stay focused on to the positives in life. For me this includes: the success of the vaccine roll out, the support Edinburgh Leisure has received from the City of Edinburgh Council, the support we've received from our customers and that we've been able to re-open, and keep open, our venues and services.

We did introduce a number of operational changes in response to COVID-19 and the associated Government guidance. All of the changes were to keep our customers and employees safe. However, I'm also aware that some of the changes have resulted in some customers finding it more challenging to access our services. And that's the last thing I want. My apologies go to those customers who have been adversely affected by the changes, along with my assurance that we are continuing to look at how we can improve things (without compromising on safety).

Amidst all the changes, what's not changed is our commitment to support as many people as possible to be active and have a great Edinburgh Leisure experience. We operate over 50 sport and leisure venues (including community access to the sports facilities in the City Council's high schools) across the city but we're so much more than our venues.

Through our services and activity programmes we use the power of physical activity and sport to support people affected by: disabilities, health conditions, poverty, and inequalities to combat the effects of inactivity and improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life. Making a positive impact on people's lives is at the heart of what we do – and it takes a very special team of people to make this happen.

Throughout 2021 we've faced resourcing issues and our building projects have been beset with delays due to COVID-19 and supply chain issues and it's a similar story throughout the country. Looking ahead to 2022, as with COVID-19, I'm not expecting these issues to resolve themselves quickly. We must continue to adapt and respond as best we can to the numerous challenges that come our way and which we have no control over. And we will also continue to look for opportunities to improve what we do and support even more people to be active.

Like me I know many of you are eagerly awaiting the re-opening of Warrender Swim Centre after refurbishment and the new Meadowbank Sports Centre. Unfortunately, there continues to be uncertainty around the completion dates for both projects. We will confirm opening dates as soon as possible. The wait will be worth it!

Here's to a healthier new year. Stay active, stay healthy and discover the positive benefits of physical activity. And remember – we will get through this!

