

Freedom of the City proposed for Ukrainian President and Kyiv Mayor

**When The City of Edinburgh Council
meets on Thursday it will be the
final meeting of the current
administration and councillors will
use the platform to send their
support to Ukrainians and
condemnation to Russia.**

The all party proposal is to grant the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh to the Mayor of our twin city Kyiv, and to the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, recognising the Russian invasion in to the country, and the heroic response from both men and the Ukraine.



The Granton Gasometer has been lit up in the Ukrainian colours by students at Edinburgh College PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Council Leader Adam McVey said: “We all stand shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people in fighting this oppressive Russian regime and we will do everything we possibly can to support them.

“Following the city summit I hosted with the Depute Leader last week, with the Acting Consul General for Ukraine and local community leaders, we are now setting out a series of steps we can take together as a city.

“As part of this, we’re bringing forward Motions to ask Councillors to stand with us in condemning Putin’s tyranny, and intend to offer the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh to the President of Ukraine and Mayor of Kyiv. By remaining in Kyiv, they are fighting side-by-side with their citizens against the Russian invasion, in a true defence of their nation. This is not just in recognition of their own leadership and bravery, but the bravery of all Ukrainians

battling for their nation.

“With members’ agreement, we will write to the Home Office encouraging unrestricted refugee visas and local working to source host families to house refugees, with a focus on those with cultural and language understanding to best support unaccompanied children.

“The experiences of those fleeing their homes and their country is heart-breaking and we are looking at how we can help those who seek refuge, but we also need the Home Office to outline a plan.”



Council Leader Adam McVey at Granton Gasometer when it was first lit up in the Ukrainian colours PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter

Depute Leader Cammy Day said: “Edinburgh has a strong Scottish-Ukrainian population and many of us have heard stories from local friends and family members about the atrocities people in Kyiv and across Ukraine are facing. We pride ourselves on the warm welcome we offer to those in

desperate need of our help and I hope we can drive forward support for refugees.

“The outpouring of grief and support from Edinburgh people has been incredible and we won’t stop flying the Ukrainian flag until the war is brought to an end. The [Granton gasholder](#) being lit up is yet another symbol of our solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

“We want to show our admiration for the outstanding leadership of the President and of the Mayor of our twin city, Kyiv. They are standing by their constituents and their country and heroically leading Ukraine’s response to invasion.

“Parties of all colours have already told us they agree – the Freedom of the City is the highest civic honour we can offer Mr Zelensky and Mr Klitschko – and if confirmed with a formal vote next week we will be able to take this forward.”



Cllr Cammy Day, Depute Council Leader, at Granton Gasometer when it was first lit up in the Ukrainian colours PHOTO ©The Edinburgh Reporter

Both Motions will be raised by the Council Leaders on Thursday, following a [City Summit](#) held last week with the Acting Consul General of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Church in Edinburgh, Police, ETAG and the University of Edinburgh to drive forward Edinburgh's efforts.

The Council has already supported the [Gas holder in Granton to be lit up blue and yellow](#) and is flying the Ukrainian flag from the City Chambers. The Lord Provost has also written to the Mayor of Kyiv outlining Edinburgh's deepest sorrow for events, and the Council is reviewing all investments and contracts for Russian ties.

The motions will read as follows:

"Joint award of Freedom of the City of Edinburgh on the Mayor of Kyiv and President of Ukraine:

"Commend the outstanding leadership of the Mayor of our twin City, Kyiv and the President of Ukraine who has remained in Kyiv to fight against the Russian invasion.

"Notes the heroism of the Ukrainian people, led by their President, members of parliament and Mayors from across the Country in fighting side-by-side to defend their nation.

"Agrees to confer the Freedom of the City of Edinburgh on Vitali Klitschko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy in recognition of the above."

The second motion reads:

Council condemns the horrific and illegal attacks on the Independence of Ukraine, their people, and their homes. Council also commends the Ukrainian people for their heroic defence of their land in fighting the illegal invasion.

Council agrees to withdraw all support and cooperation and any future invitations to the Russian Consulate with immediate effect.

Council agrees to write to the Russian Ambassador, advising that the Russian Consul is no longer welcome in our city and wrote to the UK Foreign Office to requests the expulsion of Russian diplomatic staff from the City of Edinburgh.

Notes the Lord Provost has written to the Mayor of Kyiv, expressing our support and further meetings have taken place between the Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Lord Provost, City partnership and the Ukrainian acting Consul, along with local Ukrainian community leaders.

Further agrees to:

Ban all Russian arts and cultural events and performances in the City in Council-owned venues and encourage other venues in the City to do the same.

Write to the Home Office encouraging unrestricted refugee visas and locally working to source host families to house refugees, with a focus on those with cultural and language understanding to best support unaccompanied children, families and individuals.

Agrees to allocate up to £100,000 to help coordinate local efforts of humanitarian aid with the Edinburgh Partnership to maximise supplies to Ukraine and local infrastructure to facilitate donations and transport supplies to distributions centres in Poland and other locations.

Agrees to write to the MOD to request access to unused temporary accommodation for those travelling to Edinburgh from Kyiv and wider Ukraine in the knowledge that those people will overwhelmingly want to return to their Country when the war is over.

Agrees officers will continue preparations to make sure that schools are prepared to continue children's education who are coming to Edinburgh.