

Councillors in Edinburgh remember the Queen at special meeting

The Rt Hon Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge said on Friday that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has left the capital for the final time – but the city remains in mourning for “a relentless and gentle force for peace and good will”.

Councillors gathered for a special meeting to pay tribute to the late monarch who died at her estate at Balmoral last week.

In the chamber members took the opportunity to reflect on their memories of meeting the Queen, honour her lifelong links with Edinburgh – and to thank council staff for their role in ceremonial events hosted by the city over the last week.

A minute’s silence was followed by a sole item of business to ‘give thanks for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth’s exceptional 70 years’ service and extend deepest sympathy to the Royal Family at this very difficult time’.



A proclamation was read by The Lord Lyon King of Arms Joseph Morrow at the Mercat Cross PHOTO '2022 The Edinburgh Reporter The Lord Provost led the tributes, telling members that the

former sovereign's dedication to service was "unmatched".

He said: "Her Majesty the Queen has now left Edinburgh for the final time but the city remains in respectful mourning – and rightly so – for a head of state who will be judged by history as one of the most influential world leaders of our time and as a relentless and gentle force for peace and good will nationally and internationally.

"The Queen was a role model, showing that a hugely talented woman in a male dominated world can and did outshine anyone – a true inspiration I hope for women and girls in this city and far beyond."

Cllr Aldridge added that huge crowds turning out to events held to mark her death, which included a procession up the Royal Mile on Monday, were a "clear demonstration that Edinburgh wished to do the very best for the Queen and her grieving family".



HM The Queen, Edinburgh, 12th Sept 2022

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In a sombre address to members, Depute Lord Provost Lezley Marion Cameron praised Queen Elizabeth's "humility and faith".

She said: "The loss of the former HRH Princess Elizabeth who became on marriage also the Duchess of Edinburgh until her accession as Queen Elizabeth is keenly felt, as events in recent days have shown.

"On becoming Queen in 1952 Her Majesty became patron of the Edinburgh International Festival and remained its patron until December 2016. From its being awarded Royal Patronage in 1977 on her Silver Jubilee, up until her passing the Queen served as patron of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra."



Frank Ross former Lord Provost Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam
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Former Lord Provost Frank Ross said: "It's not that long ago that we convened a special council meeting to commemorate the life of a member of the Royal Family – the Duke of Edinburgh following his passing. And now we do so again too quickly for

our late monarch.

“During my five-year tenure as Lord Provost the Queen visited Edinburgh on many occasions and graced us with her presence at major events, not least on the occasions of the state opening of parliament and to commemorate the opening of the Queensferry Crossing – some 53 years after opening the Forth Road Bridge.”

Cllr Ross said one of his favourite memories was when the Queen visited Gorgie Community Farm, remembering “the joy that her presence gave to those involved in that much-loved community project”.

As well as offering condolences to the Royal Family, Council Leader Cammy Day, Labour, said the events held in Edinburgh in the aftermath of the monarch’s passing have “seen the city shine across the world and in many of our front rooms”.

“The city has never looked so good and a perfect place for Her Majesty’s final resting place at Westminster Abbey,” Councillor Day added.

“This was a moment in history and Edinburgh’s people did us proud.”

In his tribute, SNP group leader Adam McVey described the Queen’s 70-year tenure as “an attainment that is almost incomprehensible”.

“It is hard to grasp the dedication to someone’s work, someone’s ethos, someone’s commitment to their country and the position that it takes to sustain that level of enthusiasm,” he added.

“I know many in the city will feel the passing of the Queen is like losing what has been a constant in their entire life and regardless of anyone’s constitutional view, today is a day simply to offer condolence for a life of devotion.”

He said the Queen was “devoted” to the city but added he “flinched ever so slightly” when she was referred to as Queen Elizabeth II at the new King’s proclamation in Edinburgh.

“Of course in Scotland she was Queen Elizabeth I, but simply Queen of Scots,” Cllr McVey said. “She carried out, dare I say, a distinctly Scottish tradition of the role and respected the distinctiveness of the distinctive position of being Queen of Scots rather than just Queen of the UK.”



Cllr Kevin Lang Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Meanwhile Kevin Lang, leader of the Liberal Democrat group, recalled a meeting with Her Majesty at Holyrood Palace alongside other councillors – and an excited dog.

“I was placed in the line next to Councillor Derek Howie. Now for those who don’t know Derek he is blind so he always attended meetings and events with his guide dog, in this case his guide dog Lloyd.

“When she reached Councillor Howie, Lloyd the dog took something of a liking to Her Majesty and began to intervene in a way that no rehearsal of this ceremony could have been anticipated.

“Her Majesty, of course, found this utterly hilarious and as a dog lover herself, inevitably the memory of that day was not the pomp, was not the ceremony, but was a 10 year-old Labrador.”

Green councillor Alys Mumford offered “love to anybody affected by the death of the Queen”, whilst also sending “our love and solidarity to anyone who has felt alienated by the events in the city over the past week”.

She said: “While we as a party hope one day for a Scotland without a monarchy, we recognise the impact that the Queen has had on our country and the very dear place she held in the hearts of many.

“With the daily struggles that so many in Edinburgh are facing, we know some people have felt disconnected to the ceremonial aspect of the city’s response to the Queen’s passing, and in particular are fearful for the future following the suppression of protest that we have seen outside this very building.”

Iain Whyte, Conservative group leader, said he was nine-years-old when he first saw the Queen on her visit to the capital.

“It was 1977 and she was here for her Silver Jubilee tour. I remember in advance the excitement of preparing jubilee celebrations at school and being given a silver painted London bus,” he said. “But the real highlight was being taken by my parents to join the throngs of people who simply wanted to see her pass as she left the city by car.

“I can tell you that when the Queen waves in your direction when you’re nine, you certainly believe that wave was meant

for you.”

Cllr Whyte added: “The Queen’s 70-year reign has proven constant and enduring – she provided the country with a sense of permanence and stability, helping so many through some difficult periods.

“Scotland and Edinburgh always played an important role in the Queen’s life and that of her family.

“Lord Provost I support your motion, God Save the King.”

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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12th September 2022 Edinburgh – Her Majesty The Queen’s coffin was taken from St Giles Cathedral to Edinburgh Airport to be flown to London.

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