

St John and the City volunteer fundraiser is honoured with OBE

**A volunteer whose project
culminated in hundreds of
defibrillator machines being
installed in Edinburgh and all over
Scotland has been named in the New
Year Honours List.**

Lynn Cleal has been made an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her voluntary service to the community in Scotland.

She is Chair of the St John Scotland Public Access Defibrillator Scheme, which has now resulted in more than 500 of the lifesaving machines being installed.

Lynn, who lives in Cove, near Helensburgh, but has a business in Edinburgh, said: "It was a bit of a shock, I was not expecting it at all – I thought it was a bit of a hoax when I got the letter through!"

She and her husband moved to the Rosneath Peninsula eight years ago and were struck by the public defibrillator machines which had been installed by the community first responders on buildings such as Cove Burgh Hall.

"When we saw how active a small community was, we realised there wasn't much happening like that in Edinburgh," she said.

The charity's pilot project initially aimed to install 20 defibrillators in a year, but that target was quickly exceeded – now there are over 350 in Edinburgh alone, including one on every tram, and the project has been rolled out across Scotland.

“It's been a huge success,” said Lynn.

“What we offer is free CPR training – whenever we get a site going we will teach the business or community CPR and training in the defibrillator.

“I have got a fantastic team of volunteers and supporters, they are all worthy of this honour and I'm sharing it with them.”

Lynn first spoke to The Edinburgh Reporter in 2017 at the beginning of the St John and the City project. She explained then: “We are delighted to bring together the donor businesses with Edinburgh Trams to install these lifesaving defibrillators. The St John and the City project is committed to making defibrillators more accessible to members of the public and as they will now be on every tram, we hope that they will be able to save more lives in Edinburgh.”

The most recent addition to the array of defibrillators in Edinburgh is that on the outside wall of Marionville Community Fire Station installed in October 2022. Lynn offered a graphic insight into the difference a defibrillator can make. She said: “

Imagine filling up a double decker bus every week, and everybody on that bus has a cardiac arrest. Six years ago only two people would come off that bus alive. Over the last three to five years we have put 350 of these defibrillators out in and around Edinburgh and now we can say that four people come off that bus alive.

“We continue to strive to get that number increased. Another

part of what we do is to offer free CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation) training and defibrillator awareness to the surrounding areas. We think the best way to do this for the community is to make partnerships. So we get organisations such as churches, police, fire stations and we get them all on board. Some people donate defibrillators and others – such as the fire station here – host the machine. It is then available to anybody. This is a great location where many people will see it.”

With thanks to our colleagues at Lochside Press for additional reporting.

