

Trams to Newhaven – what will happen on Wednesday?

Passenger services on Edinburgh's new part of the tram line to Newhaven will be launched with the help of the community along the route on Wednesday.

The first paying customers will board the service, operated by Edinburgh Trams, between Newhaven and Picardy Place (and onward to Edinburgh Airport) from noon.

To celebrate the occasion, a piper will accompany the first tram to the Picardy Place tram stop and members of Edinburgh's Dance Base centre for dance will perform a specially choreographed 'tram ballet' outside St Mary's Cathedral.

Council Leaders will then join local school pupils to officially open the tram for service.

The 2.9 mile, eight stop route has been under construction since November 2019, and according to the project team it has been delivered on schedule and within the £207.3m budget allocated by the council.

Over recent months there has been rigorous testing to ensure the newly constructed line, the software and the signals all work effectively and safely. This has included running trams at half and full speed and latterly to timetable, work to integrate signalling and interface with Edinburgh Trams' control centre and driver familiarisation.

Council Leader Cammy Day said: "I'm delighted to be playing a

part in this momentous occasion – the launch of tram passenger services between Picardy Place and Newhaven. It's a real landmark moment for Edinburgh, as we bring this high capacity, sustainable and reliable service to the north of the city.

"I know many will share in my excitement, and optimism for the benefits this development will provide. We've already seen vast improvements to spaces along the route and long-term I'm looking forward to the impact it will have on the local economy, which even now we're starting to see.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who live and own businesses along the route. They have shown such patience and resilience shown throughout this major, complex project and now I hope that they will really gain from the new service.

"This is also a chance to reflect on the hard work of those who have delivered this scheme. Thanks to the project team's dedication, despite the challenges of recent years, I'm proud to say Trams to Newhaven has been delivered on time and within the £207.3 million budget."

Lea Harrison, Edinburgh Trams Managing Director, said: "The opening of the route will mark another momentous day for the city, and the entire Edinburgh Trams team stands ready to bring its acclaimed brand of service excellence to tens of thousands of new customers in the communities it serves.

"We're also looking forward to delivering a real boost for local businesses, providing a convenient transport link between the city centre and some of Edinburgh's most densely populated neighbourhoods, as well as key locations such as Ocean Terminal and Port of Leith.

"With trams from every seven minutes between 6am and midnight, seven days a week, our expanded tram timetable will help firms large and small to attract new business while helping their employees get to and from work."

To mark the event, the earliest passengers will be able to purchase 'platinum' tram tickets from machines at Picardy Place and Newhaven tram stops while Pulse of the Place, the youth samba drumming band based in north Edinburgh, will perform around the Newhaven tram stop.

The Guard of Honour formed by members of the High Constabulary of the Port of Leith will stand at Pilrig Street to welcome the tram into the historic Burgh of Leith wearing full parade dress, including top hats, whistles and ceremonial batons.

While the project will open for revenue services on 7 June 2023, outstanding public realm works will continue in some sections, including Picardy Place itself.



On the eve of the launch of the Trams to Newhaven press were invited aboard to see for themselves what the new part of the line is like PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



Photo taken on 19 April when daytime testing began PHOTO Ross Nixon