

Torchlight procession to return this Hogmanay

The Torchlight Procession will again be part of Edinburgh's Hogmanay this year, raising much needed funds for homeless charity, Social Bite.

This will be the 30th year of the capital's famous New Year celebrations from 29 December 2023 to 1 January 2024. Festivities will begin on 29 December with the Torchlight Procession in the first event of its kind since 2019.

It is estimated that 20,000 people will buy a torch and take part in the walk to shine a light on homelessness, which is expected to raise around £50,000 for the charity.



Torchlight procession in 2017 PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



Torchlight procession in December 2017 PHOTO Martin P McAdam
The directors of Unique Assembly who create and produce Edinburgh's Hogmanay on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council, said: "We are thrilled to announce the return of the Torchlight Procession for this year's 30th anniversary celebrations, the event has been greatly missed by locals and visitors to the city in recent years, and to partner with Social Bite will fundraise to help those most in need of support this winter. Our 4-day programme is packed with spectacular events and artist to be announced, with the return of some old favourites from three decades of Edinburgh's Hogmanay, guaranteed to help bring in 2024 in style."

Josh Littlejohn, MBE, founder of Social Bite said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Unique Assembly and Edinburgh Council to help bring the Torchlight Procession back to Edinburgh's Hogmanay Festival. Every Christmas Social Bite open our doors to provide meals and gifts to homeless and vulnerable people and we are always blown away by the support of the Scottish public over the festive period. This partnership builds on this work at this time of year and I can't wait to see 20,000 people carrying a torch to kick off Edinburgh's Hogmanay celebrations and at the same time to shine a light on homelessness – raising funds and awareness

for the most vulnerable people in Edinburgh and beyond.”

The City of Edinburgh Council Culture and Communities Convener, Cllr Val Walker, said: “We’re absolutely delighted to see the return of the Torchlight Procession to this year’s Hogmanay celebrations. This element of the programme was always extremely popular with residents and visitors alike and I’m sure it will be again this December. I’m also really pleased to see the partnership work between the organisers and Social Bite in order to raise vital funds and awareness for their excellent work supporting vulnerable people in Edinburgh and more widely across the country.

“Edinburgh’s Hogmanay and our wider Winter Festivals programme are cornerstones of our cultural calendar and are internationally recognised as being some of the best around and I’m confident that this year’s edition will once again be a success.”

A donation of £2 from each Torch sold (£20 inc. fees) and £1.50 from additional Procession Tickets (£7.50 inc. fees) will be donated to Social Bite.

Torchlight Procession participants will enjoy a carnival atmosphere at the rebooted event, with a new start location at the Meadows presenting a feast of live Street Theatre, Fire Performers, Pipe Bands and Drummers to get the celebrations started, before Vikings from Shetland’s ***South Mainland Up Helly Aa’ Jarl Squad*** lead the procession, creating a stunning river of fire through the Old Town.



The Torchlight Procession flowed down Edinburgh's historic Royal Mile, with ten Pipe & Drum bands from across Scotland proudly led by Scotland's pioneering Celtic Fire Theatre company, PyroCeltica, and the Harbinger Drum Crew in 2019.