

Calls for council to preserve Summerhall as arts venue

After the news of the impending sale of Summerhall, politicians are gathering behind calls to save the arts centre which has become so important to the capital's culture scene.

Tommy Sheppard MP for Edinburgh East said: "Summerhall makes a huge contribution to the local community and Edinburgh as a whole as a hub of the arts in Edinburgh. It's crucially important that any sale has at its heart the ecosystem that Summerhall supports and the huge contribution it makes to the cultural landscape of Edinburgh. I'm asking the Council to use the powers it has to work up a masterplan for the site to make sure that any changes that do place after the sale are in keeping with the need to sustain Summerhall as an artistic asset for the Capital."

This is the letter which Mr Sheppard has sent to the Council Leader:



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Separately a petition to Save Summerhall has been set up [here](#).



Cllr Finlay McFarlane has lodged an emergency motion ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Finlay McFarlane who represents the City Centre Ward and who is the SNP group Culture spokesperson has lodged an emergency motion to be discussed at Thursday's Culture Committee. He said: "The scale and outpouring of support in the last few days is testament to how integral and important Summerhall continuing as a pivotal centre for the arts in Edinburgh and further afield is to people of all walks of life. The SNP are therefore calling on the City of Edinburgh Council to engage with Summerhall's management and to offer both civic support in this aim and any practical assistance that we can offer. In the meantime, we will be encouraging

everyone to show their support by getting along and buying a ticket for their fantastic upcoming programme of events and exciting Fringe season.”

The motion reads:

MOTION TEXT:

Committee:

1.1 Expresses concern at the recent news regarding the potential sale of Summerhall to new owners (albeit with leases intact) which is an important cultural institution in our city.

1.2 Commends Summerhall’s founder and director Robert McDowell and the entire team and staff for their contribution and impact on cultural life in Edinburgh since opening its doors in 2011.

1.3 Believes in the importance of Summerhall’s role to the cultural fabric of Edinburgh as a capital city and recognises it’s wider impact on culture across the country.

1.4 Is reassured that this potential change will not affect their annual programme of events and upcoming Fringe 2024.

1.4 Recognises the groundswell in public support for Summerhall continuing long into the future as a cultural institution and the live petition that has received over 3000 signatures in the first few days.

1.5 Requests that the City of Edinburgh Council opens a dialogue with the current owner and management of Summerhall to ascertain what support the city council can offer that would help secure the sustainability and future of Summerhall and its vibrant programme of events, community projects, visual arts and exhibitions with an update brought to the August Culture and Communities Committee.