

Criticism for council asking staff to volunteer at Swift concert

A member of Edinburgh Council's administration has criticised the local authority for asking its staff to sign up as volunteer marshals for next month's Taylor Swift concert.

Council employees were offered a "unique opportunity" to "warmly welcome visitors to the city, guide the public to Murrayfield, and provide general information" ahead of the megastar playing three sold-out nights in the capital on June 7, 8 and 9.

"Colleagues have the chance to play a crucial role in ensuring these events run smoothly and safely," an internal advert said, adding managers had been asked to be "as flexible as possible in accommodating this".



Cllr Katrina Faccenda Labour PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Katrina Faccenda hit out in response, saying if staff were helping out with the highly-anticipated show their other duties “are not covered”. She added: “The council is donating the value of the hours volunteered to enable private companies to profit.”

The council pointed out it has previously sought volunteers to assist major events, including for the King’s Coronation last year and following the death of the Queen in 2022.

Cllr Faccenda said: “This is not a public occasion like Olympics or Commonwealth Games, it is a concert by a performer who is a billionaire and the tickets have been sold for vast sums.”

She said the council needed to “break free from being happy to enable others to get rich when nothing comes directly to the council”.

She added: "Hotel rooms are being upsold by booking agencies well above rack rates for massive profits and until we learn to be more assertive and stop listening to the stories of how much we are benefiting pitched to us by the profiteers, the profiteers and large scale events will never benefit the residents of Edinburgh as much as they could."

Edinburgh Council has been contacted for comment.

At the start of the week the council was looking for around 30 staff members to help out between 11am and 4pm on Friday, June 7 and by Wednesday had responses from "the required number of volunteers".

The internal advert stated: "These concerts are expected to be the largest events ever held at Murrayfield, with thousands of visitors descending upon the city. Colleagues have the chance to play a crucial role in ensuring these events run smoothly and safely.

"For those who volunteer during their regular working hours, you will be compensated as usual. Any additional hours worked will be paid as overtime, in accordance with our normal overtime rules. We understand that volunteering may impact your other work, and we have requested managers to be as flexible as possible in accommodating this."

In addition to "the rewarding experience of being part of these major events," it said, Scottish Rugby has "generously offered" two tickets to each volunteer for one of the November Tests featuring Scotland against Fiji, Australia, or Portugal.

Swift is set to break the record for Scotland's biggest-selling stadium show when she takes to the stage at Scottish Gas Murrayfield Stadium next month.

The singer – who has charged up to £660 for tickets to the 'Eras Tour' – will play to just under 73,000 fans, breaking the record held by her ex, Harry Styles, when he took to the

stage at the rugby ground last summer.

by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter