

# Lord Provost sends his New Year wishes

## The Rt Hon Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge, reflects on 2024 and looks ahead to the new year.

“As we approach 2025 and reflect on the year gone by, I am filled with gratitude and joy to serve as the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

2024 has been another busy year in the civic life for the Capital, there has been a running theme of recognition and reward—celebrating the contributions of our citizens, our volunteers, and our ongoing efforts to reduce poverty while honouring our rich heritage.

A highlight of the year was presenting the prestigious Edinburgh Award to social entrepreneur Mel Young MBE. His tireless work, including founding the Homeless World Cup, has made a lasting impact on our community. Edinburgh’s volunteers are a great source of pride.



Mel Young and his wife Rona at the ceremony for The Edinburgh Award © 2024 Martin McAdam

As Volunteer Ambassador, I've seen firsthand the invaluable contributions of the city's 152,000 volunteers, who dedicate over 27,000 days each week to helping others. These volunteers form the backbone of our communities, making a real difference in the lives of vulnerable residents. I've been fortunate to visit many volunteer-led projects and witness the transformative work they do.

Despite the city's prosperity, we must acknowledge that around 17% of residents and 20% of children still face poverty and disadvantage. Tackling these challenges remains a priority, as we continue to support those in need.



24/2/2024

Service for Ukraine The Rt Hon Lord Provost of Edinburgh  
Robert Aldridge Picture Alan Simpson

I am honoured to be President of the OneCity Trust, the Capital's leading charity which continues to fight against poverty, inequality and exclusion. During the year, the Trust had its 21st birthday, having invested £1.3 million in 270 local projects over the last two decades, and most recently provided £0.17m to 28 voluntary groups.

Earlier this year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of our very first twinning with Munich and it was my pleasure to visit Munich as well as host representatives here as we celebrated 70 years of partnership and looked to the years ahead. In 2025 we will mark 40 years of twinning with Xi'an and I look forward to marking this milestone and with all our twin



cities – fostering these valuable relationships in the years to come. 2024 marks a milestone in Edinburgh's rich history: its nonacentenary.



Linda Rodgers, CEO of Edinburgh Women's Aid with the Rt Hon Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge and Morag Waller, Chair, Edinburgh Women's Aid at a ceremony to mark half a century of the organisation . © 2024 Martin McAdam

To commemorate this, the Edinburgh 900 programme launched a year-long series of events and initiatives that will take place across the city and its local communities. This diverse and dynamic programme celebrates Edinburgh's history, culture, and vibrant present, while also looking ahead to the city's future. The celebrations will continue well into 2025, with community groups, businesses, and enterprises invited to contribute events. You can track these on the Edinburgh 900 website, where the city's rich history will be showcased in ten key themes, including commerce, culture, and diversity.

As I reflect on my third year as Lord Provost, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported me.

This festive season, we must also remember the global conflicts affecting so many people and wish for peace, unity, and care for one another, as is our city's tradition.

I wish all residents and visitors a happy festive season and a prosperous New Year.



23/4/2024 Lord Provost Robert Aldridge unveils the Oor Wullie Themed Statue of Edinburgh Fundraiser Tom Gilzean on the Royal Mile.

Picture Alan Simpson