

The People's Story reopens to the public

The doors at the People's Story Museum have reopened to the public on Monday after a temporary closure instructed by council officers, and based on staff shortages.

There was a short ribbon cutting event today organised by the campaigners, led by Jim Slaven who lives locally.

Jim said: "Today is a good day for Edinburgh. I think one of the issues that we've identified over the course of this campaign is that, by the council's own admission, this building and the museum has been neglected for 35 years. There's a lot of low hanging fruit and changes can be made really quickly and easily that can begin to turn this round."

The museum was very busy at lunchtime on Monday with visitors examining the exhibits on all three floors. It is a fascinating place, and even if you have already visited, it is well worth spending a few minutes in the former Tolbooth building on The Royal Mile.

Cllr Katrina Faccenda (below) said: "This is a really big win for campaigners. It was an excellent campaign that they ran, they put a lot of pressure on and got lots of influential people to support them. The councillors moves and realised this was important and now the museum has been reopened." She explained her favourite part of the museum is on the first floor where exhibitions show 20th century stories. She said: "It's very much a step back in time to a lot of us and how we

started in politics.”



The People's Story tells the story of ordinary people living in Edinburgh through the ages. It promotes the history of trades, culture and crafts and charts the journey fighting for fairness and political rights. [Some of the placards](#) from the January 2017 protests in Edinburgh against the inauguration of US president, Donald Trump, have found a place in the history of Edinburgh related here.

The museum was opened on 14 July 1989 by John Smith leader of the Labour Party and Campbell Christie who was the General Secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Cllr Finlay McFarlane attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. He said: "I am absolutely delighted that the community campaign to save the People's Story has won through and the museum is now open. It was a busy day. Even in the middle of Jim's opening ceremony speech, people were coming out of museum who had been in to see it as soon as the doors were open.

"So it just shows that there is absolutely a need for this kind of thing and for the People's Story to be told in this city. It speaks volumes that there needed to be a campaign to

reopen the only working class history museum in the city. It speaks volumes about the priorities of this Labour council administration. However now is a time to look forward. There have been many offers of help to revitalise and reimagine and update the People's Story's content to make it sustainable and fit for the next ten or 20 years. I will be 100% behind those efforts behind the trade union movement, of working class people, of city centre residents and people from all over the city to help them tell their story on the Canongate. I am right behind them and really looking forward to seeing what the next steps are now that we have the doors back open which was the first step."

The City of Edinburgh Council Leader Cammy Day and Culture and Communities Convener Val Walker visited the museum this morning to meet with staff as final touches were made and doors reopened.

City of Edinburgh Council Leader Cammy Day, said: "The People's Story is a valuable part of Edinburgh's cultural heritage. Earlier this year, facing increased budget challenges, the museum was temporarily closed and it was proposed that it would remain so during the autumn and winter months. However, thanks to the incredible support and feedback from the public for the museum, we worked to secure the necessary funding and resources to reopen and to be able to offer this museum to residents and visitors.

"Whether you've never visited before or it's been a while since your last trip, now is the perfect time to rediscover the museum. Explore the exhibits that bring to life the authentic voices of Edinburgh's people through oral histories and written accounts. Some of the many highlights include displays of Friendly Society regalia, banners, and materials that reflect the city's rich, diverse communities. We look forward to welcoming you back to experience these powerful stories first-hand."

Displays include tableaux, original objects, images and personal stories that reveal a fascinating history of the city. The collection focuses on the history, culture, crafts and trades, and the people of Edinburgh but also as a place to explore more contemporary issues, events and opinions. All of the displays in the museum are based around the words of Edinburgh's people, taken from oral history reminiscences and written sources to tell real stories. The collections reflect this with objects ranging from Friendly Society regalia, banners and material relating to Edinburgh's diverse communities.

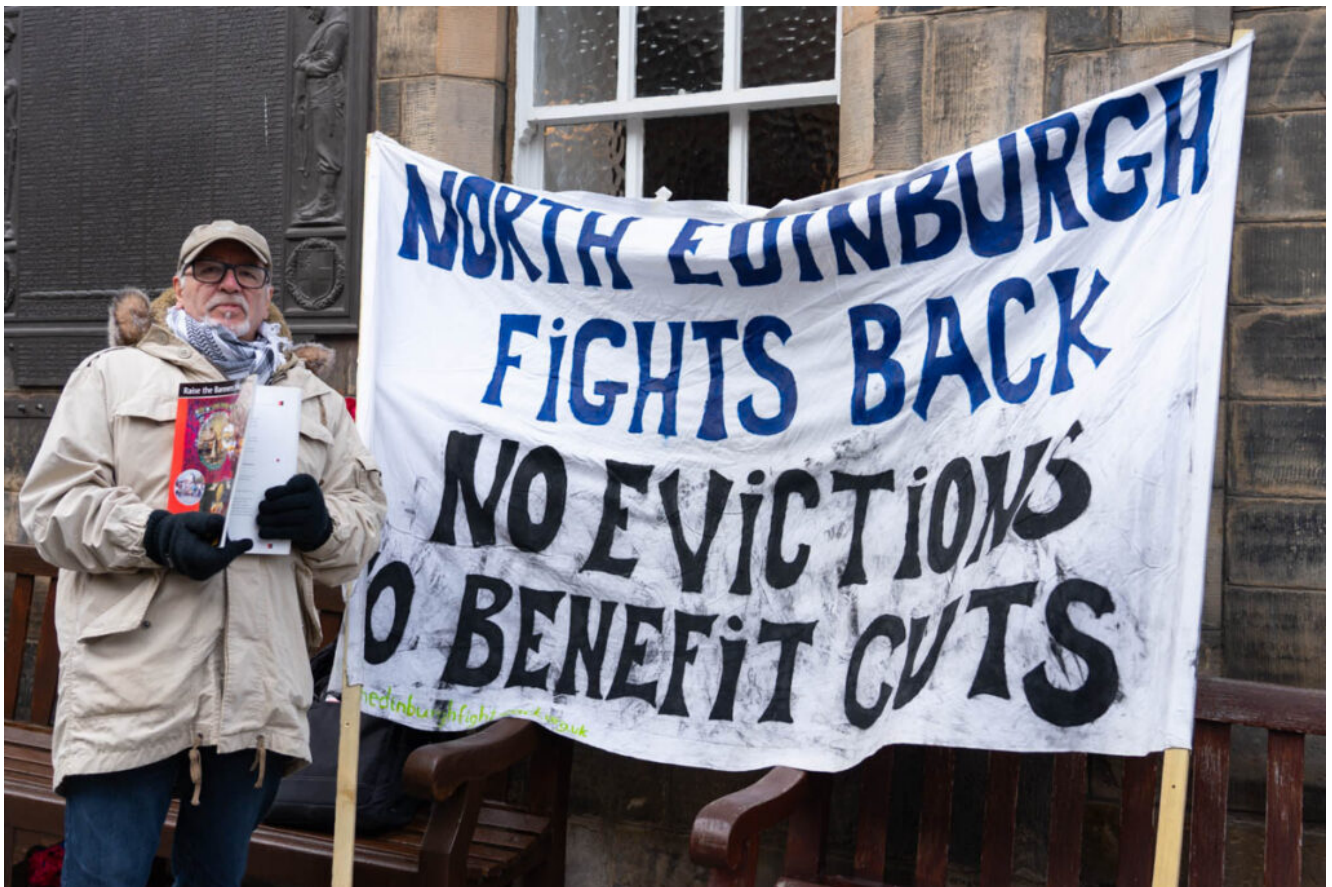
The council's Culture committee meets on Thursday to discuss the forecast overspend of £0.455m for Culture and Wellbeing services, £0.058 million for Parks and Greenspaces and £0.180million for Bereavement Services. [The papers for the meeting which will be webcast online are here.](#)





Jim Slaven campaigner





Edinburgh local Willie Black, who is a veteran campaigner for many different causes, brought along his banner for one of his latest campaigns.