

Capital city in gold medal position for Scottish grassroots Olympic legacy

As Great Britain piles up the gold medals in the Olympics, the City of Edinburgh Council earns itself a gold medal in creating a grassroots Olympic legacy in Scotland. Edinburgh Council has engaged with the Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge, run by Fields in Trust, which safeguards outdoor recreational spaces in perpetuity to ensure that communities will always have places for sport and play to mark the great events of 2012.

23 sites have been protected for future generations by Edinburgh, putting both the English and Welsh capitals to shame. The counties of Angus and Perth and Kinross are in equal silver position with 15 sites put forward by local authorities in those areas. At the other end of the scale are East Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire who have decided not to protect any land for future generations to enjoy. Currently debating whether they will get involved or not are The Highlands, Moray Council and Dumfries and Galloway.

The Duke of Cambridge is Patron of the Challenge and is committed to the importance of outdoor spaces: *'We take it for granted that children like to run and to play games and most people agree that leaving children to be cooped up inside all day is bad for them. If we are serious about that, then we must be serious about preserving the fields and parks on which children can play. If parks and fields continue to disappear at the rate at which they have done for the past few decades, many communities will have nowhere for their young people to enjoy. Some of my happiest memories as a child were those times I spent outside playing games, and I think that is true for most people.'*

Alison Moore-Gwyn, Chief Executive of Fields in Trust said *'I'm delighted by the enthusiasm with which Edinburgh City Council have embraced the Challenge and I hope we may see East Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire changing their minds, particularly as Scotland looks to create a legacy from the 2014 Games as well. Parks and playing fields are often the place where our elite sports people first identify their talent. Without access to local facilities we face the possibility of a decline in the diversity of home grown athletes and sports people.'*

This is echoed by The Duke of Cambridge who is also an Ambassador to the London 2012 Games *'As we cheer on athletes at the Olympic Games, we should remember how so many of them started their career on local green spaces.'*

Delivery of this wide ranging legacy programme was made possible by the support of Asda and the Asda Foundation. Paul Kelly, External Affairs Director at Asda said *'Asda shares Fields in Trust's commitment to ensuring 2012 brings lasting benefit to communities across the UK and so we are proud to have worked in partnership to deliver a programme that will give opportunities for participation in sports and activities well beyond the Olympic Games.'*

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For further information please contact:

Colin Rennie, Scotland Manager on 01382 817 427, colin.rennie@fieldsintrust.org ; or Kathryn Cook, Communications Manager on 07931 392 176, 0207 427 2117, kathryn.cook@fieldsintrust.org

Notes to editors:

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Ayrshire	8	85	10.625
Angus	15	288.02	
Aberdeenshire	6	34.99	
Clackmannanshire	9	89.76	9.973
Dumfries & Galloway	1		
East Dunbartonshire	2	49.4	24.7
East Lothian	2	11.9	5.95
East Renfrewshire	1	9.3	9.3
Fife	4	43.98	10.995
Lanarkshire	4	251.59	62.896
Midlothian	23	428.94	16.997
Perth and Kinross	15	692.57	46.171
Renfrewshire	3	37.87	12.623
Scottish Borders	2	19.39	9.695
Shetland Isles	1	8.7	8.7
South Lanarkshire	1	1	1
Stirling	11	113.42	10.313

- The Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge aims to protect 2,012 outdoor recreational spaces by the end of 2012 to build a legacy from the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games, and to protect 2014 by the Commonwealth Games in 2014.
- The Duke of Cambridge is Patron of the Challenge. Queen Elizabeth Field status protects green sites for perpetuity, ensuring communities and future generations will always have access to them. The Challenge builds on the work that Fields in Trust has done so far. Established in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association, Fields in Trust works to improve the protection, provision and quality of outdoor recreational spaces for all communities in the UK. They currently protect 1362 fields totalling 8586 acres.
- Further details on The Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge can be found at www.qe2fields.com The Queen Elizabeth Fields Challenge's principal partner is Asda and the Asda Foundation.
- Sites in Scotland can apply for Scotland QE Fields Fund - grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 to any Fields protected as part of the Challenge. <http://www.qe2fields.com/scottishfund.aspx>