



# Open invitation to go greener

**Sarah Devine is excited by the latest eco-friendly addition to Edinburgh's summer festivals schedule**

Homeowners will be offered advice on how to make their properties more energy efficient, save money on heating, and discover the latest advances in eco-friendly technology at the second annual Green Home Festival in Edinburgh next month.

The free week-long proceedings, which begin on 14 August, will hear from experts across the homebuilding and renovation industry in a series of in-person and online events – and organisers argue that it couldn't come at a better time.

"In the last couple of years, there has been a lot more interest from members of the public in trying to integrate energy efficiency while thinking about their home upgrades," says festival co-founder Gordon Nelson. "Prior to the Covid pandemic, there were some notable examples of passionate people seeking green upgrades to their homes, but most consumers were purely looking at home improvements rather than energy efficient upgrades. There has been a real change there recently." Gordon points to the Scottish



Government's plans to implement an equivalent of the Passivhaus design standard – a solution for zero-carbon homes – and its net-zero greenhouse emissions target of 2045, adding that gas boilers in new homes will be banned from next April. Talk in Holyrood of further regulations for all homes to reach new energy efficiency standards by 2033, means alternative heating systems are currently very hot topics.

*"There has been a lot more interest in trying to integrate energy efficiency while thinking about home upgrades"*

**Top, above, TV's Anna Campbell Jones will be the star of her own show at the festival, mainly centred around RICS' HQ in Charlotte Square, above**

Gordon adds: "There is a dedicated heat pump day which recognises the misunderstanding from consumer perspectives as to what heat pumps are [and] how much they cost. That particular show will give advice to consumers about preparing for heat pumps and try to give them a map on where to access grants, loans, and funding sources."

The festival was established by the Construction Industry Collective Voice, a coalition of some 28 trade and professional bodies. The shows will be hosted at The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) headquarters at 10 Charlotte Square in the heart of the Capital. "The festival came about a few

weeks after COP26," explains Gordon, who is the Scotland director for the Federation of Master Builders. "(We) thought we should look to take some of the initiatives from that and – noting rising inflation and a cost of living crisis developing – we thought we could bring our expertise together to advise the public."

TV presenter Anna Campbell-Jones will discuss low-carbon living in the Ingredients for a Greener Kitchen show on the first day of the festival, exploring greener ways of designing, decorating and renewing homes.

Meanwhile, Microwave Heating for Homes, led by Professor Sean Smith of The University of Edinburgh's School of Engineering, will discuss how the technology could work as heating alternative.

"That is something novel and unique for this year," Nelson says. "Microwave heating may well be a viable technology on a mass scale for homeowners looking to replace their gas boilers."

Among other highlights, the Festival of Fabric First show will help homeowners understand what steps to take before carrying out a retrofit to improve their domestic energy efficiency.

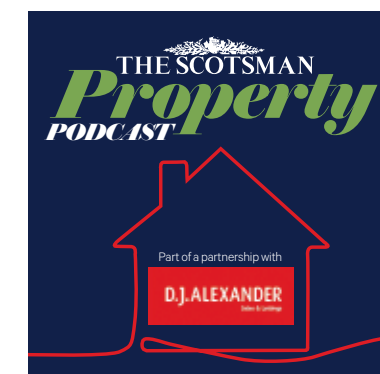
The first Green Home Festival was highly successful, with more than 400 registrations for ten shows, and this year's event aims to be bigger and more varied.

**To book tickets, go online and visit [greenhomefestival.co.uk](http://greenhomefestival.co.uk)**

**ADVERTISING FEATURE**

# Advice is on right wavelength

The Scotsman's Property Podcast debuts with on-topic insights from a trio of industry experts



With the housing market consistently hitting the front pages this year, The Scotsman has launched a monthly property podcast to take a look behind the statistics and paint a broader picture of what is going on in the industry.

Whether you are a homeowner, a tenant or an investor – or if you plan to buy or sell a property in these uncertain times – the podcast aims to give you all the information you need about the market north of the Border.

We'll also be tackling some hot domestic topics, such as sustainability, reducing household bills, and ways to add value to a home now you can no longer rely on the year-on-year gains of the recent past.

We'll examine previous cycles of boom and bust, and look to the future with expert predictions on what is next likely to affect the market.

And we'll be discussing design trends for interiors, gardens, and the latest in-home gadgets. The first edition of the podcast is now available, hosted by The Scotsman's property editor Kirsty McLuckie.

Her guests in the initial programme include David Alexander, chief executive of DJ Alexander, whose career spans five decades in the lettings industry.

His company, which now manages 10,000 properties and is the largest private letting agent in Scotland, started with just one property, as David explains.

The discussion takes us through the historic



changes in lettings legislation which led to today's busy market, examines the improvements in standards and safety for tenants and, more topically, answers questions on whether current conditions are driving out amateur landlords – and what this means for tenants and first-time buyers.

The podcast then turns to the sales market and, amid UK-wide predictions of a fall in house prices and a drop in activity, we ask if it is a more optimistic picture in Scotland.

Kirsty speaks to Paul Hilton, chief executive of property portal ESPC, to get a better understanding of how the market is performing in different geographical areas in Scotland, and seeks his expert advice for those hoping to sell at the moment.

Paul's expert take is that, while the last three years have been something of an unprecedented frenzy after the lifting of Covid restrictions, the market is now more settled and there



**LISTEN NOW**

**Online update: Lisa Lempink, above, breaks down costs of a garden redesign in the podcast; while lettings' expert David Alexander, inset left, and sales' guru Paul Hilton, right, outline advice for first-time buyers**

are good opportunities for buyers and sellers. He takes us through some property hotspots, both well-established and up-and-coming.

Of the wider market, Paul believes that while the number of transactions has dipped, there is still an imbalance of supply and demand in Scotland which is sustaining sales' prices in most areas, with figures over home report values being surprisingly resilient.

With a lettings and a sales expert on the podcast, we discuss what advice both would give to a potential first-time buyer in 2023.

We ask, is it a good time to make the leap onto the housing ladder, despite current comparable high interest rates, or would it be wise to hold off until the market bottoms out?

And we ask the perennial question, can anyone predict what the market is likely to do next?

The last three years have seen a huge

rise in homeowners investing in their gardens, with everything from eating areas, outdoor kitchens and stand-alone garden offices becoming sought-after features of any property with outside space.

A full makeover is seen as one of the best ways to invest in your home and now is estimated to net a better return than a new kitchen project, an extension or a loft conversion.

So, with summer in full bloom, Kirsty speaks to Edinburgh-based garden designer Lisa Lempink about these outdoor trends and the process involved in a garden redesign.

Lisa breaks down the costs involved and describes how this year's price rises have affected everything from labour to hard landscaping and planting, and the resulting added expense for a redesign.

While the average landscaping project easily runs into the tens of thousands, Lisa hands out some expert advice on how those with a more modest budget for their garden dream can save money and still achieve their goal – whether that is to add value to their home, or to their quality of life.



*"While the last three years have been something of a frenzy, the market is now more settled"*



**The Scotsman Property Podcast was made in partnership with DJ Alexander**