

Inspiring cancer mum to have her wedding day bliss

Couple tie the knot today after £20k appeal hits target

EXCLUSIVE

NAINA BHARDWAJ

A MUM-OF-SIX given just days to live is set to marry in style today after friends, family and well-wishers rallied round to make her big day special.

Holly Blake, 34, who has incurable cancer, will tie the knot with fiancé Niccolas Scott thanks to help from her family and from charity Wedding Wish Makers, who planned a last minute event for the couple.

Although the charity is based in the west, they went above and beyond for Holly and were able to source almost everything the couple needs for their outdoor wedding with the help of local businesses in Edinburgh.

Founder and chair Suzanne Stevenson said: "When we came across Holly's story we just really wanted to help her and it was hard for us to say no. We're parents of similar ages ourselves so we could definitely relate to her."

"We were worried that we didn't have any contacts with

suppliers in Edinburgh since we are Renfrew-based but there was support within 20 minutes from people we didn't even know which was incredible."

Other businesses were keen to pitch in and supplied the likes of a car for the bride, a limo for the children, a marquee, floral arrangements, balloons and more.

However, since the bride will be using a wheelchair, they had difficulty trying to find a tea length dress in a size 24/26 before having four to choose from

"With the year everyone has endured so far, we wanted to help Holly in any way we could"

SUZANNE STEVENSON

thanks to Crystal Bows Bridal Boutique on Great Junction Street.

They said: "As a family business, Holly's story really touched us all. We are a close knit family and reading about Holly really brought home what is important in life which is love, family and friends."

"This is why, especially with the year everyone has endured



KIND: Wedding Wish Makers have helped give Holly and Niccolas their dream wedding

so far, we wanted to help Holly in any way we could, however big or small that may have been.

"There are some things in life that are just beyond invaluable and making special memories and helping people make a dream or two come true is most definitely up there with them."

"It has been an absolute pleasure being able to provide Holly with a beautiful gown and veil and play a part in making Holly's dream come true of getting married."

"Every girl deserves to feel like a princess for a day and Holly is most certainly no exception. We wish Holly and Nic the most wonderful wedding day."

Holly, of Leith, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer

which affects the body's connective tissue. Her chemotherapy at Western General Hospital has been unsuccessful so far.

Her aunt, Christine Langridge, set up a GoFundMe page with a target of £20,000 for bills, childcare and other financial support which has now been reached.

Holly had originally gone to hospital believing she had a type of blood clot in the lungs after suffering from breathlessness and a persistent pain in her right leg.

However when she went to A&E two months ago, an X-ray showed that she had metastasised cancer.

Since then, doctors have found another lump and confirmed that the cancer has

spread to other parts of the body with Holly now suffering from grade four sarcoma in her lungs and lymph nodes.

The couple are due to tie the knot surrounded by friends and family after they were given special dispensation to move the ceremony forward.

They said: "Finding a dress that matched the occasion helped us achieve our dream day. The kindness and generosity touched our hearts and gestures like these are never forgotten. All the thanks in the world wouldn't do the act justice."

"Wedding Wish Makers made it possible for us to conceive such a day and for that, we are forever grateful. We would ask people to contribute to this wonderful charity."

UK's first Pride train hits buffers

THE UK's first fully-decorated Pride train will be "running again very soon" after a minor maintenance issue during its inaugural journey yesterday morning.

The biggest Pride flag reportedly seen in the UK travelled from London Euston to Manchester Piccadilly as scheduled, however it did not return to London Euston.

A spokesman for Avanti West Coast said: "The Pride train did not go back to Euston as scheduled as it was put into maintenance for a minor issue."

The train is covered in the traditional Pride rainbow colours, with the addition of black and brown to symbolise BAME inclusion, as well as the colours of the transgender flag.

Train manager Paul Austin said the eye-catching paint job and the staffing selection is a "sign of the steps we're taking towards a more inclusive, diverse and equal society".

A spokesman for the company said Avanti West Coast is "looking forward to it running again very soon so everyone can enjoy it like they did today".

As the livery will become a permanent part of Avanti West Coast's full fleet, the LGBTQ+ community will also have the opportunity to enter a competition to officially name it.

Experts to probe rail tragedy

NETWORK Rail has launched two independent task forces in response to the Stonehaven crash.

Former Met Office chief scientist Dame Julia Slingo will lead a review into the impact of heavy rainfall on the railway.

This will consider how data can be used to ensure future engineering decisions take local weather factors into account, as well as Network Rail's use of forecasting and weather monitoring technology.

It will also examine the extent to which the Government-owned rail infrastructure management company has explored real-time weather recording.

Meanwhile Lord Robert Mair, emeritus professor of civil engineering at the University of Cambridge, will spearhead an earthworks task force investigating the management of railway cuttings and embankments.

Driver Brett McCullough, 45, conductor Donald Dinnie, 58, and passenger Christopher Stuchbury, 62, died when the 6.38am Aberdeen to Glasgow Queen Street train crashed into a landslide across the tracks near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire, on August 12 following heavy rain.



BUS CHIEF: Nigel Serafini

Bus timetables in chaos thanks to Capital roads changes

CONTROVERSIAL road changes across the city have held up buses by up to 60 minutes and made timetables "redundant", Lothian buses' boss has said.

The measures, including road closures, wider pavements and new cycle lanes, have been introduced under the city council's Spaces for People

programme to make it easier for people to maintain physical distancing.

Parents complained on social media of children taking 90 minutes to get home from Boroughmuir High School when the normal journey time is 30 minutes.

The issue was taken up by Scott Arthur, Labour councillor

for Colinton/Fairmilehead and the reply he got from Lothian buses managing director Nigel Serafini states: "Road traffic volumes have significantly increased this week coinciding with increased roadworks and new road management measures across the city."

"This has led to significant congestion and delays to

services of up to 60 minutes, causing planned timetables to be rendered redundant. As traffic has slowed, loadings have become heavier and additional journeys have been unable to be in the right place and time to cater for school exit times."

Transport convener Lesley Macinnes said the council was closely monitoring changes.