

Five things you need to know today



Council discuss budget today

Edinburgh World Heritage need new Board members

Edinburgh Airport the best for families

Climbing Pandas

Number 13 bus

The City of Edinburgh Council is meeting to discuss its budget proposals for the next three years. There are three scheduled deputations due to speak to the council before they councillors get down to the actual facts and figures, from Unite, The Welcoming Association and Communities against the Cuts. Unite say:-“The purpose of our deputation is to draw Councillor’s attention to the effect of their budget on terms and conditions of employees in the Edinburgh not for profit sector and the effect on services, including the equalities impact. Our branch has about 600 members who work in the Edinburgh not for profit sector and there are a further six UNITE voluntary sector branches that have members who work in the city. ”

As part of the report on the Revenue Budget one of the conclusions is that the council has an unallocated General Reserve balance of £12.8m, something which is offered as ‘adequate assurance’ to the council. The council also has a budget of about £20m which it uses to offer funding to the voluntary sector, and there is a proposal to continue that level of expenditure. The breakdowns of the figures awarded to various organisations can be read among the papers for the

meeting which are all online. The Welcoming Association is only one of those which has had its grant funding completely cut from the proposed budget. They received £77,000 in the current financial year as opposed to almost £81,000 in the previous year.

[The Edinburgh Labour Group](#) issued their alternative budget about a week ago, but have criticised the administration for not publishing their budget proposals except by leaking details to the [Edinburgh Evening News](#). That paper reports that there is to be a £26m spending spree.

Here is the Agenda

[Budget Agenda 090212](#)

Edinburgh World Heritage is a charitable organisation responsible for conserving and promoting the interests of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. Its work includes the conservation and repair of buildings, monuments and spaces; the adaptation of historic buildings to modern life; learning, outreach and promotion of the World Heritage Site and influencing decision-making.

EWH's board is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation and stewardship of public and charitably given funds. It is highly active at a strategic level and requires the energetic input of trustees who are able to support and add value to the work of its small professional team.

It is currently seeking a new Chair, to replace Professor Charles McKean. The role is unremunerated and will require a time commitment of around five days a month. [You can apply here.](#)

With the half term this weekend, [Skyscanner](#) asked more than

1,000 families to score the UK's top 10 busiest airports on several family friendly factors including children's play areas and facilities, food options for children and the security process.

Scotland's biggest airports took the top two spots in the study with Glasgow International Airport coming second, just behind Edinburgh Airport.

[Edinburgh Airport](#), which carries more than 9m passengers each year, was hailed for its range of restaurants with more than 70% of those polled stating they were happy with the number of family friendly dining options. The airport was also recommended for its runway viewing areas and its accessibility while Glasgow International was commended for its variety of children's play areas.

Edinburgh Zoo is making the most of its YouTube channel to show off the newly constructed climbing frames in each panda's enclosure. There is also a [Panda Cam](#) installed to let you see the bears moving around in their enclosures at all times of the day. Here is a film by Sharon Hatton showing Yang Guang using his new toy:-

The number 13 bus service that runs from Craighleith-Blackhall to Lochend has been short-listed for the Best Bus Service prize at the Scottish Transport Awards.

Liberal Democrat Councillor Tim McKayn commented: "There was always strong community support for this service, but in persuading my colleagues to agree to the relatively large subsidy (£180,402 this financial year) I was nervous that the numbers using it would not justify the money. In fact while it

was originally thought that passenger numbers would be around 2,000 per month, they have actually reached around 9,500. I am both delighted and relieved that it is being so well used.”

The service is operated by Edinburgh Coach Lines (ECL), and was proving so popular that ECL added a couple of extra journeys on a commercial basis, although one of these was later cancelled. 55% of those using the service are concessionary passengers.