

Five things you need to know today



David Gilroy sentencing – Transmission charges – Trump due at Holyrood next week – Edinburgh Inspiring Capital – Planning applications to be determined for Ferris Wheel & Raeburn Place Hotel

David Gilroy who was convicted of the murder of Suzanne Pilley last month will be sentenced at the High Court this morning. Following the editorial about STV cameras being allowed into the High Court today on the [Law Society of Scotland website](#), Elizabeth Cutting, communications officer for the Scottish Judiciary replied:- “I welcome the note of caution expressed here about the pressure to increase TV coverage of courts by the media. The decision to allow cameras into the court next week is an opportunity for the public to see justice being done in a very high profile case that will attract a lot of public interest. This type of court situation presents a low risk to the administration of justice and it is that that will be the deciding factor in any future requests for access.

No doubt there will be increased pressure to have cameras in court more regularly, but the decision to allow access in this particular instance does not indicate that cameras will become a regular presence in our courts. Control will rest firmly with judges whose main priority is to ensure that there is no threat to the proper administration of justice.”

The TV footage will not be live but will be released as soon as possible afterwards, and the cameras will only show the judge and his officials, not the dock where Gilroy will stand. Tweeting will be allowed from the courtroom. We hope to be there to bring you the news as it happens. Follow us on

[Twitter here.](#)

Later this morning The Scottish Parliament are debating the impact of proposed transmission charging on Scotland's islands.

According to one Edinburgh renewable company, this is very welcome.

Martin McAdam, CEO of Edinburgh based wave energy company, [Aquamarine Power](#), said:-“Scotland's islands could be a green powerhouse for the rest of the UK – but only if transmission charges are reformed by energy regulator Ofgem.

“At present the islands are expected to foot the bill for upgrading the lines which will transport the energy to where it is needed. Island charges are charged nearly eight times the cost of what projects pay on the mainland. Early stage marine technologies cannot bear such a disproportionate cost of transporting clean energy to the south.

Transmission lines should be viewed as a national asset, to carry green energy from the periphery of the UK to our main centres of population.

The Western Isles interconnector, for instance, would cost only two pence per UK household if the cost was spread evenly – and would offer vast amounts of reliable wind and wave energy which would help insulate consumers from volatile domestic electricity bills caused by fluctuations in natural gas prices.

We urge Ofgem to do the right thing and introduce fair charges for Scotland's islands.”

However next week at Holyrood is when the sparks might fly.

Donald Trump is set to fly in to the capital to give evidence at Holyrood.

Tickets for the public gallery will be available shortly for when the Trump Organisation gives evidence to the Economy Energy and Tourism Committee inquiry into the achievability of the Scottish Government's newly revised targets within its 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy (Wednesday 25th April).

Members of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact Visitor Services from Wednesday 18th April as per normal booking procedures, by emailing sp.bookings@scottish.parliament.uk or calling **0131 348 5200** or freephone **0800 092 7600** (Textphone users: **0800 092 7100**). Bookings can also be made in person at the Visitor Information Desk in the Main Hall of the Scottish Parliament.

The meeting will also be webcast live on [Parliament tv](#).

Trump has issued a statement saying that wind is a waste of money according to Holyrood Magazine [who have an article about his impending appearance here.](#)

Since the inquiry was launched in January, the Committee has been gathering evidence from experts on energy generation, the planning process, skills and education providers and shortly, from those involved in producing heat from renewable energy and also the management of the grid and transmission system.

As the Committee approaches the half way mark for this inquiry, and reflects on the three months of evidence gathered, Committee Convener Murdo Fraser said:

“Onshore wind power has dominated most of the 157 written submissions to the inquiry. It also attracts the most media attention. But dig deeper and it becomes apparent that there are wider issues across the spectrum of renewable energy generation that need to be addressed.

“We have heard from witnesses about concerns about the planning system and the risk it poses to the achievability of the targets. It took, for example, over a decade to consent the arguably critical piece of grid infrastructure; the new Beaully to Denny transmission line.”

As the Committee prepares for its next round of evidence taking between now and summer, future witnesses will cover:

- Grid and infrastructure matters – including future proofing the grid, connection charges and how to encourage capture of the renewable energy potential in Scotland’s islands.
- Finance and investment, including issues for wave and tidal technology development, particularly for the critical stage beyond the initial R&D phase.
- Community projects – examining the complexity of the system and the skills required to successfully navigate it.
- Skills issues and examining why the transition of personnel from the traditional energy and oil and gas sector into renewables has been low and what could be done to redress this.
- Issues around the target for renewables sources to provide the equivalent of 11 per cent of Scotland’s heat demand by 2020.

The Committee is expected to complete evidence taking in June and report in Autumn 2012 on whether the targets are achievable.

The Clipper Round the World race goes on. Edinburgh is now lying around 7th or 8th in the race. But for *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital*, whose crew is pushing hard and determined to show they have what it takes, it may well be a case of less haste, more speed.

“Unfortunately this morning we’ve had a massive wrap of the

kite,” explains skipper, Flavio Zamboni. “In fact the thing managed to wrap around itself, the forestay, the inner forestay and the pole up-haul! It took us a while to sort out the mess but in the end we managed to take it down with only minor damage. At that stage I tried to be smart and asked the crew to put the heavy one up in the meantime without hoisting the headsail first. As a result, we nearly wrapped that, too. Because of all of the above we ended up sailing under main only for a few hours which, of course, has benefited the competition.

“The crew of *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital* is trying really hard, anyway, and we’re looking forward to the days to come!” he concludes.

The boats are so close there is only six miles between *Qingdao* in fifth and *Edinburgh Inspiring Capital* in eighth place. The team representing Scotland’s capital city has been racing the furthest offshore and is the most southerly of the yachts.

The Council’s contribution to the cost of the marketing campaign is £55,000. The reasoning behind the council continuing to support the yacht is set out in the Report to the Economic Development Committee from 31 May 2011 which you can read below. We thought we knew how much the yacht was costing in total but upon reading this report again we are not really sure, and in any case the identity of the sponsor is not made public knowledge from this report. But it appeared to be good value to the council as they approved the use of council funds for the worldwide marketing exercise.

[Clipper Round the World Race](#)

Today at the City Chambers there are some important planning

matters being decided. The giant ferris wheel to be sited in Princes Street Gardens is due for approval, notwithstanding some heavy opposition from the Cockburn Association:-

Proposed Ferris Wheel, West Princes Street Gardens

The Council will be making a decision this Wednesday on the application to place a ferris wheel next to the Ross Fountain in West Princes Street Gardens. The Cockburn Association has objected to the proposal:

APPLICATION REF: 12/00696/FUL; West Princes Street Gardens Princes Street Edinburgh; The proposal is for the temporary location of a self-supporting 53 metre giant observation wheel with up to 42 fully-enclosed and air-conditioned capsules, two ticket booths and a control booth (housed on the platform of the wheel) in Princes Street Gardens West.

The Association has studied the plans for the above proposal and wishes to make the following comments.


West Princes Street Gardens are included on Historic Scotland's Inventory of Designed Landscapes & Gardens (New Town Gardens of the City of Edinburgh) and are rated Outstanding in the categories of Work of Art, Historical, Architectural and Scenic, therefore any development in this landscape of recognised national importance must be sensitive and thoroughly thought through. The location of the proposed giant observation wheel will impact directly upon the setting of multiple listed buildings: Edinburgh Castle, St Cuthbert's Church, St John's Church and the Caledonian Hotel, Ross Fountain to name but a few of the category A listed buildings. It will also impact upon the amenity of St Cuthbert's and St John's churchyards, home to numerous graves and memorials.

The photo montages provided by Great City Attractions reveal the significant visual impact the giant observation wheel will have upon the iconic scenographic group. The wheel is not purpose designed for its setting like the London Eye but is of a generic design that enables fast assembly and dismantling reflecting its temporary nature and cannot therefore be described as a well-designed addition to the landscape. It does not preserve or enhance the setting of the Castle but introduces a visual intrusion to views of the Castle Rock, the domed apse of St Cuthbert's Church, views across the valley to the Caledonian and effectively destroys the garden setting of the Durenne Ironworks' Ross Fountain. Historic Scotland's Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting should be used to guide the City of Edinburgh Council's decision and paragraphs 4.4-4.15 make clear the analysis and assessment required. It is our reading of this document that the proposed observation wheel would be detrimental to the setting of the listed buildings by being visually intrusive and that there are no means of mitigating this. Due to the detrimental visual impact upon the historic garden and the setting of various listed buildings the proposal contravenes Policies Env 3 and Env 7 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

We would also draw your attention to the Princes Street Gardens Conservation Management Plan which was updated in 2011 and states that the gardens "provide a welcome refuge from the hustle and bustle of the city centre". Siting a tourist attraction is not going to enhance the peaceful nature of the gardens but draw the hectic nature of the city into the gardens. It further states that the purpose of the management plan is to "maintain their history of evolution and primary passive recreational function", the observation wheel would be a large active form of recreation that would dominate the West Gardens. The 2008/09 visitor survey identified the most appealing quality of the Gardens as being a "place of tranquillity" and the observation wheel would undeniably diminish this.

The ice cream vans have long been identified by both the Council and the Association as a negative visual intrusion within the West Gardens and it is therefore somewhat surprising to find one arm of the Council recommending a much larger visual intrusion that will damage the ambience of the Gardens and iconic views to the Edinburgh Castle.

The Cockburn Association has always supported the enhancement of Princes Street Gardens as a green tranquil space within the city and fought to prevent commercial activity that does not directly enhance it. In light of this we strongly object to this planning application and recommend refusal.

But other planning applications up for discussion are not  so popular with the planners. The Raeburn House Hotel in Stockbridge has lain empty for some time and the MacLean family who now want to restore it to use as a hotel have conducted a high profile campaign to try and gather support from locals in Stockbridge for their application. However this is part of what the council report gives as its reasons for recommending refusal:- “The Planning Service is committed to ensuring that the building be refurbished and a viable new business occupy it. However, the proposals in their scale, materials and design are crude and not of the quality required for Georgian listed buildings in Edinburgh. Despite discussion with the Planning Service, the applicant has not produced proposals that display greater sensitivity to the building. Given the prominence of the site from a variety of viewpoints it will be an unattractive addition that will dominate the area and does not live up to the Council’s desire to foster a high quality environment.

The proposed extension will be of considerable detriment to the conservation area and will neither preserve or enhance its character or appearance.” Of course this does not necessarily mean that the planning application will be refused but it can often be indicative. Certainly it would be good to see something happening with this important building in the not too distant future.