

Five things you need to know today



Portobello High School – Council Elections – Earth Day – Big Hoodies – Films

Portobello High School is on the agenda for the final [full council meeting](#) of this administration which takes place this Thursday at the City Chambers.

A report has been issued to Councillors calling for the construction of the new Portobello High School to begin as soon as the current appeal by PPAG (Portobello Park Action Group) is either withdrawn or concluded in the Council's favour.

If the report is approved at the Council meeting, the only remaining obstacle to work beginning immediately will be PPAG's court appeal.

The appeal is due to be heard on 23 and 24 May 2012 although the judgement may take some time, meaning that the earliest the much needed new High School could open would be August 2014. However, if the appeal is dropped, the school could open its doors as early as January 2014.

Councillors will be asked to formally approve the appropriation of an area of land in Portobello Park under the powers of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The power to do this is something that the Council has asserted since 2008, a position that was fully supported in the recent judgement by Judge Lady Dorrian, in which she also dismissed the petition from PPAG on the grounds of their excessive delay.

In addition, Councillors will also be asked to approve the appropriation of the land under Section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. This provides local authorities with the power to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the well-being of its area and persons within that area. This provides the Council with a separate legal power to allow the plans for the new Portobello High School to be taken forward.

Education Convener, Councillor Marilyn MacLaren, said:- "We are extremely disappointed that PPAG is continuing to oppose our plans.

"In 2008 when PPAG initially said they would challenge the Council's decision in court, their view was based on the fact they believed that the approval of the Court was needed to go ahead with appropriation of the land at Portobello Park.

"Their recent argument now seems to be that we have the power to sell this land with the Court's approval, but not to appropriate it to build the school, even with Court approval. This is an argument which is very difficult to accept or understand.

"The fact we are submitting this report shows our continued dedication to this vital project and our commitment to see it through.

"The appeal by PPAG is now the only obstacle to the school being built at the earliest opportunity and I would urge them to see reason and drop the appeal to prevent any further unnecessary delays."

In two weeks' time we will have a new council. We have a couple of independent candidates on the list but nothing quite as bizarre as the candidate who has been put up for election in Aberdeen.....And a woman, presumably the 'election agent' has

been arrested [according to the BBC](#). The [full list of all Edinburgh candidates is on our Council Election page](#) with links to profiles of the individuals where we have been able to get details.

Today Anthropologie are going to entertain your children for you! They have big plans for Earth Day in their Edinburgh store.

This morning from 11am-1pm the visual team employed at the George Street shop are hosting a kids craft event for Earth Day. They are inviting children from ages 3-10 to come and create sea creatures that would live in their coral reef windows. A spokeswoman said:-“It will be a great interactive morning and the kids get to take everything they make home.”

They will also be collecting donations on the day for the Marine Conservation Society in Edinburgh (<http://www.mcsuk.org>).

We told you on Wednesday about the [third Joe Caslin art installation](#) which had appeared at Robertson's Close. Have you found any more? Do tell us where!

Today would be a great day to spend some time at [The Cameo](#). The Edinburgh Reporter would happily go and see three of their films today. Marley has just opened, Salmon Fishing in the Yemen and The Woman in Black starring Scarlett Johansson. Hold us back! Here is a taster...