

Five things you need to know today



City Chambers – Holyrood – Planning consultations – RNLI – Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival

The Sub-Committee for Children and Families meets at the City Chambers today. One of the items they will hear about is that Clovenstone Primary School gets a big tick in its latest inspection report which says that the school provides a ‘good standard of education for its pupils’. You can read the report and other papers for the meeting in [full here.](#)

Today at Holyrood there will be the usual First Minister’s Questions at 12. There are no questions lodged today by Edinburgh MSPs for answer by the First Minister but some of our MSPs were pretty vocal yesterday.

Gordon MacDonald got a mention for the Wester Hailes Education Centre with his question about pupils leaving school with Standard Grades at Level 7 only. He said during the exchange with The Minister for Learning, Dr Alasdair Allan:-“The Wester Hailes education centre in my constituency has made great strides in raising student attainment in recent years. This year, 21 per cent of pupils achieved five or more standard grades at credit level—a dramatic increase on previous years. Will the minister join me in congratulating the staff and pupils who made that achievement possible, and will he examine the measures that were introduced in the school to identify whether they can be rolled out to other areas? ”

As we reported yesterday Jim Eadie had tabled a question about Edinburgh Napier University’s campus at Craighouse. This was

the answer:-

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (Michael Russell): I am not aware of any discussions. Universities are independent, autonomous institutions and, as such, the Scottish Government does not intervene in institutional matters such as decisions regarding their estates strategies.

Jim Eadie: I thank the cabinet secretary for that answer, but is he aware of the significant amount of local concern about the sale of the Craighouse campus by Edinburgh Napier University? It is seen as a valuable community asset. Notwithstanding Napier's independence, does the cabinet secretary agree that the university has an obligation to achieve best value for the taxpayer, to ensure that all transactions are open and transparent, and to ensure that any assets are disposed of in a way that continues to provide benefit to the local community?

Michael Russell: Yes, I am keen that the indissoluble link between universities and the communities that they serve is recognised. The Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council requires colleges and universities to seek its prior approval for the disposal of publicly funded property when the proceeds are likely to exceed £3 million. As part of the approval process, the Scottish funding council requires colleges and universities to demonstrate that they have obtained an appropriate professional valuation from a reputable property agent. I will ask the council's chief executive to write to the member to reassure him on this matter, and I will be happy to meet him as well.

Presumably Edinburgh Napier University sought this approval before selling the campus for £10m to Craighouse Limited who now own the site?

Last week the council gave the green light to a development by De Vere Hotels of the empty office building at Crewe Toll. Now there are planning consultations when you can have your say on the proposal. These take place on Friday and Saturday 7 & 8 September 2012 at Morrisons supermarket on Pilton Drive.

[North Edinburgh News](#) has the whole story.

The RNLI at South Queensferry have taken delivery of a new boat and already it has been out on two shouts only yesterday, both in the Cramond area. It seems that hardly a week goes by without people being rescued from Cramond Island. Our full report on what [they were up to yesterday is here.](#)

The 10th Edinburgh Mountain Film Festival is almost upon us! It will take place on 26-28 October 2012 and it is what it says. All the films are about mountains... Don't suppose they will be playing The Sound of Music but if you book now you may get early bird discounts. [More details on their website.](#)