

Five things you need to know today



Conservative Group leader resigns – Saltire Card – Forth Ports – Royal Society of Edinburgh – Our Green Lord Provost

The Conservative Group leader on the council, Jeremy Balfour, has resigned as leader of the group and a new leader will be voted for and announced this Friday. Mr Balfour is taking up the post of Convenor of the Best Value and Governance Committee.

The announcement of plans for a Scotland-wide travel Smart Card has been hailed as a major step forward for public transport in Scotland.

The new Saltire Card will allow passengers to pre-load money onto their cards which can then be used to pay for fares on trains, buses, ferries, subways and trams throughout Scotland, just like the Oyster card which is so popular in London with visitors and residents alike.

The concessionary travel scheme already operating across Scotland using Smart technology is already the biggest example of a bus smart ticketing scheme in the UK outside London, with all of Scotland 260 bus operators taking part.

SNP MSP Jim Eadie who sits on the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee said:

“This is a great step forward in making it easier for people to use public transport services across the length and breadth of Scotland.

“Whether it’s for Scotland’s many commuters or for visiting tourists, being able to use Smart Card technology across the range of public transport options will give people far more flexibility when travelling.

“Improving the connections between our towns and cities is an important part of boosting local economies and continuing our progress towards meeting our world-leading carbon emission reduction targets.

“With a lot of the technology already in place thanks to the concessionary bus pass, I am hopeful that we will see Saltire Cards rolled out as quickly as possible.”

Forth Ports which owns Leith Docks has reported a rise in profits of 6% according to [The Herald.](#) Although the company has given up its bid to build a biomass plant in Leith it is said to be considering the move at other docks which it owns, including that in Grangemouth.

[The Royal Society of Edinburgh](#) held its annual statutory meeting last night and awarded honorary fellowship to Professor Mary McAleese and also made a presentation to Professor Peter Higgs.

The Lord Provost, Donald Wilson, was at Duddingston Primary School yesterday as patron of the Plant for the Planet Academy when children from five different schools learned about climate crisis, global citizenship and global justice. The children then planted trees. Other children who undertook a “Plant-for-the-Planet” Academy at Davidson’s Mains Primary School last spring trained the children at Duddingston, becoming part of the global network of Ambassadors for Climate

Justice in the process.

Donald Wilson, the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh said: "On becoming Lord Provost in May, I identified sustainability as one of my key priorities and made a personal commitment to lowering my own carbon footprint. I have already installed solar panels on my house and now drive a hybrid car.

"I was delighted to lend my support to the Plant-for-the-Planet initiative today and it was great to see such enthusiasm for the cause amongst the children. I sincerely hope they keep up the good work and spread the word amongst their family and friends – which is exactly what I'll be doing."