

Five things you need to know today



Cycling on the agenda – MP wants Leith investment – Santa Runners ready – New restaurant in Stockbridge – The Big Give

Edinburgh Southern MSP Jim Eadie, and Lothians MSP Alison Johnstone will today meet with Finance Secretary John Swinney to put the case for a step change in levels of funding for cycling infrastructure. Against a background of public concern over safety for cyclists on our roads, the MSPs who together convene the Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Cycling, will argue that ambitious government targets on the number of journeys which should be made by bike will be missed, unless there is extra funding to match.

Alison Johnstone said:

“Investment in cycling infrastructure brings significant benefits in terms of both health and the environment. The Netherlands and Denmark are great examples of cycle friendly countries and have shown what can be achieved if governments put their money where their mouths are”.

Jim Eadie said:

“If the Scottish Government is to achieve its 2020 target, we need a step change in cycling investment. Cycling brings greater direct benefits to the economy compared to spending on roads. That's just one reason why now is the time to increase investment in cycling”.

For those of you who missed it you can still watch the BBC documentary about cycling which aired last night on the [BBC iPlayer](#). Dr David Brennan, one of the founders of Pedal on Parliament took part in the documentary but he and the other cycling campaigners [have clarified their thoughts on the way the programme has portrayed cycling](#). This is an excerpt from their news blog:-“Here at Pedal on Parliament we welcome the debate about road safety that such documentaries can trigger, but we wish to emphasise that we don't welcome the suggestion

that there's a war on Britain's roads. Instead, we ask policy-makers and planners to consider how they can remove the conflict from our roads, by designing them with all roads users in mind. In Britain's towns and cities pedestrians and cyclists should be placed at the top of the hierarchy of road users. Our [eight point manifesto](#) emphasises the need for both world class design, and an increased spending to make active travel a realistic option for people of all ages and all abilities – not just those who are fast enough and alert enough to survive on the roads as they are.”

Taking part in a debate at Westminster on unemployment in Scotland, Mark Lazarowicz MP called for new investment in infrastructure by Government both north and south of the border to create new jobs, pointing to plans to develop the Port of Leith as a potential focus for Government-backed investment here in Edinburgh.

Mark said:-“Youth unemployment has risen sharply locally and there is also a problem of underemployment – people aren't able to get as much work as they would like, whether with their employer or where they are self-employed.

“House building is always a sign of activity in the economy as a whole and there have been only 8 new homes built in Edinburgh North and Leith in the last quarter. Yet once again in his autumn statement the Chancellor failed to provide funding for new affordable housing. There were no plans either for High Speed 2 to extend to Scotland. In other sectors where the Government has announced investment – often more than once – little has happened on the ground.

“The Chancellor heralded new capital investment again today

but it needs to happen now not in some dim and distant future. A £119 million development of the Port of Leith is on a list of shovel ready projects here in Scotland. Both the UK and Scottish Governments need to get on with projects like this to create jobs so that young people desperately seeking work are not left disillusioned.”

Mark also highlighted the failure of the UK Government’s much heralded Work programme to make any impact in helping people find work. Of those people locally referred to the Work programme only 4% of those under 25 and 3% of those over that age have found work for 6 months or more as a result according to figures obtained from the House of Commons Library.

You can find the speech in full at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/todays-commons-debates/read/unknown/478/#c478>

In a nod to Team GB’s success in this year’s Olympic Games, Santas from Team North Pole were warming up at Meadowbank Stadium yesterday morning in preparation for the Great Edinburgh Santa Run this weekend. The [Santas would like you to come out on Sunday morning 9 December 2012](#) and don your Santa suits to run, walk or toddle around West Princes Street Gardens in aid of the When You Wish Upon a Star foundation.

The Pantry farm shop and kitchen is opening its doors in Stockbridge tomorrow morning, bringing the finest Scottish produce to the city just in time for Christmas. Combining

carefully sourced ingredients with influences from around the world The Pantry hopes to showcase Scotland's cuisine at its best, with a relaxed and informal dining experience.

From free-range pork from Liddesdale and hearty vegetables from the likes of East Coast Organics to specially created apple and seabuckthorn presse from Cuddybridge, each dish on the menu features a star ingredient that can be traced back to a local Scottish producer. The menus will vary every week, reflecting seasonal change and availability. In the opening week, visitors will be able to enjoy the likes of Arbroath smokie kedgeree with soft quail's egg and Pulled pork cheek, grain mustard, apple sauce and shredded celeriac.

Every star ingredient served in the kitchen will be available in The Pantry's well stocked shop. The 'urban farm-shop' will offer a variety of Scottish meats, cheese and fish, local fruit and vegetables, along with a range of meals to cook at home all prepared in The Pantry's kitchen. Cakes, coffees, light bites, salads and sandwiches will also be available to takeaway throughout the day.

The Pantry, based at 1-2 North West Circus Place, will be opening on Friday 7th December from 12pm and there will be an opportunity to sample some of the dishes on the new menu throughout the day.

On-going, the kitchen will be open from 8.30 serving breakfasts, lunch, cakes and coffees, with light bites and 'one-pot-wonders' available in the evening till 9pm. The shop will also be open from 8.30 till 9pm too, offering diners the opportunity to purchase ingredients they have enjoyed in the kitchen.

To make a booking or for more information visit www.thepantryedinburgh.co.uk.

Edinburgh World Heritage have been in touch to remind us about their involvement in The Big Give which starts today.

From 10am today, EWH will be taking part in the [Big Give Christmas Challenge](#). This means that if you make a donation to EWH, your gift, whatever the size, could be doubled.

Last year your donations helped us to:

- **Look after Edinburgh's treasures** – conserving historic buildings and monuments.
- **Keep the city's story alive** – through our schools and community programmes.
- **Regenerate Edinburgh's neglected corners** – improving the city's public spaces.

Please go to the [Big Give Christmas Challenge](#) from **10am today, tomorrow or Saturday** and make a donation to EWH. To make your donation go even further please remember to tick the Gift Aid box.

If you prefer please come into the Edinburgh World Heritage office to donate online. We can help you navigate the Big Give website, and we will also be able to say a big thank you in person!

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