

Five things you need to know today



Lonely this Christmas? – Oil & Gas company defers directors' payout – Soundhouse – Christmas trees – Look after your phone!

Almost 10,000 older people in Scotland are facing Christmas alone this Festive Season.

And First Minister Alex Salmond has called on all of us to make Scotland a great place where the elderly are included in all the celebrations.

Speaking during a visit to Lifecare's Dean Club service for over 65s in Edinburgh's Stockbridge – where he helped Santa hand out Christmas gifts – the First Minister urged all Scots to take time to visit older relatives, pop next door to check on neighbours and even set another table space for a deserving friend to spread some festive cheer in the coming weeks. The First Minister said:

“This time of year is one filled with excitement and anticipation, but for many of our older population this season only serves to highlight how isolated they can be. The psychological impact of having nobody to talk to or express concern about you is bad enough, but loneliness can also have a major impact on physical health. The work of day centres across the country is invaluable in ensuring our elderly people are socially connected with their local community and today I would urge all Scots to follow this example and make a little time to spend with an elderly relative, neighbour or friend.”

Edinburgh-based Bowleven has decided not to pay any directors' incentives at this time due to poor share price performance [according to The Herald](#).

We have been big supporters of the Sound House in Abbeyhill over the last year or so but it seems that all good things may have to come to an end as the venue is to be prevented from holding house parties from January. Until then there are some more evenings when good music will be played chez Douglas Robertson. [Find out more on their website](#).

Have you put your Christmas tree up yet? Then will you [share it on our Pinterest board here](#)? We would like to have a board completely covered in trees of all shapes and sizes!

Police in Edinburgh are warning people to be on their guard against mobile phone thieves operating in the city centre over the festive period.

There have been a number of incidents in recent days where people have had their mobile phones stolen, either directly from their pockets, or from coffee shop tables where they have laid their phone.

On some of these occasions, the victims had their devices stolen by a man who distracted them beforehand by offering advertising flyers.

Inspector Gill Geany, from Lothian and Borders Police, said: "Mobile phones, especially smart phones, are particularly attractive to thieves, and all contain personal and private information that makes their theft particularly worrying for victims.

“There have been a number of incidents over the past week where thieves have targeted people for their mobile phones, taking advantage of situations where phones have been left on open display, or are visible and within easy grasp inside the owner’s pocket.

“In other cases the victims have been deliberately distracted by a man handing out advertising flyers in coffee shops and restaurants, before having their phone stolen.

“It is important that mobile phone users limit opportunities for thieves by keeping their devices safe and secure, and avoid having them out on open display.

“In recent months we have been successful in returning stolen devices to their rightful owners as a result of them being registered on the Immobilise database, and we are keen that as many people as possible take advantage of this service, which is completely free.

“Of course, you should always report the theft or loss of a mobile phone to the police, but by registering with Immobilise you are giving yourself a far better chance of your phone being returned to you, if it is recovered by officers.

“We would encourage anyone with a mobile phone to register their device on the Immobilise database, which can be accessed at www.immobilise.com.”