

Five things you need to know today



**Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme – Leith Walk Programme
– Cramond Island tide catches walkers out – Postcode Challenge
– Cougars get grant monies**

Phase 1 of the works to improve flood defenses along the Water of Leith will be completed by the end of this summer, but the cost of the work has gone up by over £12m, for a variety of reasons. It would be good to be able to explain these reasons to you in succinct form, but even the council report has had a little difficulty in doing this.

There is a budget of £63.486m for the whole scheme. Just over £14m was spent on advance works, £29m on Phase 1, leaving just under £20m for Phase 2 of the works still needed further upstream. So far, the work has concentrated on areas downstream from Stockbridge, following initial rearrangements at the reservoirs to ensure increased storage space for floodwater.

The work has taken longer than first thought, partly due to weather since the contract started in 2011, but also partly due to what is described as 'unforeseen ground conditions', uncharted public utilities and steps required to allow residents continued access while the works progressed.

But it appears that a large part of the delay has also resulted from disputes over the interpretation of contract documents, and the council says that it is taking steps to ensure that this is not repeated in Phase 2. These 'lessons learned' will be reported and discussed at the Transport and

Environment Committee on 4 June 2013. But this has meant the council entering into dispute resolution or mediation with the contractors, and agreement on a secret agreement between the council and the contractors signed off on 9 April under the direction of the Lord Provost and several other councillors, rather than waiting for the council meeting. The terms of the agreement are apparently 'commercially sensitive' which term only reminds us of the tram project. Whether or not the £19m or so which is left for Phase 2 is enough is not quite clear, but the council leader Andrew Burns is anxious to confirm that this draws a line under Phase 1 at least.

A steering group has now been set up to oversee the project towards its completion with representatives from Finance, Corporate Programme Office and Transport, as well as a project manager employed by the council who will run weekly meetings.

There is information about the extent of the works and updates on its progress [on the council's website](#), although the last update before the current report was posted last August. The report will be discussed by the council at their full meeting this coming Thursday.

There is an open letter published on the [Leith Central Community Council website](#) written by the community council to Transport Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds, about the ongoing issues with reinstatement works to Leith Walk stemming from the tram works carried out there some years ago now, and the terms of a report to the March Transport Committee.

The letter calls for action and clarity both as to the timing of the works and the extent of what will be done.

Councillor Hinds attended the Leith Business Association meeting at the beginning of April and spoke to that group to allay their concerns over the same report from the March Transport committee meeting. She explained then that the

council wants to get as much funding as possible for the street, and that the budget is now £5.5m plus all the other costs which are being met elsewhere, but explained that all of the work cannot be done at once.

Instead the utilities works are due to be completed by the end of April, and then the council will carry on with the next stage. The next phase of works due to be carried out in Constitution Street and Bernard Street was due to begin at the end of April/beginning of May and it will take until August for that phase to be complete.

Councillor Hinds also outlined that some parts of the works which had been consulted upon were not quite finalised, but that once they were (and after further consultation with Leith Business Association) then under powers delegated to councillors it will be possible to agree the plans without going back to a full Transport Committee. Councillor Hinds also told the meeting that the council is speaking to Transport Scotland who are keen to get involved in a scheme to enhance cycling and walking, suggesting that there might be dedicated cycle lanes coming up Leith Walk but with bikes sharing the bus lane on the way down.

There are also regular updates by the council officers, the most recent of which explained

“as part of the completion of utilities work on Constitution Street, the contractor will need to do some work in the pavement area out the front of 88 – 90 Constitution Street this weekend. This work can now happen following the removal of scaffolding at that point.

“The work will take place on Saturday 27th April after 1.00pm and possibly into the evening if required, and on Sunday 28th April from 10.00am until the early evening if required.

“As a reminder, the first phase of the main Constitution Street works are due to start on Monday 29th April, with the

pavement and road resurfacing commencing in the sections between the Foot of the Walk and Coatfield Lane and the Old Dock Gates to Bernard Street.

Two drop-in sessions will be held next week for local businesses and residents to raise any questions or issues they may have about the works:

Monday 29 April – 3:00pm to 5:00pm in Printworks Coffee, 42 Constitution Street

Wednesday 1 May – 10:00am to 12:00 noon in The Constitution Bar, 48 Constitution Street

The sessions will be particularly useful for those in the immediate area where the works are taking place and it is the intention to hold similar events in future in Leith Walk as the project progresses. "

So perhaps at least some of the answers to the Leith Central Community Council's letter may already have been answered?

And elsewhere in the city the tram works have all been completed in St Andrew Square which is now open to traffic again and free from any road works as you can see from our photograph today.



Another set of walkers were rescued from Cramond Island yesterday afternoon.

Queensferry RNLi volunteer lifeboat crew were called out to rescue four people including a female who was seven months pregnant, who had attempted to cross the flooding causeway from Cramond Island back to the shore.

Aberdeen Coastguard requested an immediate launch of Queensferry RNLi lifeboat after receiving a 999 call from the group who were up to their knees in water on the flooding causeway with the tide continuing to rise around them.

Queensferry RNLi lifeboat *Jimmie Cairncross* was launched at 1.45pm and arrived at Cramond causeway within 10 minutes. The four people, who were almost waist deep in water by now, and a dog were assisted on to the lifeboat and found to be uninjured, just cold.

A further four people were spotted on Cramond Island so they were uplifted by the lifeboat crew also. All eight people and the dog were taken to Granton harbour where an ambulance had been requested to check the pregnant lady. As a precaution she was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary to be checked over.

A Queensferry RNLi spokesman Mike Garfitt said:- ‘If anyone finds themselves trapped on Cramond Island by the incoming tide, dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard. The Coastguard will alert the lifeboat. Never attempt to cross the causeway when the tide has started to cover it. We also advise to check the tide tables at the start of the causeway for safe crossing times before attempting to cross to Cramond Island.”

Queensferry RNLi lifeboat crew were also called out on Friday 26 April at 8.55pm to rescue a yacht with three persons on board which had run aground on the Drum Sands to the west of Cramond. The 23ft yacht was towed to Port Edgar Marina.

Postcode Challenge for walkers and cyclists today down on the cycle paths in the north of the city.

[More information here.](#)



The RHC Cougars RFC have successfully sought funding to start a programme of Rugby Union coaching and playing opportunities for disadvantaged primary age children and especially girls via the 2014 Communities micro grants programme.

SNP constituency MSP, Colin Keir, today congratulated the Club on their £2,000 grant which will go towards much needed equipment and advertising.

Mr Keir said:- "As my local club I am delighted that the RHC Cougars RFC have been awarded this grant. I wish to extend my congratulations to everyone involved for securing this funding which will go a considerable way to starting Rugby Union coaching for disadvantaged children in my constituency and beyond"

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the largest distributor of National Lottery good cause funding, is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery. Today, BIG announced grants totalling £83,155 to 51 projects across the country, including that awarded to the RHC RFC. The 2014 Communities grants programme offers local sports clubs, voluntary and community organisations, community councils and schools grants of £300 to £2,000 to support and stimulate grass roots involvement in sport and physical activity leading up to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

In total £5.8 million will be invested over the lifetime of the fund, which is recognised as part of the Scottish Government's Games Legacy plan.