

Five things you need to know today



Help Tom Gilzean – Gorgie & Dalry Community Council – Edinburgh Zoo in the black (and white) – Aer Lingus choose Edinburgh for maiden voyage – Blackhall Plant Sale

There is a dreadful story in [The Herald](#) today about an incident of some mindless vandalism which has had terrible consequences for a 93 year-old Edinburgh man. The pensioner, Tom Gilzean, has an electric wheelchair which has been vandalised, and which he cannot use meantime. Councillor Cammy Day is reported to be trying to help sort the matter out..

Gorgie & Dalry Community Council will hold their next public meeting is on Monday 13 May 2013 at 7:00pm. It will consist of a brief AGM followed by a normal meeting.

*Remember we have changed where we hold our meetings and you'll now find us in **Gorgie Dalry Parish Church, 190 -192 Gorgie Road, EH11 2NX**. It's very easy to find – next to Tynecastle and opposite White Park. Enter through the main door on Gorgie Rd and walk through to the meeting room at the rear of the Church. Press the buzzer twice if the door isn't open.*

We still have vacancies on the Community Council committee for individual residents and for those who represent organisations within the Community Council area. If you would like to get more involved with your community, and help improve the environment we all live and work in, then please

get in touch and we'll can help answer any questions about what is involved.

Individual residents wanting to get involved just need to live within our area, be on the electoral role, and get signatures from two other residents. Those representing local organisations will need to show that their organisations support their application, but get in touch and we'll go through what's needed with you. We are also looking for people who may be able to offer some of their time and specialist skills on specific projects – such as desktop publishing, social media, web page development, green projects, etc. – so please get in touch if you have any ideas or a couple of hours a month free.



It appears that Edinburgh Zoo is now back in the black due to their rock star pandas, Tian Tian and Yang Guang. Before the arrival of the two animals, on loan from China, the zoo was suffering financial and management issues. Now in the year when it hopes to be celebrating its centenary with the pitter patter of panda cubs, the financial picture has been reported as a good one. This has to be attributed to the draw that the pandas, and now to a lesser extent the penguins have for families and tourists.

In 2012 RZSS financially exceeded expectations, more than doubling cautious predictions made.

Income in 2012 increased by 53%, directly due to an upturn in visitors at both parks, but also due to a strong retail and catering performance. RZSS achieved an operational surplus of almost £1.5m; including investment and pension gains this total figure rises to nearly £2.4m.

There was a substantial visitor number increase at Edinburgh Zoo as the attraction was 51% up on the previous year; clearly giant panda driven, however some relatively favourable weather also had an extremely positive effect. At the Highland Wildlife Park visitor numbers were also 25% up on the previous year, the likely effect of a record number of animal births in 2012, including wolf cubs, and the arrival of the second polar bear Arktos at the end of 2011.

RZSS fully expect the 2013 results to remain strong with continuing interest in visiting pandas.

Chris West, CEO of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS), said:-“RZSS is delighted to announce our financial results for 2012. As a conservation charity receiving no public sector support, in the space of 12 months we have built it up from a £0.7m deficit to an operating surplus of £1.5m, with the overall surplus for the year being £2.4m after taking into account investment and pension gains.

“Obviously a huge leap for us, we must acknowledge giant pandas as being part of the reason; however they are an integral part of the collection and not a stand-alone attraction; Edinburgh Zoo would also have been poised to move into a positive financial position without giant pandas. I must also stress that giant pandas are a conservation programme for RZSS. Our primary goals are conservation, science and education related. RZSS combines the remit of a not-for-profit conservation charity, with the visitor attraction arms of Edinburgh Zoo and the Highland Wildlife Park.

“All of our surplus is invested back into the animals within our collection and into conservation work around the world. The financial benefits from the pandas enables us to support many other projects, not least the renaissance plans for the 100 year old Edinburgh Zoo.”

If you have not yet managed to get along and meet the Giant Pandas, then [you can watch them on the Pandacam.](#)

Aer Lingus Regional, operated by Aer Arann, flew the airlines first brand new plane on its maiden voyage to Edinburgh this week.

The airline, who operates 72 flights per week to Edinburgh, collected its first new ATR 72-600 plane at a ceremony with ATR, the world's largest manufacturer of regional aircraft, in Toulouse, France last week. The plane is the first of eight ATR 72-600s ordered by Aer Arann in a contract valued at almost €144 million.

Aer Arann celebrated the arrival of its first new plane and the addition of extra flights to the Scottish capital by choosing Edinburgh as its maiden voyage. [More here...](#)

Blackhall Plant Sale this Saturday. More about this on the [North Edinburgh News...](#)

