

Five things you need to know today



Transport for Edinburgh – New Gaelic School – MSP calls for action on Zero Hours contracts – Edinburgh International Book Festival pick of the day – Edinburgh Festival Fringe pick of the day

The council is planning to roll out a new transport body called Transport for Edinburgh which [was announced yesterday](#).

We asked the opposition party leader, Conservative Councillor Cameron Rose, what he thought about the plans for a new body:-
“Given the history of the project, the top priority is to get trams up and running as efficiently as possible. With trams now being tested on the track between Gogar and the Airport, **Transport for Edinburgh** needs to focus on providing a good service to travelling customers with integrated tram and buses. Grand plans for the future are premature.

The reality is that the tram part of the companies will not run profitably for some considerable time and the priority is to get it running smoothly – and into the black as soon as can be. That is what the people and taxpayers of Edinburgh expect and deserve.

The proposals published by the Administration are for a politician to chair the board of the transport companies. That is not a good idea. I believe a non executive director with relevant transport expertise would be more appropriate and I will try to persuade the Administration to accept this improvement.”

The Edinburgh Reporter is off to the new Gaelic school, **Bun-Sgoil Taobh na Pàirce** in Bonnington Road this morning to meet the new pupils attending there, and perhaps have a chat with the Headteacher. A total of 212 pupils have enrolled there for the new term.

We hope to have video later – they expect a piper!

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Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for Lothian and a member of Holyrood's economy committee, is renewing her call for action on so-called zero-hours contracts in light of the revelation that subcontractors on the Borders Railway project are being employed on such contracts.

In committee Alison has pressed Finance Secretary John Swinney to use the procurement process to prevent firms using zero-hours contracts from being awarded public work.

Alison said:-“The finance secretary assured me that zero-hours contracts were not used by the Scottish Government and I urged him to look at extending this standard to all work that is publicly-funded. It's frustrating to see these contracts being used by subcontractors on such a high-profile publicly-funded project.

“We must clamp down on inappropriate employment tactics. We should look for opportunities in the forthcoming Procurement Bill to improve job security.”

Broadcaster and journalist Andrew Marr is at the Edinburgh International Book Festival today in one of his first public appearances following a spell of illness. Unfortunately the event is sold out although there is always the chance of a return ticket, but what we recommend for you today (and for which there are still tickets available) is an event staged as a tribute to the late Dr Gavin Wallace who led Creative Scotland’s literature team. Leading writers will celebrate his legacy, ensuring that Scottish novels made it into print which we might not otherwise have had the pleasure of reading. [Tickets and details here.](#)

We have more photos from yesterday at the Book Festival over here on our Gallery, courtesy of John Preece, but here is a wee flavour of what he’s been snapping in Charlotte Square!







Edinburgh Festival Fringe means that we get about many emails each day asking us to review shows all across the city, which of course we simply don't have the manpower to do.

However The Edinburgh Reporter met a woman yesterday whose efforts to put on a Fringe show are nothing short of superhuman. Her show starts at 7:00am each morning and goes on for 8 hours. Vicki Weitz is running a marathon every day up and down The Royal Mile. Now this you might think not too difficult. Others might have accomplished similar feats. BUT they have not done this among the madness that is The Royal Mile during the Fringe!

We met up with Vicki yesterday and stopped her only for a moment to take her photo but she would love it if you would join her to walk or run for a while. [More details here.](#)

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