

Five things you need to know today



Council meeting – Panda symposium – Edinburgh International Book Festival pick of the day – Edinburgh Festival pick of the day – Airport expansion welcomed

The full council meets today in the first meeting of the session following the summer recess.

The papers for the meeting are online here and you can follow our [Live Coverage](#) when the meeting starts at 10:00am. You can also follow what happens at the City Chambers by watching the [webcast](#).



The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) is proud to announce that they are bringing the foremost panda experts in the world to Scotland to develop a worldwide five year Giant Panda Research Project.

From the 10th to 12th September 2013, some of the world's brightest lights will gather together in the same room for the very first time at Edinburgh Zoo for the Giant Panda Research

Symposium. Spearheaded by RZSS, and the next important steps in the conservation charity's Giant Panda Project, the event will see experts from around the world come together to help to develop a five year giant panda research plan which will have global ramifications on how giant pandas are cared for in zoos around the world and in Chinese reserves. The five year giant panda research plan will centre on five key areas: field ecology, genetic management, artificial breeding and infant panda care, veterinary management and research, then finally cognitive evolution and behavioural research.

Amongst many others, attending will be experts from RZSS, the CWCA (China Wildlife Conservation Association), CCRCGP (China Conservation and Research for Giant Pandas), the State Forestry Association for the People's Republic of China (SFA), the Chinese Academy of Science and Peking University. Key individuals from panda zoos around the world will also be present, including experts from Smithsonian National Zoological Park, San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research and Memphis Zoo. Researchers and representatives from related UK and worldwide institutions who can bring their expertise to the key areas of panda research will also be in attendance, including key Scottish bodies like the Nutrition and Health at the University of Aberdeen, the Natural History for the University of Glasgow and the Psychology Department for the University of St Andrews.

The Symposium will be officially opened by the Chinese Consulate General Li Ruiyou.

Chris West, CEO of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, said:- "I am immensely excited that RZSS is spearheading a global research project into giant pandas. The outcome of the Giant Panda Research Symposium, a multi-disciplinary global gathering to come up with a five year programme of integrated research and applied science, should make a real difference to the conservation of pandas and their habitat in the wilds of China. This really is ground-breaking research science at

which RZSS is at the heart. The symposium underlines the Society's aims to continue to be a world leader in conservation, science and education."

There is only one thing to see today at the Book Festival and you may still be able to get tickets.... [Booking details here](#). Wait for returns at the reception!

Alan Rusbridger, *Play It Again*, 3.00pm

Having mastered Chopin's difficult First Ballade, Opus 23, within a year, the Guardian editor describes a work-life balance that involved tussling with Julian Assange and wrestling with the piano keyboard.

If you have been up Lothian Road outside the Usher Hall or on Nicolson Street outside the Festival Theatre you will have seen some new screens there....Here is what the Festival website says about it:-

Seeing is believing, but believing what? Experience the spectacular and ask yourself what you believe, especially about the future and your place in that future, as you try to absorb a proliferation of LED images (satellite pictures from Korea Aerospace Research Institute) of both Scottish and Korean cultures in this astonishing transformation of the analogue world to the digital.

In Media Skins, photographer and media artist Hyung Su Kim explores new artistic expressions in public spaces by creating media facades using LEDs. Kim's works transform familiar spaces and public spaces, whether the interior or exterior of buildings, theatres or even mountains into extraordinary places infused with possibilities through memories, history and re-inventions.

*The works will be displayed **outside Usher Hall, Lothian Road** and at **Festival Theatre, Edinburgh**.*

Join the [Facebook event](#) for updates and discussions.

Edinburgh Airport's MSP Colin Keir welcomed the announcement of a £150m investment programme that will allow more passengers to move through the airport faster and create around 100 new construction jobs during the creation of the building work.

Mr Keir said:

"I'm delighted that GIP (Global Infrastructure Partners) has brought forward these plans. It shows that they recognise the positive future for Edinburgh Airport. Already, Edinburgh has secured a *Best Airport in Europe* award and this capital investment will further enhance the status of the airport internationally.

"Edinburgh's local economy, as well as the national economy, will benefit greatly with more jobs in the pipeline.

"The investment will make for an even better travelling experience for tourism and business passengers as well as allowing the airport management under Gordon Dewar to plan for an expansion of more direct routes from Scotland's capital.

"This success is in spite of the crippling effect of the Westminster Air Passenger Duty on the aviation industry, for which we need a Yes vote in next year's referendum to gain powers to control, as the UK Chancellor refuses to devolve APD as asked for by the Calman Commission. I congratulate Gordon Dewar and his team at Edinburgh Airport on this announcement."



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