

Five things you need to know today



Bag snatch in Wester Hailes – Transport for Edinburgh – Bridgend Inspiring Growth – Edinburgh International Book Festival Pick of the Day – Edinburgh Festival Fringe pick of the day

Police in Edinburgh are appealing for witnesses following a bag snatch in the Wester Hailes area of the city.

The incident happened around 8.55am yesterday morning near the entrance to Hailes Quarry Park. Two male suspects grabbed the bag from a 30 year-old woman, a white clutch bag, before running off towards the Longstone area.

The first suspect is described as white, 6ft, 20 – 22 years old, gaunt appearance, thin build, large nose, small lips, wearing dark Barbour style jacket with khaki shoulders, stonewashed denim jeans and grey baseball cap.

The second suspect is described as white, 5ft 10", 20 to 22 years old, medium build, short messy fair hair, unshaven, wearing a long sleeve white top, black jeans with grey coloured Timberland style boots.

Police Sergeant Grant McCulloch said: "The female victim was thankfully uninjured following this bag snatch, but was shaken up by this incident. We are keen to hear from anyone who recognises the description or has any information that can help in our investigation."

Those with information can contact Police Scotland on 101 or alternatively, the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



The council decided yesterday, without too much discussion on the day, to establish a new body called Transport for Edinburgh. This will be much the same as Transport for London in that it will be a parent body which will eventually have responsibilities for all the transport in the capital whether that is cycling, trams or walking, but crucially will run the trams and buses in what is seen as an important first step.

The reason that there was so little discussion actually on the day is that the councillors had prior opportunity to examine all papers in a data room at the city chambers over the last few weeks. This can make it look as though councillors are not taking the time to consider matters, but the truth in this case is that the elected members had done their homework.

The Conservative group proposed two minor amendments to what was being proposed by the council. Part of what the Conservative group wanted was to appoint only 3 councillors to the board of the new Transport for Edinburgh in common with all other council arms length companies. The council however recommend that 4 councillors must be put on the board of this particular company as a result of the history of the project, and this was eventually approved. The Tory group had however made an amendment to the reporting structure for Transport for Edinburgh which was adopted in the eventual council motion.

Transport for Edinburgh is the way that the transport system in Edinburgh will now be run with integration between tram and bus. The Council report set out a company structure and

financial model which incorporates Lothian Buses (referred to in the business plan as Busco) and Edinburgh Trams (Tramco) into an arrangement where both companies report into Transport for Edinburgh (Topco). The fifteen year financial model shows a positive outlook with a forecast profit of £3.7m over the period with an operating surplus in the fourth year of operations.

The tram on its own is forecast to run with a £42m operating surplus. Maintenance and refurbishment costs for the tram system (totalling £87m and which is not part of operating costs) would be covered by an infrastructure access fee of £39.6m payable to the Council by Tramco and through the dividend of £55.2m paid to the Council by Lothian Buses and Tramco. There is potential for additional funding to be achieved on items such as advertising and ticket optimisation.

Councillor Lesley Hinds proposed the scheme and praised the elected members for taking the time and effort to examine the papers provided in the data room, made necessary because of the commercially confidential information on figures relating to the existing business of Lothian Buses.

“Lothian Buses have been very cooperative in making this deal work. They have a great deal of experience in public transport and so it is important they are on the Transport for Edinburgh board. I feel however that two members from the Capital Coalition and two from the opposition in the council should be on the board. Transport is essential for the growth of our city and we have to work together for the benefit of the city. I welcome the real consensus on the report produced for consideration today.”

Councillor Jim Orr, Vice Convener of Transport and Environment, seconded the motion to set up Transport for Edinburgh and he echoed the Transport Convenor's thanks to staff and elected members. He said that in contrast with the days when he was observing the tram discussions as a non-

councillor he now recognised a staging post in the project had been reached. He said:-“This has brought a real sense of order to this project.”

Councillor Joanna Mowat said:-“Hopefully once the tram is up and running this will be just another arms length council company and that is why we want to stick to rules set out previously for these kind of companies. It will stop it becoming an anomaly if the number of directors and elected members is the same as other such bodies.”

Councillor Steve Cardownie whose SNP group have not always been in favour of the Tram project, commented that they have always said they would give the project support as soon as it was decided it would go ahead. He also recommended an inclusive approach to the way that all major parties will be represented on the Transport for Edinburgh board. Councillor Cardownie said:-“This is a chance to take this project forward. We will play our part in trying to ensure that the tram with the buses is the best transport system we can have. This is a major engineering project and we now have a chance to involve all parties on the council and run Transport for Edinburgh for the benefit of everyone in Edinburgh.”

Councillor Norman Work who represents Almond Ward, while he supported the Capital Coalition motion took the opportunity of mentioning again that South Queensferry and Kirkliston and other parts of rural West Edinburgh are poorly served by Lothian Buses at present. Residents of these outlying areas have to pay higher fares due to the fact that their bus services are run by different operators. The Transport Convenor recognised that the problems in West Edinburgh have to be faced, but this body would be a good first step in achieving an integrated transport system and encouraged Councillor Work to speak to the Deputy First Minister about introducing a kind of Oyster card equivalent across Scotland which would enable even more integration of transport.

Councillor Maureen Child has told us about Bridgend Inspiring Growth (BIG) which wants to acquire and renovate Bridgend Farmhouse in Edinburgh on behalf of the people and place of Bridgend and the surrounding communities including Craigmillar with the intention that the facility becomes a multi-purpose centre for education, training and sustainable living directed and run by the local community. The farmhouse building has not been used for a number of years and is in a state of disrepair. BIG has secured funding to consider options on the best use for the building with a view to preparing a feasibility study and business plan to support the preferred option so funding can be secured to realise the mission. Please take a few minutes to click on the link below to complete the options survey to inform the consultation and tell us what you would like to see happen to the building. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BridgendFarmhouseConsultation> We will be presenting the outcomes of the community consultation at an event on 7 September.

Edinburgh International Book Festival comes to an end on Monday but before then there is still opportunity to get along to Charlotte Square for all things literary. We have put together a growing [gallery of photos](#) of at least some of the figures who have visited over the last couple of weeks.

This evening at 7:00pm there is a debate about the BBC. Here is what the Book Festival say:-

“The BBC has always aimed to deliver high-quality, impartial news. But despite enjoying huge acclaim internationally, in recent years domestic newspapers and some angry licence fee payers have called its impartiality and efficiency into question. With the internet revolutionising the way news is delivered, and with British press regulation imminent, can a

state-run broadcaster still provide the benchmark? Join our panel of Media Commentator for the Daily Telegraph, **Neil Midgley**, and **Grant Gibson** who is a digital designer, web and app programmer and technology writer for The Herald, to debate this political hot potato. Chaired by **Ruth Wishart**.”

Tickets are still available [on the Book Festival website here](#).

The Fringe will also be hurtling to a close at the end of the weekend. What is there left to say about all the various acts and performances which have taken place here? Well for our recommendation today here is something musical that we saw last year when it won a Herald Angel – and we just loved this show! Tubular Bells for Two at the Underbelly in Bristo Square at 17:45. [Tickets here](#).

“2012 sell-out hit returns to celebrate the album’s 40th anniversary. Don’t miss this thrilling theatrical experience which skilfully recreates Oldfield’s 1973 masterpiece, performed in real time by just two multi-talented musicians. Witness this herculean feat as Daniel Holdsworth and Aidan Roberts capture the playful lunacy of one of the most important albums of the 20th century... with only four hands and four feet!”

Our photo today shows a very young busker on the High Street last night. (Photo Martin McAdam)

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