

Five things you need to know today



Finance Committee – Grassmarket – Broomhouse Street Party – Sunshine on Leith – Big Beach Busk

The council's Finance and Budget Committee [meets today](#) with a huge agenda to cover. They are planning to put next year's budget out for public consultation within the next month as promised in the coalition agreement, but before then there is still some work to be done.

One of the items to be discussed is the future of the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme. Phase 1 of the scheme will be completed by the end of this month and in certain areas such as Warriston there is now a lovely new wall and flood defence. The council is now addressing the cost and execution of Phase 2. This part of the scheme includes flood defence works at Murrayfield/Roseburn, Coltbridge, Damside, Belford and Edinburgh Sports Club.

The whole scheme was estimated to cost £63.539m but due to difficulties with Phase 1 there was an overspend which required mediation to agree the final amount payable of £29.132m.

In view of overall budget cuts (the council needs to slice £20m off its annual budget of £1bn each year for the next few years) it is clear that the council cannot afford the full extent of the project. Phase 2 is expected to cost £25.5m of which only £19.916 is available in the council coffers. So the council is planning to restrict its expense to the amount which it actually has, unless it can find the surplus needed in its budget.

One of the Green councillors, Nigel Bagshaw, suggested in May this year that the engineering works were scaled back by reliance on natural flood defences where possible, and this common sense approach is to be included in any plans for what works will be included in Phase 2.

In 2010 there were modifications made to the reservoirs at Threipmuir, Harlaw and Harperrig which would improve the situation further downstream. The simple premise was that more storage in these reservoirs means that there ought to be less water coursing down the Water of Leith.

The council explains that it recognises that Murrayfield/Roseburn is the area most at risk (remember those photos of Murrayfield Stadium under water some years back?) and it is where most individual properties are at risk of flooding. The council is therefore recommending that a working group is set up to look at the plans and decide, in consultation with an independent consultancy firm, which parts of the project can safely be left out. The council is also planning to look at the cost of insurance against the risk of flooding in future. All of this is subject to the council's stated view that lessons have been learned from the completion of Phase 1 and that there will be improved governance, including weekly progress meetings, in future. They also promise better communication to all householders and others affected in the areas where the next flood defence work will be carried out.

There is a lot going on down in The Grassmarket. First of all the organisers of The Grassmarket Festival Fair tell us that it will be "an exciting, hugely busy, vibrant and positive event providing visitors and locals with a wide range of high quality Scottish and globally made crafts, fashion, accessories, home wares, jewellery, arts, foods and drinks as well live acoustic music and light comedy, so creating a feel

good chilled out atmosphere on Grassmarket that will be filled with thousands of festival revellers as well steeped in history every day!

A free public entry market/event that will house maximum 14 exhibitors selling, making and showcasing high quality crafted products in a vibrant atmosphere and high footfall location. The market will consist colourful 3 meter x 3 meter gazebos supplied by [Hand Up Media.](#)“

As well as this there is a Business Improvement District plan now in place, although it is not universally accepted by all business owners in the area according to [The Scotsman.](#)

There is already a BID in the city centre which is run by Essential Edinburgh, recently voted back in for a second term by around 78% of the business owners. Briefly, they levy all business owners in the area and then organise cleaning of the streets, waste removal and projects such as the lovely plant holders in Rose Street as well as events in St Andrew Square like the open air films which took place earlier this year.

[Click here](#) for the BID business plan for The Grassmarket which runs for five years till 2018 and sets out the names of all office bearers and what the project aims to do.

There are plans to set up similar BIDs in Leith and South Queensferry at various stages of incarnation.



The new film starring Peter Mullen will be released next month but we thought you might enjoy a little preview. Showing Edinburgh off at its very best there are loads of sites to spot here!



[The Big Beach Busk](#) takes place on Portobello Prom this Saturday. The organisers are getting very excited it seems from their Facebook page. The event is made up of street entertainers such as you might have seen on The Royal Mile over recent weeks, and you are invited to just pitch up and play – or pitch up and listen!

“No rules. Just Busking. You can be any kind of street entertainer you like from a one man band to an orchestra, a mime/robot, a choir, balloon modeller or magician. We’ve had brass bands and tenko drummers alongside salsa bands and some amazing singer songwriters.

A mile of promenade, a mile of buskers. Simple. No booking a place no buying tickets. Come along and play or come down just to see the spectacle. This is the Beach Busk.”