

# Five things you need to know today



**Fire Control Room at Tollcross to be retained – Property Prices in Edinburgh on the rise – Holocaust Memorial Day – Portobello Beach clean-up – Louise Bourgeois**

Although the decision is yet to be made about which three fire control rooms in Scotland will be retained alongside Johnstone Control the largest in Scotland, it appears that the recommendation is to retain a centre at Tollcross.

Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for Lothian, is welcoming a report for next week's fire service board recommending that the fire control room at Tollcross in Edinburgh should be retained but she is expressing sadness at the continued threat to jobs in centres including Inverness and Aberdeen.

The Edinburgh centre faced the axe as part of a property review following the creation of the new single service – another Scottish Government centralisation that the Scottish Greens campaigned against.

Last October Ms Johnstone raised her concerns with the chair of the fire board, and she visited the Tollcross control room to hear the concerns of affected staff first-hand.

Alison said:-“Having met with affected staff at the Edinburgh control room I naturally welcome what looks like a reprieve for them. But I remain saddened by the prospect of other centres such as Inverness and Aberdeen facing closure, and the loss of local knowledge and expertise.

“These plans were bungled by the single fire service board.

They were not discussed in advance with the highly skilled workers affected and management will clearly have some work to do to repair staff relations. Those regions set to lose their centres must have assurances that local needs will still be met.”

\*\*\*

Property prices in Edinburgh went up by 5% last year, according to figures just released for the fourth quarter of 2013 by Solicitors Property Centre Scotland.

The total number of residential sales across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife rose by almost 50% annually and to the highest level for the quarter since 2007. Most areas experienced a rise in house prices, with the average house price in Edinburgh increasing to £212,296. Although West Lothian saw a 10.4% fall in the average price, this followed a 9.3% rise the previous year meaning prices are now broadly in line with 2011 levels.

David Marshall, business analyst with ESPC said: “Buyer activity rose throughout 2013 and the number of homes being bought and sold is now as high as it has been for a number of years. As ever, it is important to put the recent improvement in context however. The volume of sales is still some way below what we would have seen at the peak of the market and properties are being secured for an average of about 2% below their Home Report valuation.

“That having been said, market conditions today are certainly more favourable for sellers than has been the case for several years.”

\*\*\*

On 27 January each year the world marks Holocaust Memorial Day. It was on this day in 1945 that prisoners at the largest Nazi extermination camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, were freed.

The Filmhouse is showing The Promise tonight, a documentary about Albanian Muslims who helped to rescue Jews during the Holocaust.

Booking details [here](#).

\*\*\*



\*\*\*



The Louise Bourgeois exhibition I Give Everything Away at [The Fruitmarket Gallery](#) runs for another month until 23 February 2014.

*“This acclaimed exhibition begins with a labyrinthine presentation of Bourgeois’s Insomnia Drawings, a remarkable suite of 220 drawings and writings made between November 1994 and June 1995. Created in the suspended state between sleeping and waking, The Insomnia Drawings contain all the major themes of Bourgeois’s work and reveal the close link between drawing and writing that is such a key part of her practice.”*