

# Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



**Council meeting today – Edinburgh City Singers – Edinburgh Zoo Nights – Chinese Warrior lanterns – Digital Sentinel**

The full council meets this morning beginning at 10 am. The Edinburgh Reporter will be providing live coverage [here](#). All of the council papers are [here](#).

The council will consider a report about the progress of building a new £41.5m school at Portobello. They will have spent almost £3.2m by the time they get to the stage where the Private Bill is passed. This is now being considered by Holyrood, and given that it attracted unanimous cross-party support when it was debated early last month, it is likely to be passed later this year.

While the council was involved with legal action in connection with the site at Portobello Park it had considered two 'fall back' options which are now said to be no longer possible as there are insufficient funds. One of these was to purchase the former Scottish Power site at Baileyfield, but Scottish Power has now agreed to explore the option of selling the property to another party. The council made an offer for the property last year but despite requests for information on the sale during 2013 the sellers did not advise their intentions till fairly recently.

The second fall back option is to build on the existing site in a phased manner which it is estimated would cost £47m and thus exceeds the budget.

The council already undertook in October 2012 to designate the existing school site as open space following the construction

of the new school on parkland. This will now be earmarked as a Field in Trust. This option offers a firm legal commitment from the council to retain the space as open ground in the future, which it must hope will allay some of the fears of those who opposed the building of the school on this site. In addition, during the planning renewal process the council undertook to allow access to the two all weather pitches to the public when not required by the school.

Follow our live coverage [here](#).

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There is a new community choir in central Edinburgh who are looking for new members of all ages and all abilities.

*We're the Edinburgh City Singers, and we are a non-auditioning choir open to absolutely anyone. We sing pop songs, folk tunes and songs from musicals. Songs that everybody knows. What's unique about us is that you don't have to pay up front for a whole term in order to attend rehearsals. Most choirs like this demand that you subscribe for a term, often having to pay up to £100 in advance! We offer a pay as you go system so that if you're unwell, going on holiday, or just realise that the choir isn't for you, you won't be out of pocket.*

You can visit our website here: [www.edinburghcitysingers.com](http://www.edinburghcitysingers.com), or our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/edinburghcitysingers](http://www.facebook.com/edinburghcitysingers)

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The award-winning Edinburgh Zoo Nights returns for 2014 and is tipped to be bigger and better than ever!

After a successful launch in 2013, the number of Edinburgh Zoo Nights has doubled from two to four, with the first event on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May followed by Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June. Tickets are on sale from today.

With tickets for both events last year selling out several weeks in advance, capacity for 2014 has increased to 2,500 per night. As Edinburgh Zoo is owned and operated by the charitable organisation the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, money raised from Edinburgh Zoo Nights will go towards the Society's range of conservation projects.

Edinburgh Zoo Nights offers adults a rare opportunity to see one of Scotland's iconic visitor attractions after hours, while enjoying a glass of bubbly and a range of delicious street food. Visitors will also be able to see what the Zoo's animals, such as the giant pandas, penguins or chimpanzees, get up to in the evening, while also enjoying live music and street performers.

Jo Paulson, Events Executive for Edinburgh Zoo, said: "Edinburgh Zoo Nights could not have had a better launch, winning Best In-House Event at the 2013 Scottish Event Awards, and it is really exciting to be bringing it back for a second year.

"Many aspects from last year's events will be returning this year, including the silent disco, animal talks and adult face painting, but we will be bumping up the entertainment on offer, with a different combination of live music, street performers and comedy acts at each event. Edinburgh Zoo Nights promises to be a wild start to the weekend!"

Running from 6pm to 10pm, advanced online booking is required for Edinburgh Zoo Nights; tickets cost £20 each or £17 each for members, plus booking fee. Attendance is strictly for over 18s. Tickets can be purchased via [www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/zoonights](http://www.edinburghzoo.org.uk/zoonights).

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The Chinese Warriors are still standing tall in the Old College Quad, but not for much longer! They will be on show for tomorrow only and then they will move along... So hurry while you can still get a glimpse of them! Stockbridge Photography Club offered us one of their photos of the warriors as their photography of the week which you can see [here](#).

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The Digital Sentinel is a project based in Wester Hailes funded by Carnegie UK Trust which aims to show local people how they might become local news reporters.

This week they have published a piece about local Wester Hailes artist [Ron Wilson](#), but what they really need are stories and also volunteers to come forward and help.

The next training session is on 19 February 2014 beginning at WHALE Arts at 1.00pm and then moving to the Wester Hailes Library at 5.30pm. Email [digitalsentinel@whalearts.co.uk](mailto:digitalsentinel@whalearts.co.uk) for more information.

Photo of Ron Wilson courtesy of Digital Sentinel.