

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Six months to the referendum – Budget Day – Transport Committee meeting – Ecurie Ecosse cars – Free workshops on grant funding

Six months today the country will vote on its future. The Edinburgh Reporter has no political agenda on the referendum or any other matter but is happy to share your views or those of the two main players in the independence debate the Yes Campaign and the Better Together Campaign.

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As Chancellor George Osborne prepares to present his Budget later today, the SNP claim that the UK Treasury is coming under increased demands to scrap plans to increase whisky duty.

Angus Robertson SNP Westminster leader commented : -“We know that an extraordinary 80% of the price of a bottle of whisky in the UK goes in tax to the Treasury. This week the Chancellor has a chance to do something to stop this unfair and discriminatory tax regime. The ‘tax and grab’ mentality at the Treasury is nothing new for the Whisky industry. Since 1999 alone Westminster taxes on whisky have increased by a whopping 39%. It is now quite simply time to end the spirits duty escalator in the budget.

“The Scottish Council Development and Industry (SCDI) recently

called on George Osborne to drop any plans for a further rise in duty on Scotch whisky, which unfairly penalises the industry compared with other forms of alcohol.

“The SCDI has pointed out that scrapping the alcohol duty escalator for whisky, which was scrapped for beer in 2013, would support business investment and exports, and could increase the drinks industry’s contribution to the economy by £230m in 2014.

“The No campaign trot out all the scare stories and myths about how Scotland would face an exodus of companies following a Yes vote. The truth is that whisky producers are investing in Scotland now even with all the punitive Westminster tax regime . But that investment could be higher – we are missing opportunities because Westminster is working against our interests. Only with a Yes vote this September can we promote – protect and grow Scottish industries away from Westminster’s control and create the fairer and more prosperous society we want to see.”

The council’s Transport Committee meets this morning at 10am. Today there is a new Vice Convener following Councillor Jim Orr’s resignation last month. Councillor Adam McVey was appointed at last week’s full council meeting to the post. 27 year-old McVey was elected as a brand new councillor at the 2012 elections and represents the Leith Ward.

He has a Masters in International Law and is hoping to put his stamp on the sustainability aspects of council business.

A petition was lodged with the Scottish Parliament in December 2013 to try and save the collection of Ecurie Ecosse cars for the nation.

The petition reads:-“This petition has come about due to the totally unique character of this collection but primarily because of their origins and the tremendous success that they had representing there country. These cars and transporter are the crown jewels of Scottish motor sport and as such should have a place in our national museum in Edinburgh, the birthplace of Ecurie Ecosse. Not just a collection of cars but a truely unreplaceable part of our heritage of which we as a nation should be justly proud and as such should be prepared to offer them a place where they can be viewed and appreciated by all. Driven by legends such as Sir Jackie Stewart, these cars cannot be allowed to be dispersed far and wide never to be seen in there homeland again. The significance of this collection cannot be underestimated and with this in mind it is essential that the national museum make an attempt to aquire one of these vehicles for the nation.

The collection of Ecurie Ecosse race cars will be offered for sale at auction in December. As to the worth of this collection, it is an unknown quantity but due to the provinance of these cars and the present rise in classic car values, I do not see the whole collection being sold for less than £10 million. Individually the values vary but again as always with auctions it is what someone is willing to pay

The NMS collection policy is I believe “where individual items of outstanding significance in the history and technology of Scottish transport become available we will seek to acquire these”

At this present time the museum has one of Sir Jackie Stewarts F1 cars on loan for three years and this would be a fine addition to this collection or part of.”

At present there are 184 signatures to the petition.

If you wish to draw something to the attention of the Scottish Parliament you can lodge a petition. Find out how to do it

[here](#).

A series of free workshops are being held across the city for community groups to apply for grant funding to deliver local projects in their neighbourhood.

Delivered by Edinburgh's Neighbourhood Partnerships, the workshops provide practical advice and guidance to applicants to improve their skills in the application process. Activities include drafting and assessing mock applications, and exercises that promote the range of funding opportunities that are available to them.

The workshops support the delivery of the Council's Community Funding Support Programme and were introduced in response to community feedback. The workshops have been met with positive comments from participants. They have found them to be a "great wealth of information" and the exercises are "useful to increase confidence in the application process". It was also said that they help to "break down the jargon" in the application forms.

Upcoming workshops will take place in East and West Neighbourhood as follows:

- Craigentinny/Duddingston and Portobello/Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnerships -Wednesday 26 March 2014, Northfield/Willowbrae Community Centre, 2.30-4pm
- Almond Neighbourhood Partnership – Monday 31 March 2014, Rosebery Hall, South Queensferry, 5-6.30pm
- Western Neighbourhood Partnership – Thursday 10 April 2014, Drumbrae Library Hub, 5-6.30pm

Places must be booked in advance. For more details and to

reserve your place please
email neighbourhood.partnerships@edinburgh.gov.uk