

# Five things you need to know today



**Portobello High School – Jazz at the Botanic – Dads Rock – Marketing Edinburgh – Orchid Fair –**

The council's private bill to allow a new school to be built in the park at Portobello was passed yesterday afternoon just before 5pm.

The promoter of the bill was Siobhan McMahon the Labour MSP for Central Scotland since parliamentary rules prevented the Edinburgh and Lothians MSPs to officially back the bill. Lothians MSP Kezia Dugdale referred to this in her remarks:- "When we last met to discuss the bill, I expressed my frustration at the rules that preclude members who represent an area from participating in a private bill process that affects that area. I was worried that my colleagues would not understand the complex and long-standing community interest in the issue and that they would be cold to the arguments from both sides and simply go through the motions, without an affinity for the community in question."

*Ms McMahon concluded her introduction to the final stage of the bill process thus:- "In conclusion, the committee has spent over 12 months considering the issues pertaining to this divisive bill and is disappointed that there has not been a greater degree of constructive resolution and engagement between the parties. We acknowledge the objectors' concerns on various fronts. For example, there will inevitably be adverse impacts due to noise and operational disturbance; there will be a visual impact from the construction of the building and some loss of views to Arthur's Seat; and there are indeed health benefits to be*

*derived from open space, which the park provides. However, the committee also recognises that compensatory and mitigation measures will be implemented as required by the planning process; that there are other green and open spaces in the vicinity; and that there will be other benefits to the community from the new sporting facilities.*

*Overall, we are satisfied that an appropriate balance has been struck between the private interests of those who would be adversely affected by the proposal and its benefits to the wider community.*

*I move,*

*That the Parliament agrees that the City of Edinburgh Council (Portobello Park) Bill be passed."*

Lothians MSP Gavin Brown said:-“The significant progress that has been made on a couple of items has encouraged me to make my up mind to vote in favour of the bill at decision time today. The first was the firm commitment that was given to designate the existing site as a new park or recreation facility and to give it Fields in Trust status. Although that is not a statutory provision, it provides a degree of safeguarding and weakens some of the arguments against the bill. Secondly, as was referred to earlier, the amendment in the name of Alison McInnes that was lodged at phase 2 of consideration stage restricts the situation somewhat. Effectively, the bill can do only what it says on the tin—it will not give any wider scope to the City of Edinburgh Council or to any other council. Those two points are quite important and they tip the balance in favour of our passing the bill.”

It is true to say that this has been a divisive matter in the local community and those on both sides have been passionate about their cause. Those forming the group objecting to the site of the new school did not appear to be admitting defeat last night, but it is now clear that the new school will be

built and open in time for the new school year in August 2016.

Alison Johnstone Lothians MSP said:-“As an Edinburgh councillor, I visited Portobello high school and was, frankly, appalled by the condition of the building. Learning and teaching in that poorly designed and poorly maintained building is needlessly challenging. If Portobello high school had been properly designed in the first place and had been allocated a meaningful life-cycle maintenance budget, we might not be here today. I know that those who oppose building on the park also whole-heartedly agree that Portobello needs a new school. Passions have run high in this debate because our parks and our schools are among our most precious and most important community assets, and the local community concerned cares deeply about those assets.”

The bill was passed in the nick of time as Holyrood is now in recess for six weeks.

\*\*\*

The Botanics are hosting a jazz evening in July, so if you're a member or know someone who is, then you can still get some tickets [for this event.](#)

*Join the Friends of RBGE for an evening in the magnificent Palm Houses. Sparkling wine and canapes will be served and live music provided by the Roger Cull Jazz Trio. Tickets are available to Members and their guests.*

*All funds raised will be directed to the Small Project Fund, which supports worthy Science and Horticulture projects across our four Gardens.*

\*\*\*



\*\*\*

Two new high profile, non-executive appointments have been announced at Marketing Edinburgh, further strengthening the organisation's role in promoting the city as a world-leading investment and visitor capital.

Bill Percy, Customer Experience Manager at Virgin Money and Juliana Delaney, Chief Executive of Continuum Group (owners of award-winning attraction The Real Mary Queen's Close) have joined the board at Marketing Edinburgh, adding experienced industry voices to the table, dedicated to the promotion of Scotland's Capital.

The new non-executive appointments follow the announcement of Gordon Robertson, □Director of Communications at Edinburgh Airport, as Chair of Marketing Edinburgh in April 2014.

Bill Percy, Customer Experience Manager at Virgin Money said:-  
"Virgin Money has a strong base in Edinburgh and a long-standing association with some of its iconic events, such as The Fringe and of course the Virgin Money Fireworks Concert that brings the Edinburgh International Festival to its close. Joining the board at Marketing Edinburgh offers the chance for me to make a contribution to a city I'm passionate about and help shape the direction of its future as an investment capital in Europe."

Juliana Delaney, Chief Executive of Continuum Group said:-  
"Leading attractions like The Real Mary King's Close richly embody the heritage strand of the city, but Edinburgh has so much more to offer as a place to Live, Work, Invest, Study and Visit – so I'm thrilled to join Marketing Edinburgh and to help bring the city's unique brand to the wider market place. Other cities aspire to reach the level of quality and richness Edinburgh already has, but as those cities are snapping at our heels, the job remains a challenging one!"

Gordon Robertson, Chair of Marketing Edinburgh, said:-  
"A significant objective of Marketing Edinburgh's three year

business strategy is to build private investment in the organisation through Edinburgh's 'corporate citizens'. These new appointments reinforce this goal, with two hugely experienced, high profile individuals – each able tap into their own respective industries while taking a proactive role in growing Edinburgh.”

\*\*\*

Also at the Botanics they are holding an orchid fair starting from today.

### Taiwanese Orchid Fair



Fri 27 June to Sun 20 July

Come and see a stunning display of colourful and elegant orchids by the Taiwan Floriculture Exports Association. Weekend activities will include Chinese flower painting and orchid culture tips.

Orchid Events:

[Plum Blossom Painting Demonstration](#) – Sun 29 June

[Chinese Flower Painting & Face Painting](#) – Sun 6 July

[Life in the Trees](#) – Fri 11 July

[Tea Ceremony & Tea Tasting](#) – Sun 13 July

Click on the event to find out more.