

# Five things you need to know today



**The Smith Commission**

**Petition about Forsyth's Sphere**

**Free Public Seminar about the Smith Commission**

**Banff Mountain Film Festival World Tour starts in Edinburgh**

**Petitions Committee**

The Smith Commission is to publish its draft proposals for increased Scottish devolution today which is three days ahead of schedule. The commission published its report at the end of November but today we should have the draft bill by which the promised powers should be brought into effect.

When the report was published last year The Prime Minister said:

“I'm delighted with what's been announced, we're keeping our promises and our United Kingdom together. I always said that a 'no' vote didn't mean no change, indeed, we made a vow of further devolution to Scotland and today we show how we're keeping that vow to keep that promise.

“The Scottish Parliament is going to have much more responsibility in terms of spending money but it will also need to be accountable for how it raises taxes to fund that spending and I think that's a good thing. It also makes the case for English votes for English laws unanswerable and we'll be taking action on that shortly.

“And I think taken together, this extra devolution for

Scotland and dealing with all the issues in our United Kingdom, will make our United Kingdom stronger.”

Any announcement might be made on the [Smith Commission website](#).

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said earlier this week that the publication of draft clauses from the UK Government intended to implement the Smith Commission proposals must be the beginning not the end of a process of empowering the Scottish Parliament.

The UK Government is expected to publish material on the implementation of Smith today. Mr Swinney said all parties must have an open mind on improving the proposals and must take on board views from stakeholders across civic Scotland and the people of Scotland who will judge the proposals carefully.

Calling on the UK government to transfer powers over equality, welfare and the means to tackle poverty in an effective way, Mr Swinney said that the Scottish Government would use any powers the parliament received in the best interests of the people of Scotland.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney who took part in the Smith Commission said:

“This week must mark the start of real engagement by the UK government on empowering the Scottish Parliament.

“Since the Smith Commission reported many people, including a broad range of organisations in civic Scotland, have been waiting to see their proposals for implementing Smith’s recommendations.

“Any proposals put forward this week must be the start of a process of devolving power and not the end.

“This week Westminster must demonstrate clearly that it will

translate the proposals from Smith into legislation and ensure that the powers are transferred to Scotland fully in keeping with both the letter and the spirit of the Smith Commission and in a way which has the support of the people of Scotland.

“The publication of these proposals creates the opportunity for people and organisations across Scotland to have the opportunity to shine a light on what is being offered.

“It is now time to ensure that the people have their say and that all parties listen to their voices.

“Whilst Smith did not recommend all the powers I would want the parliament to have, we will use what powers are made available, as far as possible, to increase equality, to tackle poverty and to grow the economy. And we will lead the debate to ensure the Scottish Parliament is equipped with the powers our people believe it should have to tackle the fundamental challenges in our country.”

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At last a petition for you to support to have the sphere reinstated on top of the shop that used to be Forsyth's, and is now Top Shop owned by Sir Philip Green's Top Shop.

A no-brainer and something we have commented on often when out taking photos.

Time to do something about it – sign the petition [here](#).

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Sufferfest © Cedar Wrigh

This year the Banff Mountain Film Festival 2015 World Tour begins in Edinburgh. From Saturday 24 January 2015 the Tour will delight audiences across the UK with a showcase of the best films for two and a half hours of bliss if you are interested in anything remotely connected with being in the mountains, and whether you are an accomplished mountaineer or simply a lover of the panoramic views.

Now in its sixth edition, the 2015 UK and Ireland Banff Tour will be the largest to date with 83 screenings taking place in 55 locations, including 15 new venues, between 24 January and 6 June 2015 – and this Saturday it is here at the Festival Theatre!

The festival showcases a diverse collection of the best and latest films from the global mountain sports community. The two and a half hour programme has been selected from over 370 films which were entered into the prestigious Banff Mountain Film Festival, held in the Canadian Rockies in November 2014.

Banff audiences will be taken on a journey around the world, as they get to know the remarkable characters behind the hair raising on-screen action sports. This year's Banff Tour will offer audiences an exhilarating adventure through the big screen as they paraglide through the Alps, mountain bike on the Isle of Skye, surf in the Arctic Circle, ski in Patagonia, kayak in Canada's British Columbia and much much more – through 16 Tour films.

[Book tickets here](#) but here is a trailer to prepare you for the ride:

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The council's petitions committee meet this afternoon. This meeting is public and you can attend in person or watch the

webcast [online](#).

Today's meeting will consider only one petition about the introduction of a Bike Hire Scheme here in Edinburgh. Since the council has moved to advertising giant JCDecaux for its on street advertising hopes have been raised that a bike hire scheme might be in the offing. The petition on the table today has attracted 739 signatures.

If you are in any doubt we are firmly in favour of such schemes and use them wherever we travel in the world.

Here is an infographic about the Dublin Bikes showing how successful these have been.



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