

Five things you need to know today



Royal Highland Show

Trams to Newhaven?

Armed Forces Day next week

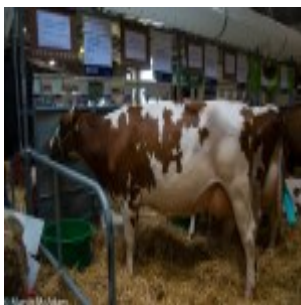
Man convicted of Leith Links rape

Daily flights to Chicago celebrated with a little jazz

Today is the second day of the Royal Highland Show. Yesterday it was cold and rather uninviting which is a terrible pity as there is so much to see and so much effort has been put in to preparing and bringing animals, machinery and handicrafts (to name but a small portion of what you can see there) to Ingliston.

There are still things to see which are indoors but if you are going out there today do layer up!

Here are some of the animals we did see during yesterday's visit:









Another step towards the probable extension to the tram line might be taken next week when the council grants more time for working up a business case for it.

It was announced yesterday that a report to be brought to the council meeting next Thursday will set out the first findings of what is called the Outline Business Case. This involves the scrutiny of many figures, facts, views and yes, some of the history of the tram project.

Transport Convener, Councillor Lesley Hinds explained to us that while the report will bring out the preliminary findings of what council officials have been working on since December last year, they now need more time to conduct robust scrutiny of the figures.

The council noted last year that the tram extension is key to supporting economic growth in Edinburgh, and speculation is

that the numbers of passengers on an extended line would increase the use of the tram overall. The belief is that the tram would integrate with the Leith Programme (to restore Leith Walk to the condition it was in prior to tram excavations there) and the St James Quarter development.

There are some obstacles to overcome before any extension to Newhaven (which was the original destination point when the tram project began) can even be started. Funding might be tricky, given that the Scottish Government have already said they will not pay any more towards the tram. We are told that other options such as the Green Investment Bank and possibly European funding for the project which may cost up to £144m.

The current tram stop at York Place was always intended as a temporary placement and when the St James Quarter project is completed the likelihood will be that a stop is sited at Picardy Place instead. The possible options are to extend the line to Newhaven, Ocean Terminal, Foot of the Walk and McDonald Road. The last of these has been discounted as it has not been proved financially viable.

The first year of Edinburgh Trams has according to the council officers been largely in line with projections. They have carried around 5 million passengers, and apparently this has not detracted from Lothian Buses performance. That company have also enjoyed a successful year (remember they gave the council an extra couple of million earlier this year from their profits). It appears that what has actually happened is that more people have been choosing to use public transport.

An all-party working group has been meeting since October last year to monitor progress and ensure that this investigation work alone is run within the budget allocated to it. The permissions are already in place for the line to be laid, and we do already have twenty seven trams which is more than enough to run a line all the way from the airport to Newhaven and back.

What the Council Leader and the Transport Convener were both at pains to point out to us yesterday was that if the extension plans go ahead, it will only be when every number has been closely examined. They are determined that history does not repeat itself in the second phase. One novel idea is to explore with the possible contractors in a formal way whether they would be even interested in undertaking the contract in the first place.

Finally there will be a data room set up ahead of the council meeting later this year when the report is brought back for consideration in October, ensuring that all councillors are aware of all the facts before making a decision.

Watch our interview with Lesley Hinds [here](#).

With the full support of Garrison Headquarters and the City of Edinburgh Council this year's Armed Forces Day event will again be held in the Grassmarket and will include a parade that will provide a high profile presence of the Armed Forces and Veterans community. There will be music, entertainment and stalls until 3pm on Saturday 27 June.

For more information visit:

www.armedforcesday.org.uk/event/edinburgh-armed-forces-day/

A man who attacked a woman on Leith Links has been found guilty of rape.

Faizon Ali subjected his 28-year-old victim to the serious sexual assault in the early hours of Thursday 11th November 2014.

He was found guilty at court today and will be sentenced at a later date.

Detective Sergeant Keith Fairbairn said: "This was a terrifying ordeal for the victim, who had the courage to come forward, report the incident and work with officers.

"These arrests should send a clear message to our communities that regardless of the circumstances of a crime, we will investigate the matter thoroughly and anyone found to be responsible will be brought to justice.

"I would urge anyone who wishes to report a crime to come forward and rest assured that your report will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and professionalism."



Edinburgh Airport and the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival offered travellers a taste of Chicago blues yesterday in celebration of United Airlines' new direct route to the Windy City. Two leading Scottish blues musicians, Jed Potts and Sandy Tweeddale delighted passengers by picking up their guitars and performing some numbers at the airport's new Plaza area.

2015 will have the Festival's biggest blues line up to date with a headline concert – Blues From Chicago, sponsored by Edinburgh Airport, plus a programme featuring exciting American blues names making their Scottish debuts.

Mud Morganfield and Lurrie Bell are just two of the legendary musicians playing as part of the Blues From Chicago concert at Edinburgh Festival Theatre on Friday 24 July.

United announced their new service to Chicago O'Hare last year and the daily service will fly until 2 September when it will change to four times weekly until 6 October.

More information about the Edinburgh Blues and Jazz Festival [here](#)

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