

Five things you need to know today




Edinburgh Trams

Westminster debate

Food Poverty to be focus of new government group

New student housing opened

Museum Lates in November

 Today for those of you who are already up and about you may know that Edinburgh Trams now start running earlier to enable those of you who need to catch an early flight to get to the airport by tram.

They are running a six week trial so if you need to get somewhere early be sure to use it!

[Read more here.](#)



Westminster is about to debate and decide on English Votes for English Laws this coming week.

It sounds as though it might for once unite the opposition on the Labour and SNP benches.

Responding to a report on English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) by the House of Commons Procedure Committee, Labour's Shadow Scottish Secretary, Ian Murray MP said:

"The Government's proposals for EVEL are an incomprehensible

mess. This report adds to the many expert voices who have already said that these proposals will not strengthen Parliament. Instead, David Cameron's proposals will weaken our democracy, weaken Scotland's voice in Parliament and for the first time create two classes of MPs. It could lead to the perverse situation where some unelected members of the House of Lords will be more powerful than elected MPs. Labour will put forward our own proposals that will simplify this process, but not threaten the way the UK's democracy works."

The SNP describe the proposals – which would introduce a new parliamentary stage for laws that are judged not to affect other parts of the UK – as 'over engineered and potentially burdensome' and have insisted that there should be a pilot stage to assess how the proposed changes would actually function.

Commenting Angus Robertson MP, SNP Westminster Leader said:

"This report shows the utter confusion and total inadequacy of what the UK government is proposing on EVEL. The Tories have got themselves into a first class muddle and are trying to force this through – with too many flaws – too quickly.

"English Votes for English Laws puts forward an absurd solution to the UK's current constitutional inequalities and it is clear that the proposals need to go right back to the drawing board so that they can be examined properly.

"The Tories are paying a very high political price for trying to rush through ill-thought out proposals which would make Scotland's representation at Westminster second class – they need to explain their latest thinking to the people and parliament."

You will be able to read the first report from The House of Commons Procedure Committee [here](#).



The scourge of food poverty and possible solutions to Scotland's increasing reliance on foodbanks will be investigated by a new government group.

Representatives from poverty organisations and charities will convene today for the first meeting of the short life working group, to identify the issues which push people into food poverty and discuss how they can be addressed.

The group, chaired by the Secretary of the Church of Scotland's Church and Society Council Rev Dr Martin Johnstone, has been asked to make recommendations to the Scottish Government by February 2016 on the actions required to eradicate food poverty in Scotland.

The first meeting coincides with the Poverty Alliance's annual Challenge Poverty Week which runs from October 17 to 23 and aims to challenge the stereotypes around poverty and increase public support to combat it.

The latest statistics from the Trussell Trust show that a total of 117,689 people picked up a three-day supply of groceries from their Scottish foodbanks in 2014-15. Of those, 36,114 were children. This is more than eight times the number helped just two years ago.

Social Justice Secretary Alex Neil said: "It is heart breaking that anyone should be left hungry and unable to afford to feed their families in a country as prosperous as Scotland.

"UK Government welfare cuts and benefit sanctions have continually pushed more and more people into food poverty and increased the demand and number of food banks in Scotland. This shocking trend has to stop.

"By bringing together a range of experts who support people in food poverty we hope the group will come up with a food

strategy that will reduce the need for foodbanks over time.

“Food poverty cannot be solved overnight which is why the group will look at how we can address some of its long-term causes and whether we can take a more joined up approach to welfare benefits advice, health and employment support services.

“I look forward to hearing the group’s recommendations on how we can ease the pressure on food banks, tackle food poverty and create a fairer Scotland.”

The Scottish Government currently invests £1 million into the Emergency Food Action Plan which helps support 26 local emergency food aid projects and the charity Fareshare to redistribute surplus food from retailers to communities across Scotland.

The group’s recommendations will feed into the Scottish Government’s Social Justice Action Plan. This will be published in the new year with milestones to the next Parliament and beyond to help tackle poverty and create fairer opportunities for all.

The chair of the group, Rev Dr Martin Johnstone, said: “I am delighted to be chairing this independent Working Group on Food Poverty, whilst appalled that in a country as wealthy as Scotland the number of people going hungry is increasing by thousands each year.

“Our starting point will be that we need to reverse that trend. The group will bring together people with a wide variety of experiences of tackling food poverty including, critically, those with direct experience of what it means not to have enough for you and your family.

“I hope that together we can highlight what is working, what needs to change and what the Scottish Government and others can do to bring about a hunger free Scotland.”

Peter Kelly, director of the Poverty Alliance said: “The growth of foodbanks in recent years is the surest sign that we need to do more to tackle poverty in Scotland.

“Challenge Poverty Week is aimed at highlighting that solutions to poverty do exist, and the work that volunteers across Scotland do week in and out providing emergency food aid shows that people are committed to tackling the scandal of food poverty.

“But it is necessary that we find longer term solutions to food poverty. So we welcome the Scottish Government convening this new group to find lasting solutions to the problem. Through it we will be able to draw on the experience and expertise of those volunteering in foodbanks, people using emergency food aid and those involved in community food projects to make a real difference in the future.”



A purpose-built 272-bed Ziggurat Student Living development was officially opened at the weekend by famous boxers Barry McGuigan MBE and Edinburgh born Josh Taylor.

This building is one of two accommodation locations which are within a few hundred metres from each other, at Murano Place and Shrubhill on Leith Walk, and total 532 beds. The Shrubhill site will also house over 18,000 sq ft of retail space, with Sainsbury's confirmed to create a convenience store on the ground floor.

Ziggurat Student Living Director, Jim Pike, commented: “It's great to welcome two sporting heroes Barry and Josh to our latest development to help us celebrate the official opening. We were also delighted to be one of the sponsors of last night's boxing match in Edinburgh between Josh Taylor and Hungary's Adam Mate.

“This latest development is totally modern and purpose-built

and our emphasis is always on extremely high levels of customer service. With only a few bedrooms still available to let for this academic year, we are confident that our student tenants will have a fantastic living experience in Edinburgh."

Barry McGuigan commented: "It is a pleasure to be back in Edinburgh and to officially open Ziggurat's latest development. I know that there are literally hundreds of Irish students attending universities in Edinburgh and I am sure this will become home to many of them."

Josh is Barry McGuigan's latest signing to Cyclone Promotions and is one of the most successful Scottish amateur boxers in history. He was boxing in his first professional fight at Meadowbank on Friday evening, in a bout which Ziggurat co-sponsored.

The main contractor on both buildings is Ogilvie Construction. Royal Bank of Scotland provided financial backing for both new facilities and Ziggurat now operates three sites in Edinburgh, one in Newcastle and one in Dublin.



Karaoke, tattoos and magic will all be served up with a Victorian twist alongside a star musical line-up at *Museum Lates: Victorian Sensation* at the National Museum of Scotland on Friday 13 November 2015.

Live music in the Grand Gallery will come from rising stars Honeyblood (www.honeyblood.co.uk), who recently supported the Foo Fighters at Murrayfield and are on the sold-out bill for Edinburgh's Hogmanay Concert in the Gardens, and electro pop duo Bdy_Prts (www.bdyprts.com).

The Victorian theme complements the Museum's current exhibition, *Photography: A Victorian Sensation*, which closes

on 22 November 2015

(www.nms.ac.uk/photography). Entertainment on offer will include Dr Matt Lodder revealing the secret history of tattoos, magician Luke Eaton, dressing up in the Victorian Selfie Studio and cocktail demonstrations by Edinburgh Gin in a gin parlour in Hawthornden Court. There will also be Victorian singalong karaoke in the company of pianist Neil Metcalfe.

Vic Galloway will return to host alongside popular features Fresh Air FM bringing silent disco to the Imagine Gallery and a DJ set on the main stage, themed craft activities with The Red Door Gallery, pop-up bars in the Grand Gallery, object handling and talks plus the rare opportunity to simply explore the galleries of the National Museum of Scotland by night.

Tickets are on sale now www.nms.ac.uk/lates or by phoning 0300 123 6789. The live music programme is curated by media partner The List.

Tickets for the Late only are priced £12 (£10 concessions and National Museums Scotland members), combined tickets for the Late plus admission to the exhibition, *Photography: A Victorian Sensation* are £20 (£18 for members/concessions).

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