

Five things you need to know today



Scottish Government ready for refugees

New coach for Edinburgh's diving stars of the future

LUSH Charity Pot Fundraiser for Scottish Pen

St Giles at Six

At the Edinburgh International Festival 2016

Scotland is expected to receive around one third of the total number of Syrian refugees due to arrive in the UK before Christmas, Minister for Europe and International Development, Humza Yousaf, has announced.

The refugee taskforce set up to co-ordinate Scotland's practical response to the humanitarian crisis met this week ahead of the first arrivals.

Mr Yousaf, who chairs the meeting, has offered to visit local authorities expected to receive refugees to discuss their arrangements and preparations, and engage with local communities on the importance of their role in the integration process.

The Minister said: "Scotland's response to the humanitarian crisis has been phenomenal and we have been working to ensure we provide a very warm welcome to those who come to Scotland seeking protection, safety and security.

"Of the refugees expected to arrive in the UK before Christmas, Scotland is expected to take around one third, and this is testament to the work of the taskforce, local

authorities and many other partner organisations to ensure we are ready – and we are ready. It is a great symbol of our compassion that Scotland is expected to take a third of refugees arriving before Christmas, while making up only 10 per cent of the UK population.

“I realise that local authorities have already gone to great lengths to prepare themselves but I will be looking to visit them to discuss their arrangements and offer them support and advice if they feel it beneficial.

“It has been heart-warming and inspiring to see the positive reaction from people all over Scotland and local communities will play a crucial role in the integration of these refugees. We cannot underestimate the importance of local engagement in response to what is an international crisis.

“Scotland is a caring and compassionate country and we have worked with our partners to provide a welcoming environment for those refugees.

“Areas such as local government, housing, health services, language support, transport and social services are crucial to this, and the taskforce has worked to ensure these services are ready.”



One of Edinburgh’s own diving stars is to help inspire children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) at a dedicated new class.

European Games Gold winner James Heatly will visit the new class at the Royal Commonwealth Pool, where he has been coached by Edinburgh Leisure since he was a young child.

It is hoped the new diving classes will provide children with a range of ages and abilities the opportunity to discover the

joys of diving and its many fitness benefits. The addition of a 1m platform to the world class diving facilities has made it possible to specifically launch coaching for children with a wider range of needs.

Part-funded by Sport Scotland, the new 1m platform joins Olympic Standard facilities including 5m and 10m platform, and three 1m springboards.

The venue in the heart of Edinburgh played host to the commonwealth games diving event in 2014, where James – the grandson of the late diving champion Sir Peter Heatly – competed before the eyes of the world.

Vicki Tomlinson, Diving Coach for Edinburgh Leisure, said: “We are delighted that the arrival of the brand new 1m diving platform has allowed us to launch diving coaching for children with additional support needs.

“Diving is just such an amazing sport which allows children to build strength and agility, as well as grow in confidence.

“That’s why it’s great to be able to see children of all ages and different abilities and needs get a chance to enjoy diving.

“The children will also have the opportunity to work towards certificates and, although it’s early days, we hope to connect with clubs across the UK and eventually participate in tournaments.

“We’re really pleased that James has kindly offered to share his expertise and passion for diving with the class. It will be really inspiring for the children to meet a diving star who has been coached here in our own Royal Commonwealth Pool.”

A wide range of coached diving classes are offered at the Royal Commonwealth Pool for adults and children of all ages and abilities.

Diving is just one of a wide range of sports offered by Edinburgh Leisure's hugely popular coaching programme.

For further information about all coaching and activities offered visit www.edinburghleisure.co.uk



LUSH Charity Pot Fundraiser for Scottish Pen: Writers at Risk. This afternoon Scottish PEN are teaming up with LUSH Edinburgh for a fundraising event on behalf of PEN's campaigns in support of imprisoned writers.

They are hosting a fundraising party at LUSH to raise money for their **Saudi Arabia** campaign, highlighting the cases of **Raif Badawi**, blogger, sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes, and **Ali Mohammed al-Nimr**, sentenced to crucifixion. The '**Charity Pot Party**' is a chance for PEN to 'take over' LUSH's charity pots, which are pots of hand and body lotion dedicated to a specific charity. With every purchase of a Charity Pot, LUSH donates 100% of the price (minus the taxes) to small, grassroots organisations that could use a helping hand to continue the incredible work that they do. Charity Pot supports organisations that align with LUSH's ethics in the areas of environmental conservation, animal welfare and human rights.

Join PEN today at [LUSH, 115 Princes Street](#), to talk about how to support free expression all over the world. This event will run from **12-6pm** – drop in and say hello!



St Giles' At Six: tonight the **Scottish Romance Orchestra**, conducted by **Robert Dick**, will play a programme including **Delius On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring**, **Ravel**


Pavane pour une infante défunte, **Ravel** *Bolero* and **Dvořák** *Slavonic Dances*. 6pm, [St Giles' Cathedral](#), High Street. Free admission; retiring collection. All welcome.



The Edinburgh International Festival will present Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma* with a newly prepared critical edition, restoring the originally intended vocal colours. Cecilia Bartoli performs the iconic role as Bellini originally envisioned it, for a mezzo soprano, with a stellar cast including: Rebeca Olvera, John Osborn, Péter Kálmán, Liliana Nikiteanu and Reinaldo Macias.

The production by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier modernises the story, setting it in occupied France during the Second World War. Since it opened at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival in 2013 it has become one of this decade's greatest opera productions.

Priority booking opens [here](#) from Wednesday 11 November.
On sale for everyone: Saturday 21 November. Cheapest tickets are £30.

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