

Five things you need to know today



- **Edinburgh School closures**
- **First Minister's Tax return**
- **Telferton Allotments**
- **Murrayfield Community Council**
- **Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2016 – calling all candidates**

The council decided late on Friday that 17 schools either built or refurbished in a 2003 PPP1 deal would not open this morning after the Easter holidays, leaving around 7,500 pupils with nowhere to go today.

The council explained on Friday that this resulted from a revelation that the company which runs the buildings under the deal could not confirm their safety, despite assurances earlier last week that the buildings were safe.

The council published FAQs on their website to try and help explain the problem they now have.



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Detailed surveys are now being carried out on all buildings before they will be reopened.

[Read more here.](#)



As a result of queries during last week about the Prime Minister's tax affairs, the First Minister has published her tax return online in common with all the leaders of the main political parties in Scotland. It shows that she along with other Scottish Ministers claim their salary at 2008/09 levels and that she has paid over £30,000 in tax. She has also given an assurance that she will publish her return annually.

This is Ms Sturgeon's tax return for 2014/15:



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The SNP said that First Minister's only income is the salary she receives as an MSP and First Minister.

Nicola Sturgeon pays tax on her full salary entitlement but only draws her salary at its 2008/09 level – the balance is automatically paid to the Scottish Government for use in general public spending.

As a result, in 2014/15 the First Minister paid around £3,000 into the Scottish Government consolidated fund.

Since the start of the voluntary pay freeze on 1 April 2009, Scottish Ministers have made an additional £250,000 available for public spending from their own pay packets.

Within that total, the First Minister and her predecessor have forgone some £20,000 over the same period.



The council will later this week recommend that an application to build houses on a historic allotment site should be refused.

The site was laid out as allotments for use by the workers at the Portobello Power Station around 1923/24 and has been used as such even after closure of the power station in 1977.

The planning committee will hear a report from officers which recommends refusal. There were 278 objections and an online petition from the allotment holders with 3032 signatures was also submitted.

A spokesperson for the Craigentenny and Telferton Allotments said: "We believe the plans are misleading; they suggest the developer will create new allotments, whereas, for the last 90 years, the site has been in continual use as allotments, worked and managed by the local community."

“The developer is trying to give the impression that they will be gifting allotments to the City of Edinburgh, but in actuality they are proposing a loss of over 50% of the site.

“Our use of the site as allotments has been recognised by the City of Edinburgh Council, who awarded the site a Certificate of Lawful Use last September.

“The developer has suggested the site is not well managed, however the allotments are maintained to a very similar standard to that of Edinburgh Council allotments.

“Craigentinny & Telferton Allotments have been accepted on to the Scotland’s Gardens Open Day scheme, and when they inspected the site they found it to be charming and attractive.”



Murrayfield Community Council will meet next week. The draft minutes of their last meeting are here



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The Edinburgh Reporter has some further interviews today with candidates for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections 2016. If you are one then please get in touch soon to organise an interview!

Send an email to editor@theedinburghreporter.co.uk

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