

Five things you need to know today



- **Edinburgh PFI Schools update**
- **Grow your own in National Gardening Week**
- **Edinburgh Festivals Forum has a new chair**
- **New M&S at Chesser**
- **Rush Hour Concert**

While 17 schools remain closed today the council is making alternative arrangements for some 2000 S4 S5 and S6 pupils to be accommodated in high schools in the city. These are the pupils who will have exams soon and the council already said they would give them some priority.

The pupils the final three years at Firrhill, Drummond and Royal High Schools will return to their own premises on Wednesday of this week, as their buildings were only refurbished and not built as part of the PPP1 project.

Pupils from Gracemount and Craigmount may hear later today what arrangements are being made for them.

The Council is contacting parents directly and full details of the arrangements once they are finalised will be on the [Council website](#).

Other bodies such as Standard Life and the University of Edinburgh have offered their spare space for use as classrooms meantime.

Chief Executive Andrew Kerr said: “We have plans in place to ensure all primary and special school pupils will be back in schools by next week subject to the Council getting access to the closed schools.

“Our focus is very much on getting our school children back into education as soon as possible. That remains our priority, particularly for those pupils preparing to sit their exams in May.

“Edinburgh Schools Partnership are continuing with their programme of inspections which began on Friday, and have committed to providing new information as and when it becomes available.

“I fully recognise the significant inconvenience to parents caused by these closures and I want to thank them for their patience as we continue to work through this issue. I can assure them that as soon as we have new information, we will pass it on. Daily updates will also be available via the council website.

“I also want to pay tribute to the response from a number of city organisations, both public and private sector, who have come forward with offers of help. There’s been a real sense of the Edinburgh community pulling together and we are very grateful for that.”

Early indications are that the issue that prompted the decision on Friday has been identified in other buildings but as yet the council is not able to determine the full extent of this or the potential impact it may have.

The Council will update parents via the www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schoolclosures and via the Council Twitter [@Edinburgh_CC \(external link\)](#) on a daily basis.

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Central Scotland Green Network is encouraging Edinburgh

residents to get involved with National Gardening Week this week 11-17 April by growing their own food.

According to their recent research there is an increase in community growing in the five years to 2015.

There are more than 300 sites where community growing takes place in allotments, community orchards and community gardens. Since 2010 allotments in central Scotland have increased by 7% and there are now 6,700 individual plots on more than 160 sites.



Keith Geddes, Chair of the CSGNT, which drives forward delivery of the CSGN, said: “As Europe’s largest greenspace initiative, we are working to increase the area of land used for growing plants, fruit and vegetables across the region and what better way for locals to get involved than by taking part in National Gardening Week.

“Our research highlights a significant increase in the number of sites and area of land used for community growing since 2010 and interestingly, it is community gardens, which tend to be the smallest sites, which are experiencing the fastest growth, demonstrating that even very small community growing initiatives at a local level can contribute to the wider goal.”



The Edinburgh Festivals Forum is pleased to announce that Professor Susan Deacon has been appointed as Chair of the Forum to replace Lady Susan Rice CBE, who is stepping down after nine years’ service.

Susan Deacon brings a wealth of experience to the role of Chair from her work across the public, private and voluntary sectors in Scotland and the UK. She is currently Assistant

Principal External Relations at the University of Edinburgh and was recently appointed as Chair of the Institute of Directors in Scotland. She holds a number of other non-Executive positions.

Ken Hay, Chair of Festivals Edinburgh, commenting on the appointment said: 'On behalf of the Board of Festivals Edinburgh, I would like to thank Lady Susan Rice for her outstanding contribution in support of our festivals over the last nine years. The Festivals Forum has been crucial in the continued success of the Festivals and in developing the milestone Thundering Hooves 2.0 report.

'We're delighted that Susan Deacon is taking up the post of Chair of the Festivals Forum as we look ahead to the challenges and opportunities of the next period. Her breadth of experience across business and public life will be invaluable in helping the Forum foster the collaborative effort needed to take forward our shared strategic vision.'

Susan Deacon said: 'Edinburgh's Festivals are a real jewel in Scotland's crown. A great many people and organisations play their part in making our Festivals the success that they are. It is a privilege to be appointed as Chair of the Festivals Forum and to be part of such an important team effort to maintain Edinburgh's position as the world's leading festival city. It is an exciting time to be taking on this role as we start to build for the Festivals' 70th anniversary year in 2017.'



M&S Food are to open a new shop at Chesser Avenue at West Edinburgh Retail Park on the site of the old Chesser Avenue fruit market.

The 9000 square feet of retail space will open on 27 April 2016 employing 60 staff and offering 4,500 food and drink

products. There will also be a 42 seater cafe with a takeaway menu.


Alyson Crombie, Store Manager, said: “Our new store at Chesser marks an exciting milestone in the redevelopment of the old fruit market site and we can’t wait to open our doors this month.

“It’s fantastic that we’ve been able to recruit local people from the surrounding areas to work at the store.

“We’re really looking forward to becoming part of the Chesser community and getting to know our local customers here. We hope lots of people come out to join us on the 27th!”

The new retail park will offer shoppers with 286 free car parking spaces. As well as a food ordering service, customers will also be able to take advantage of the popular “Shop Your Way” next day delivery service, which gives shoppers the option to have their M&[S.com](https://www.marksandspencer.com) orders delivered to the store for free.



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