

Five things you need to know today



- Trident vote
- Edinburgh Airport breaks more records
- Slow Food
- Cafe Tiki
- Lothians MSP calls for participation in the City consultation

Later today the UK Parliament will discuss and vote on the renewal of the UK nuclear deterrent Trident.

Green MSP Mark Russell wants to work with MPs and MSPs from all political parties to see the system scrapped.

Mark Ruskell MSP, the Scottish Greens' climate, energy and environment spokesperson said:

“It will be utterly absurd if Westminster votes to commit tens of billions of pounds to replace Trident at a time when there are real threats to the funding of public services. These weapons of mass destruction will always be wrong and Greens will continue to be the loudest voices in saying that the nuclear system is costly and immoral.

“In the Scottish Parliament Green MSPs secured a majority for a constitutional ban on nuclear weapons in an independent Scotland and we are continuing to work with politicians from across the parties for a nuclear weapon free Scotland. We'll also keep on campaigning outside of Holyrood with various groups to peacefully ensure that Trident remains a thorny issue in Scotland for years to come.”

The SNP urged new Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday to set her premiership off on the right tone by delaying today's vote on Trident renewal, in order to allow proper scrutiny of "one of the most important decisions Parliament will ever take."

Reflecting on the 'unprecedented political turmoil' of the last few weeks, Westminster Leader Angus Robertson said that the public deserved the decision to be subject to as much scrutiny as possible – and not rushed through on the back of a month of "backstabbing, score-settling and navel-gazing" among the two main parties.

✘ Meanwhile the Church of Scotland has said that the rush to vote is unseemly, and confirmed its stance against the UK possessing weapons of mass destruction. The Convener of the Church and Society Council Rev Dr Richard Frazer said : "The Church of Scotland has consistently spoken out against nuclear weapons for more than 30 years.

"MPs will debate and vote on whether or not to renew the four nuclear submarines which constitute Britain's nuclear deterrent. This announcement comes in the wake of the UK's vote in favour of leaving the European Union, it comes at a time when the Opposition are embroiled in a leadership challenge and it comes only days after the appointment of a new Prime Minister. At a time when we are rebalancing our relationship with the rest of the world, we do not believe this should be our first action. We are concerned the House of Commons is being rushed into this decision in undue haste with little opportunity for reflection or wider discussion.

"Since 1982, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has deplored the use, through threat or deployment, of nuclear weapons. The scale and indiscriminate nature of the destruction caused by any nuclear weapons system renders it illegal. Nuclear missiles fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants. They wreak widespread, long-term and severe damage on the natural environment. Such weapons are

abhorrent and any decision to renew the Trident system must only be taken after deep and mature reflection.

“As Christians we are called to be peacemakers and yet ‘peace’ that is kept through the indiscriminate threat of mass destruction could not be further from the peace that Christ calls us to. Over recent turbulent weeks, we have had cause to reflect on the importance of leadership in our political life. One act of profound leadership for the world would be a decision by our country to renounce our dependence on weapons of war that have no moral legitimacy. We should be building peace through strong and courageous leadership and not by commissioning more nuclear weapons. As Christians, we believe that justice, peace, reconciliation and hope can only be established in the world when we are bold enough to be the change we want to see in the world.”



Edinburgh Airport announced its latest passenger numbers showing 1,173,953 passengers passed through Edinburgh Airport last month.

This represents a 6.8 per cent increase on the same month last year and is the busiest ever June at a Scottish airport.

Welcoming the passenger numbers, Gordon Dewar, Edinburgh Airport’s Chief Executive, said: “June’s record breaking passenger numbers make this another great month at Edinburgh Airport.

“Our continual growth underlines the need for Edinburgh Airport to adapt so we can accommodate the ever increasing number of people wanting to fly in and out of Scotland’s Capital city.

“It is for this reason that we are engaged in the initial consultation stage of an Airspace Change Programme and I would encourage everyone to log

onto <http://www.letssofarther.com/> and have their say to help the design of future flight path changes.”



Plans are now well underway for the second [Edinburgh Food Festival](#) in George Square this July 27th – 31st with many events already announced & more to come.

Slow Food say they will again be making a significant contribution with a bigger stall and extended hours.

“Each day there will be a showcase of Scotland’s Good, Clean and Fair food with on-the-hour workshops, tastings and demonstrations at the Slow Food stall. Wed – Fri (12 – 5pm), Sat – Sun (11am -6pm).

“Throughout the festival our daily themed [Slow Food stall](#) will showcase some of Scotland’s good, clean and fair food”



Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Employability and Training, visited a popular social enterprise cafe in Edinburgh last week that is helping people with sight loss and other disabilities to enhance their work skills.

Mr Hepburn met staff and volunteers at Cafe Tiki, based within the headquarters of sight loss charity RNIB Scotland on Hillside Crescent. The cafe provides low-cost lunches and snacks. Over half of its employees have personal experience of sight loss.

There are around 8,500 blind and partially sighted people of working age in Scotland. But while the employment rate of people with a disability generally continues to increase, the rate for those with sight loss has remained at around 29 per cent, compared with 76 per cent for the general population.

Mr Hepburn said: “Many people with sight and hearing loss can need a degree of specialist support to find and stay in work. They can face barriers such as transport difficulties, limited access to assistive technology and employer misconceptions about what they are capable of. RNIB is doing fantastic work to support these people, and help build individual confidence and capability.

“I am looking forward to hearing first-hand about the challenges in accessing the labour market.”

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Lothian Green MSP Alison Johnstone is calling on her constituents to make their feelings known on the future of Edinburgh’s Old and New Towns before a council survey closes on 25 July.

Council chiefs are seeking people’s views to help create policies to preserve and enhance the World Heritage Site and Alison wants guarantees that the city’s large tourism numbers won’t mean that prospective hotel developers are given carte blanche.

Alison Johnstone MSP said: “People from the capital are all too aware of planning issues in the city and now we have an opportunity to give our views on Edinburgh as a place to live, work and visit in this survey before it closes at the end of the month.

“Given our World Heritage status, our growing population and increasing development pressures it’s important that people make clear their opposition to developments that may not be the most optimal or necessary use of precious city centre sites.

“We need to have an honest conversation about how many luxury hotels the city needs and where they should be situated.

Tourism is vital to Edinburgh, but we need to ensure that Edinburgh caters for travellers on all budgets, and essentially, for those who live and work in the city.”

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