

Edinburgh Political Focus – what are the politicians saying this week?

In Edinburgh there are many politicians from Councillors to MSPs and then there are the MPs who have to travel to London from Monday to Thursday each week. As well as that we have Alyn Smith MEP from Edinburgh. They usually have something to say so here is a flavour of what they have commented on this week.

Gordon Macdonald MSP reminds you that there are two public consultations that you can get involved in to shape the future of bus services and smart ticketing in Scotland.



Transport Scotland has set up two consultations which will run until 5 December 2017.

Commenting, SNP MSP Gordon Macdonald said, “Millions of people across Scotland use buses every day.

“Transport Scotland’s two new consultations offer the public and stakeholders in Edinburgh an important opportunity to have their say on how best to improve Scotland’s bus services.

“In order to develop an effective, joined up, Scotland-wide smart ticketing and payment service, it is important that as many transport operators, public bodies and users as possible are consulted.”

The two consultations can be found below: –

1. Local Bus Services in Scotland – Improving the Framework for Delivery [Click Here](#)
2. The Future of Smart Ticketing [Click Here](#)

✘ Maureen Child is the Labour councillor for Portobello and Craigmillar. She sends out a newsy email each week and here is an excerpt from the latest :

I am grateful to Barney Dellar for this link which attempts to bust some of the myths about 20mph and air quality. It injects some research-based scientific findings into this over-heated transport debate.

http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_improve_air_quality

Interesting chat on social media and elsewhere about the cutouts of the Powerleague site.

Some of it here: <https://www.facebook.com/justinkenrick/posts/10211952401939623>

There was a unanimous decision of Council to market the site and to ring-fence the proceeds to fill the funding gap for rebuilding Meadowbank. There were no dissenting voices. The questionnaire reflects that fact. It is also a fact that the planning status of that site in the recently approved Local Development Plan is as open space. It is not a designated housing site. Make of all that what you will.

You might have seen the Portobello Rotary traditional games at the Portobello Village Show. Now the club is inviting you to an Doors Open Evening to hear about the work Rotary club members do in the local community and their major worldwide project to eradicate polio. So do come to the King's Manor Hotel on Wednesday 11 October, 6.15pm for 6.30pm, for a communal meal and chat. Portobello Rotary is a small club, but a welcoming one and it should be a great evening.

The community cinema group in Craigmillar have planned a whole day of outdoor cinema screenings in an amazing yurt for Friday 22 September. These screenings are part of the first event to be held on the temporary green space on this day. Their programme includes local film made over the years, from Arts the Catalyst to Bill Douglas' My Childhood. The event is about more than just watching a film – but opportunity for people to connect, share stories and come together as a community. Could be a great day and if nothing else a yurt isn't something you would see every day as you travel along Niddrie Mains Road. More information from dani.Waddell@thistle.org.uk

Portobello Library are having a Dementia Cafe on Tuesday 19 September, 10am – 4pm. A diagnosis of dementia can be a frightening, both for the person with dementia, and for their families and friends. The good news is that there are lots of groups and services in Edinburgh that offer support for people with dementia and those who care for them. Come along to our drop-in cafe to find out more. There will be people on hand to chat you to about dementia, and to help you find groups and services in your local area. You can drop in any time between 10am and 4pm and have a cuppa, a scone and a good natter!

Christine Jardine is Liberal Democrat MP for Edinburgh West and yesterday in Westminster she demanded that VAT is lowered for those involved in Tourism.



Christine Jardine MP for Edinburgh West

Ms Jardine, who pressed the UK Government during Questions to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

said:

“Edinburgh West’s local economy benefits from the large number of tourists who visit places like the new Queensferry Crossing, our world renowned zoo and the home of Scottish Rugby. I want to ensure these businesses and the communities they are part of are supported in every way possible.

“That’s why I pressed the Minister today on looking at implementing an initiative that our European partners already have in place to give VAT flexibility to businesses in the tourism industry.

“Businesses all over the country deserve the best deal possible from the UK Government.”

Miles Briggs, Lothian MSP, congratulated the University of Edinburgh Principal Sir Timothy O’Shea on being named as this year’s winner of the [Edinburgh Award](#). Miles has this morning tabled a Parliamentary motion at Holyrood welcoming the award which has already attracted broad cross party support. Sir Timothy becomes the 11th recipient of the award, following in the footsteps of previous winners including JK Rowling, Professor Peter Higgs, Dame Elizabeth Blackadder and Professor Richard Demarco.



Sir Timothy O’Shea

Speaking today Miles said: “I congratulate Sir Timothy on receiving this prestigious award which is richly deserved.

“Sir Timothy has provided strong and dynamic leadership for the University of Edinburgh during his period in charge and has helped ensure that it remains one of the very best academic institutions internationally with a global reach and profile.

“The University of Edinburgh is a key element of the economy

of the city and wider region and helps drive economic growth here and it is entirely appropriate that Sir Timothy's contribution to the University and city is being recognised through him receiving this prestigious civic honour."

Jeremy Balfour MSP for the Lothian Region attended the **Which? Nuisance Calls campaign** event on Wednesday 13 September at the Scottish Parliament, giving his support to the Which? Campaign to stop nuisance calls.

Which? research shows as many as eight in 10 (81%) Scots received a nuisance call on their landline in the last month, so campaigners from the consumer champion spoke to MSPs about the issues with these calls that many are facing in their constituency.

Alex Neill, Which? Managing Director of Home Products and Services, said: "We're delighted that Jeremy Balfour MSP attended our event and is backing our campaign to put an end to nuisance calls.

"Scots continue to receive more nuisance calls than the rest of the UK, and we are delighted that Jeremy will get behind the Scottish Government's action plan and raise awareness of this everyday menace to the public."

Jeremy commented that 'the issue of nuisance calls affects everyone and I am pleased to support the campaign to help raise awareness of how people can protect themselves against nuisance calls, especially the vulnerable and most at risk people in our local areas.'



Joanna Cherry MP for Edinburgh South West in her usual direct fashion spoke during a debate on the European Withdrawal Bill in the House of Commons on Monday. She quoted the Law Society of Scotland view on the bill before the house while levelling the claim against the bill that it is a power grab by

Westminster, including some of the devolved powers.

"The effect of the bill would be to remove the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament in relation to any matter in retained EU law. This would be the case even if it related to areas of law not reserved to the UK under the Scotland Act, such as agriculture or fisheries."

And as usual Tommy Sheppard MP for Edinburgh East rose to make a barnstorming speech about the alleged power grab contained in the bill.

Thankyou [@TommySheppard](#).

Just...thankyou. [#EUwithdrawalbill](#) [pic.twitter.com/c50CDM8FZN](#)

– Sarah Mackie (@lumi_1984) [September 12, 2017](#)

He said : "Let me put this on the record: the people who sent me to [this place](#) to speak on their behalf voted by 74% to retain their European citizenship and against the process in which we are now engaged.

"The people of my country voted by 62% to retain their European membership. We were told in 2014 that the independence referendum was not a matter of Scotland dissolving itself and its citizens becoming part of another country. It was about a political union between Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Within that Union, according to [David Cameron](#), the views of Scotland would be respected.

"I call now for that respect to be shown to Scotland and to the Scottish Government. I know that the UK will leave the European Union—that much is certain—but what happens next must be different in different parts of the United Kingdom; it must be different in Scotland, so that Scottish interests can be protected.

“I say to the Conservative and Unionist party in Scotland: you may have a [majority](#) in this vote, but you are alone tonight in Scotland in letting this process go through.”

The Bill was passed.

Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh North and Leith is still in pursuit of the truth from David Mundell the Secretary of State for Scotland. Particularly she wants to unearth how much it costs to run the Scotland Office. She asked : “To ask the [Secretary of State](#) for Scotland, what the names are of his Department’s special advisers; and what the annual employment costs of those advisers are.”

The Secretary of State for Scotland referred her to a government publication giving the salaries for all special advisers. You can find it [here](#) and it discloses only one special adviser for Mr Mundell who may receive up to £70,000 per year.

It is 20 years since Scotland voted to restore The Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. There were some speeches and you might like to read that made by [The Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland’s Place in Europe \(Michael Russell\)](#)

[Click here.](#)

