

Five things you need to know today

It's the middle of the week and the weather remains cold.

The Met Office say 'Intermittent snow showers and windy this morning. Peeks of sunshine later. Cold. High around 40F. Winds WSW at 20 to 30 mph. Chance of snow 40%.'

The Queensferry Crossing is still closed with lengthy diversions by Kincardine Bridge.

☐☐QUEENSFERRY CROSSING UPDATE☐☐06:50#M90 QFC remains CLOSED☐☐

Journey times via [#A985](#) Kincardine Bridge☐

From J6 Kinross S/B via [#A977](#) – approx 1hr 10 min

From J3 Dunfermline via A985 – approx 1 hr 5min

Consider train over FRB – [@ScotRail](#) running enhanced service☐
pic.twitter.com/CESJ5v7Ccu

– Traffic Scotland (@trafficscotland) [February 12, 2020](#)

You would see this video on the BBC news last night. The bridge remains shut – despite calls from Edinburgh Western MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton on Twitter that it should be open. Ice fell on a van earlier in the week. He then had a briefing from the Transport Secretary which confirmed that there is no way to clear the ice from the towers except manually or by waiting for it to thaw.

The Queensferry Crossing, the bridge that 'would never close' now shut in both directions. pic.twitter.com/2aZuL4zQRK

– Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP [@agcolehamilton](#) [February 10, 2020](#)

Transport Secretary, Michael Matheson, paid a visit to the bridge on Tuesday. He said: “Engineers have been closely monitoring and studying the unique weather conditions causing this issue with a build-up of snow and ice on the Queensferry Crossing.

“We are developing our understanding of these conditions, which involve a certain consistency of snow and/or sleet, wind speed and direction, interacting fluctuating low temperatures. This is leading to an ice formation on the bridge’s towers and cables at low temperature which has subsequently fallen from the bridge when thawed.

“We are doing all we can to mitigate the impacts of this closure. A diversion route is in place via the Kincardine bridge and I would encourage those travelling from further away more strategic destinations – Perth or Dundee to Glasgow for example, to consider an alternative route avoiding the main diversion where possible.

“We continue to work closely with public transport providers to provide alternative transport and additional capacity. Working in partnership we have strengthened the public transport offering across the Forth between the Lothians and Fife. Additional buses are in operation, including additional bus services from rail stations which are experiencing higher than normal demand.

“The Forth Road Bridge (FRB) remains open as a public transport corridor into the city from Fife. The decision has been taken to not reopen the FRB to general traffic given it

is currently undergoing significant renovation work on the main expansion joints and has a contraflow in operation.

“Opening the FRB up to general traffic is likely to result in increased congestion for all vehicles and leave the crossing vulnerable to lengthy delays as a result of any accidents or breakdowns. This would have a significant negative impact on journey times for public transport over the Forth.

“Looking ahead we will implement constant monitoring of the Queensferry Crossing, when similar weather conditions are expected. With a particular focus on the areas we now know as vulnerable to this ice accumulation. We are taking steps to improve our traffic management response to any incidents so that ice can be cleared and any risk minimised.

“Given the weather forecast for similar cold conditions, we expect this will be during the course of Wednesday and we will provide further updates as soon as they become available. Safety of the travelling public is paramount and we will reopen the bridge as soon as it is safe to do so.

“I appreciate the frustration this closure may cause and I very much appreciate the public’s patience and co-operation at this time.”

SNP councillor Kate Campbell has accused a Tory group councillor of casual everyday sexism in response to his comments about her wanting the top job at the City Chambers. Read one of Local Democracy Reporter David Bol’s last articles [here](#). It would indeed be a meteoric rise if it happens. Cllr Campbell was a student of film studies, then worked for Tommy Sheppard MP before being elected in 2017 and becoming first Economy Convener and now Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work.



Richard Purden was at The Queen's Hall to review Ute Lemper for us. Read more [here](#).

And tonight at The City Chambers Tom Gilzean will be posthumously awarded the MBE by the Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross. Tom who died earlier this year aged 99 was given the honour in the New Year Honours List. What a pity he did not live to receive it himself.



Tam Gilzean BEM charity fundraiser, winner of the 2014 Edinburgh Award and former Royal Engineer at the Garden of Remembrance in 2017