

Five things you need to know today

This is our newly revived 'Five things' article where we gather together news which interests us and we hope will interest you.

If you have something you think our readers might like to know then do email us with details: editor@theedinburghreporter.co.uk

Protest



Protest outside Queen Elizabeth House against the UK Government's proposal to block the Gender Recognition Reform legislation passed by The Scottish Government using S.35 ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

A protest was held in Edinburgh on Thursday to tell the UK Government that their proposed use of Section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 to stop the Gender Recognition Reform Act gaining Royal Assent is unwarranted and unfair.

Read our whole report [here](#).

BBC cuts



Tommy Smith, OBE PHOTO Derek Clark

Tommy Smith, OBE, is leading a campaign to persuade the BBC to think again about proposed cuts to programming including Jazz Nights, Classics Unwrapped and Pipeline.

A rally is being held at the Usher Hall on Sunday at 11am when musicians who support the campaign will gather as a show of strength against the public broadcaster's cost cutting move.

[The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to Tommy Smith](#) earlier in the week. Listen here:

Royal

Royal Visit



HRH The Princess Royal popped into Lady Haig's Poppy Factory in Edinburgh on Thursday to officially re-open the campus following a two-year refurbishment.

Her Royal Highness toured the factory and its new exhibition space, and chatted to staff, before visiting Poppyscotland's mobile museum, Bud.

The factory, founded in 1926, will now re-open to visitors and school groups following the project to showcase its history and heritage. Thirty-three disabled veterans work in the factory on Logie Green Road, making more than three million poppies each year for the Scottish Poppy Appeal, as well as wreaths and other tributes.

Her Royal Highness was met by the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh, Brigadier Dr John Reid Thomson, who is also chair of the factory, Poppyscotland's President, Rear Admiral Mark Beverstock, Helen Owen, chair of Poppyscotland, and factory manager, Major Charlie Pelling.

David Adamson, a wreath maker and tour guide, who served for 22 years with the Royal Highland Fusiliers, gave her a tour of the factory, introducing the team.

Her Royal Highness has been in Edinburgh for much of this week and many locals have received their honours at investitures held at The Palace of Holyroodhouse.

Dunard Centre – making progress



Alison Rose, Chief Executive of the NatWest Group, of which the Royal Bank of Scotland is part, visited the site with Gavin Reid, Co-Chair of IMPACT Scotland and Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, to mark the moment the site is handed over. PHOTO Paul Chappells

The site of the new concert hall has been handed over to charity IMPACT Scotland so that they can clear the site later in the year in readiness for construction. This will be the first purpose built concert hall in Edinburgh for more than 100 years and is being funded by philanthropic donations from the Dunard Fund as well as support from the City Region Deal.

The Royal Bank of Scotland has granted a long lease of the site by way of support.

[Read more here.](#)

Levelling Up Fund

More than £16 million from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund was already confirmed in 2021 and this funding will help kickstart regeneration for the Granton Waterfront area in Edinburgh. The project will start off the transformation of Granton's waterfront in the first phase of the redevelopment called Heart of Granton, and was used as a Case Study as the Government issued notice of new awards this week. The funding will be used to decontaminate the site of the gas holder and turn it into a greenspace for community use. One of the key aims is to light up the gas holder at night to make it a beacon on the city's skyline, something which has been done in the past on an occasional basis. The work is due to begin next year.

Sadly the UK Government did not award any funds in Midlothian at all. Owen Thompson MP and Midlothian Council Leader Kelly Parry have jointly written to the Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove, expressing their frustration and disappointment that Midlothian Council did not receive a penny in funding from Round 2 of the Fund.

Midlothian had placed a Round 2 bid for important A701 corridor improvements, with support provided by Mr Thompson as the local MP. The council today received a brief letter from the Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper MP and Minister for Levelling Up, Dehenna Davidson MP informing them the application had been unsuccessful, but that feedback was not immediately available.

Scotland's share of the funding was £177 Million out of a possible £2 Billion, meaning only 8.5% from the available

funds were delivered to Scotland in this round, a reduction of 1.6% in Scotland's share from the previous round. Many Local Authorities including Midlothian received nothing.