

Five things you need to know today

Take a tram to Newhaven

And soon you will be able to do just that. The council and Edinburgh Trams announced yesterday that the trams will begin carrying passengers on 7 June 2023.

With just under two weeks to go before the big day, the trams will continue running on the route to Newhaven to the planned timetable and a frequency of a tram every seven minutes. Works on the Picardy Place island site started during February 2023 and are, we understand, scheduled to be completed by June 2023.



Tram leaving the West End tram stop PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

It is an exciting moment for the city which has been so affected by the tramworks which began in 2008. The business case on which the tram proceeded into reality predicted that the tram extension will lead to passenger numbers on the tram doubling to 15.7 million each year. This was a pre-pandemic estimate, and time will tell if the number of people jumping aboard reaches these levels.

The Scottish Government has not supported concessionary fares on board trams in the same way as it has with bus travel. The under 22 scheme is a case in point and was not extended after 31 March 2023. But the board of Edinburgh Trams decided that it could not stand by and allow those under 22 to have free bus travel, but have to pay on the trams. This could have led to more passengers using the buses, rather than a tram carrying up to 250 passengers, and perhaps making traffic congestion worse.

So the Edinburgh Trams board has decided to continue to offer free concessionary travel for people under 22 on trams to 31 December 2023, which is the end of the company's financial year.

Until March this year the council reimbursed the tram company for this lost revenue, but the budget which was approved in February 2023 does not make any provision for ongoing council support. So Edinburgh Trams will "carry" the cost of this lost revenue, although they had not budgeted on receiving any income for younger passengers, so there is no effect on the company cashflow or budget. The council and Transport for Edinburgh will continue to discuss the Fair Fares review with Transport Scotland to try and agree that the government underwrite the free travel.

It has taken some time to get to this point, particularly after the council decided it could only build the line to York Place in the first project, mainly due to financial pressures. The first part of the tram project cost much more than

initially predicted, took much longer, and only delivered half the line. The Edinburgh Tram Inquiry led by Lord Hardie has just issued its report, but it will be with the printers for some weeks before printed copies are available. The inquiry itself has taken since 2014, and had cost £11 million by 2020.

Edinburgh International Children's Festival

Imagine, the children's festival begins tomorrow and runs for a short period until 4 June.

On Saturday there will be a day of free pop-up performances and artist interventions for families at the National Museum of Scotland. The day will involve walk-about characters, dance and Chinese pole performances, music, hands on art activities and also a performance of Hat, Hat, Hat. This is a new performance commissioned by children from Forthview Primary School and created along with artist Cynthia Cheung.

[Read more here and book tickets now.](#)

The full programme is here:



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Teapot Trust

The Teapot Trust based in Musselburgh has won a gold medal at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show with their Elsewhere Garden, created on the theme of the Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

Sarah Randell, Chief Executive of Teapot Trust said: "Winning gold is a fantastic acknowledgement of the brilliance of Semple Begg's design in conveying the freedom gifted by art therapy.

"The most important point is that we've never lost sight of the reason we created the Elsewhere Garden – to reach more children so that their lives can be transformed through the healing power of art therapy. For us, that's gold.

"We are so grateful to Project Giving Back's funding that has enabled this to happen, helping us reach more children and their families who will benefit from art therapy."

[The charity](#) describes itself as "at the forefront of transformative mental health support for children, young people and families living with chronic conditions".

The News is 150 years old

The Edinburgh Evening News celebrates 150 years on 27 May, and we wish our colleagues there a Happy Anniversary.

It is easy to access the archives of any newspapers through the British Newspaper Archive website which has editions all the way up to 1955. While you visit the library you can access the British Newspaper Archive for free.

Tales of One City the Edinburgh Libraries website has used the facility to look back at some of the notable events of the

last 150 years which the paper has reported on. One of the most poignant as we head towards the new tram service to Newhaven is the farewell to the tram in 1956.

[Read more here.](#)

We are not quite 150 years old but we have just published our 50,000th article online. We have a massive archive of articles and photos over the last ten years or so.

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