

# Five things you need to know today

## A Transport Red Wheel for the White House

On Friday there was a ceremony held at the White House in Craigmillar – the art-deco building originally created as a roadhouse when drinking and driving was still socially acceptable. This was one of a number of roadhouses built on arterial routes around the city.

They were designed by architect William Innes Thomson of the firm W N Thomson and Co for Jemima Hood Gair. Gair's fifteen-year-old daughter convinced her to request a [Moderne](#) design.

The White House opened on 18 October 1936. It is a two-storey irregular-plan [International Style](#) and [Modern](#) building with [Art Deco](#) detailing. its [lounge bar bay window](#) has been compared to that of the card room of the [RMS Queen Mary](#). The ground floor featured a [public bar](#), [saloon bar](#), [tea room](#), and [skittle alley](#), while the first floor featured a [billiard room](#) and lounge bar.

[Read more here.](#)

NATIONAL TRANSPORT TRUST

'THE WHITE HOUSE'

CRAIGMILLAR

1936 roadhouse in an International /  
Modern style, to which motorists drove  
for food and drink, billiards and skittles



TRANSPORT HERITAGE SITE

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And the prices are at Black Friday rates until midnight tonight...



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# the Edinburgh Reporter

December 2024



By **PHYLLIS STEPHEN**

**ALL ABOARD THE TRAM** to get to the city centre for Christmas fun. Santa's in town ready to meet children just next to the tram stop in the Piccolo Spiegeltent in St Andrew Square, where there will be stories, a letter writing

station and a post box to send any missives direct to Santa's workshop.

The newest attraction in Edinburgh is the Christmas Tree Maze which is one of the UK's largest illuminated Christmas tree trails. Step free access but anyone who wants to explore the maze is advised to buy a ticket in advance

- and remember the EH postcode discount.

A spokesperson for producers, UniqueAssembly, said: "Edinburgh's Christmas is finally here, and with a seven-week programme packed full of family favourites, this year promises to be one of the biggest and best ever. Whether sipping on cool

cocktails in our brand new Ice Bar, enjoying a festive treat at the Coorie Inn or showing off your skating skills on the Ice Rink, there's something for everyone at Edinburgh's Christmas."

[edwinterfest.com/edinburgh-christmas/](http://edwinterfest.com/edinburgh-christmas/)

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## The Scottish Budget

The Scottish Budget will be announced by Finance Secretary, Shona Robison, on [Wednesday afternoon just after 2 o'clock](#). There is no traditional holding the briefcase aloft staged

photo ahead of Scottish budgets, but most local authorities are looking for some more money from The Scottish Government this time. The UK Government increased the block grant paid to Holyrood by £3.4 billion. How that will now be divided up by The Scottish Government on the devolved areas will be made clear on Wednesday.

First Minister, John Swinney, said that improving Scotland's NHS will be a top priority.

He said: "All of us have used Scotland's National Health Service at different points in our lives, and we all know what a precious institution it is.

"Under this government, Scotland has had the best-performing core Accident & Emergency Units in the UK for nine years, we have more GPs per head than anywhere else in the UK and we have prevented the disruption of strike action by settling fair pay deals for frontline NHS workers.

"But we know that health services everywhere face huge pressure in light of the COVID-19 pandemic – and ours is no exception.

"When I became First Minister, I made clear that one of my top priorities was improving public services like the NHS. Since then, I have thrown the weight of the Scottish Government behind tackling some of the key challenges it faces – whether that is increasing capacity in hospitals or making it easier for people to see a GP.

"Our budget this week will be a budget which has improving the NHS at its heart. We have listened carefully to suggestions from patients and staff – as well as engaging constructively with organisations and political parties across the parliament.

"I want to make progress on improving our NHS, but to do that, Parliament must approve our Budget Bill in order to unlock

investment which will drive the long-term and lasting improvements – and the healthier population – that we all want to see.”

## **Scottish Labour advise the SNP not to waste an opportunity “this time”.**

Michael Marra MSP and Scottish Labour finance spokesperson said “For 14 years, the Tories have provided cover for the SNP’s financial failures and reckless waste – but that ends here.

“Now that Labour has turned the page on Tory austerity and delivered record levels of funding for Scotland, the SNP has to stop the blame game and own its decisions.

“Right now almost 1 in 6 Scots are on an NHS waiting list, exam results are declining, our justice system is at breaking point and countless Scots are suffering as a result of the housing emergency.

“The SNP is out of excuses – they have a budget of nearly £60 billion at their disposal. The whole of that budget must deliver for the people of Scotland and address the challenges our country faces.

“Scottish Labour has engaged in good faith at every point in this budget process, but the SNP has failed to answer our calls to rescue our public services which can only be achieved with a new direction for Scotland.

“The SNP is still failing to be transparent about the state of public finances or honest about how things reached this point.

“This week is an opportunity to end the decline and take our country in a new direction – the SNP must not squander it.”

## **Scottish Greens want to press their influence on the SNP with a demand for a £2 cap on bus fares and the rollout of free school meals to all P6 and P7 pupils..**

Ross Greer MSP said: "This budget is John Swinney's chance to show the kind of Scotland he wants to build. If it is a fairer and greener Scotland, Green MSPs will be willing to work constructively with him to see it passed.

"Scotland is one of the richest countries in the history of our planet. It's shocking and entirely avoidable that so many children still live in poverty and come to school hungry. The Scottish Greens have already secured the rollout of universal free school meals to all P4 and P5 pupils, and a wipeout of all school meal debt held by struggling families. Now we want to go further. In September the SNP dropped our previous shared commitment to expand free school meals to P6 and P7. We want to see that decision reversed and a commitment in the budget to deliver those meals.

"One of the most important schemes already delivered by the Scottish Greens is free bus travel for everyone under 22. It has seen 730,000 young people taking 140 million free bus journeys since it was introduced two years ago.

"To protect the planet and help families with the cost of living, we need to make buses more affordable. That is why we have proposed trialling a £2 bus fare cap for services across Scotland from next year.

"When the Scottish Greens removed peak rail fares we got more people onto our trains and saved commuters hundreds or even thousands of pounds. Sadly the SNP have since reintroduced those peak fares. We will argue for their removal once again but we also want to see a bus fare cap, making Scotland's most

popular form of public transport much more affordable.

“These are the kind of bold, ambitious and practical changes that the First Minister could make to undo the damage being inflicted by Westminster and build a fairer, greener Scotland. If he takes these steps on Wednesday, the Scottish Greens will work with him to agree a final budget proposal early in the new year.”

## **At the council this week**

The business this week includes a meeting of the Housing committee. Journalists attended a briefing by the Convener but the whole hour was given up to discussing the impending deadline for temporary accommodation.

The housing convener explained that since the pandemic the council had been placing people in temporary accommodation which was unlawful. The advice from officers was to stop using any accommodation which did not have an HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) licence and advise the landlords they would not use their B&B or hotel premises any longer until they held the necessary licence.

A mega meeting of the Licensing Board on Friday heard more than a dozen such applications for premises which are a temporary home for 484 residents. We are not yet sure whether residents had to be moved out of any unlicensed accommodation over the weekend but we do know that all applications heard on Friday were approved.

The landlords only acted when forced to do so, something commented upon at the Licensing Board meeting. We will have a fuller report on that meeting shortly.

Otherwise the Housing meeting will deal with matters such as winding up the council's property development arm, [EDI Group](#), (which it has been doing for seven years). In the report



council officers advise there will be a smaller dividend paid to the council:

“The projected special dividend to the Council from closing EDI is currently forecast to be £7.847m. This is a reduction on the original forecast figure of £8.5m, reflecting the loss sustained by EDI on the Market Street hotel development, write-downs on property valuations associated with COVID-19, higher than anticipated tax liabilities on the sale of land at Brunstane East, and other costs arising such as contributions to remedial works on unadopted roads and costs associated with the South Park and the leased land at West Shore Road.”

Monday, 2nd December, 2024

- [10.00 am CANCELLED – Regulatory Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers

Tuesday, 3 December, 2024

- [10.00 am Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers
- [2.00 pm Pensions Audit Sub-Committee](#) – Lothian Pension Fund, – 4th Floor, 9 Haymarket Square, Edinburgh, EH3 8RY

Wednesday, 4 December, 2024

- [10.00 am Development Management Sub-Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers
- [6.00 pm Consultative Committee with Parents](#) – Virtual Meeting – via Microsoft Teams

Thursday, 5 December, 2024

- [10.00 am Culture and Communities Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers
- [2.00 pm Pensions Committee](#) – Lothian Pension Fund, – 4th Floor, 9 Haymarket Square, Edinburgh, EH3 8RY

Friday, 6 December, 2024

- [10.00 am Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee](#) – Virtual Meeting – via Microsoft Teams

## At The Scottish Café on 7 December

Join Carina Contini owner of The Scottish Café invites booklovers to join her and two other wise women on 7 December at The Scottish Café for a book signing.

She will have Sue Lawrence (New Scottish Baking) and Sara Sheridan (The Secrets of Blythswood Square) in the restaurant to sign copies of their books and she will also sign copies of her latest cookbook.

Carina was snowed off last time and is hoping for better weather next weekend!

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