

Five things you need to know today

Eye Pavilion at last

The Scottish Budget includes funding for a new Eye Pavilion to replace the tired building by The Meadows.

The government said the £2 billion increase in frontline NHS spending will increase overall health and social care investment to £21 billion to reduce NHS waiting lists, making it easier for people to see their GP, and progress the Belford Hospital, Monklands Hospital and Edinburgh Eye Pavilion projects.

Labour MSP, Sarah Boyack and Conservative MSP, Miles Briggs, have both been campaigning to have a new eye pavilion. Both say they are delighted.

Ms Boyack said: "This project is long overdue and we need the work to start immediately.

"I want to pay tribute to all the tireless campaigners and sight loss charities and my fellow Edinburgh MSPs that have been pushing hard for a new hospital for years."

Miles Briggs said: "Over the last eight years SNP Ministers have on three occasions promised a new eye hospital for Edinburgh only to cancel and pause it. I welcome the announcement that a new hospital has been included in the Scottish Government's budget and will work to make sure they keep their word and deliver."



The Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion

Housing emergency

The council declared a housing emergency in the capital in November 2023. Since then housing convened Cllr Jane Meagher has told us she has been pushing the case with The Scottish Government for more funding to allow Edinburgh council to invest in much needed new homes for social rent. Cllr Meagher has also been in regular contact with Scottish Ministers over the problems facing the council in finding accommodation for people who present as homeless.

On Wednesday planning approval was given to a new development which the council believes will be one of the biggest new housing developments in the capital for decades.

West Town Edinburgh will include 7,000 homes, and 35% will be affordable homes. This is intended to become a new £2 billion 20 minute neighbourhood on a 205 acre site close to the airport.

Council Leader Cammy Day said: “With urgent solutions to our housing and climate emergencies needed, our new City Plan is helping to make sure development in the city creates sustainable, affordable homes. And by unlocking underused sites to the West and to the North of the city, we’re now starting to see affordable low carbon homes built at the pace and scale we need.

“The Council has approved planning in principle for over 12,000 new homes this year and more additional green space than any other city as we work urgently with partners to sustainably address Edinburgh’s housing emergency. The biggest housing-led development in Edinburgh of modern times, West Town will provide a huge number of the new homes our city needs and I’m pleased Council officers and developers have worked together to get a great result. This is a major £2 billion development of 7,000 energy efficient homes, alongside shops, schools, local amenities, and lots of greenspace.

“Consider this alongside our £1.3bn regeneration of the [Granton Waterfront](#), which is the biggest development of its kind in Scotland, with over £250 million invested with partners and good progress being made towards delivering around 3,500 new net zero carbon homes. All of this is welcome news for the city, for our climate ambitions, for the thousands of residents in need of new housing and for Edinburgh’s economy – which is bucking national trends and continues to grow.”

Following the announcement of more money for housing in The Scottish Budget, Places for People’s chief executive Greg Reed said: “The £768m investment in affordable housing turns a new page for Scotland, where a worsening crisis sees every twentieth person awaiting a social home and where 10,000 children are stuck in temporary accommodation.

“The Finance Secretary’s injection into the Affordable Housing Supply Programme – reversing the devastating 2023 cuts to the

budget – will pave the road to recovery for housing in Scotland and urgently kick-start the supply of 8,000 vital new affordable homes.

“But while this funding is welcome, this is just the start. A long-term and strategic approach is the only way to truly end Scotland’s housing emergency, reduce homelessness and eradicate child poverty. We welcome the Finance Secretary’s pledge to look at all the levers available to her to achieve this.

“The SNP’s recent £1m investment in homelessness prevention, alongside a winter fuel allowance for pensioners, will provide a vital shot in the arm to Communities – but a focus on existing homes is also urgently needed. A current shortfall of £20m is preventing suitable adaptations to many homes – such as stairlifts and ramps – meaning too few properties meet Customers’ needs.

“At Places for People Scotland we work tirelessly to create, support and manage thriving Communities. Last year we built 430 homes, supported over 3,200 people with financial and digital inclusion, and helped 300 individuals who were homeless or at risk of being so. But with more support we can go further and faster.

“Housing in Scotland had taken two steps back but today makes a giant stride forward. This Government grasps the enormity of the challenge and we stand ready to work together to ensure everyone has a safe, suitable and quality home.”



LAST CHANCE TO APPLY FOR COMMUNITY GRANT FUNDING

If you have an idea that will make a difference to your local community then apply now for a grant of up to £5,000 to make your idea a reality.

The application deadline for the [Community Grants Fund \(CGF\)](#) has been extended to **5pm on Monday 16 December 2024**. This is the last chance to apply for a grant this year.

You can apply for up to £5,000 for community-focussed activity taking place in 2025. Areas with funding still available are: Almond, Craigentenny/Duddingston, Forth, Inverleith, Morningside, Pentlands, South West and Western.

Alan Gordon, Secretary for Longstone Community Council, said of the fund: *The CGF is an accessible fund for local groups across the city to make good use of. It brings ideas to life, activities to communities and often makes the difference between something happening or not. If you have an idea for improving your community, the CGF can help it to blossom.*

There are 13 local pots of money, each covering a different area of the city. In some areas the money for this financial year has already been allocated. However, there are several areas where funds remain. For more information about how to apply and to check how much money is available in different areas, go to the [Council's CGF web pages](#).

If you require further information or help to apply, please email communitygrantsfund@edinburgh.gov.uk

The Pitt

The Pitt in Leith used to be a good place to hang out at the weekends until it closed – and the good news is that it will be back soon – literally bigger, and better than ever.

The street food market has moved. It will now be sited at a new bigger location in Granton and will open its doors on 6 December. According to the organisers it will become a local

hub with retail and market units as well as spaces for community groups and families – and the permanent street food market. And there will be coffee.

The Pitt opens from 6 December.

[Read more here](#)



The Pitt

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the Edinburgh Reporter

December 2024

EDINBURGH'S NEWSPAPER... A CAPITAL READ FROM START TO FINISH



Santa's on track

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 Spiegellent 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/

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