

# Five things you need to know today

## Cockburn Association public meeting – sign up here

The Cockburn is holding an event on 3 April called On the Road to Nowhere – highlighting our piece on the ramp in Charlotte Square which appears to us to have no purpose whatsoever- and which is a complete eyesore in the New Town.

Cockburn announce the event with this statement: “This Public meeting has been organised by the Cockburn Association to explore the current issues and challenges in managing streetscapes and civic spaces in a heritage city. Not only is the centre of Edinburgh inscribed as a World Heritage Site, but many areas of the city are designed as a Conservation Area, defined as a place of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance which is desirable to preserve or enhance.

“Street space in Edinburgh is a finite resource. City of Edinburgh Council policies such as the City Mobility Plan and Future Streets/City Centre Transformation have generally been welcomed, attempting to address the variety of purposes and traffic modes which creates these major tensions and challenges on Edinburgh’s streets.

“However, streetscape management is an increasing concern. From the lack of basic maintenance to interventions like the concrete ramp in the internationally significant Charlotte Square, tarmacking over historic setts in Frederick Street and unsightly pedestrian control infrastructure on the High Street are just a few recent examples.

“Join us on Thursday 3 April to hear from the Association and other organisations on the challenges of streetscape and civic space management in Edinburgh. Share with us your concerns about what it happening on your street.”

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/on-the-road-to-nowhere-edinburg-hs-streetscape-and-heritage-places-tickets-1273752029609?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>



Ramp to nowhere in Charlotte Square PHOTO Duncan McGlynn

## Double your donation to the Botanics

Earlier this year the donations to the [Botanic appeal after Storm Éowyn had reached £100,000.](#)

Now The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has announced that there is a chance of having donations doubled until 31 March.

A spokesperson said: “We are now in the final phase of our Save the Palm Houses campaign. Thanks to a special match-



funding opportunity, donations made until 31st March will be doubled, up to £10,000.

“We are making remarkable progress and have almost reached our £250,000 target, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. Your gift today will be put to work immediately, as we strive to get the Palm Houses open once more.”

[If you can then donate here.](#)



Damage in the Botanics where the tallest tree perished in the storm

## **100 Princes Street is one of the 100 Best Places to Stay**

The new hotel at 100 Rose Street – which is only open to overnight guests – has been named in the [100 Best Places to Stay in the UK](#) list published by The Times and The Sunday Times. The establishment is named Best City Hotel, with the guide saying *“Edinburgh’s most existing stay shows off*

*impeccable service, Edwardian opulence and a killer location.”*

Claire Irvin, Head of Travel of The Times and The Sunday Times, said: “The judging process for this year’s Best Places To Stay awards has been as rigorous as ever, as our criteria combines with the ever-increasing importance our readers place on value for money in travel to find a shortlist worthy of their visit.

“This value is subjective – our readers covet multiple breaks across the year and are lucky to have the time and money to spend on them – however, each trip needs to be individually unique and memorable. And with international destinations easier than ever before to reach, UK hotels have their work cut out to compete on all levels. Luckily for us, they are rising to the challenge as never before.

“The price points of each hotel chosen may differ but they all share the same commitment to consistency and excellence our readers – and their hard-earned cash – deserve.”





# Baroque Festival

From 1 April to 10 May 2025, the Institut français d'Écosse is holding its first Baroque Music Festival in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The programme will offer a unique journey of Baroque music, with concerts by talented local and European musicians : Maxim Emelyanychev, Jan Waterfield, Héloïse Bernard, Anne-Marie Klein, Caroline Cradock, John Kitchen, Arusha Nazari, Antoine Morinière, Mujie Yan, Tiffany Vong and Tim Macdonald.

[Get your tickets or Festival Pass here.](#)



## This week at the council

Monday, 10th March, 2025 – no meetings

Tuesday, 11th March, 2025

- [10.00 am Policy and Sustainability Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers

Wednesday, 12th March, 2025

- [10.00 am Development Management Sub-Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers



Debenhams, Princes Street, Edinburgh. Photo: Martin P. McAdam  
[www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)

- At this meeting the application by Social Bite to move their village to 40a West Shore Road will be considered – but officers have recommended refusal. This will be the subject of a detailed presentation and it is of course up to councillors to decide on the application.
- The other application which is of note is the development of the former Debenhams store on Princes Street with an application for **hotel and pod hotel (Class 7) and associated uses with rooftop extension, alterations, and associated works**. This is recommended for approval. (Sadly two tier cycle racks at the rear are part of the plan – trying to get a heavy e-bike onto the upper level of such a rack is an impossible task for most.)
- Anyone who ever shopped in Debenhams knows this is a labyrinth of a building which is explained as follows:
  - **112 Princes Street**

- The main part of the former department store occupies the former Conservative Club at
- 112 Princes Street by Robert Rowand Anderson, dating from 1882-4. All that remains
- of this building is its four storey and attic, Free Renaissance style, sandstone facade
- with reconstructed elements comprising the gable chimneys, red tiled roof, dormers,
- and part of the ground floor elevation with altered to form shop display windows. The
- only salvaged internal features are the arcaded stair and associated stained-glass
- windows which were reconfigured and relocated towards the rear of the building. The
- reconstruction was designed by Ketley, Goold & Clark (with Simpson and Brown) and
- carried out from 1978-81. Six storeys of concrete floor plates were erected extending
- from Princes Street to Rose Street South Lane, including a modern glazed infill on the
- west side. The building is category B listed (reference LB29512, listed on 13 April
- 1965).
- **109, 110 and 111 Princes Street**
- The former store also occupies most of the building at 109, 110 and 111 Princes Street
- which comprises the 1869 Palace Hotel by John Lessels which became the Liberal
- Club. This building is a four storey, attic and garret, French Renaissance style,
- sandstone structure with modern shopfronts at ground level. The only part of this
- building not occupied by the former Debenhams store is the ground floor of the historic
- structure. The interior was mainly reconstructed as part of the department store
- formation in the late 1970s/early 1980s, although the

- stair and entrance hall, decorative
- ceiling plasterwork and remnants from the Gladstone Memorial Library survive. The
- building is category B listed, side (reference LB30147, listed on 12 December 1974).
- **144-150 Rose Street**
- The final premises occupied by the former Debenhams store comprises the basement,
- ground and first floors of 144-150 Rose Street. This building was originally a three
- storey and attic tenement erected in 1780 but was demolished retaining parts of the
- facade only as part of the department store creation of 1978-81. The original ground
- floor frontage was replaced with a modern sandstone shopfront. This building is
- category C listed (reference LB29650, listed on 28 March 1966).
- There are internal connections between the two main buildings. The ground and
- mezzanine levels of 112 Princes Street connect with the basement and first floors of
- **144-150 Rose Street** via the basement of the Rose Street building and a link structure
- in Rose Street South Lane.
- The site is within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site and is
- adjacent to several other listed buildings and structures, notably 152 and 154 Rose
- Street (including the Kenilworth Bar) and 112-114 Rose Street Lane South (reference
- LB29651, listed on 12 December 1974). Princes Street Gardens, part of the New Town
- Gardens Designed Landscape (reference GDL00367), is situated to the south of the
- site. The surrounding area is in mixed, predominantly commercial, use including shops,



- offices, hotels, restaurants, and bars.

Thursday, 13th March, 2025

- [10.00 am Finance and Resources Committee](#) – Dean of Guild Court Room – City Chambers

The Finance committee will end the speculation over the future of the bus station on Elder Street which last year was thrown into doubt. It had been thought that the council would be unable to renew the lease of the site beyond 2027 as the pension fund which owns it wanted to develop it into a residential site. However that has not happened and the committee will be asked to approve a 15 year lease. The current rent for the site is £223, 525 per year and the lease is due to expire in September 2027. Councillors had agreed previously that the central location of the bus station was key and that alternatives would be expensive to deliver.

The new lease will be for 15 years from 13 September 2027 at a rent of £350,000 (with a six months rent free period). The rent will be reviewed in line with the Retail Prices Index every five years although it cannot rise more than 1.5% and 3%. The council is responsible as is usual in any commercial lease for the repair of the site and also insurance. The council also has to pay a service charge applied to all tenants in the Multrees Walk area. The committee will also be told that there are income opportunities at the bus station such as advertising by JC Decaux.

Friday, 14th March, 2025 – no meetings



Edinburgh Bus Station. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam  
[www.martinmcadam.com](http://www.martinmcadam.com)