

Balloonatics – Chris Henry: Get Ready to go Balloon Crazy!



Comedian Chris Henry has issued a Christmas invite to children to join his army of Balloonatics at Edinburgh's Gilded Balloon's new venue in the Basement Theatre over this festive period.

Glasgow-born Henry has performed in front of packed houses in Adelaide, Melbourne, Bangkok, Singapore, and Glasgow.

Balloonatics is a comedy which will entertain families this Christmas with fun, jokes and general silliness to keep children and adults alike entertained.

Henry says: "I was inspired by my brother's family to create a show for kids that wasn't painful for adults to watch too. That's when I decided to blend my minimal balloon modeling skills, with what I am good at – making people laugh."

Balloonatics is at Gilded Balloon's Basement Theatre – Edinburgh on 16th, 23rd and 30th December 2017 at 2.00pm

Tickets are just £10.00 and can be purchased [here](#).

Free Christmas festivities

take over Greater Grassmarket on Saturday

Santa and Rudolph return to the Grassmarket area for festive fun tomorrow.

On Saturday 16 December 2017 Santa and his friends will be returning to the Grassmarket for free, family-friendly Christmas festivities. Organised and facilitated by the Greater Grassmarket Business Improvement District (BID), the festive event will feature attractions including; live music, carol singing, street performances, a Christmas market and a giant snow globe.



The giant snow globe, located in the West End of the Grassmarket under the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle, will offer visitors the chance to feature in their own miniature winter wonderland where they can take a picture worthy of the family Christmas card. There will also be performances by Elvis The Energetic Elf every hour from 1pm – 4pm inside the giant snow globe.

Visitors can get their photographs taken in between the shows and after the final show. Photos cost £5 for two people and £10 for up to four people.

Events kick off with the Christmas market which opens from 10am – 5pm and the attractions are available from 12pm – 4pm.

Dalkeith Country Park Spreads Some Festive Cheer With Christmas Tree Donations



Dalkeith Country Park has got into the spirit of Christmas by providing real Christmas trees to two local communities in Midlothian. Rosslyn Chapel and Woodburn Primary School have both received a Nordmann Fir tree from the pop-up Christmas tree shop at Restoration Yard.

Julie Merrilees, Visitor Services Manager at Dalkeith Country Park, said: “We were delighted to be able to donate the Christmas trees to help bring some extra festive cheer to local organisations.

“We were especially proud to see how amazing our tree looked in the beautiful setting of the iconic Rosslyn Chapel. We’d like to thank everyone who got in touch to enquire about a donation this year.

“Anyone wishing to enjoy one of our lovely trees in their own home can visit our pop-up shop.”

Ian Gardner, Director at Rosslyn Chapel Trust said: “The tree looks spectacular in our chapel now we have adorned it with an array of festive decorations.

“We always receive lots of compliments for our Christmas tree and are sure this year will be no different. The Chapel is open to visitors all month and, as a working church, Christmas is a very special time of year here. We’d like to thank the team at Dalkeith Country Park for their very kind donation.”

The pop-up shop has various Nordmann Fir trees, which were

grown in Stirling, from five to seven feet high. From 16th December, the shop will be open every day until Christmas Eve.

Restoration Yard Store, Café, Wellbeing Lab and Fort Douglas continues to be open seven days a week for Christmas shopping, lunching and playing.

Further information on events at Dalkeith Country Park is available [here](#).

Hibernian Ladies sign Shannon McGregor from Aberdeen



Hibernian Ladies have signed attacking midfielder Shannon McGregor from Aberdeen Ladies.

The 18-year-old joins the club with a wealth of experience after being a stand-out player for Aberdeen, as well as being capped at various youth levels for Scotland.

She is delighted to have joined Hibernian Ladies, saying that it is a big move for her, and is targeting a successful debut season in green and white.

Shannon told Hibernian Media: “It feels amazing to have signed for Hibernian. It’s a big move for me and it’s a big club to joining.

“The side have been really successful in the past, so coming to a club like this is a good move for me.

“It’s great to know that the coaching staff here have been

watching me throughout the seasons when I was at Aberdeen.

“My aims are to try to get a good amount of game time, which I feel will be tough as the squad are strong and it’s a battle to get into the starting team. I want to be as creative as all the other players here and do my best to help the club.”

Head Coach Kevin Milne said: “It’s really good news to be adding Shannon into our squad.

“I think she adds real quality to the squad and she will strengthen us as we strive to win the league title.

“Shannon was a signing target before I was even at the club, and once I was told about it I wanted to follow through on it as she is an excellent player.

“She had a lot of interest from other clubs and the fact that she chose us is great.”

Princes Street closed after man struck by masonry from Balmoral Hotel



Princes Street was closed for more than an hour this morning after a pedestrian was struck by masonry from the Balmoral Hotel.

Emergency services were called to the scene around 10.50am and the man was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

His injuries are not thought to be life-threatening.

A Police Scotland spokesman said: “Princes Street was temporarily closed to pedestrians and traffic in both directions between North Bridge and St Andrews Square as a precaution.

“The road has now reopened and the public are thanked for their understanding.

“The Health and Safety Executive and City of Edinburgh Council have been contacted.”

Work on Saughton Road North complete – road to re-open this evening

WATER MAINS WORK ON SAUGHTON ROAD NORTH COMPLETE TWO MONTHS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

Scottish Water work to improve the water mains infrastructure in and around Corstorphine has now completed on Saughton Road North, two months ahead of schedule.



Just under a kilometre of new pipe along Saughton Road North supplying around 4,000 customers has been upgraded.

Work now moves on to Kirk Loan but will pause for the Christmas break on 22 December 2017.

Kirk Loan will be closed to through traffic for approximately 11 weeks. Scottish Water are halting the works and opening the

roads in time for the festive period to give residents and businesses a well-deserved break, and also in line with the council's policy that no road works take place at this time of year.

The rolling programme will recommence on 8 January 2018 to complete Kirk Loan and move along to Clermiston Road.

Scott Fraser, Scottish Water's corporate affairs regional manager, said: "We are pleased that we have completed the Saughton Road North phase ahead of schedule.

"This is down to using a method called pipe bursting, which is a trenchless way of upgrading the water pipes, as 'launching and receiving' pits replace the need for a traditional construction trench in the road, resulting in faster, less intrusive work, leading to quicker reinstatement of the road.

"Scottish Water acknowledges that closing this section of road has been inconvenient for the local community, road users and public transport. We apologise for any inconvenience and thanks affected road users for their ongoing patience and understanding."

The £1m project to ensure customers continue to access clean fresh drinking water and maintain security of their water supply, is part of a wider programme of investment from 2015-2021 across the city.

Police unveil three-year implementation plan



Police Scotland yesterday announced plans to invest in new cyber hubs and purchase new unmanned aerial vehicles as it unveiled a three-year implementation plan for the Policing 2026: Serving a Changing Scotland strategy.

The UAVs will be used as alternatives to the force helicopter in rural and remote areas, primarily in the search for missing people, while a £3.6m investment in cyber hubs will mean that state-of-the-art facilities will be set up in the north and west of the country to add to an existing hub in Edinburgh. These specialist teams will help tackle rising demand for digital and cyber-related crime investigations and work on prevention.

Data from mobile devices is increasingly valuable in investigations, and around 40 cyber kiosks will be provided across Scotland for local officers to triage mobile devices quickly to determine if further specialist forensic analysis is needed.

These projects are just some of those which will be delivered over next three years in the first phase of the implementation of Police Scotland's work to change the way it delivers services, following a public consultation on the strategy earlier this year.

The plan will be presented to the Scottish Police Authority at its meeting on 19 December.

Other elements of the plan include:

- Piloting a range of mobile devices for operational use, enabling officers to access core systems and applications away from base
- Responding appropriately to the needs of individuals and communities by developing a new contact and resolution model based on an assessment of risk and vulnerability and with a continued commitment to localism
- Enhancing our response to risk and vulnerability through

- a new contact assessment model and work with partners
- A public consultation on the use of body worn video
- Increasing automatic number plate recognition coverage, intelligence and capabilities
- Investing in our workforce wellbeing, modernising staff pay and reward, and introduction of a new leadership strategy
- Developing an operating model for corporate support services, providing consistently high levels of service and access

Deputy Chief Constable Iain Livingstone said, “Our officers and staff across Scotland do an excellent job protecting the public every day, but the demands on policing have been changing.

“Our Serving a Changing Scotland strategy was developed to address the challenges we now face and to enable the police service to become operationally and financially sustainable.

“Since we consulted on this strategy earlier in the year, we’ve been working hard to pull a broad range of projects together so we can prioritise the work we need to do.

“This three year plan sets out what those priorities are and how we will go about the first stages of this transformation. It sets out how we will give our officers and staff the tools, resources and support they need to continue to keep people safe and to respond appropriately to the millions of calls for help we receive every year.

“Fundamental to all of this is the wellbeing and development of everyone working in Police Scotland, regardless of rank or role. This will allow all of us to play our part in making these changes happen and take pride in the future of policing in Scotland.”

Muirhouse Housing Association show their generous side

Muirhouse Housing Association have donated over £500 worth of food to the local foodbank on the run up to Christmas.

The generous donation was delivered to the foodbank by some of their staff and board members.

The community foodbank that operates from the Muirhouse Community Shop has been in existence for two years and has seen demand increase over this time.



Photo Thomas Brown

The foodbank do not require people to be referred, and locals can get food simply by calling them or popping into the shop.

A spokesperson for the Board and staff of at Muirhouse Housing Association said: “It’s a sad fact that foodbanks have become necessary in this modern day, however, they provide such a crucial support for those that need it.

“The dedication and care shown by Tenants and Residents In Muirhouse (TRIM) and the Muirhouse Community Shop is both an example and inspiration to us all.

“The concept of caring for your neighbour and your community is one of that is at the heart of Muirhouse Housing Association and this is alive and well in Muirhouse.

“When our Board learnt of the scale of people requiring support, over 70 emergency food parcels during the festive season last year, our board and staff felt compelled to act

swiftly to support such a worthwhile cause.

“We are proud to support TRIM and the Community Shop and we share their passion to see a thriving Muirhouse community.”

Demands for parcels from the foodbank have already increased over the last week and they are expected to keep rising as Christmas approaches.

TRIM chairman, Robert Pearson, said : “We have already seen an increase in the number of requests for food from local people.

“People don’t need to be referred to use our foodbank – all they have to do is ask for help – and that can be something people don’t like doing.

“We are here to help anyone who lives in the local area who may need food over the festive period.

“If anyone needs food please don’t hesitate to contact us and we will gladly provide a food parcel.”

If you need help over the festive period you can call the Community Shop foodbank on 07914942026

Muirhouse Housing Association is a community based housing association providing a range of good quality social housing in the communities of Muirhouse and Drylaw in North Edinburgh.

To find out more about them visit their website at <http://www.muirhouseha.org.uk/>

Edinburgh brewery – now

available online

Edinburgh based Bellfield Brewery is the first in the UK to use new voice controlled devices to sell its beer.

The company aims to grow digital sales to a point where it represents 20% of the company's total sales volume by the end of 2018.



Using Amazon's voice controlled digital assistant, consumers can now find their local stockist of the beer – and order it online – using only voice commands.

“Alexa, where can I buy Bellfield beer”? will elicit information on local stockists throughout the UK.

The system developed by the team at Bellfield, uses Amazon's Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform that helps showcase cutting-edge products from startup businesses.

Users can also ask the digital assistant to “Tell me about Bellfield” to hear the brewery's back story on an audio clip and get product information.

Bellfield launched in March 2016 as the UK's first, dedicated gluten-free brewery, with a mission to offer “Craft Beer for All”.

Set up by two coeliac friends in Edinburgh, the brewery produces small batch beers that are also gluten-free and vegan.

Director, Marie Brown pointed out that research indicates nearly 1 in 4 millennials would try voice-controlled ordering of products and around 10% have already used it.

She said, "This isn't just a gimmick. Research indicates that AI powered shopping is growing fast; 3 in 4 households in the US are predicted to have 'smart speakers' in their homes in the next three years.

"Ordering food and drink through voice controlled devices, will become as common as popping round to the corner shop is now."

Top £10,000 award scooped by Napier University Graduates

Scottish EDGE competition rewards start-ups with roots in Edinburgh Napier



Two entrepreneurs whose start-up ideas were brought to life during their time with Edinburgh Napier have both scooped a top funding award.

Edinburgh Napier graduates Sydney Chasin and Martina Zupan made it through to the finals of the Wild Card EDGE and Young EDGE categories respectively as part of the wider Scottish EDGE competition.

At the official awards ceremony yesterday (14 December), both were awarded funding of £10,000 in front of a packed audience at the Royal Bank of Scotland headquarters in Edinburgh.

Sydney was one of 11 Wild Card Edge winners, with Martina one of 12 Young EDGE winners. Nearly 200 businesses were eligible for both categories, with 22 selected for the final of each.

Scottish EDGE is a competition aimed at identifying and supporting Scotland's up-and-coming, innovative, high-growth potential entrepreneurial talent. To date, it has awarded £9m to nearly 300 businesses. Its Young EDGE competition focuses on supporting companies whose directors are all aged 18-30, while Wild Card EDGE is a judges' award category that requires the collective agreement of the assessment panel that you or your company has the 'wow' factor.

A graduate in financial services with entrepreneurship, Sydney was inspired to start her own business after completing her studies and became the first recipient of the Edinburgh Napier's graduate entrepreneurship visa sponsorship.

Her product – Lil' Pop – is a healthy snack that uses a crop called sorghum to produce an alternative to popcorn. Her company – The Healthy Crop – currently operates out of Edinburgh Napier's Bright Red Triangle incubator at Merchiston as she gears up to bring Lil' Pop to a commercial market.

Martina graduated from Edinburgh Napier's product design course earlier this year, with her innovative start-up – Alterwaste – focused on creating valuable sustainable materials out of waste by-products.

Her line of disposable tableware made from waste eggshells – Colleggtion – was developed as part of her final year project and she is now working on her eggshell material to replace plastic in a variety of industries. Her work is also being supported through Bright Red Triangle

Martina Zupan said: "Scottish EDGE was my first competition where I had to pitch live, so it was very nerve wrecking. But all the amazing people involved (judges, Scottish EDGE team and other inspiring entrepreneurs) have made the whole experience very positive and exciting. I feel extremely proud to have won the Young EDGE award and this achievement gives me extra confidence in turning my idea into reality."

Sydney Chasin said: "I'm honoured to be part of the Scottish EDGE competition and be one of the eleven Wildcard winners. This award is a game changer for the speed in which we can develop lil'POP and reach company goals. Pitching and asking for funds can be daunting, but the Scottish EDGE team and judges have made the entire process a wonderful and memorable journey."

More information on the competition can be found at:
<https://scottishedge.com/>

More information on Lil' Pop can be found at:
<https://thelilpops.com/>

More information on Alterwaste can be found at:
<http://alterwaste.com/>

Image courtesy of Sandy Young Photography

Briggs critical of Sick Kids' delays

Edinburgh's New Sick Kids Hospital Opening Delayed Yet Again

Miles Briggs MSP for Lothians has said that it is unacceptable that The Royal Hospital for Children and Young People has yet again been delayed, now until Autumn 2018.

The project, which was originally scheduled to open in Winter 2012, has been further delayed to Autumn 2018.



This was the scene at the groundbreaking ceremony in March 2015

The £150 million facility has experienced delay after delay with no clear reasons given. Campaigners have expressed anger that, during the six years of delay, a similar facility in Glasgow has been completed with funding from The Scottish Government.

Miles Briggs MSP commented : “Families, parents and patients across the Lothians and eastern Scotland will be deeply disappointed and frustrated at this.

“This appears to be yet another delay to the opening of a vital new hospital facility, despite NHS Lothian guaranteeing that it would open this autumn.

“Families deserve answers and clarification from both NHS Lothian and the Scottish Government about the reasons behind this delay and I will again be seeking these on behalf of constituents.

“The SNP government’s handling of this whole project – which it claims is one of its flagship infrastructure investments – has been incredibly poor from the outset, having originally indicated a new hospital could be ready by the end of 2012.

“Since then we have seen delay after delay and this is unacceptable.”

**Local crime fiction writer
Peter Ritchie chats to The**

Edinburgh Reporter



Local crime fiction writer Peter Ritchie signed a five book deal with Black and White Publishing this year.

The first book, 'Cause of Death' was launched last month at a [special event](#) at Waterstones store in Princes Street.

Peter took part in a question and answer session conducted by former Lothian and Borders Police Deputy Chief Constable Tom Wood in front of an invited audience.

Ahead of that event, Peter told The Edinburgh Reporter: "I've been writing crime fiction about five years now. Before that I dabbled with poetry and short stories which are all in a drawer now.

"I have had four books published plus one that I have finished last year but I have signed a book contract with Black and White and they are publishing from the beginning again and have re-edited the original books. They all feature the same character.

"It was terrifying writing the first book because you don't know and have no idea whether it is rubbish or not. The critics can be really harsh and in the 'e' world, people tear even the best of authors up so I do get slightly panicked when a book is finished.

"I had an idea for years about a detective who had been hit by a car and was lying in a road thinking about his end. That was the prologue for the first book, and that's what I wrote when I first started.

I honestly had no idea what was coming next, then suddenly Grace appeared along with the story of Northern Ireland. Of course Northern Ireland becomes important probably because it

had quite an effect on me from when I worked across there.

“Although there is a serial killer in the first book, I have tried to stay away from that subject in the rest of the books. Scotland seems to be knee deep in serial killers and bodies in crime fiction so I have tried to make them more authentic I suppose.

“I will never be able to convince the people who know me that the characters in the books are fictional and are not based on real people but of course you do draw on what you have seen and heard.

“For example, one of the small incidents that happens in book two was an act of incredible humanity which concerned a death and involved a priest

“This actually changed the way I thought about people. I was going through a stage where I think I was becoming a bit cynical but what I saw this man do changed me completely.”

In [‘Cause of Death’](#) Peter draws on his wide experience as an investigator to draw an authentic picture of how criminals, their victims and the detectives who try to catch them think, act and feel.

The book follows the fortunes of Detective Chief Inspector Grace Macallan whose career has hit a serious roadblock. When a covert police operation in Northern Ireland goes badly wrong, she’s faced with a painful decision – lie to save a young officer’s career, or tell the truth and ruin her own reputation.

Peter began his working life at 15 as a deep sea fisherman before joining the police service and moving through the ranks of CID/Murder Squad/Regional Crime Squad in Scotland.

He then went on to manage the Organised Crime Unit in the National Criminal Intelligence Service in London where he ran

a multi-agency team drawn from various branches of the law enforcement and the security services. This was a unique concept at the time and Peter travelled to many parts of the world in this role. He was subsequently appointed as the UK Liaison Officer to Europol in The Hague where he spent five years.

He returned to Lothian & Borders heading the Major Crime Team before taking on an advisory role for a project in Croatia.

Following his retiral he worked on a number of private investigations before spending the next few years as part of the public inquiry team looking into the murder of the LVF leader Billy Wright in the Maze Prison.

He also worked on a public inquiry into the death of eighteen patients in the Vale of Leven Hospital from a hospital acquired infection.

Review: Shrek The Musical



I had the dubious pleasure of keeping two of my grandchildren over the weekend. When I mentioned I was going to see Shrek The Musical at the Edinburgh Playhouse on Thursday their reaction was all-too predictable. There were sniggers and an assertion that, physically, I bear more than a passing resemblance to the repulsive crude ogre.

The musical is, of course, based on Shrek the Movie which focused on an ogre named Shrek who finds his swamp overrun by

fairy tale creatures who have been sent there by the evil Lord Farquaad. Shrek makes a deal with the lord to bring him a queen in exchange for the deed of his swamp. With a talking donkey, Shrek takes Princess Fiona to Lord Farquaad – only for Shrek to fall in love with the princess.

The musical version isn't exactly like the film but follows a similar premise.

The show opens with a young Shrek and his parents emerging out of the "once upon a time" pages of a huge storybook. Shrek has just turned seven, but Mum and Dad don't offer him much encouragement "It's a big bright beautiful world—but not for you," they advise. This sets the tone of the show – very funny in parts and touching in others.

Shrek is played by Steffan Harri whose theatre credits include *Les Misérables*, Monty Python's *Spamalot* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. Despite being an ogre you can't help but like Shrek and support the underdog.

Shrek falls in love with Princess Fiona, played with some style by Laura Main, star of BBC Television's *Call the Midwife*. Aberdeen born Main also has considerable theatre experience including *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It* and *Alice in Wonderland*. She gives a fine performance as a princess who finds true love but not in the way she had imagined.

The show has many laugh-out-loud moments and many of these are provided by the excellent Samuel Holmes who plays the diminutive Lord Farquaad. His attempts to marry Princess Fiona almost come to fruition but although he's meant to be something of a baddie, it's difficult to dislike someone who makes the audience laugh merely by looking at them.

The other main character is Donkey, played by Marcus Ayton, who also plays to the audience as you might expect in a show like this. Ayton is another actor with considerable theatre

experience and the four main characters all work well together with their love for the show clearly shining through.

The show is predominately aimed at children – it's a revision of a fairy tale after all – and the kids at Thursday evening's performance loved it. Adults enjoyed it too, sometimes for reasons the kids might not understand (Lord Farquaad riding on a horse and saying 'Whoa, sturgeon' invoking deep sounding chuckles on a day the Scottish government announced tax increases for higher earners)

The production team also deserve huge credit for the set, the large dragon making its presence felt being particularly impressive.

Shrek The Musical is a fairy tale with a difference. It is a story about inner beauty and being true to who you really are. In an era where far too much importance is attached to image, it's an uplifting tale and one which is very enjoyable. The closing number of 'I'm a Believer' says it all and had many of the audience up on their feet.

Shrek The Musical is at the Edinburgh Playhouse until 7th January 2018. Tickets [here](#).

Edinburgh Reporter rating ****

Touching images document dementia



Andy and Sheila
Biggar pictured

by Katariina
Leinonen

Images that document the everyday life of people living with dementia have been unveiled as part of a creative project between Edinburgh Napier University and an Edinburgh care charity.

Photography, TV and music students have documented some of the stories of people being supported by the Eric Liddell charity.

Photography students Katariina Leinonen and Theodor Asoltanei captured Andy and Sheila Biggar's visit to the centre's Lunch Break service.

The photographs are now on display along with a film made by students John Smith, Shannon McCann, Ethan Brown and Ruaraidh McKay.

The footage documents the day in the life of an older woman and features the music of student Chloe-Rose Hughes who, along with her fellow student Fraser Greenwood, has been visiting the centre to lead music therapy sessions with day care clients.

Lindsay Morgan, placement co-ordinator for Edinburgh Napier's School of Arts and Creative Industries, said: "All the students involved are very talented and have used their skills to create wonderful outcomes whilst also making the process enjoyable for everyone."

New owners for city guest

house

Southside Guest House on Newington Road has been sold to Roy Chung, a first-time entrant to the industry.

The mid-terraced property boasts eight en-suite letting rooms, reception area, a kitchen and breakfast room, a secluded private garden and patio.

Previous owners Franco and Lynn Galgani are retiring to spend more time with their family.

Stuart Drysdale, associate director at Christie & Co who handled the sale, said: "The hospitality market in the capital is extremely buoyant."

Ice hockey – basement rivals clash



Action from Murrayfield courtesy of Ian Coyle

Edinburgh Capitals and Dundee Stars clash head-on on Friday (face-off 7.30pm) in a huge basement battle at The Dundee Ice Arena.

They are desperately in need of points as they bid to catch the chasing pack.

Capitals prop up the 12-strong table with six points from 22 games while their Tayside rivals have 15 points from 23 games.

Both go into the game on a downer. Capitals have lost their

last four games.

Dundee snapped a seven-game losing streak with a home win over Manchester Storm on Sunday, but crashed 7-2 to Sheffield Steelers in the Challenge Cup, quarter-final, first-leg at The Dundee Ice Arena on Wednesday.

Omar Pacha, Stars' coach, was lifted by Sunday's 5-3 victory over Storm, his previous club.

But the mid-week defeat, with a return due in Yorkshire on Tuesday, was a set-back.

Pacha's men, however, eye two points to cut the gap between them and tenth-placed Braehead Clan.

Currently, the misfiring Glasgow side have 22 points from the same number of games.

And Dundee's Canadian-born playcaller said: "Sunday was a huge win for us and we have to build on that.

"Wednesday was a real challenge for us against a quality team."

Capitals are hurting on and off the ice and bosses have promised success-hungry fans that they will strengthen.

New player signings are expected next week and management say a commercial manager will be appointed.

Ukraine-born coach Dmitri Khristich will, however, have to take the ice in Dundee without new blood.

Elsewhere, Braehead Clan captain Ville Hämäläinen demanded that his men produce their top performance when they entertain league newcomers Guildford Flames on Saturday (face-off 7pm).

And he believes victory against the English side can be a springboard to moving up the table.

Hamalainen said: "When you look at the league table we are

only five points away from fifth place.

“To start climbing back up the ladder we need two points starting with Guildford.

“Guildford are a good hockey team and have been in form recently so we need to ensure we bring our A game (to the rink) and play for the full 60 minutes.”

Scottish Government to set out its draft budget this afternoon

Speaking ahead of presenting the Scottish Government's Draft Budget to parliament this afternoon, Finance Secretary Derek Mackay said:

“The 2018-19 budget will demonstrate beyond doubt where the Scottish Government's priorities are: stopping UK cuts, protecting public services and unlocking Scotland's economic potential.

“The budget will bring forward key measures to protect public services like our NHS against the worst effects of UK budget cuts and continued Brexit uncertainty, and deliver a growth package to support the economy, unlock innovation and drive increased productivity.

“This will be a budget that is good for taxpayers, good for public services and good for business. It is a budget that will deliver for Scotland.”

Apart from various TV channels you can watch the budget live

on the Scottish Parliament TV webpage [here](#).



Bananarama tickets go on sale on Friday morning

Bananarama will play Edinburgh Castle on 20 July 2018, and tickets will go on sale on Friday morning 15 December 2017 at 9.00am.

With 30 chart hits and combined sales of over 40 million, Bananarama are said to be the most successful female group of all time, according to the Guinness Book of Records.

Their string of 80s classics include Robert de Niro's Waiting, Cruel Summer, Venus, Shy Boy and Love In the First Degree.



Mark Mackie, director of Castle Concerts said: "We are delighted to have Bananarama play Edinburgh Castle this summer. Without doubt, they are one of the greatest girl groups and the atmosphere on the night will be truly electrifying."

Earlier this year, the girl group that defined the 80s announced they were back to their original, record-breaking line up for a tour of the UK. The news of Sara, Keren and Siobhan's reunion was met with universal approval from the media and public. The original tour dates sold out instantly and further dates were added to extend the winter tour.

"We've had the best time touring this year and can't wait to take our show back out on the road again in 2018." – Keren Woodward
"Scottish audiences are always fantastic. As the original line up, we're really excited to play Edinburgh for the first time ever!" – Sara Dallin

"We perform all our hits and we're really looking forward to taking our live show outdoors. I'm sure the atmosphere is going to be electric at Edinburgh Castle." – Siobhan Fahey

Nick Finnigan, Executive Manager at Edinburgh Castle said:
"Bananarama are real pop legends. We're really looking forward to welcoming them here at the Castle for what's sure to be a special evening."

Since their unforgettable last performance as a trio at The Brits in 1988, Keren and Sara have continued as Bananarama, releasing records and touring to global audiences. Siobhan went on to have hit singles and albums around the world as part of Shakespeare's Sister before becoming a solo artist.

TICKETS ON SALE FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER AT 9 am

£47.50 and £42.50 + booking fee

This concert is all seated

Online: www.ticketmaster.com www.seetickets.com

By phone: Ticketmaster 0844 844 0444

In person:

Tickets Scotland Edinburgh, 127 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3DT

Tickets Scotland Glasgow, 237 Argyle Street, Glasgow, G2 8DL

The Hub Tickets, 348-350 Castlehill, Edinburgh, EH1 2NE

Grouchos Dundee, 132 Nethergate, Dundee, DD1 4ED

Tickets are NOT available from Edinburgh Castle Box Office

Planning approval for brownfield site at Ocean Terminal

As mentioned earlier in the week the planning committee held a hearing yesterday about the area of land opposite Ocean Terminal. Approval was given for Waterfront Plaza which had strong backing from the local community and business leaders, and despite the recommendation of council officers, the approval was unanimous.



Ambitious proposals for “Waterfront Plaza”, which were strongly backed by local community and business leaders, were given the green light after Councillors voted unanimously in favour at the Hearing.

CALA Homes (East) is now hoping to begin construction of the 388 homes as early as summer 2018 with first completions late summer 2019 – along with 1500sq.m of flexible workspace units similar to The Arches, Market Street.

As well as the anticipated major economic benefits and the creation of a public realm, a wide range of the local housing supply will be boosted, with 97 affordable homes also included in the plans.

Craig Lynes, Land Director at CALA Homes (East), said: “We are thrilled to have received the backing of Councillors who recognised the importance of bringing much needed new homes to

the area.

“This derelict site is well-known to local people and we hope to ensure that our plans bring a notable boost to the local economy and contribute to a vibrant community.

“We’ve also worked closely with the community and leading local figures to ensure that the commercial units the site will create are in keeping with demand – bringing opportunities designed around Leith’s leading creative industries.”

In the week leading up to the Hearing at The City of Edinburgh Council Development Sub-Committee, a joint-letter was issued on behalf of high-profile backers, including Port of Leith Housing Association, Leith Chamber of Commerce as well as Ocean Terminal and 41 of its businesses.

The letter “strongly urged” support for the residential-led proposals located on historically disused land opposite Ocean Terminal, citing the urgent need for new private and affordable homes and the huge potential boost to the local economy.

Further public backing came from local Councillor Gordon Munro, who called the project a potential ‘catalyst’ for the regeneration of Leith – as well as the vocal support of Lord Provost Frank Ross and Councillors Gavin Barrie and John McLellan.

The amended plans present a range of apartments and family homes, to include 33 semi detached and terraced townhouses, 27 colonies, 328 apartments, plus 29 ground floor workspaces fronting Ocean Drive.

It is anticipated that an eclectic mix of ‘workspace’ units complimented with the proposed public realm, to include an urban square and public green space and café building fronting Victoria Dock at Waterfront Plaza will draw more visitors to

the area and keep them there for longer, in line with local ambitions to increase the retention of visitors in Leith.

The Hearing to consider and determine the application was held at The City of Edinburgh Council Development Sub-Committee on 13 December 2017.

Council Leader's report for December 2017

Councillor Adam McVey is the leader of the SNP group and the Council Leader in a coalition with Labour councillors.

Each month he issues a monthly leader's report and below you can read this month's.

- ✖ He is questioned on matters in the report at the full council meeting after each report is published.

This month he took part in the Sleep in the Park to raise funds for action on homelessness.

Here he is talking about the experience

Survived. [#SleepinthePark](https://t.co/3c8InuPuUpic.twitter.com/1GqPlNQRL) <https://t.co/3c8InuPuUpic.twitter.com/1GqPlNQRL>

– Cllr Adam McVey (@adamrmcvey) [December 10, 2017](#)



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Star Wars with subtitles at Vue Omni next week

There will be a subtitled screening of Star Wars: The Last Jedi will take place on Wednesday 20 December at Vue Omni Centre after an anonymous deaf blogger began a quest to find a venue to watch the movie during her honeymoon.



Deafinitely Girly from London took to Twitter to find a screening of the blockbuster with subtitles in Edinburgh so she could watch Star Wars with her new husband during their honeymoon in the city.

Robert Smith, General Manager at Vue Omni Centre, said: “When we spotted Deafinitely Girly’s quest we were only too happy to help as we strongly believe the big screen experience should be enjoyed by all. We are over the moon the newly-weds will be able to enjoy a special date night with us during their trip.”

Deafinitely Girly, who published a [blog post](#) about the screening, added: “I can’t thank Vue enough for giving us a honeymoon date night in Edinburgh to watch The Last Jedi with subtitles.

“When they responded to the tweets from me and my followers, I couldn’t believe it. I hope other deaf people in Edinburgh will also take this opportunity to come and enjoy Star Wars on the big screen.”

Secure tickets by visiting: www.myvue.com

Story Telling Evening coming to Easter Road tonight



Two Partners from TSB Leith , Daniel Gibb and his colleague Jo Chalmers were delighted to present a cheque for £200 to Hibernian non-executive director Frank Dougan at Easter Road as part of the bank's Christmas Pride donation programme – where TSB gives every one of its branches money to gift to a local cause, as a little extra support at this time of year.

A Story-Telling Evening takes place at the stadium at 7pm on December 14th, with professional actors telling a trio of Christmas tales.

The event has been organised by GameChanger, the public social partnership involving the Club, Hibernian Community Foundation and NHS Lothian, as part of the Edinburgh Cheer campaign.

Daniel said: “We’re delighted to back such a worthwhile event, aimed at the local community and designed to bring some much needed Christmas cheer to families who might not otherwise have as much to look forward to at Christmas as most of us take for granted.”

Those interested in attending the story-telling event should contact Stuart Guthrie at the club sguthrie@hibernianfc.co.uk

Twenty six questions asked at council meeting this morning

At today's full council meeting in Edinburgh there were 26 questions tabled for written answer by various conveners.

This is not a record as there were over 30 asked last month, but it is still many more than during the previous administration.

There may be supplementary questions and answers during the meeting which you can watch here but this will give you a flavour of the councillors asking for information about a variety of topics.



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Speedway – Andersson the man for Monarchs



Monarchs new signing in action

Parsons Peebles Monarchs are pleased to announce their fifth signing for the 2018 Speedway season, 21 year old Swedish rider Joel Andersson.

Joel was the Swedish Under-21 Champion in 2016, and also rode in the World Under-21 Final and the World Under-21 Team Championship. He has competed for several seasons in the Swedish Elite League, most recently with Masarna, and he also rides in the Swedish second tier (the Allsvenskan League). He will be coming to Britain for the first time though Monarchs have previously tried to sign him.

He said “I think that was about two years ago, I thought I was too young and didn’t feel ready. Now I need to go to the UK to get experience.

“I’ve been in the Elite League about four years. I will be a reserve for Masarna this year, and in the Allsvenskan League I will race in Norrkoping this year, for Vargarna. I was with Vastervik previously but they won the League and have been promoted. I also have Poland for next year, I am going to race in Krakow. I hope so anyway, in Poland you don’t know!

“Of course I have heard plenty about the Edinburgh Monarchs. I have been speaking to Victor Palovaara who was racing for

Glasgow, and I asked him what he thought about Edinburgh. He said it was a really good club."

Swedish circuits are often wide and long but he feels that Armadale won't hold too many fears for him. "I like the technical tracks. Norrkoping where I will be racing next year is the smallest track in Sweden I think. I really like the technical stuff because you have to think to be fast on the track."

That Swedish Under-21 triumph he rates as his best achievement to date. "I think it must be, anyway it is the biggest competition that I have won. I rode in the Swedish Under-21 team but we didn't qualify for the final." Having reached 21 he will not be in these competitions in 2018.

His website has details of his backup team but he will be looking to add to that for his UK racing. "My Polish mechanic will only do Poland and Sweden. My dad works full time so he is only with us for the meetings when he has time, and maybe when it's close to home. I intend to find a mechanic in the UK."

He already knows one of his new team mates well. "I know Erik Riss, I raced against him in the Under-21 stuff for a number of years, and he is racing also for Vargarna next season."

Joel will be active over the rest of the winter prior to arriving in Scotland. "I am going to Australia in two weeks to race speedway there for two months. I will be home in early March and intend to come over as soon as possible after that. I will have two bikes and three engines, and I think my mechanic will be over in February to take them across. I can fly over and put the bikes together.

"I am a little bit nervous and excited now that it is so close. Every time I go to a track in Britain it will be a new one so that is a reason for being a little nervous!"

Subject to BSPA confirmation Joel will start on an average of 5.20.

2 Semple Street want to add another floor to meet demand

The developers of a new office building in Edinburgh's Exchange District have applied for planning consent to add an extra floor which would help alleviate the Capital's chronic shortage of office space.

GSS Developments (GSS) – who are onsite building 2 Semple Street – said a planning application to extend the building would also ensure it is more in keeping with neighbouring properties in the Exchange.

GSS said their application to add a 5000 sq ft glass-encased sixth floor was on the advice of letting agents and in response to current market conditions where potential new entrants to Edinburgh's financial centre were being thwarted by a lack of suitable first-class office space.

The 2 Semple Street building is the only Grade A development which will complete and be ready for occupancy in 2018 and GSS said they were seeking to update their plans and to bring them in to line with other office blocks in the vicinity, such as the seven storey Atria building and the eight floor Capital

Square development.



Paul Stevenson, GSS Developments director, revealed a prospective tenant and globally recognised brand had recently viewed 2 Semple Street but would require more space than the 38,600 sq ft currently on offer if it was to make its first foray in to Edinburgh.



Mr Stevenson said: “It is widely accepted there is a dire lack of Grade A office space available to rent in Edinburgh city centre and we are delighted that 2 Semple Street is on schedule to be the only development to be ready for occupation next year.

“We are seeking permission to add an extra floor as a direct consequence of market demands and to be able to provide a first-class fit-for-purpose office building capable of attracting a quality tenant who will make a significant contribution to Edinburgh’s economic and social fabric.

“It has become increasingly clear that a number of businesses looking to move in to Edinburgh or to relocate within the city require a footprint of 40,000 sq ft or more and we are responding to that demand.

“The City of Edinburgh Council was very supportive of our post-purchase design improvements to provide a better floor plate and enhanced stone elevations. With the current need to

increase availability of Grade A office space within the financial district, we hope the City Council will maintain that positive approach and see the value in extending the 5th floor glass box to be over two floors.

“We recognise that this is unusual, given that we are onsite and construction is underway, but we believe that this innovative proposition provides a time-sensitive opportunity to create much needed floor space.”

As it stands, 2 Semple Street is capable of accommodating up to 350 staff but the proposed extension would provide space for 400 employees and meet the needs of larger potential tenants.

Angela Lowe, senior director at joint letting agent CBRE, said: “An extra 5000 sq ft may not sound a lot but in a city where there is a lack of floor space it makes a significant difference in securing a broader range of tenants. We advised GSS that increasing the floor space will enhance the flexibility of the building and follows the example set by a number of other high-profile developments within the financial centre.

“2 Semple Street is one of only a few speculative Grade A office developments to be built in Edinburgh since the 2008 economic crash. If consent is granted for this extension it reinforces the message that Edinburgh is working hard to address high-level occupier demand and to drive economic growth.”

The current development is due to complete in July 2018 and if consent for the extension is granted it is expected the revised scheme would complete in October 2018.



Ice hockey – Capitals to ‘strengthen’



Action from Murrayfield courtesy of Ian Coyle

Edinburgh Capitals have assured succes-hungry fans that they will strengthen on and off the ice.

The Murrayfield side, who anchor the 12-strong table with only six points from 22 league fixtures, promise to confirm new signings next week.

And they are advertising for a commercial manager in a bid to identify new growth areas.

A statement on the club’s website said management acknowledged that recent weeks have been frustrating for loyal fans.

The statement added: “We’d like to assure our supporters that the Edinburgh Capitals are about to become stronger both on and off the ice.

“We are in talks with a number of players and expect to announce new recruits from next week.

“We want to significantly strengthen the squad for the second-half of the season.

“We have three full calendar months left this season and we’re focussed on bringing in players who will battle for the club week-in, week-out from now until the final game of the season.

“We are also seeking to strengthen off ice and are advertising for a commercial manager.

“We want to strengthen our current commercial ties whilst seeking to expand and identify new opportunities for growth.

“We recognise the need to strengthen in such areas as a necessity to bring success in the longer term in the Elite League.”

The unnamed spokesman said: “We recognise that our supporters have remained loyal during this period, but naturally frustration has been felt.

“Our immediate goal is to provide you with a significantly stronger roster this season, a stronger second-half to the season and for us to continue to build a club structure that provides a strong future in the Elite League.”

Rangers come from behind to secure all three points at Easter Road



Hibs lost out to Rangers in front of a packed Easter Road

tonight despite dominating throughout.

The hosts took an early lead and created chance after chance but two goals from the visitors just before half time gave them an undeserved lead.

Hibs had numerous chances to equalise and were denied a clear cut late penalty when referee Kevin Clancy failed to spot a handball inside the penalty area and the visitors hug on to secure all three points.

Neil Lennon made three changes to the side that drew with Celtic on Sunday with Darren McGregor, Simon Murray and Oli Shaw replacing Steven Whittaker, Brandon Barker and Marvin Bartley who all dropped to the bench.

After a pulsating start to the game, Hibs took a deserved lead in the 8th minute after good work from Murray who cut in from the left before cutting the ball back to Lewis Stevenson who fired a right foot strike into the net off Bruno Alves.

Moments later former Hibs' striker Kenny Miller was stretchered off with a hamstring injury and was replaced by Daniel Candeias.

Hibs continued to press forward and Wes Foderingham did well to block a shot from captain Paul Hanlon.

Shaw then found Martin Boyle with an inch perfect through ball but the winger's powerful shot was straight at the Rangers' keeper.

With Hibs totally dominant, Rangers equalised just before the break against the run of play when Jason Holt found Josh Windass who fired past Ofir Marciano from the edge of the area.

In time added on Alfredo Morelos beat Hanlon inside the area before hammering the ball past Marciano at his near post to give the visitors an undeserved lead.

Brandon Barker replaced Shaw four minutes after the restart and the on-loan winger caused Rangers problems down the left wing.

Twice the Englishman was denied by the woodwork as Lennon's men created chance after chance.

Boyle then fired a low cross into the danger area but Murray just missed connecting with the ball from three yards.

Hibs were then denied a stonewall penalty when David Bates clearly controlled Efe Ambrose's cross with his arm but referee Kevin Clancy unbelievably waved away their appeals to the fury of the home supporters.

With ten minutes remaining Barker cut in from the left but his powerful effort flew agonisingly inches over the bar.

Lennon then replaced Murray with Whittaker and moved Hanlon up front but despite late pressure Rangers held on to secure all three points.

After the game Lennon told BBC Scotland: It's a clear penalty. It's the clearest hand-ball you will see this season.

"The linesman's looking right at it. I've just had a word with him and he said he didn't think it was a penalty. He must've been the only one in the ground. It's totally unacceptable."

"We were sensational tonight, and we thoroughly deserved to get something from the game.

"I can't believe we've lost it but sometimes you don't get the luck. We've absolutely pumped Rangers second half, and I didn't even think we deserved to draw the game, let alone lose it."

"The goalkeeper (Ofir Marciano) will be disappointed with his

performance. He's only really had to deal with two or three shots on target.

"He shouldn't get beat with the first one, and he definitely shouldn't get beat with the second one. He's actually guessing, and that's disappointing and he knows that. However, he's been excellent for us since he's come in."

"The two wingers (Martin Boyle and Brandon Barker) were unplayable, absolutely unbelievable, but I need to look at my strikers – Simon's (Murray) missed a tap-in; he needs to score that.

"The amount of balls we flashed across the face of goal from the two wingers was incredible – it just needed someone to get on the end of one, and the game's ours.

"We worked the ball brilliantly into wide areas, put great balls across the goal, and they're begging to be put in.

"Concentration at both ends of the park (was a problem for Hibs), but in the throes of the game we were absolutely magnificent, the football was breathtaking at times.

"I'm really happy with the level of performance, and there's a sense of injustice that we haven't got something, but we'll get ready for Aberdeen and look forward to that."

Hibs: Marciano, Hanlon, McGinn, McGeouch, S. Murray (Whittaker 86'), Stevenson, Boyle, McGregor, Ambrose, Stoles, Shaw (Barker 50'). Substitutes not used: Dawbrowski, Bartley, Slivka, F. Murray, Porteous.

Rangers: Foderingham, Tavernier, John, Wilson, Miller (Candeias 13'), Windass, Morelos (Herrera 83'), Alves, Holt, Barjonas (Bates 71'), McCrorie. Substitutes not used: Kelly, Hodson, Kranjcar, Pena.

Referee: Kevin Clancy.

Attendance: 20,057.

Hearts Teenage Dream So Hard to Beat



It's fair to say this hasn't been the happiest of seasons for Hearts. The ill-fated tenure of Ian Cathro as Head Coach ended in bitter fashion when many Hearts supporters were still sunning themselves on beaches enjoying their summer holidays. Elimination from the Betfred Cup – coming third in a section containing lower league sides Dunfermline Athletic, Peterhead, East Fife and Elgin City was nothing short of embarrassing for a club of Hearts standing – was the death throes of the Cathro experiment. His appointment a year ago was lauded as a brave one – not least by this website. Sadly, it didn't work out.

It seemed to take Hearts an age to appoint Cathro's successor. Many names were linked to the role, some of whom were well-known (former England manager Steve McClaren for example) After four weeks of much soul-searching, Hearts appointed their Director of Football to the post of Head Coach. Craig Levein was now carrying the can for performances on the pitch as well as appointments off it.

The much-anticipated opening of the new main stand at Tynecastle was postponed. Not once but twice and when it eventually did open there were the inevitable teething problems.

On the pitch, Hearts struggled to score goals and, consequently, win games and with Christmas on the horizon the

team slid towards a relegation battle. The players were under fire. Levein was under fire. Even Ann Budge did not escape criticism for the first time since she took ownership of the club three and a half years ago.

With Hibernian making a decent fist of challenging at the top end of the Ladbrokes Premiership following their promotion after three seasons away, the world of the Hearts support was looking quite dark, perhaps the darkest since the near total eclipse of the club during administration in 2013.

There is, however, a shaft of light which shone at its brightest at Tynecastle on a cold, dark Tuesday evening in mid-December.

With injury and loss of form affecting several first team players this season, Craig Levein has turned to Hearts promising youngsters to help steady what has been a rocky ship in the last year. Jamie Brandon (19), Euan Henderson (17), Aidan Keena (18), Lewis Moore (19), Daniel Baur (18), Alex Petkov (18) and Harry Cochrane (16) have all featured in Hearts first team at some point this season. This growing list of teenagers progressing to the first team from the youth academy was added to on Tuesday evening by, arguably, the most promising of them all – 16-year-old Anthony McDonald.

Few Hearts fans expected the name of the attacking midfield player to be on the team sheet to face Dundee but with Jamie Walker out through injury, Levein gave the Kirkcaldy born youngster the opportunity to step up to the plate, to use industrial terminology. Those Hearts supporters who closely follow the club's Under 20 team already knew what McDonald was capable of, with many believing he was the most talented of all the club's youngsters. On Tuesday, he demonstrated to the rest of the Hearts support and the Dundee players just what he can do, setting up Hearts first goal thanks to a powerful run from midway inside his own half, culminating with a superb chipped pass to Isma Goncalves who fired Hearts in front.

McDonald also delivered the corner kick which fell to captain Christophe Berra who sealed victory with Hearts second goal near the end of the game.

McDonald's overall display was impressive. He was always looking for the ball, taking responsibility (and not every Hearts player can honestly claim that during this difficult season) and displaying a maturity which belied his young age. Little wonder many Hearts supporters stayed behind at the end of the game to give McDonald the standing ovation he fully deserved. He was the last player to leave the pitch and clearly revelled in the acclaim. As McDonald said himself on social media last night he was 'absolutely buzzing' to have played such a major part in Hearts victory.

Over the years I have seen a few 16-year-olds make their Hearts first team debut. Some have promised much but delivered little. Some have found the occasion too much to handle and have disappeared. Others, though, have made a positive impression. I recall Hearts legend Gary Mackay making his competitive first team debut against Ayr United back in 1980. He, along with fellow teenager David Bowman, were seen as the future of the club during more dark financial times in 1980. Then manager Bobby Moncur turned to the youngsters to help salvage the club from the effect of two relegations and near financial catastrophe. Mackay and Bowman were the most promising of the young lads and they were soon joined by another who would go on to become a Tynecastle legend – John Robertson.

In the early 1990s, Hearts manager Sandy Clark was faced with a similar scenario as Hearts were faced with redeveloping a crumbling Tynecastle Park. With little money for new players, Clark blooded youngsters such as Allan Johnston, Kevin Thomas and Gary Locke. 'Lockie' would go on to captain Hearts in the Scottish Cup final of 1996, aged just 21. 'Magic' Johnston was a winger in the best Hearts tradition and famously scored a hat-trick at Ibrox in a famous 3-0 win for the Maroons, also

in 1996.

There's a certain pride supporters of any team experience when they see youngsters make an impression in the first team. A sense of being in it for the long run, of commitment, not like some journeyman who sees joining the club as their last big pay day or as a last resort because no other club has come in for him. The youngsters come through the ranks and relish the chance to make the most of breaking into the first team.

The supporters recognise this and are willing to forgive a misplaced pass or being caught in possession as it's part of a 'learning curve' and giving support to young players is crucial for their progression to established first team players.

Hearts are one of the leading clubs when it comes to giving youngsters their chance. Craig Levein's side has struggled for much of the season but lads such as Moore, Cochrane and Brandon have not let the team down. If anything, the youngsters who have been drafted into Hearts first team have been the highlight of what has been, thus far, a dismal season for those in maroon. Anthony McDonald may have played just the one game for Hearts first team but his performance on Tuesday has been one of those highlights. Yes, it's just one game and, true, Dundee weren't the most troublesome of opposition. And it's unlikely McDonald will be thrown into the Tynecastle cauldron when the 'invincibles' Celtic come to Gorgie on Sunday.

Nonetheless, his impressive display on Tuesday was a bright light on a long, dark season for Hearts. As The Undertones famously sung, a teenage dream's so hard to beat. Hopefully, McDonald, Cochrane, Moore, Brandon and others will prove this will be the case.

Whatever happens to Hearts this season the future of the club, if young McDonald, Moore, Cochrane and Brandon is anything to

go by, is brighter than it's been for some time.

Woman dies after being knocked down by car on Old Dalkeith Road



A 53-year-old woman has died after being knocked down by a Ford Fiesta car on Old Dalkeith Road near the King's Gate entrance to Dalkeith Country Park, around 7am on Tuesday morning.

She was taken to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and died on Tuesday evening.

Officers have appealed for any witnesses to come forward.

A Police Scotland spokeswoman said: "Police in Midlothian are investigating following a fatal road traffic collision on Old Dalkeith Road.

"The woman was taken to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, however she sadly passed away that evening.

"Anyone who may have witnessed this collision and has not yet spoken to officers is urged to contact Police Scotland on 101, quoting incident number 0405 of December 12."

Dugdale gets written warning over absence

You can hardly fail to have noticed that former Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale took part in STV's I'm a Celebrity in recent weeks. Today she flew back into Glasgow Airport with her friend Alan Roden who is the former communications director for Scottish Labour, and immediately went back to work at Holyrood.

Part of that work involved a meeting with the new Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard.



Following a meeting of the Scottish Labour Parliamentary Group Executive today, Scottish Labour Business Manager James Kelly said:

"Today Kezia Dugdale MSP was interviewed by the Scottish Labour Parliamentary Group Executive regarding her unauthorised absence from Parliament for three weeks.

"Following a discussion between Richard Leonard, Kezia Dugdale, and the group executive, it has been decided that the group will reprimand Ms Dugdale by way of written warning. She will not face further action.

"Tomorrow Scotland faces the most important budget since devolution, with local services facing huge cuts that will hit the poorest the hardest. The Labour family must now come together to oppose these cuts and outline fairer alternatives that ends austerity and lifts children out of poverty."

Kezia Dugdale MSP said: "I deeply regret that this caused issues in the first weeks of Richard Leonard's leadership and I am determined that it won't affect Labour's ability to scrutinise the Scottish Budget.

"Now I'm getting back to work – and the very first thing I did was to vote with Labour for a fairer alternative to Tory austerity and demonstrate that parliament has the powers to stop the cuts and lift children out of poverty."

Ms Dugdale said previously she would donate her three weeks'

salary to The Rock Trust. But she would not answer any journalists' questions at Holyrood earlier today.