

## [Ninewells Community Garden on-line event #dundeewestend](#)



In this Ninewells Community Garden on-line event, Bob Bilson and Peter Christopher will lead a workshop on the pruning of fruit trees and bushes to de-mystify and explain the processes which many amateur gardeners can find daunting.

This will be a Zoom-based workshop, with presentation and time to ask questions.

It takes place on Sunday 21st February from 2pm to 3pm.

More details at [www.facebook.com/events/368478337655591](https://www.facebook.com/events/368478337655591)

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## [Support for cross-party effort to secure free ATMs](#)



I am giving my support to a cross-party effort at the UK Parliament to secure free-to-use ATMs.

Led by Liberal Democrat MP Jamie Stone, a group of 26 cross-party MPs has called on the Payments System Regulator and the UK Government to take action on the interchange fee – allowing for ATMs up and down the country to become once again free to use.

The decision from LINK to cut the fee paid by banks to ATM providers for every cash withdrawal has passed costs usually paid by banks onto consumers, resulting in the lack of free-to-use cash machines.

10 500 free-to-use cash machines have already disappeared across the UK in the past two years – with 1 in 4 ATMs now charging Scots to withdraw cash. We have seen this locally across Dundee including in the West End.

The letter – signed by the Liberal Democrats, SNP, Labour, and Conservative parties – as well as the Parliamentary motion introduced by Mr Stone advocates for the Payments System Regulator to introduce a tiered or zonal approach to interchange fees, which would ensure funding is fairly distributed throughout the UK to protect access to cash in all communities.

I strongly believe it is unacceptable that constituents have to pay to access their hard earned cash. It particularly affects the vulnerable and elderly and I hope the regulator and the government take up Jamie Stone MP's

proposals. That way, we ensure we can secure a good network of free-to-use cash machines.

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## University restructuring concerns – Minister responds



Richard Lochhead MSP, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education has responded to the concerns I have raised over proposals by the University of Dundee that would see the merger of three academic schools – Schools of Humanities, Education and Social Work and Social Sciences – into one, with the loss of 34 academic jobs and potentially other support staff jobs.

Whilst indicating that universities are autonomous institutions and Scottish Ministers nor the Scottish Government has locus to intervene directly, the Minister does say that “in the spirit of the Scottish Government’s Fair Work policy, our view is that compulsory redundancies should only ever be used as a last resort” and that he has “asked my officials to maintain contact with the University and to report to me on developments” particularly in relation to the redundancy issue.

I appreciate that the Scottish Government will not get directly involved but the clear message about the avoiding compulsory redundancies is clear. I have made clear to the University Principal that I strongly believe that the University should remove threats of compulsory redundancies completely.

It should, at the very least, look at options to rebalance the staffing in

the affected areas by natural turnover over the next few years.

The City Council – with twice the number of staff as the university – has avoided compulsory redundancies. The University of Dundee needs to step up and give a commitment to its staff that any compulsory redundancies are completely off the table.

Professor Iain Gillespie, Principal of the University of Dundee, has responded to my concerns about the possible axing of university jobs offering a meeting to discuss the issues which I have accepted.

I am grateful to the Principal for agreeing to meet with me about this very serious issue. I will be making clear that potential compulsory redundancies of 34 academic posts, with probable additional reduction in support staff is of real concern and cannot be justified.

It would have a really detrimental impact on student teaching and the student experience and make the university a less attractive option to potential new students. It would also result in further strain on already overworked staff.

The bottom line is that the university owes it to its staff to take the threat of compulsory redundancies completely off the table.

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**[Latest update from Friends of Wighton](#)**



**From Sheena Wellington about today's Lunchtime Recital online by Ensemble Hesperis :**

We are very pleased to welcome back as our online Lunchtime Recital guests this month, Mary-Jannet Leith (Recorders) & Thomas Allery (Harpsichord) of Ensemble Hesperis. The pair are no strangers to the Wighton both as performers and researchers. The Zoom link to join in is below!

Mary-Jannet is a Scottish instrumentalist, musicologist, historian, and teacher. She is fascinated by the potential which her instrument has for bridging artificial boundaries between musical 'genres'. It is her strong belief that truly excellent music often eludes definition, and that it is the communication of emotion and feeling to an audience which should be the aim of a professional musician.

Thomas is an organist, choral conductor and harpsichordist based in London and Oxford. He enjoys a varied career spanning work as an organist and choral director in church music, continuo playing, research and teaching. Thomas is

the Director of Chapel Music at Worcester College, Oxford, where he is responsible for the musical development of the Chapel choirs and organ scholars.

**To see the concert:**

Friends of Wighton invite you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Lunchtime Recital with Ensemble Hesperis

Time: Feb 3, 2021 1PM Greenwich Mean Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81870378916?pwd=TEZpVlg5NDlDV3BCSzRBK294b1F2QT09>

Meeting ID: 818 7037 8916

Passcode: 968552

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## [Mental health guides from Feeling Strong](#)



Feeling Strong, Dundee's youth mental health charity, has launched its new and improved mental health guides.

There are three new guides which are for young people, children and guardians.

Feeling Strong has been working with Dundee's young people on creating these new guides for a few months now, with over two hundred responses from young people about what they think matters most.

The guides will help those who read it have a better understanding of Feeling Strong, other Dundee specific support and how it can possibly help young people.

Feeling Strong has printed 2 000 copies of the guides which are being distributed to schools, community groups and libraries across Dundee, as well as making digital copies of the guides available on their website.

More information is available at [www.feelingstrong.co.uk](http://www.feelingstrong.co.uk).