

## PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on 11th November 1991 in the Portobello Centre.

### PRESENT:

Norman Kerr (Chairman), Nick Stroud (Vice Chairman), Florence Jones (Treasurer)  
Iain Abbot, Cllr David Begg, Rena Begg, Mary Jane Elton, Norman Hughes,  
Cllr George Kerevan, Jane Kindley (EDC Recreation Dept), Ray Lang,  
Dana McCluskie (EDC Recreation Dept), Sheila McIvor, Sgt Arthur Mackey  
(Portobello Police), Gordon McRae, Lawrence Marshall, Brenda Moloney, George  
Murray, Tom Smith, Andrew Strachan, Len Young

### APOLOGIES:

Gill Anderson

Florence Jones apologised for her late arrival.

### 92.1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, with the addition of Drew Strachan to the apologies for absence.

### 92.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

92.2a PORTOBELLO POST OFFICE: no further news.

92.2b COAL DUST POLLUTION: Len Young reported that the District Council is about to serve notice on Bruce Lindsay to clean up the coal operation at the Freightliner site. They have to move carefully for legal reasons, and cannot enforce specific action, only request it: but if there is no improvement the matter will be referred to the Procurator Fiscal.

BEACH POLLUTION: the Chairman has received a letter from Mrs Jenny Wilson on behalf of a group of "responsible dog owners", requesting an opportunity to put their case to the Community Council on any future occasion on which dogs are to be discussed. It was agreed to invite the group to a future meeting to discuss this.

There followed a discussion of this problem: it was generally agreed that things are getting better, but still not right. The beach is owned by the Crown and Council jurisdiction over it may be limited. The police cannot devote significant resources to enforcing by laws, but will act when notified by at least two witnesses.

Action: Clarify Local Authority and police powers with respect to the beach.

92.2c PORTOBELLO CENTRE: The new Centre Management Committee has decided not to hold its Annual General Meeting until next May, as it is entitled to do under its constitution. Ray Lang promised that the minutes of its meetings would be made available to the Community Council. Several new classes are starting up in the Centre and are being widely advertised. Norman Hughes asked if the Centre would be used as a Fringe venue next summer; Ray Lang didn't know.

92.2d TOWERBANK SCHOOL: The new School Board has just met for the first time. One of its most urgent tasks is to decide how best to use the Ash Pitch for the benefit of the school, and how to get a new gymnasium.

There have been no further developments at Portobello High School.

92.2e BATH STREET: the police have investigated complaints about dangerous driving and illegal parking. They will act against any driver who parks on a public footpath, but some areas of footpath are designated as private and therefore out of their control.

There is no immediate prospect of traffic management, but Lothian Regional Council are investigating the feasibility of a one-way system and this is quite likely to come into effect when the restoration work is completed, hopefully in April.

92.2f MARINE BAR: Norman Kerr has written to the Planning Department in support of local residents' opposition to the proposal to create a new arcade here. Iain Abbot has discovered that there is no mention of an upstairs restaurant in the formal planning application. The Amenity Society is objecting on the grounds that the plan includes alterations to the exterior of the building, with windows being converted into doors. Cllr Begg recalled a 1986 decision to prevent further arcade developments in Portobello, but Cllr Kerevan pointed out that this is not a legally clear change of use since a public bar is already operating here.

92.2g PROMENADE DEVELOPMENT: Iain Abbot, Gordon McRae and Len Young attended the public meeting on the Prom proposals, on behalf of the Community Council. Peter McGowan, the designer of the proposals, proved to be very receptive to local comments. The biggest difficulties are that funding is likely to be incremental, and that the proposed refreshment kiosk outside the swimming baths is proving to be controversial. There is also some anxiety that the planned quantity of booths and flagpoles may make the Prom look cluttered.

It was generally agreed that the area immediately to the west of Bath Street was in urgent need of improvement, but this is in private ownership. Portobello Water Sports Club is also privately owned and its redevelopment cannot therefore be pursued directly: there is apparently a conflict between the Club committee and their architect which is currently delaying progress.

Action: to find out the situation regarding the redevelopment of the Water Sports Club.

Norman Hughes announced that La Mer restaurant at the eastern end of the Prom is closing, and deplored the application of public funds to improving the appearance of the Prom rather than to the direct support of local businesses. It was generally agreed that the Scottish Tourist Board (STB) have neglected Portobello and its surroundings, but Cllr Kerevan pointed out that the public agency whose job is to support local business is not the STB but Edinburgh Venture Trust (EVENT). LEEL have become as involved as much as they have partly because of the STB's neglect. They are funding two consultants: Peter McGowan, to suggest ways of improving the Promenade environment; and A P S Cairns, who are drawing up a plan for stimulating tourist-related business – putting together a package of opportunities to present to Scottish Enterprise.

Access continues to be a crucial problem: we all want to see many more visitors to Portobello, but there is no room for them to come here by car. This problem must be set against our attempts to attract visitors.

Cllr Kerevan announced that the District Council had included provision to begin work on the Promenade improvements in its 1992/3 financial plan.

Cllr Kerevan also announced that the Scottish Office has called in the plans for the Sports Centre, which is therefore in limbo.

92.2h PUMPING STATION: the planning application has been approved, but the building not yet put out to tender. There is no reason though to believe that matters are not proceeding normally.

Action: to find out what stage the pumping station has reached.

92.2i JOPPA TENNIS COURTS: Norman Kerr is getting estimates for the cost of resurfacing the courts, and will contact relevant authorities when he has these.

Gill Anderson has written to the Highways Department asking for signposting to the tennis courts and putting green, but her letter has not even been acknowledged yet.

92.2j FREIGHTLINER TERMINAL: there is no further news of the application for a Go-Karting track at present.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Norman Hughes asked whether the Portobello Centre could get more involved with the Festival and Fringe. The Centre building is owned by the District Council, but run entirely by its own local Management Committee with funding from Lothian Regional Council's Community Education department. All decisions concerning its running are made by this Committee, who are answerable to the people of Portobello. The Fringe cannot tell groups where to put on their shows. If Portobello wants to attract them it should put together a sufficiently good package to attract them, with four or five local venues, hotels, restaurants and transport all contributing. The official Festival is operating on a limited financial budget, but we should invite its new Director to Portobello at the earliest opportunity. Norman Hughes hoped that the District or Regional Councils might initiate this because of the difficulty of a local individual doing it. Drew Strachan suggested that the Chairman of the Community Council might be the ideal person for the task.

The next issue of the Reporter is due out at the end of the month.

The access road beside ASDA is being used freely by cars, and not just by buses as intended. The automatic gate there has never worked, and the (small) notices are simply ignored. Cllr Begg will ask the Highways Department about this and report back to the Community Council.

Iain Abbot mentioned a public meeting in the Town Hall on Thursday 14th November to discuss the plans to convert the old High School Annexe into housing.

Nick Stroud reported on the recent meeting of the Portobello/Milton Local Forum at the Portobello Centre, which had been addressed by the District Council's new Chief Executive. The next Forum will be discussing the recent District Council survey which identified Portobello High Street as a pollution black spot.

Action: the Community Council will request further information about the District Council's Festival of the Environment.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be at 7:30 pm, on Monday 9th December 1991, at the Rockville House Hotel. After a short business session the Chairman invites Council members to join him for cheese and wine.

**Portobello Community Council**  
**AGENDA**  
**Monday 9th December 1991, at 7:30pm**  
**Rockville House Hotel, Joppa**

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of previous meeting.
3. Matters arising.
4. Review of last two years.
5. Chairman's remarks.

To be followed by cheese and wine.