
PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

From:

ORDINARY MEETING OF PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
HELD IN THE PORTOBELLO CENTRE, ADELPHI GROVE
ON MONDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 1992 AT 7.30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies.
2. Speaker - Mr David Leslie, Chairman, Portobello Working Group
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
4. Matters arising
5. 1992
6. Sub-Committee Reports
7. Treasurer's Report
8. AOCB
9. Date of Next Meeting

PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 95th meeting, held on 10th February 1992 in the Portobello Centre.

PRESENT:

Norman Kerr (Chairman), Nick Stroud (Vice Chairman), Iain Abbot (Acting Secretary) Gillian Anderson (St Philips Church), Elspeth Douglas, (public), Norman Hughes, Cllr George Kerevan, Ray R.Lang (Portobello Parish Church), Jack MacDonald, A. McGregor (public), Ellen McGregor (public), Gordon McRae (Portobello History Society), Ps Arthur Mackey (Portobello Police), Brenda Molony (Portobello Community Festival Association), George J. Murray (Council of Churches), Tom Smith (Brighton Residents), Andrew L. Strachan (PCC), Peter Strachan (public), Len Young.

David Leslie (Edinburgh District Council Planning Department)

APOLOGIES:

Marjorie Amos, Rena Begg, Jim McMillan

95.1 PORTOBELLO WORKING GROUP

The Chairman welcomed David Leslie, of EDC Planning Department, who explained that while he is the Chairman of the Working Group he was also attending the meeting as a representative of the Planning Department – which has a new area plan for public discussion.

1a The Portobello Working Group

The Group was set up in response to the report on Portobello produced by Roger Tymms and Partners for the SDA at the beginning of 1990. The courses of action identified in that report required the involvement of many agencies, and the District Council took the initiative to set up a working group involving all relevant professional interests. This is not a Council committee, and there are no politicians on it – just representatives of the Planning, Housing, Recreation, Economic Development and tourism departments of the District Council; the Highways and Water & Drainage departments of the Regional Council; Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd (LEEL); and other local organisations (such as Scottish Homes) by particular invitation when relevant.

The remit of the Working Group is to focus on Portobello, coordinating the work of the various departments, mainly for environmental improvements.

The Tymms report did not recommend solutions, only suggest possible areas of action, so further studies have been required to organise specific actions. Thus for example Bath Street was identified as a high priority since it is a major route to the beach and Promenade, and already a Housing Action Area. A report on Bath Street was therefore commissioned from Carter McGlynn on which basis the District Council can now decide how best to target its resources.

Another report was commissioned from Peter McGowan and Associates by LEEL, and focuses on improving the fabric and image of the Promenade, to increase its appeal to both resident and visitor.

Another report has been commissioned by LEEL, this one from Roger Cairns and Partners, to look into the possibilities for economic regeneration and development in the

Portobello area. The Working Group has nothing to do with this study, but they hope to be involved in due course.

David Leslie then made the following points about the Working Group in response to questions from the floor:

There are no proposals to remove old shop fronts (for example the apparently derelict ones in front of some houses in Bath Street), but Council grants are available to help owners who wish to do this for themselves.

While it looks as though there have been lots of studies and little action, the Working Group has not existed for long enough to implement many of the recommendations yet: the studies now being carried out *will* have an impact.

The Planning Department is ultimately powerless to stop most developments, despite concerted local opposition, specific examples being the Brunstane Farm scheme and the two houses on the old Seabeach site. This is because current legislation favours the developer, the ultimate decision on all planning matters lying with the Secretary of State for Scotland. Although public protest can rarely stop a development it can usually strengthen the Planning Departments hand in requiring improvements, so however unsatisfactory the present planning process is people should still use it to oppose unsatisfactory developments.

Cllr Kerevan remarked that Portobello has one of the best briefed and highly regarded Amenity Societies in Edinburgh, which has greatly improved the local environment.

1b North-east Edinburgh Local Plan

Portobello features in a Local Plan adopted by Edinburgh District Council in 1985, but the 16 Plans of that time have now to be reduced to six, and Portobello, Leith and surrounding areas are now to be grouped into the North East Edinburgh Plan. (The other five are Central, South-East, South-West, North-West and Rural.)

The Local Plan defines policies and proposals on the use of land and buildings, against which the Planning Department can consider all future planning applications. The Plan therefore determines the future character of the community, and must be kept up-to-date and in tune with local feelings and aspirations. Public participation in Local Plans is therefore critically important in developing the best strategy. The primary route for this participation will be the District Council's Local Forums, since there are six in the Portobello/Leith area and only five Community Councils (out of a possible total of twelve), but comments will be welcome from any Community Council and any member of the public. The Planning Department will start from the existing Plan, various reports, and two former Local Plan Forums, and add to this base any comments they receive on such issues as:

- general planning matters
- unresolved problems
- gap sites suitable for development
- areas which should *not* be developed
- the extent of the local Conservation Area
- open spaces which need protection

- etc etc

Ideally the Community Council will collect local opinion on these matters.

The following points emerged in discussion:

The Local Plan is not just another plan, but a statutory component of the local structure plan which binds decision-making, unlike any plan since the 1985 one. Although it is now too late to do anything about past planning decisions, however regrettable they might be, this is our opportunity to control *future* developments.

A New Planning Act which should be passed later in 1992 will increase the importance of Local Plans, and therefore the Planning Department's power to control undesirable developments.

Any input from Portobello Community Council will be treated just as seriously as input from the Local Forum, since it is recognised that the Community Council has more detailed local knowledge than the Forum. The Community Council will receive just as much consultation information as the Local Forum, and opportunities to contribute. Cllr Kerevan observed that Portobello is unusual in having both a Community Council and Local Forum. Cllr Kerevan (as Convenor of the Local Forum) will meet with Norman Kerr (Chairman of the Community Council) and David Leslie to decide how to manage public consultation over the Local Plan.

The Central Edinburgh Plan is now available for public comment (for example in the Central Library), until Easter.

The Local Plan cannot include specific buildings such as the High School Annexe, but it will provide a framework within which such specific developments can be controlled.

There is no question of Portobello now having to compete with Leith for Council resources. The Local Plan area will be split into ten districts and the aim will be to preserve and enhance the character of each individual district.

- 1c The Chairman thanked David Leslie for coming out to our meeting. Mr Leslie has some further points to make concerning Portobello which will be circulated with these minutes or at the next meeting.

95.2 JOPPA GROVE

Andrew Strachan reported that residents from four houses in Joppa Grove must be evacuated by 20th February as the houses are subsiding into old mine workings. The Coal Board is denying any responsibility since its five-year period for complaints is now over. Since vast areas of Joppa and Portobello are built over extensive mine workings it was agreed that the Community Council would join in expressing its concern to the Coal Board, who do not seem to be taking the problem seriously. The Chairman will write in general terms to the Coal Board, emphasising the gravity and urgency of the situation.

95.3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Assumed to be adequate.

95.4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 94th MEETING

- 4a Iain Abbot, as Acting Secretary, has drawn up a list of Council members which still requires further improvement: for example only one person (Maggy Jones) is recorded in the Minutes as ever having resigned, and we do not have a formal list of organisations' representatives.

Iain has collected a full set of minutes minus those for meeting 87 in April 1991 and the AGM in December 1990: Norman Kerr will supply copies of both.

As agreed at the January meeting, Iain has started recording attendance at Council meetings for quarterly publication.

The notice and agenda for this meeting were displayed in the Community Council noticeboard at the Police Station.

- 4b Andrew Strachan now has a number of ethnic contacts and will be following these up.
- 4c Norman Kerr will talk to Sandra Blake to find out if she is interested in being Secretary to the Community Council. He recorded his appreciation of Tom Smith's offer to take on the job if Sandra is unable to.
- 4d It was noted that Scott Weatherstone *is* receiving our minutes. Cllr Kerevan mentioned these at the last Local Forum meeting.
- 4e The next issue of the Porty Reporter is due out in March, the deadline for copy being 12th February.
- 4f We still await advice from the Tennis Courts sub-committee about signposting and resurfacing the tennis courts. We also have to formalise the status of the sub-committee in relation to the Community Council. It was agreed that:
Andrew Strachan would invite Dennis Crighton to our next meeting.
Our Treasurer would ask to see their books.
Norman Kerr and Iain Abbot will see what resurfacing work is required.
- 4g We will invite a speaker to our March meeting to tell us about the new bus service to Newcraighall.
- 4h Cllr Kerevan has forwarded our concern about the weight of the library doors to the Recreation Department and hopes to have their response by the March meeting.
- 4i Norman Kerr is still trying to push through our revised constitution.

95.5 PLANNING ISSUES

- 5a Dry Sports Centre: still no news (Scottish Office considering written submissions).
- 5b Scottish Power Office: planning permission not yet granted.
- 5c Go-kart track: now open, and not yet causing any problems.

95.6 PORTOBELLO BUSINESS GROUP

- 6a The King's Cross public house has gone out of business.
- 6b Norman Hughes has invited Stephen Blackie of LEEL to discuss local developments, including a community service/resource centre at Rockvill Hotel.

- 6c Norman Hughes is looking for local participation in ‘Joppa Journey’, a new play for the Festival.

95.7 CORRESPONDENCE

Mary-Jane Elton has resigned from the Community Council. Norman Kerr paid tribute to her work with Maggy Jones on the Sand and Sea sub-committee, in particular. It was noted that Bill Westwood and Susan Westwood had resigned from the Community Council two years ago.

95.8 1992

The next meeting of the 1992 committee will be held in about 10 days’ time, after which full minutes will be circulated to all members of the Community Council. Scott Weatherstone is keeping the District Council informed/involved. There is some slight query over a licence for use of the Prom for a ‘street party’: Norman Kerr will discuss this with the police, and with Lynn Aitchison (chair of the 1992 committee).

95.9 SUB-COMMITTEES

- 9a The position of the Tennis sub-committee should be resolved at our next meeting.
- 9b The Sand-and-Sea sub-committee needs to be revived: this will be discussed at the next planning meeting of the Community Council’s executive.
- 9c The Illuminations sub-committee has a bank account and little else. Norman Kerr will discuss this with Lynn Aitchison and with our Treasurer.
- 9d Norman Kerr stated that the 1992 Committee is separate from the Community Council and not one of its sub-committees since it involves outside organisations. However all its reports and decisions have to be notified to the Community Council and all its financial expenditure is under the control of the Community Council.

95.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10a The Niddrie/Brunstane Burn is to be cleaned up on 23rd May as part of this year’s Festival of the Environment. This is a big stretch so needs lots of volunteers. Iain Abbot will represent the Community Council at the cleanup planning meeting on 12th February.
- 10b The Public Right of Way alongside Brunstane Burn to Eastfield has apparently been blocked or encroached upon. It nevertheless remains a public right of way.
- 10c The public footpath past ASDA to Newcraighall is now obstructed by a locked gate after 6:00pm, forcing young people to walk up the dual carriageway to get to the cinema and bowling centre. The Community Council will find out from the Planning Department what Public Rights of Way exist in our area.
- 10d Norman Kerr has received a draft Urban Nature Conservation Strategy document. He will write something about it for the Reporter, then pass it to Portobello Amenity Society and Norman Hughes for further comment.
- 10e Brenda Molony reported that she had been asked by the Chairman of Towerbank PTA about a proposal to set up a ‘street market’ on the Ash Pitch, which apparently “had the approval of the Community Council”. However noone present had any knowledge of

this. Nick Stroud will contact the PTA Chairman for further information. Norman Hughes said the Community Council should support local business initiatives such as this, and perhaps further emulate London Street Markets by getting the High Street closed to traffic periodically. Andrew Strachan pointed out that there is often a charity stall beside the Town Hall.

- 10f Ray Lang passed on a request from the Portobello Centre management committee that they be allowed to put notices on the Community Council noticeboard occasionally. There was no objection to this, though it was observed that 1992 information might crowd this out.

95.11 NEXT MEETINGS

The dates of the meetings for the remainder of the life of this Community Council are as follows (all being the second Monday of each month):

- 9th March
- 13th April
- 11th May
- 8th June
- 13th July
- 10th August

All meetings will be at 7:30pm in the Portobello Centre, Adelphi Grove.