



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 215th meeting held on 26th January 2004 in Portobello Baptist Church

Present: Maureen Child, Dawson Currie, Alix Gaffney, Robert Gatliff, Kathleen Hart, Bob Jefferson, Nora Mackenzie, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro, George Murray, David Scott, John Smart, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, Lewis Waugh.

Apologies: Celia Butterworth, Lawrence Marshall, Sandy Smith, Bill Thomson.

In attendance: Robert Davidson (CEC), Kenny Owen (Portobello Police), A. Robinson, F. Wilson.

215.1 Chairman's Introduction

John Smart welcomed members to the first meeting of 2004, and announced the resignation of Aileen Valentine. Apologies were received from David Wright, Head Teacher, Portobello High School.

215.2 Police Report (Kenny Owen)

New hours for staffing the Police Station were now in place. A series of car break-ins in the Regent Street area had been resolved following a night time plain-clothes operation. There are two new neighbourhood watch schemes in West Portobello. A Junior Crime Prevention Panel has been set up in East Edinburgh as a way of getting children more involved. There have been recent attempted break-ins at commercial properties in Portobello. The Council thanked the police for their efforts, especially the night time operations during the cold wintry weather...

215.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted. Proposed: Brenda Molony; Seconded: David Turner.

215.4 Matters Arising

215.4a Grant Schemes: Richard Barclay has applied for support towards the redevelopment of the paddling pool site.

215.4b King's Road Roundabout: There is money in the budget to improve the roundabout junction. A. Gaffney wished removal of the plants to improve visibility on safety grounds. It was suggested that it was safer to keep the plants to restrict views and slow traffic down. John Stewart suggested that the plants should be preserved on environmental grounds. There would be no significant changes until the major work to improve the junction was begun.

215.4c Police Station Clock: James Ritchie's had assessed the clock and a written report was awaited.

215.5 Reports

215.5a Treasurer: Account balances: Community Council £5,744.77 Tennis Club £2,679.46.

215.5b Tennis Courts: No report.

215.5c Cleansing etc: (Robert Davidson). Trees would be planted to replace the damaged paved circle in the Harbour Road area. The Hope Lane Embankment had been cleaned up and Christian Path resurfaced (a huge improvement). Fishwives Causeway was a site of dumping and dog fouling, and would get more maintenance and waste bins. Dog fouling was still a problem, but the efforts of the environmental wardens were welcomed. So far there have been 41 fines for dog fouling and many more warnings. People wishing to report problems could contact Bob Davidson or the team leader, Charlie Hall (07786174181).

Karen Kay from Beautiful Scotland in Bloom has been invited to attend the next meeting.

215.5d Planning (John Stewart):

6 John Street – a new application has been lodged to convert this property to a Guest House.

Superstore Application – Studies on the retail impact and traffic management had been written in favour of the developers, but the retail impact study ignored Portobello as a shopping centre, and focused on the distance to Leith and Musselburgh. The traffic study failed to assess problems at the Bath Street and Brighton Place traffic lights. The campaign to stop the development continues, although the date of the planning hearing has not yet been set.

New Nursery – The proposal to develop the Thomson Garden Centre as a children's nursery has been resubmitted. PAS has raised objections. The proposal requires a green travel plan and traffic calming measures in Bellfield Lane. Previous objections on traffic grounds were unlikely to be a factor in a planning decision.

Ghost train site – planning application has been withdrawn.

Portobello Conservation Area – booklet summarising the architectural heritage published by the Council with contributions by PAS. Whilst this should guide planning policy, the new development at the north end of Bath Street demonstrates that planning decisions are still weighted towards the developer and against the architectural heritage, even in conservation areas.

Paddling Pool site – outline planning permission, including a refreshments kiosk, has been lodged.

215.5e Councillors:

Maureen Child – see attached written report. There is money in the CEC budget to upgrade the footpaths in the Conservation Area.

215.5f Signs and Plaques: A. Robinson presented a report. Discussion on the future location of the Coade Stones centred on the Harry Lauder Garden to the west of the Town Hall. Objections were raised and a site to the east of the Hall was suggested, although there may be problems with access to services. The paddling pool site was also suggested.

215.6 A.O. B.

215.6a Portobello History Society. M. Munro reported a plan to make a video about Portobello (A Place of Leisure: Place of Work). An application has been made to the LDC for a grant. The Community Council endorsed the project. There is a tight timetable to complete the project this year.

215.6b Christmas Lights. Dawson Currie reported on the Portobello Christmas Lights. This year the tree lights had been considered too old and unreliable and not used. Additional decorations, previously used in George Street, are promised for next Christmas. Council representatives would be invited (by Dawson Currie) to a future meeting to discuss the proposals for next year.

215.6c Portobello Website: Bob Jefferson reported on recent developments which include easier ways to add comments, current and back issues of the Portobello Reporter, Community Council minutes, pictures and pen portraits of PCC members, local groups directory, What's On Guide, magazine section, bus and train timetables, local news service, local business directory and a discussion forum (140 members; >800 messages). It was agreed to fund the £50 pa hosting charges. A website sub-committee meeting would be arranged in February.

215.6d. Portobello Community Council Finances: It was agreed to discuss the finances and how to use unallocated resources effectively at the next meeting of the Community Council.

215.7 Next meeting

Meetings are held on the final Monday of each month, except July and December, at 7.30pm in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

The next meeting is on 23rd February 2004.

Subsequent meetings are on 29th March and 26th April 2004.