



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 217th meeting held on 29th March 2004 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Maureen Child, Dawson Currie, Kathleen Hart, Bob Jefferson, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, David Scott, John Smart, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, David Turner.

Apologies: Celia Butterworth, Robert Davidson (CEC), Robert Gatliff, Lawrence Marshall, Sandy Smith.

In attendance: Joyce Campbell (Portobello Library), Bob Wardrop (Portobello Police), Ian Wilson.

217.1 Chairman's Introduction

John Smart welcomed members.

217.2 Police Report

Inspector Wardrop initiated a discussion of what the community wants from its police officers, to identify issues which he could feed back to his colleagues. It was generally agreed that it's a good thing to improve crime clear-up rates, and at over 40% Edinburgh's rate is very good compared with some other places, but a balance has to be struck with prevention rather than cure, and most people would like to see more officers on the beat. There was also concern that Portobello was losing status, with its police station not being fully staffed 24 hours a day now, with all emergency calls being handled at Bilston Glen, and with the emergency response team being based at Craigmillar. Portobello's complement of police officers has been reduced from 34 to 33. The Chief Constable's request that Edinburgh be granted capital city status for policing purposes has apparently been rejected, and Portobello officers are sometimes needed in the city centre, placing further pressure on local resources. All 999 calls are now graded into more or less urgent priorities, and the less urgent ones might not get a response for several hours, but it is still important that every crime be reported. It will always be the case that more resources would result in a better service, especially with the emergence of new challenges such as drugs and national security. David Turner pointed out that other agencies besides the police help to prevent crime, and also needed adequate resources.

Community Councillors were invited to write to the Chief Constable to express any concerns they might have about policing in their area.

Anyone who would like a particular topic to be covered in the monthly police report to the Community Council should send their request to the Secretary at least 48 hours before the meeting, for forwarding to the police representative.

217.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted. Proposed: Tom Smith; Seconded: Kathleen Hart.

217.4 Matters Arising

217.4a Fittings for Christmas lights: Dawson Currie asked if the street-lighting refurbishments mentioned in Maureen Child's report to the last meeting would remove the fittings we have had installed for Christmas lights. Maureen was reasonably sure that these fittings would be safeguarded, but she would check with Ian McFadyen in the Council. Official advice about the lights in the cherry trees near the Town Hall is that this type of light does not last more than a couple of years, and it's not worth replacing them.

217.4b Police Station clock: Bob Jefferson reported that the police have offered to pay some of the expenses of restoring the clock, which has been a welcome boost to the project.

217.5 Reports

217.5a Treasurer: Account balances:	Community Council	£5,148.94
	Joppa Tennis Club	£2,679.46

Thank you letters have been received from Evergreen and Porty Youth Scene for the grants from the Community Council.

The end of the financial year is approaching, and the Treasurer asks that any outstanding expenses be claimed as soon as possible so that year-end accounts can be drawn up.

217.5b Tennis Courts: no report.

217.5c Cleansing etc: no report.

217.7d Planning (John Stewart):

6 John Street – no decision has been taken yet.

Superstore Application – there is no new news about this. A demonstration against the superstore is planned for 11am on Saturday 3rd April, at the Town Hall.

195 Portobello High Street – the application from Pizza Hut has been granted.

There is nothing contentious in any of the applications lodged recently.

217.5e Councillors:

Maureen Child – report circulated at meeting and by email.

Lawrence Marshall – no report.

217.5f Signs and Plaques: no report.

217.6 A.O.B.

217.6a. Vision for the Promenade: John Stewart summarised the many reports there have been over the years on the subject of improving and developing Portobello and its seafront, plus meetings with individual politicians and officials, all apparently without avail as the Promenade steadily deteriorates. The Local Development Plan has not saved us from unsuitable developments, and new plans currently being finalised will apply to the whole of Edinburgh, so are likely to gloss over subtle but important details in Portobello. PAS had discussed this and decided that it would be better to come up with a vision of what we want for the Prom than to do nothing and watch the continuing decline.

Maureen Child said that there was no money to deliver improvements unless Council assets were sold off, and even then, rebuilding Portobello High School would probably take precedence over the Prom. She had convened a meeting of all relevant Council people to come up with ideas, though nothing specific had come of that yet. She regretted that even though Portobello is Edinburgh's resort it is not as important as the Old Town, for example, and does not attract special heritage funding. Neither does it present major redevelopment opportunities, which is why it isn't attracting private funding like the waterfront project around Granton.

It was agreed that John Stewart would start pulling together aspects of a possible vision for Portobello seafront and western entrance. Anyone with ideas for this should send them to John.

Margaret Munro asked why the Town Hall wasn't used more, for example in the Festival and Fringe. There are difficulties about this, and there was some feeling that the Hall is already well used for private functions. Maureen Child agreed to find out in more detail.

217.6b Secretary's report

1. There is to be only one Royal Mail delivery per day in Portobello from today onwards.
2. The Edinburgh Marathon takes place on 13th June, the route as last year including the Prom, Joppa Road, High Street and Brighton Place. There will be some road closures, a need for stewards, and opportunities for local businesses.
3. The Association of Scottish Community Councils newsletter could be a useful asset.
4. We have received an entry form for Community of the Year 2004.
5. Scottish Water is investigating Seafield's "odour potential".
6. St Philips Young Women's Group have asked if the parade could be reinstated; Robert Gatliff has replied suggesting a further exchange of ideas.
7. We have received copies of Edinburgh's City Housing Strategy 2002–2007.
8. Edinburgh Association of Community Councils: Saturday's meeting was addressed by Bristow Muldoon MSP (convenor of the Parliament's Local Governance and Transportation Committee, who welcomed Community Council participation in the new opportunities for local democracy), and Sarah Sinclair (Deputy Chief Officer of Lothian Health Council, who urged Community Council participation in the forthcoming Community Healthcare Partnerships and Public Partnership Forums). Further information on both subjects will be circulated in coming months. Suggestions for further topics and speakers for the Association were invited.

217.6c. Harry Lauder garden: Kathleen Hart requested help with the maintenance of the garden, which is currently being undertaken by herself and Margaret and Tom Smith. Maureen Child knows of a constituent who may be able to help.

217.7 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 26th April 2004.

Subsequent meetings are on 31st May 2004 (AGM) and 28th June 2004.