



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **Minutes of the 231st meeting held on 29th August 2005 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Maureen Child, Dawson Currie, Robert Gatliff, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Lawrence Marshall, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, Avril Scott, David Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, Betty Young.

**Apologies:** Celia Butterworth, Susan Deacon, Alix Gaffney, Kathleen Hart, Brian McCrow, Brenda Molony, George Murray, Sheila Scott, John Smart, Sandy Smith, Insp. Norman Ward.

**In attendance:** Carla von Blunden, Joyce Campbell, Gillian Dunn, Caroline Hosking, Linda Kelly, Maggie LeMay, Mike Robb, Alex Rose, Mike Spells, Anne Ward, Derek Welsh.

**231.1 Chairman's welcome:** the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, including representatives from PCATS, the Community Centre, Community Education and the Library. He recorded the Community Council's best wishes to John Smart, the previous Chairman, following his recent bereavement and his continuing poor health.

While this was an ordinary Community Council meeting, some of it was concerned with the future of Portobello, and the run-up to our public meeting on this subject on 12th October.

### **231.2 Library development**

Mike Spells, from Edinburgh's Libraries Division, spoke about aspects of Portobello's Library, where the City was making significant current investment in the lift, automatic doors and general accessibility in order to comply with disability legislation. He wanted Portobello to have the best possible library but observed that it was difficult to make definite plans when the future of the present building was so uncertain. While he had no view of his own on whether the Library should move to a new building, it would be difficult to house the community room, computer suite and local history archive in the present building, and it was always difficult to balance the needs of the public, councillors and new legislation. This was made even harder since there is now no clearcut model of what an ideal library should be: it depends on local needs.

Joyce Campbell, Portobello's Librarian, has big plans for the future of the Library but these would require significant investment, and some would not be possible in the present building. She didn't foresee any difficulty in combining with a new Community Centre in some way, for example to join up the provision of related services, but she emphasised the importance of protecting the Library's quality. She agreed to look into a complaint from a member of the public about playstations in the Library.

### **231.3 Minutes of the 230th Meeting:**

Margaret Munro pointed out that she had not "observed" that the History Society needed archive storage space but that she was "requesting" it. With this correction the minutes were accepted:

Proposed: Margaret Smith, Seconded: David Scott.

### **231.4 Matters Arising:**

**Brighton Park sundial:** the repair has been carried out but not yet paid for as there was some question over the quality of the work.

\* **New flats in Bath Street:** Lawrence Marshall is awaiting a response from the Planning Department to some questions about the development at no. 19.

\* **Task Force:** held over to next meeting.

## **231.5 Reports**

**231.5a Police:** The police representative will be at the next meeting.

**231.5b Treasurer:** The City of Edinburgh grant of £878.40 had been received, less £131.78 for insurance for public liability and our information boards and plaques. Outgoings have been £1,057.50 for the old Town Hall clock, £500 for the Open Door event on Triathlon Day, and a donation of £100 towards the cost of the public art display at the John Street paddling pool site in June. This leaves the current balances at: Treasurer's Account: £6,037.56; Joppa Tennis Courts: £5,736.34.

**231.5c Joppa Tennis Courts:** no report.

**231.5d Task Force:** Held over to next meeting.

- \* **Action:** City Councillors to request a Task Force representative to attend Community Council meetings.

**231.5e Planning:** John Stewart reported that PAS had participated in the consultation about the new Edinburgh Local Plan. He reported the new planning application to build six three-storey houses at 19 Promenade (the old ghost train site), to which PAS has objected. Bath Place residents would also be objecting, preferring that the Council obtain the land for open space. John Stewart pointed out that the ground had been identified as gardens on an 1856 map and was therefore wrongly classified as housing land now.

### **231.5f Councillors:**

Maureen Child circulated her report at the meeting. She had also produced a report in July (when the Community Council did not meet), and a report for over-sixties, both of which were available from her on request.

Lawrence Marshall mentioned the first ever trains running on a Sunday from Brunstane and Newcraighall, for the Festival fireworks on 4th September. He reported that BT planned to remove the public telephone box at the top of King's Road, and that anyone who was concerned about this should contact BT. The plans for phase two of the High Street redevelopment were on display in the Library; comments could be made to John Stewart for feeding back to the Council. The plans include a budget for removing the old wooden Community Council noticeboard at the Town Hall and upgrading the other noticeboards if we wish, after which we would have to agree to maintain the boards. This was agreed subject to John Stewart clarifying all the details with the Council. Tom Smith pointed out that the new information boards were for the use of the whole community, not just the Community Council.

- \* **Action:** John Stewart to obtain a detailed list of the City Council's plans for the noticeboards.
- \* **Action:** The Treasurer to look into the cost of adding these boards to our insurance policy.

Robert Gatliff asked that more trees be planted on the north side of the High Street, and Dawson Currie asked when the upgrade of the street lights would be completed.

- \* **Action:** Lawrence Marshall to find out when the lighting improvements would be finished.

Lawrence thanked everyone involved in making the triathlon and subsequent POD entertainments such a success, and hoped there would be more such events in future. The meeting agreed with this, and welcomed the initiative. Finally, Lawrence mentioned the sand sculptors who had spent several weekends crafting marvellous sculptures on the beach, and welcomed Bob Jefferson's idea of commissioning them to create something new for us. This, and a fee of £50, were agreed without objection.

**231.5g Signs, Plaques and coade stone:** no report this time.

**231.5h Portobello Traders:** no report this time.

**231.5i Portobello Neighbourhood Watch:** no report this time.

**231.5j Portobello website:** no report this time.

## **231.6 Portobello Community Planning**

The only project being pursued actively at present was the Lottery application for a bandstand on the Promenade, which had passed the first hurdle and reached the short-list. It now required planning

permission, a building warrant, and confirmation that the plinth was adequate. An architect was involved with the project and a preliminary survey had been carried out. Margaret Munro pointed out that there was probably an active drain under the plinth; otherwise there was no objection to pursuing this project.

### **231.7 The future of Portobello**

The Community Council is holding a public meeting in the Town Hall on the evening of 12th October to canvass local opinion on how Portobello should develop.

Lawrence Marshall had hoped to involve Council officials, but the Council's own plans were not yet sufficiently clear to permit this. Maureen Child thought we should first identify all the functions required in our community – such as homes, activities and education – and only focus on the details after that; the public meeting should therefore concentrate on the 'big picture', after which Council officials would be able to work out the details. Linda Kelly agreed that it was important to have an overview, but that such detailed aspects as the future of the Library and the Community Centre should be considered at the same time; she volunteered her expertise in running big meetings in small groups to facilitate discussion and planning. Joyce Campbell was concerned about the loss of Library services during any major rebuilding or redevelopment. Maggie LeMay pointed out that the Community Centre had been looking for new premises for seven years, as the current building was not sufficiently flexible for the range of activities supported there. Lawrence Marshall outlined his ideas for how Portobello could get a new Library and Community Centre, using the proceeds from the sale of the PowerLeague soccer pitches, but it would take a lot of detailed planning to be sure of the feasibility. Robert Gatliff suggested that a brief presentation from Edinburgh's Waterfront Project could help to set the overall scene and context, and he pointed out that the High School must also be considered.

The Chairman closed the discussion by asking for volunteers for a subgroup to organise the public meeting. (The subgroup includes Robert Gatliff, Stephen Hawkins, Caroline Hosking, Linda Kelly, John Stewart and Nick Stroud.)

### **231.8 A. O. B.**

1. **Community Award competition:** Robert Gatliff reported that our application had been short-listed, and that the judges would be visiting Portobello on the morning of 27th September to review what was said in our application, talk to local people and walk around the town; he asked for volunteers to help prepare for the visit.
2. **Treasurer:** Tom Smith pointed out that Kathleen Hart was no longer formally a member of the Community Council, as she is no longer our CAB representative. He proposed that she be co-opted. This was seconded by Margaret Munro and unanimously agreed.
3. **Congestion charge questionnaire:** The Chairman distributed copies of a questionnaire from a Heriot-Watt student who was investigating travel arrangements in Edinburgh; completed questionnaires should be returned to him or direct to the student.

### **231.9 Future meetings**

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 September 2005.

Subsequent dates are: 31st October 2005  
28th November 2005  
30th January 2006  
27th February 2006