



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **Minutes of the 233rd meeting held on 31st October 2005 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Celia Butterworth, Maureen Child, Dawson Currie, Alix Gaffney, Kathleen Hart, Bob Jefferson, Lawrence Marshall, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, Avril Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, David Turner, Insp. Norman Ward, Betty Young.

**Apologies:** Susan Deacon, Ron Dymond, Robert Gatliff, Brian McCrow, Nora Mackenzie, Brenda Molony, John Smart,

**In attendance:** John Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Colin Cuthbert, Maria Devoy, Stephen Hawkins, Keith I'Anson, Sheila I'Anson, Peter Lake, Margaret Rae, Ian Ross, Ian Wilson.

**233.1 Chairman's welcome:** John Stewart took the Chair in Robert Gatliff's absence and welcomed the good turnout. He conveyed the Community Council's best wishes to Tom Smith after his recent operation.

### **233.2 Minutes of the 232nd Meeting:**

The minutes were accepted: Proposed: Tom Smith, Seconded: Margaret Smith.

### **233.3 Matters Arising:**

- \* **233.3a Tennis Courts Clubhouse:** Kathleen Hart had checked the terms of the lease and found that the City Council is responsible for keeping the building wind- and water-tight, and the tenants for maintaining the interior. No major change may be made without permission of the City Council. Maureen Child had spoken to Council officials about the building and a meeting was to be arranged to discuss the replacement proposal.
- \* **233.3b Task Force:** held over to next meeting.
- \* **233.3c High Street phase 2:** John Stewart had still not received a detailed request from the City Council about the Community Council's noticeboards; when he has, Kathleen will arrange their insurance.

### **233.4 Public Meeting on 12th October**

All felt that this had been a very successful meeting, and thanked Robert Gatliff for organising and chairing it, and Tom Smith for analysing the returned questionnaires. The Chairman highlighted the strong messages that people wanted to keep Portobello's green spaces, and to keep the Library and Community Centre in their present locations.

A number of points were made in the ensuing discussion, which were variously answered by the City Councillors. Nick Stroud wanted the City Council to devise an overall plan for the future of Portobello before making piecemeal developments, but Lawrence Marshall said that a 'big picture' is always changing. Bob Jefferson believed the Community Centre management committee had changed its mind about wanting a new site, but Lawrence Marshall highlighted the difficulties of redeveloping the present building. Tom Nimmo emphasised the community's wish that the Library remain where it is; Lawrence Marshall agreed that everyone except the City Council's Director of Culture & Leisure wanted that, but the desired 'central location' could be the High Street just as well as Rosefield Avenue. Tom Nimmo wanted to know how the City Council would fund future developments when it had no assets left to sell; this point was not answered. Margaret Munro asked if the money raised by selling assets in Portobello would definitely come to Portobello; Lawrence Marshall "hoped" that a "fair share" of it would, while Maureen Child said that the City Council doesn't usually ring-fence sales income this way, and that Portobello might be better off with Council spending priorities if we didn't demand ring-fencing. Lawrence Marshall added that the sale of the PowerLeague site was different to the sale of the Library and Community Centre sites, and that proceeds from the latter would be used specifically for their redevelopment. Diana Cairns pointed out the significance

of the questionnaire returns, and asked that they be publicised in the *Reporter* and on the Party website. It was also agreed that the results should be sent to the Council's Directors of Planning, Education, Culture & Leisure, and Community Education. Peter Lake asked about the timescales for the City Council's decisions; Lawrence Marshall thought a decision about the PowerLeague site would probably be taken in December or January, and Maureen Child added that no decisions about the Library or Community Centre were in the pipeline.

- \* **Action:** questionnaire results to be publicised on website and in *Party Reporter*.
- \* **Action:** Maureen Child to supply contact details for City Council Directors, and the Secretary to send them copies of the questionnaire and its outcome.

### **233.5 Reports**

**233.5a Police:** the Community Council extended a warm welcome to Inspector Ward, recently appointed to Portobello. Inspector Ward reported that police officers were once again based in Portobello 24 hours a day, which was helping in dealing with certain problems. A new Youth Action Team was helping to deal with problems involving young people, some of which were caused by alcohol; on the other hand the mere boisterousness of a group of young people was no worse than the noise from a badly-run council meeting... Inspector Ward warned of the increased danger of late-afternoon burglaries at this time of year, when it gets dark before people get home from work. Two points were made about the dangers of speeding traffic (a problem all over Edinburgh apparently), and the inappropriateness of having 40mph speed limits on residential roads in the area. In response to another question, Inspector Ward agreed to find out if there was any CCTV evidence of someone damaging cars in the Rosefield area.

- \* **Action:** the Police to check CCTV records for clues in relation to damaged cars in Rosefield Avenue.

**233.5b Treasurer:** The only income this month had been the Royal Bank's sponsorship of the website. The current balances were:  
Treasurer's Account: £6,130.78; Joppa Tennis Courts: £5,348.34.

The Treasurer asked Maureen Child to get a bill for the work done in the Harry Lauder garden. Dawson Currie asked if the bill for membership of the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils had been paid, but no bill had been received.

- \* **Action:** Maureen Child to arrange a bill for maintenance work in Harry Lauder Garden.
- \* **Action:** Dawson Currie to arrange a bill for membership of the EACC.

**233.5c Joppa Tennis Courts:** no report.

**233.5d Task Force:** held over to next meeting.

**233.5e Planning:** John Stewart reported that planning permission had been granted for the construction of 96 flats on the site of the Corsie bowling centre. The application for the construction of six houses on the Ghost Train site at 19 Promenade was to be the subject of a site visit, and there would probably be further news by the end of November.

### **233.5f Councillors:**

Lawrence Marshall mentioned the City Council's intention of keeping non-retail outlets in the main section of the High Street to less than 20%, which affected a café which had been opened without planning permission.

Maureen Child circulated a written report, and mentioned the official opening of the new swingpark in Joppa Quarry Park at 2pm on 7th November. In response to a question about the possibly illegal collection of local shellfish, Maureen reported that Environmental Health officials thought local shellfish would probably not be fit for human consumption, and agreed to report further developments.

- \* **Action:** Maureen Child to provide further information about local shellfish.

**233.5g Signs, Plaques and coade stone:** the application had been submitted to the Lottery for funding to erect the Coade Stone pillars in the community garden, and the outcome should be known before Christmas. Other work was in abeyance meantime.

**233.5h Portobello Merchants and Traders:** no report this time.

**233.5i Portobello Neighbourhood Watch:** no report this time.

**233.5j Portobello website:** Bob Jefferson reported that the website was now being managed by a three-person team, and had been shortlisted for a Community of the Year award; the results would be announced in December. A community radio station called *Radio Free Porty* had recently been set up, to present local music, poetry and other arts; it is at <http://www.radiofreeporty.org/>

**233.5k Community Development:** no report this time.

## **233.6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**233.6a Community of the Year Award:** Tom Smith reported that the judges' visit had seemed to go well. The awards would be made on 8th December.

**233.6b Jet Skis:** Diana Cairns raised the issue of jet skis being used very close to the beach, and vehicles to support them being brought on to the Prom and beach, causing widespread danger and distress. There are similar problems at Granton and Musselburgh, but no effective powers to deal with them, though Loch Lomond police have some success by using antisocial behaviour legislation. Inspector Ward agreed to find out if it is illegal to bring vehicles on to the beach. Lawrence Marshall had raised the issue with the City Council safety officer but had not yet received a response. Since this is a national issue it was suggested that the Scottish Parliament be asked to tackle it. The related issue of antisocial cycling on the Prom was raised. It was suggested that better signage might encourage more thoughtful use of the beach and Prom, even if legal considerations mean that it can only say "Please ..." or "Please don't ...".

- \* **Action:** Inspector Ward to investigate the legality of taking vehicles on to the beach.
- \* **Action:** the Secretary to explore the submission of an ePetition to the Scottish Parliament.
- \* **Action:** Lawrence Marshall and Maureen Child to encourage the provision of better signage.

**233.6c Porty website:** Bob Jefferson pointed out that he was a member of the Community Council in his own right rather than to represent the interests of the website, and asked that Maria Devoy be co-opted to the Community Council in this role. This was agreed.

**233.6d Scottish Association of Community Councils:** no one expressed an interest in attending the Pitlochry meeting, but Brian McCrow's interest in it was supported.

**233.6e New book about Portobello:** Margaret Munro announced the publication of a new book about Portobello and Duddingston in the *Images of Scotland* series. There would be launch events at the Dalriada Hotel on 23rd November (7.30-9pm), Portobello Library on 26th November (9.30-1pm), the Sheeps Heid in Duddingston on 1st December (7-9pm), and at Piershill Library on 3rd December (10.30-12 noon). She would bring copies to the November meeting, and it was already available at Portobello Stantioners.

**233.6f New planning legislation:** The Scottish Parliament is presently considering a new planning act, which includes more involvement for community councils in the early stages of planning applications and a consequent removal of third party right of appeal in later stages. A petition has been set up to oppose the apparent curtailment of the public's right to fight antisocial developments (the petition can be 'signed' online at [http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view\\_petition.asp?PetitionID=66](http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/view_petition.asp?PetitionID=66)).

There had been a planning workshop in the Scottish Parliament on 29th October, at which the PCATS campaign had been mentioned as an example of good practice. That meeting had called for more time, money and training to enable local people to deal with planning issues. There had also been a call for city councils to produce local plans and update them regularly, but Maureen Child pointed out the difficulty of doing this because there were too few planning professionals. It was agreed that it was valuable for local people to participate in the Scottish Parliament's consultation meetings, and Stephen Hawkins agreed to find out how to receive regular notification of these.

- \* **Action:** Stephen Hawkins to find out how to get on the Scottish Parliament's meeting notification list.

**233.6g Edinburgh primary schools:** The City Council believes the city population is declining, and therefore proposes to close some primary schools. Maureen Child agreed to circulate a paper on this subject, and all are asked to return comments to Robert Gatliff before the next meeting.

\* **Action:** Maureen Child to give 'education cuts' paper to Secretary for distribution.

\* **Action:** ALL, to comment on proposed closures to Robert Gatliff.

**233.6h Amnesty International meeting:** David Turner announced an illustrated talk by Amnesty's project director on human rights in Central and South America, at 7:30pm on 2nd November in the Evergreen Shop at 230 High Street.

**233.6i Christmas:** Margaret Smith agreed to contact Ian MacFadyen of the City Council about improving Portobello's Christmas lights, and to approach the local schools to set up some carol singing events.

**233.6j Website sub-group:** It was formally agreed to co-opt Maria Devoy and Paula Williams on to the Community Council's website sub-group.

**233.6k Train named for Portobello:** Stephen Hawkins wondered what the difficulty would be in getting a train or locomotive named for Portobello when one had recently been named "National Galleries of Scotland"; no one had an answer to that.

### **233.7 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 28th November 2005 (the last of 2005, with Christmas cheer)

Subsequent dates are: 30th January 2006  
27th February 2006  
27th March 2006  
24th April 2006