



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 238th meeting held on 24th April 2006 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Celia Butterworth, Maureen Child, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Alix Gaffney, Kathleen Hart, Bob Jefferson, Nora Mackenzie, Lawrence Marshall, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, Kenny Owen (Police), Avril Scott, David Scott, Sheila Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, Aileen Ward (High School), Betty Young.

Apologies: Susan Deacon, Robert Gatliff, Andy Hunter (Task Force), Brenda Molony, George Murray, John Smart, Sandy Smith.

In attendance: Diana Cairns, J. Cameron, Stephen Hawkins, Caroline Hosking, G. McCulloch, Karen Maclean, John Rostron, Ian Wilson and several others.

238.1 Chairman's welcome:

Tom Smith welcomed everyone to another full meeting, and expressed the Community Council's pleasure in welcoming Aileen Ward as a representative of the High School. He reminded everyone to fill in the individual and group nomination forms for the new Community Council, which had to be returned to the Library by 4pm on the following afternoon.

238.2 Minutes of the 237th Meeting:

The sum given by the Local Development Committee for the Helen Hopekirk concert was £2,888, not £2,222. With this correction, the minutes were accepted: Proposed: John Stewart, Seconded: Betty Young.

238.3 Reports

238.3a Police: There had been 165 calls at the Police Station during the month. Problems included several break-ins and attempted break-ins to houses and businesses, one car stolen, three thefts from vehicles, 23 reports of vandalism, 16 reports of assault (none serious), three traffic accidents (one involving minor injury), and a big increase in calls about youth behaviour (68, compared with 22 for the same period last year). There had been three calls about vehicles on the beach; these were being dealt with by initial warnings which would be followed up if necessary by vehicle confiscation. A new 'pub watch' scheme had been launched to try and counteract alcohol abuse.

238.3b Treasurer: The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £8,573.79; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,242.28. The former included £2,888 from the LDC and £600 from the Hope Scott Trust for the Helen Hopekirk concert. Much of the Tennis Courts fund was about to be used in the refurbishment of the Clubhouse. The accounts had been drawn up for the end of the financial year and were about to be audited by Celia Butterworth and Margaret Smith.

238.3c Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time.

238.3d Task Force: no report this time.

The Task Force is happy to receive reports from the public about any problem within its remit, on 078 101 81039, from 6:30am to 5:30pm, seven days a week.

238.3e Planning: John Stewart reported that the application involving the Seahaven Hotel had been withdrawn, but he would be asking the Planning Department about building work currently being carried out at the Hotel. There was no objection to an application involving two garages in Pittville Street but he had asked that an appearance more fitting to their environment be used.

238.3f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that the tourist information boards were all in reasonably good shape, and well-cleaned by the recent rain. Commemorative plaques had been received for Ned Barnie and Helen Hopekirk, the latter to be unveiled on Sunday 21st May, two days after the concert. The coadestone pillars were being cleaned in the Council's conservation workshop; there would be a display about the coadestone project in the Library window from 8th to 29th May. The Community Garden at John Street was to be opened on 3rd June, for which Portobello Open Door was organising a Victorian Pageant. The pillars would not be ready to be installed in the Garden until the end of the year.

238.3g Portobello Traders: the group had been 'in hibernation' for several months, but was still ticking over. The work to upgrade the High Street had had an adverse effect on local businesses but the hope was that the overall improvement would make up for that.

238.3h Portobello Neighbourhood Watch: Betty Young reported that she had circulated local groups advising them to contact the Community Council if they wanted any help or advice. There was a feeling that the police were not promoting the scheme so much now.

238.3i Portobello website: Maria Devoy reported that Bob Jefferson had given a presentation to the Rotary Club to promote the website. A new presentation system would be available shortly, and Bob would be able to give a presentation to the Community Council if wanted.

238.3j Community development planning: ongoing.

238.3k Councillors:

Maureen Child had not produced her usual monthly report as she had been on holiday. Of the 750 email messages she had received in the month, only 30 were on the subject of the new High School. A new report on options for the School was about to go to the Executive, and to the full Council on 4th May when local deputations were expected to make submissions. The new Community Garden in John Street was to be opened at 12:30 on Saturday 3rd June. Youth problems were causing concern, particularly around Morton Street and Joppa Quarry Park, with at least some of the young people involved being local. Robert Davidson's work had been so successful that the Council was quadrupling the funding for Task Force teams; anyone wanting graffiti removed could contact Environmental Consumer Services (tel 529 3030, email env.con.svs@edinburgh.gov.uk). Cllr Child emphasised the importance of reporting graffiti and litter problems, or youth problems (to the police), as all calls were logged and would influence future investment.

Alix Gaffney observed that graffiti is seen as an art form in some places and that if we provided places for this street art it might reduce antisocial graffiti. A member of the public was afraid that this would not reduce the graffiti which deliberately set out to taunt the police, but Maureen Child agreed to find out about the professional graffiti artist who is working on a city art project.

* **Action: Maureen Child to find out how we might encourage 'desirable graffiti' in Portobello.**

Dawson Currie wondered if the Joppa Quarry swingpark was being vandalised because all the local play facilities were for younger children, with little provision for older ones; if there were places for teenagers they should be better signposted. Avril Scott asked that there be more "nice notices", saying "please" and explaining rules and requests. Maureen Child mentioned the difficulty of finding a suitable site for the local skateboard/wheelie park so much desired by some people.

Lawrence Marshall had been following up the fate of our first civic clock, and had found that the City Council is responsible for keeping the clock in good repair but that the Baptist Church is responsible for housing it; it had been removed on safety grounds and was now in store in Penicuik while planning and funding opportunities were explored. The work on the High Street was progressing satisfactorily, with the plans now on display in the Labour Party rooms at 54 High Street. A brief was being drawn up ready to appoint a consultant to look at the redevelopment of western Portobello along with BL Developments, Standard Life and other interested parties; this might affect the whole of the Telferton industrial estate, the Scottish Power site, the PowerLeague site and the harbour area, and would include a Community Planning Day. Dawson Currie was concerned at the rumoured continued involvement of Duddingston House Properties; Lawrence Marshall agreed to look into that. John Stewart wondered how this would affect planning applications already in the pipeline, such as the one for a private snooker club at the FunPark, but this was not yet clear. Margaret Munro asked if the future preservation of the B-listed kilns was assured; Lawrence Marshall agreed to find out.

Lawrence Marshall reported that stout gates had been fitted at all the entrances to the Promenade to try and exclude unauthorised vehicles, and that railings at the western end were being renewed. He was discussing aspects of the use of jet-skis with the Council's chief safety officer and other relevant officials. An application had been made to build a two-storey house in Regent Street; John Stewart had found the plans innovative but thought the application would be turned down because there were few windows on the ground floor.

The refurbishment of shops in the High Street was generally welcomed, but it was noted that many are being taken by charities, which was unfair to our local businesses since charity shops were heavily subsidised and increasingly sold new goods in competition with local shops. Lawrence Marshall said there was no legislation to prevent this, but agreed to take up the matter with Susan Deacon and Gavin Strang. Maureen Child pointed out that rates are set by the Scottish Executive and local councils have little say in charitable affairs.

- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to find out if Duddingston House Properties still had an interest in Portobello.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to try and ensure the safe preservation of the two kilns.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to discuss unfair competition between charity shops and local businesses with Susan Deacon and Gavin Strang.**
- * **Action: Secretary to write to Susan Deacon and Gavin Strang about charity shops.**

238.4 Any Other Business

238.4a planning and PCATS: Stephen Hawkins had attended a city planning workshop and thought a similar approach would be invaluable for the western Portobello redevelopment. He reported that there was about £3,000 left in the PCATS fund and one possibility would be to use this to employ a consultant to pursue such a planning strategy: the PCATS campaign would not be finished until decent new housing was built.

238.4b Helen Hopekirk concert: the concert would be at 7:30pm on Friday 19th May; tickets cost £8 each and were available from the Library. There would be a variety of performers, including two professional musicians from the USA. A few volunteers were required to help on the night.

238.4c Harry Lauder's birthplace: Alix Gaffney observed that the cottage thought by some to be the birthplace of Harry Lauder was up for sale again, but Lawrence Marshall and Maureen Child said the City Council would not be interested in buying it.

238.4d Portobello High School: Lawrence Marshall asked that the Community Council arrange a special meeting at the High School.

- * **Action: Community Council to consider holding a meeting at the High School.**

238.5 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 29th May 2006.

Subsequent dates are: 26th June 2006
28th August 2006
25th September 2006
30th October 2006
27th November 2006