



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 282nd meeting held on 27 September 2010 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Diana Cairns (Joint Secretary), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Peter McColl, Joe Madden (Portobello Open Door), Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Brenda Molony (Portobello Reporter), Margaret Munro (Vice Chair, Portobello History Society), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (Chair, PAS), Ros Sutherland (Portobello Park Action Group), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parent Council), Anne Ward (PCATS), Frances Wraith (Brightons and Rosefield Residents' Association) William Wilson.

Apologies: Celia Butterworth, Lilian Graham, Peter McColl, Nick Stroud, Leon Thompson Cllr Mike Bridgman.

In attendance: , Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, PC Matt Higson, A Jeffrey, Alan Anderson, Fiona Holt, P Myerscough (BL Developments), Lee Kindness, Angela Downie, Beryl Neill, S Bacica, Ian Wilson.

282.1 Chair's welcome.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that we would start the meeting off with a presentation by Dalrymple Trust on the proposed development at Newcraighall East. EDI who are the developer for the Newcraighall North site had decided not to attend as they were not ready to present their proposals.

282.2 Presentation on proposed development at Newcraighall by Dalrymple Estates

Alex Orr of Indigo introduced the presentation team: Alex Sneddon (traffic consultant), Peter Allan (PPCA) and Ross Peedie (John Thomson and Partners).

Mr Orr explained that there had been an exhibition at Newcraighall Primary School earlier in September and that the plan had evolved since then as a result of comments made at the exhibition. He stressed that The Dalrymple Trust is concerned that the new development takes on board the concerns and aspirations of the public.

The presentation covered the following points:

The council had allocated Newcraighall (which is green belt land) for housing in the new Edinburgh City Local Plan. It is in a strategic location close to the park and ride facilities and the A1.

The site has attractive and well-used playing fields and a sense of place, with vernacular architecture which has been used to guide the form of the new development. Constraints are existing mine shafts, which need to be made safe and access will be mainly through Klondyke Street. Secondary emergency access will be through the housing estate. There are also power lines where there will need to be set-back zones and the land to the east is open space. Children and Families is looking at the possible impact on the existing school and a new classroom, more playground space and an all-weather pitch are proposed.

The design takes into account people's desire to access the countryside, so a landscaped buffer to the south has been included in the design to soften the edge of the development.

A mini civic space, surrounded by houses, will also be included to extend the high street and the developers do not see the need for commercial space. The area east of the power lines will be retained as green space and the developers have had a conversation with PEDAL about using part of it as a community farm but are open to other ideas as well.

It is proposed to have green links running east to west, in order to create permeability. The development will be designed to take a bus link to the east towards a future business park and there will be a turning area provided for in the site. There will be play spaces in the development which will be pedestrian and cycle friendly and there will be a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS), for example, ponds will hold storm water.

The development will front out over open space and there will be tree-lined boulevards which will create a sense of place. The architecture style preferred by visitors to the exhibition was a traditional East Lothian style.

Traffic: Mr Sneddon explained that his consultancy was doing the traffic impact analysis for the Dalrymple and the EDI developments. He explained that there are several marked cycle routes and that they aim to build in public transport links as they are obliged to provide a bus link. New developments should also be within 400 m of public transport. Other nearby public transport links are at Brunstane rail station and there is a park and ride facility at Newcraighall rail station.

To facilitate vehicular access it is proposed to remove some or all of the railway abutments. There would be a signalised crossroads and a pedestrian crossing facility will be built in. The assessment of traffic will consider the AM and PM peaks and the signals at the A1. The vertical measure (speed bumps) have started to break up and therefore horizontal measures will be considered.

Discussion and Q& A followed: There was suggestion of using the money available for the access strategy to reduce the speed from one end to the other of the development and to use the money for holistic improvements. It was explained that

the school will have to be extended and the developers will contribute around £1m to this via a section 75 agreement.

There was the suggestion that the buffer space around the development could be used for allotments. A local allotment association has approached the developers who are receptive to the idea and to any other ideas for use of the area to the east of the pylon exclusion zone.

There was a suggestion that more retail facilities would be welcomed but the developers said they would have to look at the potential number of people who would use these facilities as it would have to be sustainable. There was the possibility that EDI might have some retail provision in their site.

There was a suggestion of having shared space in the development so that there would be no need for formal crossings. The developers said that any solution would have to be approved by the council and that they are developing three alternatives which they will bring to their next consultation event.

There was a question about the use of speed bumps on Whitehill Street. The developers said they would use something other than speed bumps (“vertical measures”) they intend to give the street a blockwork appearance or “horizontal measures” to control speed.

Concern was also expressed about the removal of the railway abutments as this is the East Coast mainline.

The Chair thanked the Dalrymple Estates for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Following the the departure of the presentation team, the following concerns were also noted about traffic: pedestrian crossings versus zebra crossings; concern about the efficacy of speed bumps; the need to re-think traffic calming measures; suggestion of diverting traffic around Newcraighall; creating an environment where people want to drive more slowly.

Action: David Hamilton to collate a response to the the Dalrymple Estates. All to e-mail David points to be included and David to circulate draft letter for comments.

282.3 Minutes of the June and August meetings

The minutes of the June meeting were approved, proposed by Brenda Molony and seconded by Caroline Hosking.

282.4 Matters arising from the June minutes

280.3 [This was wrongly numbered in the June minutes as 280.5]. The mediated discussion meeting had taken place and Hugh Crawford’s report had been circulated.

280.5m John Stewart had organised the payment of rent and public liability insurance for Joppa Tennis Courts

280.5q Cathy Cherizard was to find out when the beach was being replenished. Cllr Child said that the work is to be started in January and finished in February.

280.7 The objection letter to the Big W proposal had been submitted.

280.8 A request had been made for an alternative meeting date for the BL consultation event but had not been granted.

280.10 A letter of objection to the proposed development in Bellfield Street had been sent but it had been granted.

280.11b Leon Thompson had circulated details of the regatta.

280.11c Nick Stroud had not written to ask for extended opening hours for the public toilets. Cathy Cherizard explained at the meeting that the council cannot extend the opening hours because of budgetary restrictions.

Two corrections were made to the August minutes: Peter McColl had sent his apologies and Archie Burns had been mistakenly recorded as representing PPAG. Diana Cairns to amend and send out. The minutes were approved, proposed by Anne Ward and seconded by Margaret Munro. There were no matters arising.

282.5 Agree AOCB

It was agreed to discuss the following items under AOCB: the proposed closure of Blindcraft (Nelson Johnstone); the Sir Harry Lauder community garden (Dawson Currie); insurance for the Gilberstoun notice board (David Hamilton); community council constitution (Sean Watters).

282.6 Communication

The Chair explained that to increase communication with the public a website was being developed. He had had negative feedback about the tenor of some e-mails that had been circulated around the group and reminded people that the internal e-mail list should not be used for hectoring or bullying others, nor should it be used to make new decisions, as they could differ from what had been agreed in meetings. E-mails to other CC members should be polite and non-confrontational in tone. It was agreed that at the next meeting we would discuss protocols and roles and responsibilities of CC members.

Joe Madden offered to create a website and said that we could have free web space from the council. The website could include a home page, a news page and a minutes and contacts page so the public could get in touch. It was agreed that the website should be completely independent of any other body so that we have total control over it. Questions were raised about communication and who would see e-mails that came in from the public. John Stewart clarified that all recent e-mails sent in by the public had been passed on; there had been a slight delay as Nick Stroud had been on holiday. Other suggestions were raised, for example the use of Yahoo group (or something similar) for internal communication, different internal and external e-mail addresses.

It was agreed that a group would work on developing the website and it would comprise of Margaret Munro, Joe Madden and David Hamilton.

Action: Group to meet and start to progress plans for website.

282.7 Portobello Heritage Trust

Margaret Munro, Chair of the Heritage Trust, said that the repair of the collapsed kiln was progressing slowly, they were in regular contact with the council and that the work was in the ninth month of a three month contract. Because of the use of lime mortar the work needs to be completed before winter.

The Baptist Church clock has still not been replaced on the building even though it has been repaired. There are legal issues with the building and the clock needs to be re-attached to the steel structure which takes the weight of the clock. There had been a rough estimate for the work and Cllr Bridgman was chasing up more detailed information to allow estimates for the required work to be sourced.

Margaret suggested setting up a joint working group between the CC and the PHT to target funding to have the clock reinstated. It was agreed that the group members would be John Stewart, Margaret Munro and Sandra Blake.

282.8 Reports

282.8a. Police

PC Matt Higson gave a report saying that it had been quite a busy summer and that there has been a lot of good work done on the beach. Using a social and alcohol bye-law had obtained good results. However, there were still youth, alcohol and vandalism problems and Portobello along with Lochend, and Northfield generates a high proportion - around 40 % - of Edinburgh's youth calls.

The police are looking at preventative measures and Portobello's licensed premises are good at keeping youths out but a lot of people come from outside the area. There were some questions about the high number of calls and it was acknowledged that it was in part due to a lack of facilities, however, the police and council had provided additional facilities during the summer. Some names crop up regularly and it appears that they come from outside of the area.

2.8.2 b. Treasurer

As he was unable to attend the meeting Leon Thompson had sent his report in advance.

Balance

The PCC account balance currently stands at £3,626.32.

This includes £1,662.00 ring-fenced for the Gilbertstoun sign boards.

Income and expenditure

The annual grant of £800.68 was paid to PCC on 12 August from City of Edinburgh Council.

PCC members have been reimbursed for out of pocket expenses to the value of £22.50.

Forthcoming expenditure

The rent for the Hall is now due and a cheque for £90 has been given to Portobello Baptist Church.

Public liability insurance for the tennis courts has been arranged and is in place. The premium is £157.50 providing cover up to £5M.

(PCC has taken out the cover as we are the organisation with responsibility for the courts. Joppa Tennis Club will reimburse PCC for the full amount).

The meeting expressed its appreciation of Leon's efforts .

282.8c. Neighbourhood Partnership

Peter McColl reported that the motions proposed by PCC had been agreed and that the next meeting was in early December.

282.8d Environmental update

There was discussion about the shelter in the Towerbank primary school playground. The Chair noted that we had persuaded the council to continue maintaining the shelter but it was necessary to stop vandalism. There had been suggestions of moving the bench and bin as they are used to climb onto the shelter. The council wants our opinion about the last bay of the shelter: should it be left in place or left open to the elements?

After some discussion we agreed that we would support extending the roof to the wall and the use of anti-climb paint.

Scott Thomson of the Council's Parks department has drawn up a park improvement plan for Rosefield Park. It is proposed to hold a meeting to discuss the plans, followed by a tour of the park. PAS and BRRA will be involved. Members who put their names forward to attend the meeting were: John Stewart, Maureen Child, Frances Wraith, Maria Devoy and Diana Cairns.

Cathy Cherizard gave a report and said that John Stewart had accepted the Green Flag award for the Portobello Community Garden.

The following points/issues were also raised:

- The sign for the Bridge Street car park was still not in place.
- The "Welcome to Portobello" sign is still missing from the Seafield junction.
- The attractiveness of wild flower planting in both Figgate and Rosefield Parks.
- The appreciation of Gilberstoun residents for the new bins and the anti dog fouling stickers.
- The fence in Windsor Place - a lower wire one had been put in to replace the broken one.
- The old control box for the pedestrian crossing had been left when the Seafield junction had been signalised and needs to be removed.
- Puddles forming in Portobello High Street by the Central bar.
- On the approaches to Gilberstoun bushes are growing over the pavement and obscuring street lights;
- Christmas lights.

Cllr Hawkins noted that work on Christian Path would be complete around January/February 2011. Concern was expressed that clearing the Christian path could make the properties which back onto it vulnerable.

Sheila Gilmore MP said she had been approached by a resident about having part of the beach declared as a dog-free zone.

Action: The Chair to put on the agenda for the next meeting.

282.8e. Planning

There was a discussion about solar panels and it emerged that there is no clear planning guidance. It was agreed that the principle of solar panels not being visible on the front of property elevations in the conservation area should be adhered to but

also that the CC was generally in support of solar panels as a green form of energy generation. The Council's Planning department has said that it will look at applications on a case-by-case basis. It was agreed that the CC should support solar panels as a sustainable form of energy in principle and that we would consider each planning application on its merits.

Action: Diana Cairns to write a short letter to the Planning department expressing the CC's view on solar panels.

The Chair noted that a revised design for the proposed Hovercraft terminal had been lodged by Stagecoach, which now resembles a row of beach huts, with the central part affording shelter from the weather. The parking could still be problematic as no public transport goes to where the terminal is proposed. There would be two buses connecting with the Hovercraft, one to the city centre and one to Ocean Terminal but none to Portobello. It was suggested that the no 12 Lothian bus could link to the terminal.

Action: The Chair to write to planning about bus links to the terminal.

Viridor Waste Management had put out a press release during the recent public inquiry into their application for an incinerator at Innerwick saying that they intend to re-apply for a waste transfer station in Portobello as they believe that they can overcome the Scottish Government Reporters' grounds for refusal. Diana Cairns said that she would keep everyone up to date with any developments.

BL Developments: A letter had been written from the CC in response to the pre-planning application consultation for the latest proposals for the former Scottish Power site and a reply had been received from Phil Myerscough of BL. Mr Myerscough had come along unexpectedly to the meeting.

A discussion took place with the following points being raised, many of which had been raised at the August meeting:

- concerns about new significant retail provision in Portobello and the effect that it would have on the local shops;
- the proposed store would be significantly larger than the existing Scotmid;
- the proposal would double the supermarket floorspace in Portobello
- the developer reiterated that a Waitrose supermarket is required to balance the planning risk and intimated that the Council's Planning dept were broadly in favour of his plan;
- some people would prefer a higher housing density and no supermarket;
- the previous plans had been objected to on grounds of height, density, traffic and air pollution, not just by the CC but by many local residents;
- the NWPDB does not provide for any other retail larger than a purely local corner shop;
- concern about another supermarket was the third most pressing concern expressed in the responses to the consultation on the NWPDB;
- the need to see the findings of a retail impact assessment for the proposed supermarket before being able to say whether plans are supported or not;
- concerns about impartiality of a retail impact assessment;
- concern about being left with a gap site;
- the need to focus on the proposal before us now, not what might happen in the future;

- the council had said that the door was firmly closed on any supermarket development on the former Scottish Power site;
- the belief that the supermarket would not be a Waitrose and that the threat was the same to the local shops regardless of the operator;
- the feeling of being put under pressure by the developer to make a decision before the CC is ready;
- the validity of a straw poll being questioned.

As the meeting had run out of time, the matter was left at the same conclusion as at the previous meeting.

282.8f. Signs and plaques

No report.

282.8g. Community centre

The next meeting was scheduled for 12 October.

282.8h. Councillors

Cllr Hawkins noted that there was to be a meeting on 29 September at the Royal High Primary School to allow people to have their say on budget cut proposals. Councillor Child had circulated a report.

282.9 AOCB

This item was not addressed due to the lack of time.

282.10 Date of next meeting:

Monday 25 October at 7.30 pm in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

Future meetings will take place on: Monday 29 November, Monday 31 January 2011, Monday 28 February 2011.