



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 287th meeting held on 28th March 2011 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Peter McColl, Joe Madden (Portobello Open Door), Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Leon Thompson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council).

Apologies: Lilian Graham, David Hamilton, Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), William Wilson, Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

In attendance: Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, Robert Gatliff (Joppa Tennis Club), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Ben McLeish (Gilberstoun Residents Association), Margaret Williamson (Portobello High School), John Young (Portobello Police).

287.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting.

287.2 Police report

John Young summarised local crime statistics, which revealed a 5% fall in A Division crime, a 10% reduction in Portobello and Craigmillar, and a 14% drop in antisocial behaviour. The clear-up rate is slightly higher than the same time last year, at 48.5%. Of the 28 crimes reported in Portobello and Joppa in March (one fewer than in February and 16 fewer than in January), six involved vandalism, five youth problems, and just one a pedal cycle – all very low compared to surrounding areas.

The areas of local policing priorities for attention set at the Community Safety Sub Group Meeting in February were Duddingston Park South, Niddrie House Park and Craigmillar Castle. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team is conducting interviews with the public to improve feedback, and visiting all licensed premises to combat under-age drinking.

P.C. Sands, the local School Link police officer, has recently completed a presentation to all pupils at Portobello High School to promote the Crimestoppers youth brand called 'Fearless' to encourage young people to come forward and pass on information about crimes that affect them that are happening in their area. This can be done online at <http://www.fearless.org/>, by telephoning 0800 555111, or if a knife is involved, by texting 88551. As with the adult version of Crimestoppers this information can be passed on anonymously. Sgt. Young pointed out that 'Crimestoppers' is a charity, and is not led by the police.

Nelson Johnstone asked why it had taken nearly six hours for the police to attend the scene of a break-in at the Coillesdenes. Sgt. Young explained the call grading system that the police use when determining the response to a 999 call, with crimes in progress receiving the most urgent attention. The call grading process should be explained to the caller by the call taker at the Force Communication Centre (FCC) who should also provide advice in the interim period. Although acknowledging that other cases are distressing for the victim, immediate police attendance has to be balanced against all current demands on resources.

Nick Stroud asked how widespread the problem of gangs importing women from Eastern Europe was in Edinburgh, and whether it touched Portobello, in the wake of the day's report that a woman had asked for asylum in the city in the wake of just such abuse. Sgt. Young agreed to make enquiries about this.

* **Action: John Young to enquire into the extent of 'human trafficking' in Edinburgh.**

287.3 Environment Update

Cathy Cherizard summarised the main points of local interest:

- one-way traffic in Bellfield Street to be implemented when City Council Parking and Lighting departments complete their contributions;
- the two 'Welcome to Portobello' signs are now in place at the West end of the High Street, and the template has been stored securely for any necessary future use;
- the High Street gullies were to be power-cleaned in the coming week;
- pedestrian access down Pipe Street would be organised in the coming week;
- the Task Force had introduced a new rota, resulting in longer contact hours;
- discussions were still ongoing with Sustrans over the upgrading of Christian Path;
- Hope Lane pavements were being resurfaced to fix damage caused by the Winter weather;
- new priority signs at the tunnel in Brighton Place were more visible than the old ones;
- responding to the Community Council's initiative via the Neighbourhood Partnership, the City Council's roads department was considering a consultation on tackling traffic problems in Bath Street, Straiton Place and Marlborough Street, perhaps by inviting local residents and other interested parties to a workshop. There was particular concern over accessibility for fire appliances, as it had recently been found that a rescue tender could not get down Marlborough Street. Cathy Cherizard agreed to undertake various tasks with a view to holding a consultation within two months, including writing to all local residents, possibly with a tear-off slip for people to indicate their attendance at the meeting and to make points that concern them. Stephen Hawkins suggested that the consultation should take the form of a workshop to identify local issues prior to any scheme being drawn up by officers. Further consultation on the drafted proposals could then take place on with those most affected.

Caroline Hosking thanked Cathy for arranging the installation of a new sign to the Bridge Street car park.

- * **Action: Peter McColl to suggest all relevant contacts to Cathy Cherizard.**
- * **Action: Cathy Cherizard to see if there have been any traffic surveys in the area of concern.**
- * **Action: Cathy Cherizard to write to affected residents and other interested parties to introduce the idea of the consultation and to invite feedback.**

287.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted: proposed by Diana Cairns, seconded by Anne Ward.

287.5 Matters arising

287.5a Seat at Town Hall bus stops (286.3). Cathy Cherizard reported that she had reached a dead end in trying to have this seat reinstated. Maureen Child thought local residents had objected to it being there, but Diana Cairns observed that the people to whom local residents might object gathered there even without the seat, so a seat made nothing worse and would be appreciated by people waiting for buses.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write to Jim Hunter requesting reinstatement of seat at bus stops.**

287.5b Bus shelter in Milton Road East (286.5b). Nick Stroud had written to the City Council as requested, asking that the bus shelter in Sir Harry Lauder Road be moved to Milton Road East.

- * **Action: Nick Stroud to follow up the letter about the bus shelter.**

- * **287.5c** Community Council constitution (286.5f). Following our decision at the January meeting to adopt the community council constitution with an amended clause 11(g), Diana Cairns had written to the City Council to ask for their agreement. They had replied that the model constitution is nationally agreed and should not be changed, but did not give a convincing reason for this, especially as the constitution itself contains a clause allowing for amendments. It was agreed that we should ask the City Council if there was a reason why we should not amend the constitution in the way specified and, if not, that we should adopt it with the agreed change.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write Michael Driscoll of the City Council to this effect.**

287.5d Double yellow lines in conservation areas (286.5k). John Stewart asked Diana Cairns to follow up the letter she had written to the City Council on this subject.

287.5e Community Council Website (286.7). Joe Madden thanked Celia Butterworth for sending photos for the site and Maria Devoy for sending the requested link-text, but advised that no FAQs had been contributed.

287.5f Consultation on Police and Fire & Rescue services (286.8h). Stephen Hawkins reported that he had reviewed the proposals for the Police service and found the consultation not to be completely open but to favour a single Scotland-wide authority, with Kenny MacAskill's backing. Since responses are required by 5th May John Stewart asked Stephen to circulate a summary of the issues so the Community Council could decide its response at its April meeting. Mike Bridgman clarified that David Hamilton had volunteered to look at the Fire Service proposals and not the police service proposals, then observed that the Fire and Rescue service was already highly efficient and cost-effective, with fire deaths reduced by 50% over recent years; changing it to a single Scotland-wide service would lose local accountability, and risked repeating the Welsh experience of costing millions of pounds to achieve negligible savings. He too was asked to circulate a summary of the relevant information so that we could draft our response at the April meeting. Tom Ballantine asked that both summaries be succinct and reflect both sides of the case put in the consultation documents.

* **Action: Stephen Hawkins to summarise the arguments for and against reorganising Scotland's police forces.**

* **Action: Mike Bridgman to summarise the arguments for and against reorganising Scotland's fire and rescue services.**

287.5g Baptist Church clock (286.8h). Mike Bridgman reported that he had received a letter from the City Council's Dave Anderson saying that the clock has been repaired and stored securely at the City Council's expense, but that its reinstatement and future maintenance were the responsibility of the building's owners. The Community Council's sub-group was pursuing this issue in collaboration with the Heritage Trust, and would be looking for funding possibilities.

287.5h Public meeting about traffic problems (286.9a). The City Council had now taken this on, and Cathy Cherizard was organising a meeting.

287.5i Hustings for Scottish Parliament election (286.9c). Tom Ballantine reported that this event was well in hand and awaiting confirmation of the key local candidates. It would be held in the Old Parish Church hall in Bellfield Street on 19th, 20th or 28th April, depending on the availability of the candidates. It was agreed to allow a small budget to help with the organisation and smooth running of the event. Diana Cairns pointed out that the Community Council is entitled to free photocopying in the Library.

287.5j Joppa Tennis Club constitution (286.9d). *See item 287.7.*

287.6 Agree Agenda and AOB

Several items were identified for discussion under AOB.

287.7 Joppa Tennis Courts

Leon Thompson reported that he and the Tennis Club had been over the draft constitution once again, and he circulated the new version with a covering note summarising the key issues and the important advantages gained through the Club's ongoing relationship with the Community Council – which had saved the courts in the first place. The Club would take care of all day-to-day management, while the Community Council would remain as formal tenants. As Community Council treasurer he had resolved all issues around insurance and commended the proposed arrangement as a straightforward way of sustaining an important community asset. Robert Gatliff added that this would not be a good time to try and make a new arrangement as the City Council might feel moved to increase the rent; the Tennis Club had taken all necessary steps to ensure that the status quo would be satisfactory.

Brenda Molony suggested that the constitution should contain a paragraph arranging for the disposal of assets should the Club fold. Tom Ballantine requested that a clause be added requiring the Club to ensure that the conditions of the Community Council's responsibility as tenant be met. It was noted that an agreement would need to be drawn up between PCC and JTC about responsibilities, such as the timely presentation of insurance certificates and audited accounts. With these changes it was generally agreed that the proposed constitution would be satisfactory. Diana Cairns asked that any changes be highlighted in the new draft when it is circulated.

- * **Action: Tom Ballantine to send precise wording for a ‘responsibility clause’ to Leon Thompson and Robert Gatliff.**
- * **Action: Leon Thompson and Robert Gatliff to add a paragraph about disposal of assets and circulate the new draft before the April meeting for agreement.**

287.8 Seating in Towerbank playground shelter

Celia Butterworth noted that the local school was planning to paint a mural in the newly-restored shelter, and she thought it would be a community benefit to have seating in there as well. Cathy Cherizard reported, however, that it was City Council policy not to have seating near a school to avoid attracting ‘antisocial elements’ and consequent debris. There was general gratitude for the City Council’s repair to the roof of the shelter, and John Stewart reported that it had been suitably treated to preserve it against the elements.

287.9 Communication: PCC website

Joe Madden reported that he had added the photographs received from Celia but still needed contributions for the FAQ section. Nelson Johnstone asked that information about sheltered housing at Coillesdene be included, but after discussion it was agreed that this would be better added to the *Porty Online* site. Joe was then asked to make the site public.

Portobello Community Council website: <http://www.portobelloc.org/>

- * **Action: Maria Devoy to tell Nelson Johnstone how to send information for inclusion in *Porty Online*.**
- * **Action: Joe Madden to make the new website public.**

287.10 Reports

287.10a Police: *See item 287.2.*

287.10b Treasurer: Leon Thompson reported spending of £88.13 for Peter McColl’s attendance at a conference and £65 for the rent of the meeting hall, leaving us with £1,483.96 in the account.

287.10c Neighbourhood Partnership: Peter McColl reported that the next meeting of the Partnership would be on 8th June, at Portobello High School.

287.10d Environmental Update: *See item 287.3.*

287.10e Planning: John Stewart reported that the plans for increasing floor space at Kinnaird Park were now available on the City Council’s Planning Portal, at http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/publicaccess/tdc/DcApplication/application_detailview.aspx?caseno=LIGH31EW01U00, and he asked anyone interested in this development to send comments to David Hamilton. He would ask David to submit a response on the Community Council’s behalf, first circulating the draft for comment, before the deadline of 22nd April.

- * **Action: Anyone interested, to check the Kinnaird Park planning application and send comments to David Hamilton.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to ask David Hamilton to draft the Community Council’s response.**
- * **Action: David Hamilton to circulate draft response to Community Council, in time to receive comments before submitting it by the deadline.**

287.10f Signs, Plaques and coade-stone: Celia Butterworth reported on the outcome of the latest meeting of her sub-group, which had focused in particular on the need to renew the ‘Seaside’ interpretation board beside the cakestand. The old board had been damaged by rain so it was proposed to produce a new board from Ruth Hutcheson’s original paintings, but this would cost around £1,500 and the sub-group’s funds were now down to £60. She asked that the Community Council split this cost 50-50 with the Amenity Society, but it was suggested that she first approach the Neighbourhood Partnership since their new financial year and funding round was about to start.

287.10g Portobello Community Centre: David Scott reported that the next Community Centre meeting would be on 12th April, following the usual plan of the second Tuesday of the month.

(Anyone who would like the minutes of Centre meetings can email admin@portobellocc.org.uk to be added to the mailing list; minutes are available from the Centre's website at <http://www.portobellocc.org.uk/>)

287.10h Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her regular written report.

Stephen Hawkins reminded everyone that Lothian Buses fares would be increasing slightly on Sunday 3rd April, congratulated them for containing their costs so successfully over the years, and hoped that local people would continue to support their award-winning local bus service. He reported that legal aspects of land ownership in the vicinity of the kilns had been sorted out, and that a new contractor was about to start work to finish restoring the damaged kiln. The City Council was in the process of selling a long-vacant plot of land in Figgate Street, for development or as a garden for the neighbouring tenement. The City Council was about to appoint three new 'town centre initiative' officers, to help regenerate some of the city's local communities. Our area would be Portobello, Leith Walk and Leith, and we might consider inviting the relevant officer, when appointed, to a future meeting.

287.11 Any Other Business

287.11a High School golf championship

John Stewart reported that the High School had asked several local businesses for sponsorship for its Cruden Cup competition; it was agreed to donate £10.

- * **Action: John Stewart to arrange this donation with the Treasurer.**

287.11b Gilberstoun representative

John Stewart reported that David Hamilton was resigning from the Community Council as he was moving out of the area, and thanked David for all his hard work on our behalf, including that in relation to proposed developments at Newcraighall and Kinnaird Park. David had requested a continuing Gilberstoun presence on the Community Council, so it was agreed to co-opt Ben McLeish as a representative pending a formal arrangement with the Gilberstoun Residents' Association.

287.11c Harry Lauder Memorial Garden at the Town Hall

Dawson Currie observed that the Harry Lauder Garden is not being as well looked after as hitherto. The City Council had previously refused to take on this maintenance, but John Stewart agreed to take up the matter again.

- * **Action: John Stewart to write to Jim Hunter requesting that the City Council keep the Harry Lauder Garden tidy.**

287.11d Community consultation

Sean Watters reminded the meeting that the Community Council has a statutory duty to seek the opinions of our community, and he suggested we explore ways of achieving this. This would be a good time to initiate such an exercise, to evaluate the success of the website and the installation in the Library, and to think of other possible initiatives. It was agreed that it would be helpful to have some further ideas to discuss at the April meeting.

- * **Action: Sean Watters, Sandra Blake and Maria Devoy to bring ideas to the next Community Council meeting.**

287.12 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, Edinburgh EH15 1EU.

The next meeting is on 25th April 2011

Subsequent dates are: 30th May 2011
27th June 2011
29th August 2011 (no meeting in July)