



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **Minutes of the 297th meeting held on 26th March 2012 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

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

**Apologies:** Maria Devoy, Robert Gatliff (Joppa Tennis Courts Club), Nelson Johnstone, Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), Katie Quinn (CEC), Leon Thompson, Allyson Thomson (CEC), Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

**In attendance:** Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Ben McLeish (Gilberstoun Residents), Barry Mercer (Safer Neighbourhood Team), John Young (Portobello Police), and members of the public.

### **297.1 Chair's welcome**

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for resisting the temptation of the warm sunny evening.

### **297.2 Police report**

Barry Mercer summarised the main points of the monthly police report circulated by email and on paper. Only 38 incidents had been reported in Portobello/Joppa in March, mostly involving vandalism, theft, shop-lifting and some antisocial behaviour. There had been a day of action over metal theft. A man had been charged following the stabbing in Portobello in February. The advent of lighter evenings was likely to lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour and the police were taking measures to minimise this, including efforts to prevent under-age drinking. There had been seven damage-only vehicle accidents in the month. Police had spoken to people driving around in the vacant Big W car park, but asked that any further concerns about this should be reported to the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

*(The full police report is appended to these minutes.)*

### **297.3 Environmental update**

No East Team representatives were available to attend the meeting, but they had previously circulated a report by email. They had found a metal bench to replace the one lost from the bus stops near the Town Hall, but wanted reassurance that reinstating it would not cause any increase in antisocial behaviour. Diana Cairns pointed out that the police had received no reports of antisocial behaviour here, and that the bench had only been removed to allow the area to be repaved. It was agreed that we would like the old wooden bench to be restored to this spot as soon as possible.

The Environmental Wardens had been asked to monitor illegal disposal of rubbish; anyone who sees this happening should notify the Environmental Wardens (tel 661 7063).

The Neighbourhood Pride initiative, in which all relevant Council services are brought to bear on local streets for maximum coordinated benefit, would be focusing on the following areas of Portobello in the coming months:

26–30 March:	Portobello Promenade
1–11 May:	Bellfield Street, Bellfield Lane
15–25 May:	Regent Street, Marlborough Street
29 May–8 June:	Bath Street, Mentone Avenue
12–22 June:	Seaview Terrace

Brenda Molony and John Stewart hoped that the Neighbourhood Pride initiative could do something about the rusting bollards and ‘gazebo’ at the East end of the Promenade. Maureen Child pointed out that the East Team was already considering options for this work, and that the Neighbourhood Partnership would decide about it, but it was agreed that we should write to emphasise the desirability of this work being done.

Caroline Hosking asked that the East Team report definite proposals for dealing with the rubbish/recycling bins at Bridge Street and Windsor Place, observing that these obscured sight-lines and were blocking ramps needed by wheelchair users.

Brenda Molony was concerned by the poor appearance of the beach, which might affect our aspiration to receive a Seaside Award; it was generally agreed that the beach hadn’t looked so bad for several decades. It was agreed that we should ask that the beach be restored to a state befitting Scotland’s capital.

- \* **Action: East Team to reinstate wooden bench at Town Hall bus stops.**
- \* **Action: Nick Stroud to write to James Hunter of the East Team asking that bollards and gazebo by the pumping station be put in good order.**
- \* **Action: East Team to present proposals for dealing with rubbish/recycling bins at Bridge Street and Windsor Place.**
- \* **Action: Nick Stroud to write to East Team asking that the beach be brought up to the high standard it should have as Edinburgh’s seaside, and be kept at that standard.**

## **297.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the February meeting were accepted without alteration: proposed by Brenda Molony, seconded by Dawson Currie.

## **297.5 Matters arising**

**297.5a** Community Council survey (296.5e). Diana Cairns had circulated the results of the survey by email; see also item 7 below.

**297.5b** Unlicensed traders (296.5g): John Stewart had collated information about local shops selling food without the relevant licence and sent it to the City Council as requested; the enforcement department would be investigating. A meeting with the town-centre sub-group and local traders had been organised; this would be taking place on 27th March in the Library.

**297.5c** Train noise at Stanley Street (296.5h). John Stewart and Mike Bridgman were both awaiting replies to letters they had written to the East Coast Train Company about overnight noise and pollution. Maureen Child thought that the impending local elections were a complicating factor, but believed that an acoustic barrier was being designed.

**297.5d** Planting in Rosefield Park (296.5i). Peter McColl had submitted a written report on this topic to the Neighbourhood Partnership as requested, but didn’t know if this had been considered at the meeting. He agreed to find out.

- \* **Action: Peter McColl to find out if the Neighbourhood Partnership discussed the planting in Rosefield Park.**

**297.5e** Bellfield Street telephone kiosk (296.6). Leon Thompson had looked into the cost of insuring the kiosk, as requested. Steve Wheatley had suggested that it wasn’t worth insuring against minor damage, but only against the cost of removal. John Stewart had discovered that the kiosk was sited on “land adopted by the City Council”. Steve Wheatley had contacted the Peebles group and found that they had adopted three kiosks for £1,800, funded by the People’s Postcode Lottery, and were using them for information exchange with books and newspapers; the kiosks had been in use since February and were not insured. A group of 12 local people had agreed to help maintain the Bellfield Street kiosk.

It was agreed to adopt the Bellfield kiosk, for £1.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to arrange adoption of Bellfield Street telephone kiosk.**

**297.5f** Promenade signage (296.8). Andy Matheson had not yet arranged any meetings involving the Community Council to plan this signage, and it wasn't known if he had been in touch with British Waterways, though Stephen Hawkins was aware that he had been consulting other authorities.

\* **Action: Andy Matheson to let John Stewart know about future meetings to plan Prom signage, and John Stewart to circulate to community councillors so that they may attend.**

\* **Action: Andy Matheson to see if British Waterways have relevant experience or advice.**

**297.5g** Traffic management in Portobello (296.9). Nick Stroud had written to Dawson Currie as requested, to ask the Neighbourhood Partnership to devise a comprehensive traffic management plan for the whole of Portobello. Mike Bridgman reported that this had been accepted at the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting, and that a new plan would be worked out taking account of traffic flows and traders' needs, but no timescale had been decided.

**297.5h** Town Centre sub-group (296.10). A meeting with local traders was to take place on 27th March in the Library.

**297.5i** McCarthy and Stone plan for old British Legion site (296.11c). Diana Cairns had written a letter of support, as requested.

**297.5j** Hustings for local election (296.12a). John Stewart had set up a sub-group to organise the hustings meeting, as requested. The Town Hall was booked for Wednesday 25th April, 7-9pm. Sandra Blake would be inviting all candidates to attend once nominations closed at the end of the month.

\* **Action: sub-group to organise and promote hustings event on 25th April.**

**297.5k** Sponsorship of local rugby club (296.12c).

\* **Action: Leon Thompson to send £50 to Portobello Rugby Club.**

**297.5l** Local spring-cleaning activities (296.12d). Diana Cairns had circulated what information she had, as requested, though no dates had yet been decided.

## **297.6 Agree Agenda and AOB**

Various items were noted.

## **297.7 Community Council survey report**

Sean Watters summarised the response to the survey: some 130 local residents and 170 High School pupils had identified a variety of major and minor issues; his report, available online, summarised the main findings and included the raw data for all the responses. He agreed to write an article for the *Portobello Reporter* of up to 200 words by 10th May, and to create a concise version for the Community Council website. He pointed out that it was time to choose a prize-winner.

Dawson Currie observed that there was little mention of the Community Council, but Sean reassured him that many of the respondents were aware of it and that it wouldn't be expected to have a high profile in this context. Diana Cairns mentioned that Big Things on the Beach had launched a manifesto calling on the City Council to implement its plans for the Promenade, and if this happened it would go a long way towards meeting one of the priorities identified by the survey, which showed that the beach and the High Street are Portobello's key areas. (The BTOTB manifesto is available in the Library and online).

Sandra Blake thanked Sean for a great deal of hard work, and highlighted the importance of reporting back regularly to the local community on the outcomes of the survey; she, Sean and Ros Sutherland agreed to consider how best to do this, Ros emphasising the need to show how the Community Council makes a positive difference. Sean stressed the need for regular consultation, and was worried at the low number of responses from the under-35 age group. He said that some people had expressed a wish to receive Community Council news and information by email.

*(The Big Things on the Beach Manifesto is at*

<http://www.bigthingsonthebeach.org.uk/component/content/article/142-take-to-the-beach> )

\* **Action: Sean Watters to write an article about the survey for the *Portobello Reporter*.**

- \* **Action: Sean Watters to create a summary report for the Community Council website.**
- \* **Action: Sean Watters, Sandra Blake and Ros Sutherland to consider the next steps for communicating the outcomes of the survey.**

## **297.8 Proposed changes to public entertainment licensing**

Brenda Molony summarised the City Council's proposal to extend licensing requirements to cover free public events, as well as charged ones as at present. This was apparently to try and prevent unauthorised 'raves', but would have the effect of stifling local and community events and suppressing spontaneity. Joe Madden reported that Portobello Open Door always applies for a licence for its events because of the difficulty of knowing how many people might attend. It wasn't clear if this would have financial implications for community groups but it would certainly lead to a great increase in bureaucracy and add a burden which small groups would not be able to carry. Ros Sutherland pointed out that other authorities in Scotland have found a way to handle the new national legislation without creating unnecessary difficulties for community groups, and suggested that we find out how they have done this.

Brenda agreed to respond to the City Council's implied consultation on this, expressing a sceptical view.

- \* **Action: all, to let Brenda Molony know of any examples they are aware of in which other Scottish authorities have interpreted this legislation.**
- \* **Action: Brenda Molony to circulate a draft response, then submit it to the City Council.**

## **297.9 Reports**

**297.9a Treasurer:** Leon Thompson reported through John Stewart that there had been no incomings or outgoings in the previous month, so the balance in the current account remained at £2,020.93. Our current insurance policy with Zurich would end on 30th April.

**297.9b Neighbourhood Partnership:** Peter McColl had had to miss the previous meeting (on 29th February). Mike Bridgman, convener of the Neighbourhood Partnership, reported that the initial recommendations for dealing with traffic congestion had been rejected with the request that plans be developed for the whole of Portobello (see item 297.5g), and that WREN funding had been received to enable an area for boules to be added alongside the multi-use games area in Rosefield Park. The next Partnership meeting would be at 6:30pm on Wednesday 13th June, at the High School.

**297.9c Planning:** John Stewart announced that the Scottish Government Reporter had refused the variation of the planning condition which prohibits the sale of food at the site of the former Big W.

There followed a lengthy discussion initiated by Tom Ballantine about the 'Annie and Belle' cafe in the High Street. The Community Council's 'letter of comment' had apparently been interpreted by the City Council as a letter of objection, and with three other letters of objection and no indications of support, planning permission for a change of use from Class 1 to Class 3 premises had been refused. A petition supporting the cafe had since been signed by nearly 700 people, however, and while appreciating the spirit of the City Council's policy on the balance between Class One Retail and non-retail businesses in the High Street, Tom felt that the Community Council should represent local feeling and support this cafe, and the positive contribution it was making to the High Street. Several people pointed out that the Community Council was only defending the City Council's planning policies in maintaining the balance between Class 1 and Class 3 premises, while others urged the need to be flexible in an uncertain financial climate and to support entrepreneurialism, initiative and enterprise. Ros Sutherland suggested that we find out whether the Community Council's letter had had any influence on the decision of the Local Review Body; Maureen Child agreed to do this.

- \* **Action: Maureen Child to find out what interpretation the Local Review Body put on our 'letter of comment' on the Annie & Belle cafe.**
- \* **Action: Annie & Belle cafe to be on agenda of a future meeting.**

**297.9d Signs and Plaques:** Celia Butterworth reported that the Geology Board had been reinstated thanks to a great deal of work by Alison Robinson, and that the Board was now as good as it had been when first installed in 2000. The total cost would be about £100, divided equally between the Community Council and the Amenity Society. The Community Council thanked Alison Robinson warmly for her work.

**297.9e Community Centre:** David Scott reported that the Centre was open again after a two-week closure for rewiring. The next management meeting would be on 10th April.

**297.9f Joppa Tennis Courts:** no report this time.

### **297.9g Councillors**

Maureen Child circulated her monthly report, and promised to circulate dates for local clean-up days as soon as she knew them. Stephen Hawkins highlighted the City Council's aspiration to "get things right first time", and the benefit this was already having for local communities.

- \* **Action: Maureen Child to circulate details of any local public spring-cleaning events.**

## **297.10 Any Other Business**

**297.10a Civic clock:** John Stewart reported on progress towards reinstating Portobello's first civic clock. It had been established that the City Council formally owns the clock, and if the Baptist Church agreed, funds would be sought to have the clock returned to its position on that building.

**297.10b Future of Old Parish Church, Bellfield Street:** Nick Stroud relayed Andrew Patterson's comment that the Church of Scotland was planning to create a single parish for Portobello, centred on St Philip's church, and that the church building in Bellfield Street might become redundant. Archie Burns pointed out that Portobello's churches and halls host a range of important community activities. A member of the Old Parish congregation who was present at the meeting felt that it would be intrusive of the Community Council to involve itself in this matter prematurely, so it was agreed simply to ask Andrew Patterson to report any further developments.

## **297.11 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 30th April 2012 (298)

Subsequent dates are: 28th May 2012 (299, preceded by the 30th AGM)  
25th June 2012 (300)  
27th August 2012 (301; no meeting in July)

Portobello Community Council on the Web: <http://www.portobelloc.org/>

The Safer Neighbourhood Team: tel: (0131) 652 4147  
email: [ADivSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ADivSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk)

## **Portobello/Joppa Beat Update**

### **Crime Update**

Recorded crime continues to reduce with 38 being recorded across the Portobello/Joppa area in March. The majority of these relate to acts of vandalism, theft shoplifting and some anti-social behaviour related offences.

Despite some significant arrests and reduction in housebreakings some properties, both domestic and business, have recently been broken into during day-time hours. Accordingly residents and business owners are encouraged to continue to be vigilant and to take time to check their home security.

Crime prevention advice can be found by visiting the Lothian and Borders Police website [www.lbp.police.uk](http://www.lbp.police.uk) and clicking on the crime prevention link, or alternatively you can arrange for a Crime Prevention visit by contacting the Craigmillar SNT team. Tel 0131-652-4147.

### **Metal Theft – Day of Action**

Metal, with its high resale value, continues to be stolen throughout the local and force area. The culprits will steal metal from a variety of locations including garden gates, lead roofing, electrical cables and manhole covers. Often these thefts cause real danger to the public and we would encourage all residents to be vigilant and report any suspicious persons or vehicles.

On 15th and 16th March a national day of action took place in the Portobello area targeting carriers and dealers of stolen scrap metal. Local road checks were done in conjunction with VOSA, SEPA and trading standards, and preventative advice was given to metal dealers.

Radio adverts, posters, leaflets and postcards have been created to raise public awareness, and urge people to report anything suspicious. This can be done by contacting your local police station on 0131-311-3131 or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800-555-111.

### **Serious Assault - update**

Following last month's appeal in relation to the investigation of the stabbing of a man on a garage forecourt in Portobello High Street on Friday, 17th February: a 40-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection with this incident. He was due to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Monday (26th March).

## **On the Beat**

With the clocks springing forward and the arrival of lighter evenings, local SNT officers are well aware that the improving weather may bring an increase in youth calls and anti-social behaviour. Craigmillar and Portobello SNT officers are committed to addressing any issues and have dedicated patrols in “hotspot” areas identified from the “You said – We did” information. Community engagement is a vital tool when addressing anti-social behaviour issues and we would encourage you to contact your local SNT officer with any information or issues you have. Details of all local SNT officers can be found on the Lothian & Borders Police website.

All local off-licence premises will be visited in the coming weeks and advice will be given regarding under age drinking and the responsibilities that staff have. Posters and leaflets will be distributed stressing the importance of ensuring persons buying alcohol are not under 18, and highlighting the penalties for committing offences. We are aware of the practice of adults “proxy buying” alcohol for persons under age and are encouraging members of the public and off-licence staff to be particularly vigilant to this. Anyone caught buying alcohol for a person under 18 could receive a £5,000 fine, up to three months imprisonment, or both. Educational work is being carried out at local schools, highlighting the wider effect under-age alcohol abuse has in the area. Outreach workers are also engaging with young people across the neighbourhood.

## **Local Policing/Community Priorities**

The new policing priorities for the Craigmillar/Portobello area are:

1. Tackle and reduce antisocial behaviour in common stairs in the Niddrie House area
2. Tackle and reduce antisocial behaviour and drug abuse in Bingham Way
3. Tackle and reduce antisocial behaviour and vandalism in the Cakemuir area.

We will be working closely with our partner agencies in an effort to address these priorities. These issues have been researched and identified as specific problems and we aim to tackle and reduce the issues, providing feedback to the residents associations of progress made.

We are also aware that there are other issues affecting local residents. We would encourage attendance at local community meetings where you will have the opportunity to speak with your local police officer regarding issues in your area. Details of your local meeting can be found on the Lothian & Borders Police website at [http://www.lbp.police.uk/my\\_neighbourhood/edinburgh/craigmillar-portobello.aspx](http://www.lbp.police.uk/my_neighbourhood/edinburgh/craigmillar-portobello.aspx)

## **Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)**

The SNT continue to listen to your concerns and endeavour to tackle and/or find solutions to areas of complaint. If you wish to raise a concern regarding matters in your street please get in touch.

You can contact your community policing team on:

Tel: 0131 652 4147 (office)

Tel: 0131 311 3131 (24 hours)

email: [ADivSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:ADivSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk)