



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 293rd meeting held on 31st October 2011 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Robert Gatliff (Joppa Tennis Courts Club), 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, Eva Schonveld (PEDAL), Leon Thompson, Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council).

Apologies: Sheila Gilmore M.P., Lilian Graham, Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Anne Ward (PCATS), Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

In attendance: Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Paul Lambie, Ben McLeish (Gilberstoun Residents), Katie Quinn (CEC), John Young (Portobello Police), Margaret Williamson (High School).

293.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting.

293.2 Police report

John Young summarised the main points in his report which had been circulated by email before the meeting. There had been 60 reported crimes so far in October, with 48% having been cleared up already. The main problem of note had been a significant increase in vandalism, much of it due to two juveniles who had been apprehended and charged. Operation Draft was under way to ensure maximum safety and enjoyment of Bonfire Night on 5th November, with a continuous police presence planned for the Promenade during the evening, and close liaison with the Fire Service. Concerns about bonfires could be notified to 529 3111, or about firework sales to Trading Standards at 529 3030. Sgt. Young also circulated a questionnaire by which the public can help the Safer Neighbourhood Team set priorities for its work; this questionnaire is available on the Community Council website.

(Sgt. Young's full report is appended to these minutes, and includes tips for emergency kits for the home and for motorists.)

Archie Burns asked about accidents and antisocial behaviour involving cyclists on the Promenade. Sgt. Young was investigating these aspects as resources allowed, and had so far found that seven cyclists had been charged in the previous year, and that there had been several accidents involving cyclists but mostly on the periphery of the Promenade rather than actually on it; he would get further details as time permitted. Ben McLeish asked about the extent of crime in the Gilberstoun area; Sgt. Young offered to find out, and also observed that crime statistics are available on the Lothian and Borders Police website.

- * **Action: Sgt. Young to check crime statistics in the Gilberstoun area.**

(Crime statistics by postcode area can be accessed at
http://www.lbp.police.uk/information/crime_statistics.aspx*)*

293.3 Environmental update

Following up an action from the previous meeting, Katie Quinn reported that the grid on the culvert entrance of the burn in Rosefield Park had been interfering with the river-bed and had therefore been removed; the flood prevention team was monitoring the consequence of doing this. Katie agreed to find out if anyone was now removing debris from the Burn. Following up another action, Katie is discussing signage options for the Community Centre and Washhouse Theatre. Caroline Hosking was worried that the position of recycling bins at the junction of Bridge Street and the High Street would obscure drivers' view; Katie agreed to check this with the Roads Team.

- * **Action: Katie Quinn to find out if anyone is responsible for removing debris from the burn in Rosefield Park.**
- * **Action: Katie Quinn to ask the Roads Team to check the siting of recycling bins near the junction between Bridge Street and the High Street.**

293.4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

The June minutes had not been formally adopted at the August meeting, so were accepted: proposed by Diana Cairns, seconded by Brenda Molony.

The minutes of the September meeting were accepted: proposed by Joe Madden, seconded by Dawson Currie.

293.5 Matters arising

293.5a Grid in burn in Rosefield Park (292.4). Katie Quinn has this in hand (see item 293.3 above).

- * **293.5b** ‘Town Centre sub-group’ (292.6a). Ben McLeish and Diana Cairns had met with Sarah Woodford, and were now working on a vision for the sub-group.
 - * **293.5c** Clarification of relationship of Joppa Tennis Courts to the Community Council (292.6b): Robert Gatliff agreed to check the new JTC Club constitution with Leon Thompson.
 - * **Action: Robert Gatliff to check JTC constitution with Leon Thompson, then circulate it to the Community Council.**
- 293.5d** People urinating in Bath Street (292.6c). Nick Stroud had spoken with a Community Safety Officer at the City Council who said that the police were aware of the problem and doing their best to apprehend offenders; members of the public could help by notifying the Safer Neighbourhood Team of the times and places of persistent offences. There were no plans to reduce the opening hours of public toilets, but lack of resources meant that their opening hours could not be extended, as unstaffed toilets would attract antisocial elements such as drug users.
- * **293.5e** Office bearers to plan speakers and topics for future meetings (291.5m). John Stewart had organised this; planning would be a topic for early in the new year, followed by themes suggested by the community consultation.
 - * **293.5f** VAT on privatised Council services (292.6f). Ben McLeish had not yet had time to find the information he had agreed to pass to Stephen Hawkins. *Ongoing.*
- 293.5g** Celebrating Christmas in Portobello (292.8). Sean Watters was negotiating the possible involvement of Towerbank Primary School. Margaret Williamson reported that the High School would be holding its traditional concert in the School but that pupils were otherwise too busy with exams to participate in a community event.
- 293.5h** Newcraighall housing development (292.9e). Ben McLeish had written a letter of objection as requested. Since the Gilberstoun Residents’ Association wouldn’t otherwise have its own voice at the development management sub-committee meeting, it was agreed that they could speak on behalf of the Community Council.
- 293.5i** McCarthy & Stone redevelopment of British Legion site (292.9e). John Stewart had circulated details of the presentation as requested.
- 293.5j** ‘Big W’ public inquiry (292.9e). John Stewart was drafting a Community Council precognition and would circulate it for comment before it was submitted.
- * **Action: John Stewart to circulate draft ‘Big W’ precognition for comment.**
 - * **293.5k** Privatisation of City Council services (292.6g). Caroline Hosking reported that the campaign against the privatisation of public services was meeting at Meadowbank Sports Centre at 6pm on 1st November. Peter McColl reported that there would be a special Neighbourhood Partnership meeting to discuss the issue on 23rd November; he would circulate further details via John Stewart nearer the time.
 - * **Action: Peter McColl and John Stewart to circulate details of meeting on 23rd November to discuss the privatisation of public services.**

- * **293.5l** Evening News articles about PPAG (292.10a). Ros Sutherland had not yet circulated links to the articles in the local media which prompted her report to the September meeting. *Ongoing*.

293.5m Support for wind turbine at Seafield (292.10b). John Stewart and Nick Stroud had both written to PEDAL in support of the wind turbine proposal, as requested.

293.6 Agree Agenda and AOB

One item of Other Business was noted.

293.7 Portobello signage

John Stewart introduced Paul Lambie, a local resident who had asked to present to the Community Council some plans for using imaginative signage to raise awareness of Portobello. The suggestions included artistic ‘old-fashioned billboards’ on the Straiton Place park railings adjacent to the Promenade to promote local businesses, and paid for by them; and a large ‘Welcome to Edinburgh’ sign painted on the Promenade ‘apron’ between John Street and James Street to remind people arriving by plane that Edinburgh had a seaside resort. There was general agreement that both initiatives deserved serious consideration, and Ben McLeish was asked to raise the idea with the Town Centre sub-group; it was also agreed to co-opt Paul on to this group.

- * **Action: Ben McLeish to take Paul Lambie’s signage ideas to the Town Centre sub-group.**

293.8 Portobello – a Fair Trade Town

Portobello’s ‘Just World Shop’ is leading a local initiative to have Portobello recognised as a Fair Trade Town, and had asked for the Community Council’s support. A motion to this effect was agreed, and John Stewart was asked to report that back to the local organisers.

- * **Action: John Stewart to report back that the Community Council had agreed the motion.**

293.9 Community Council survey

Sean Watters had summarised the online surveys to indicate the most popular suggestions, and circulated a document with the full text of all the submissions recorded so far. A few paper copies still had to be added to the online collection so this was only an interim report, and he would produce a separate report for the 170 replies received from the High School. The main comments so far wanted to see improvements to and protection of High Street shops, less traffic, more parking spaces, and better facilities for cyclists, with the greatest amount of support being for enhancements to the Promenade. Once all the returns were in the system, the sub-group would meet to decide what action to take in response. The results would be published in full on the Community Council website and a summary in the *Portobello Reporter*. The draw for the £50 prize would be made once all the returns had been incorporated.

Sean was thanked for his very hard work on this consultation exercise.

293.10 Brighton Place road surface

Several local people had raised concerns about the poor quality of the setts in Brighton Place. Maria Devoy confirmed that heavy vehicles travelling at speed along the road cause severe vibration in local houses and are probably responsible for the damage being observed in them. Suggestions for improving the road included relaying the setts (although it is believed that the City Council can no longer call on the requisite skills to do this), to tarmac the entire street, to tarmac the edges for cyclists, and in all cases to enforce a much lower speed limit. Ben McLeish said it would be better to do a fully comprehensive repair than just to patch up the road, and therefore that the money for the latter should be transferred into a capital budget for the former. It was agreed that we should follow up this problem with the City Council and with Lothian Buses.

- * **Action: Nick Stroud to write to City Council asking about their plans for Brighton Place.**
- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write to Lothian Buses requesting a voluntary speed limit here.**

293.11 Reports

293.11a Police: *see item 293.3 above.*

293.11b Treasurer: Leon Thompson reported a payment of £90 for hall hire, so that there was now £2,204.80 in the Community Council's account.

293.11c Environmental Update: *see item 293.3 above.*

293.11d Neighbourhood Partnership: Peter McColl reported that there would be meetings on the 23rd and 30th of November.

293.11e Planning: John Stewart reported that permission had been refused to create a cafe at 100 Portobello High Street.

Diana Cairns reported that the City Council was consulting on the new Local Development Plan; she agreed to find out if the Main Issues Report was available as a PDF that could be circulated to the Community Council.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to ask the City Council's planning department if they could supply a PDF version of the Main Issues Report of the new Local Development Plan.**

293.11f Signs and Plaques: Celia Butterworth reported that repeated efforts to remount the Geology Board on its lectern had failed, incurring expenditure of £55.93 which was to be split between the Community Council and the Amenity Society. A replacement board would therefore be obtained through insurance, though this was likely to result in an increase in the insurance premium.

293.11g Community Centre: David Scott reported that the next management meeting would be held on Tuesday 8th November. He asked for the Community Council's support in seeking new signage to the Community Centre, and John Stewart reported that this had already been given.

293.11h Joppa Tennis Courts: Robert Gatliff reported another successful season, with a well-supported competition for younger players. He asked if the Community Council could see any reason for not increasing the playing hours on Sunday from 1–5pm to 12–6pm; this was felt to be reasonable, so the Club would next consult neighbours at the courts. Robert further reported that the pavilion was in a poor state of repair, suffering from problems of rot and insect damage, and that it might need to be rebuilt at a cost in the region of £20,000. It was pointed out that the City Council was responsible for keeping the building in good repair. Maureen Child thought that it might be possible to get 'Section 75' funding from the Sovereign Homes development at the Jewel and Esk Valley College, and recommended the Club to ask Scott Thomson about this possibility. Stephen Hawkins said that the amount of rebuilding necessary would depend on the state of the floor, and that the Club should not rush into a decision to demolish.

- * **Action: Joppa Tennis Club to consult neighbours about extending Sunday playing hours, and to follow up various suggestions for funding a new club-house pavilion.**

293.11i Councillors

Maureen Child circulated her usual written report.

Stephen Hawkins expressed concern at the impact on local traders of the High Street resurfacing work, with some not knowing about the work until it started. He welcomed the approval of the new plans for the Towerbank extension, in which the controversial nursery roof had been reversed and the building moved back a little. He also mentioned the City Council deferring its decision on its Alternative Business Model for a month.

Mike Bridgman welcomed the plan for redeveloping the British Legion site with 49 two- and one-bedroom flats, and explained that the delay in the decision over the Alternative Business Model was to give all councillors an opportunity to examine the financial background to the Model.

293.12 Any Other Business

293.12a Restructured parliamentary boundaries

Sheila Gilmore had contacted the Community Council to highlight the impending consultation on the Boundary Commission's plans to reduce the number of UK parliamentary constituencies from 650 to 600, and Edinburgh's from five to four. This would entail Edinburgh East being split between 'Edinburgh Central and Leith' and 'Edinburgh South', and although not the preferred option, it was possible for Portobello to be

moved into an East Lothian constituency. Peter McColl argued strongly that Portobello should remain part of Edinburgh, and agreed to feed back this view to the consultation, on behalf of the Community Council.

Organisations and individual members of the public are welcome to comment on the proposals. The only opportunity to make a verbal submission is on Monday 14th November at Edinburgh City Chambers. Comments may also be made in writing to the Scottish Boundary Commission, Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HD, or by email to comments@scottishboundaries.gov.uk. Full information about the planned changes is provided at <http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/>

- * **Action: Peter McColl to report the Community Council's desire that Portobello should remain in an Edinburgh constituency.**

293.12b Planning themes at future meetings

Sean Watters asked when the Community Council would be inviting speakers on the subjects of and around planning. John Stewart assured him that these would be the first topics to be arranged for the New Year.

293.12c Parking and congestion in Marlborough Street

David Scott asked about traffic problems in Marlborough Street. Stephen Hawkins replied that the Environment Team was still working on the outcomes of the public meeting on this subject held in the Town Hall earlier in the year, and would be organising another public meeting in due course.

293.12d Festive arrangements for the November meeting

Maria Devoy asked about plans to mark the proximity of Christmas at the next meeting. She agreed to provide food, Diana Cairns would supply wine, and Sean Watters would obtain wine glasses.

293.13 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 28th November 2011

Subsequent dates are: 30th January 2012 (no meeting in December)
27th February 2012
26th March 2012
30th April 2012

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