



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the 241st meeting held on 28th August 2006 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

**Present:** Jackie Brock, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Robert Gatliff, Kathleen Hart, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro, David Turner, Avril Scott, David Scott, Sheila Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, David Turner, William Wilson, Betty Young.

**Apologies:** Celia Butterworth, Stephen McIntyre, Tom Nimmo, Nick Stroud, Sandy Smith.

**In attendance:** ex officio members: Maureen Child, Lawrence Marshall, Kenny Owen (Police) and Aileen Ward. Visitors: Steve Hudson, Chris Jones, Paul Scott and Iain McMenemy of GVA Grimley developments, Linda Kelly (Community learning and development), Lewis Waugh and Ian Wilson.

### 241.1 Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff welcomed everyone to a full meeting with a busy agenda. A folder of relevant correspondence for AOB was circulated, and the chair introduced representatives of GVA Grimley.

### 241.2 Presentation by GVA Grimley

A short slideshow presentation showed the proposed redesign of the Jewel and Esk college and campus. The presentation team highlighted:

- A planning application has been lodged. It was hoped construction work would begin around April 2007 and be completed by Autumn 2008.
- There would be minor demolition, with most buildings being stripped out and refurbished. The key aims were to consolidate existing buildings and make the entire campus more accessible. One new building in the centre of the campus would be four storeys high, and would house the School of Service Industries, *e.g.* catering, beauty and recreation facilities.
- This would be the highest building with lower buildings 'cascading out' to the exterior, to minimise overshadowing of neighbouring residents.
- Some land owned by the college would be surplus to requirements, and an application had been submitted to redesignate this for residential development of 70 houses, flats and villas.
- Residential use would be critical for the funding strategy. In return, the college would make a contribution to the enhancement of Joppa Quarry Park.
- All residents bordering the college had been invited to meet the design team on site. There had been responses from 24 households, with a deadline of 30th August.
- The success of the project depended on creating facilities such as a café, swimming pool, gym and beauty treatments that would be popular and well-used by the public.

Several points were made in response to questions:

- **concerns about increased road use:** traffic consultants had been appointed. An in-depth analysis of the impact of any increase in car traffic was publicly available as part of the planning application. The area enjoys excellent public transport links (bus and train).
- **Impact of the café and other amenities on neighbouring houses:** the design aimed to be sensitive to the local environment. The highest building would be in the centre, with screening around the café so residents would not be overlooked. Care would be paid to opening times of the café facilities.
- **Specific questions** could be addressed to Ian McMenemy, Halogen PR, 4 Queen Street, 225 3757.

### 241.3 Minute of the 240th Meeting

No amendments requested. Proposed: Kathleen Hart and Seconded: John Stewart.

#### **241.4 Matters arising from previous meeting**

241.4a BL Developments (240.2): **Cllrs Child and Marshall** had met council officials to discuss the status of a 'draft masterplan' seen by BL Developments which reportedly stated that 50-60% of the redevelopment of the former Scottish Power site should be devoted to employment. The Councillors reported the concerns of the Community Council that this might open up the site again to a bid by a supermarket. Officials had confirmed that the document seen by BL Developments was not the draft masterplan for the delivery of a detailed strategy for the area. While there does need to be some employment use on the site, it would not be as high as stated in this early document. Maureen Child has asked officials to draw from a recent study submitted to the Planning Committee on the innovative use of employment space within residential areas to inform the final masterplan, expected by October 2006.

**Robert Gatliff** (on behalf of the PCC) **and John Stewart** (on behalf of PAS) confirmed that they had written to the Council expressing concerns at any proposal which might require employment for up to 60% of the site. **PAS** would consider establishing a sub-group once the public consultation was under way.

241.4b "desirable graffiti" (240.7a.): Maureen Child had emailed details of a professional graffiti artist to **Nick Stroud for follow-up action.**

241.4c Charity Shops (240.7c): Sheila Scott advised that action was required at national rather than local level. The Planning Department is not allowed to distinguish between charitable and other retail premises to prevent a charity shop being established. There appeared to be scope for the association to pursue a "class order" to prevent further proliferation of charity shops. It was agreed that this issue required wider publicity. Several examples of local traders losing custom because of sales of new goods in charity shops were cited. There was considerable sympathy for the aims of charity shops, but also for the threat to local businesses.

Laurence Marshall advised that a free business directory would be produced following the completion of the High Street improvements.

Actions:

- \* **Brenda Molony** to feature this issue in the next edition of *Portobello Reporter*.
- \* **Robert Gatliff** to draft a letter to the *Scotsman*.
- \* **Sheila Scott** to report on further developments.

241.4d The Baptist Church / old Town Hall Clock (240.7e): Lawrence Marshall to continue to try and confirm who owns the clock and arrange possible reinstatement.

241.4e jet skis (240.7f): Diana Cairns reported that she could not get either the police or the council to accept lead responsibility for dealing with **unauthorised access to the beach** or to provide information on the installation of buoys, measures to improve access or the replacement of the gates. She reported over 300 signatures in support of the **jet ski petition** which would go to Parliament in September.

- \* **Action:** Diana Cairns to continue to pursue with the police and the City Council.

241.4f City Plan (240.7h): Robert Gatliff had issued the Community Council's response to the planning consultation, requesting that planning for schooling in Portobello should be considered in the document.

241.4g Portobello Online (240.8h): Maria Devoy reported that there had not been a meeting of the sub-group despite her best efforts to organise one in July or August. However, the three moderators/administrators had met to deal with complaints made by four people. It was agreed that members of the sub-group would meet following the Community Council meeting and agree a date promptly.

Maria reported that only four people out of a total of over 550 registered users had complained. In dealing with these complaints: one had been upheld; an informal request to remove a group of postings was agreed in acknowledgment of the effect on the complainant at being the focus of them; another thread had posts edited to protect the privacy of a group of residents; and the fourth was denied. Maria had received phone calls from two of the complainants, which is not part of the agreed complaints procedure.

A general discussion on the contributions to *Portobello Online* took place. A member of the public and some Community Council members said they had concerns about the disrespect and personal insults shown to individuals, and the tone and content of some contributors who remained anonymous; Lewis Waugh (Portobello High School) had hoped to use the discussion forum in education, but found the standard of

debate unacceptable. It was suggested that these contributions do not reflect our community and could affect the reputation of Portobello. John Stewart suggested the removal of all posts subject to a complaint until it was resolved. It was also suggested that no anonymous postings be allowed, and that a more formal discussion site be separated from the “chat room”.

It was reported that the majority of its users were very positive about the Forum. There was a clear policy and guidelines used by moderators and their role was not to act as censors. Removing a post subject to complaint could be unworkable and might result in ‘reprisal’ complaints and disruption. The use of anonymous user names was normal practice for such sites as POL. People made personal decisions to choose to read the contributions or not. It was acknowledged by the Community Council that this was a difficult issue. It was reported that Bob Jefferson had resigned as a moderator.

In summing up, Robert Gatliff recognised the difficulty of the moderator’s task; he thanked Paula, Bob and Maria for their work. He asked the sub-group to meet as a matter of urgency to try and resolve the outstanding complaints through the complaints procedure. This group was also invited to consider any additional measures that could improve the forum.

241.4h Community Development Planning (240.8i): Robert Gatliff invited ideas for priority issues for the Community Council to focus on.

- \* **Action:** Secretary to arrange a meeting of the development Group.

241.4i High School visit (240.9a):

- \* **Action:** Secretary to circulate notes from the **visit to the High School in June.**

241.4j Sailing School (240.9b): It was understood that Mr Bendit had bought the property on Bath Street. Robert Gatliff had written to the Council supporting the idea of a sailing school.

241.4k Community Planning (240.9c): Dawson Currie circulated a written proposal to set up a sub-committee to advise the Community Council as the community planning process began to get established. The new arrangements would be complex, and it was felt that other areas in our ward might have an advantage given their current planning structures, though Maureen Child thought it unlikely that we would get ‘left behind’, given our experience in handling planning applications and the active profile of the Community Council. She conceded that what should be straightforward process issues had been presented in an overly complex way and muddled matters.

It was agreed that the Community Council needed clarity around issues of governance, accountability and representation, and that a sub-group should be set up. Margaret Munro agreed to attend a meeting on 14th September about community planning arrangements for East Edinburgh. Tom Smith would attend the Local Development Committee meeting on 12th September. Community Council members with specific expertise would be identified as representatives when subsequent need arose. Linda Kelly offered support to the sub-group when it is established.

- \* **Action: Margaret, Tom and Dawson** to report back to the next meeting.

241.4l Community Council ties and scarves (240.9d): The response to the design was lukewarm.

- \* **Action:** Robert Gatliff agreed to ask the tie manufacturers to consider a design by PHS pupils.

## **241.5 Election of Secretary to the Portobello Community Council.**

Nick Stroud was proposed by John Stewart and seconded by Jackie Brock.

## **241.6 Reports**

### **241.6a Police**

July:	1,700 calls to the police station.	330 incidents along the High Street
August:	1,200 calls	240 incidents

Bicycle theft was the predominant crime. The Pub Watch initiative had been going for three months; five people had been banned for life from Portobello pubs. The six-week Prom Initiative had been the busiest ever, with 2,500 wrist bands given to children; a new supply was required and the bands needed to be a larger size.

**Action: Kenny Owen to order.**

## 241.6b Treasurer's report

Kathleen Marshall reported £6,427 in the treasurer's account and £6,916 in Joppa Tennis Courts account.

**241.6c Joppa Tennis Courts.** Robert Gatliff reported a very successful season, although there had been some vandalism to the clubhouse veranda. The pavilion was to be renovated rather than be replaced.

**241.6d Task Force:** No report this time.

**241.6e Planning Applications.** John Stewart reported action on behalf of PAS and PCC:

- Objection lodged for the conversion of 20 Bath Street into three units. Application refused by the Council.
- 19 Promenade. Owner had appealed refusal of his application. John had written asking the Council to designate this land for community use in the City Plan as it is in the North-east Local Development Plan.
- Highlighted the impact of the Jewel and Esk redevelopment on neighbouring houses of the four storey building's height and location. Also the location of the bar.

**241.6f Signs and Plaques:** Best wishes passed to Celia who was unwell. The plaque to Ned Barney outside 7 Straiton Place was now in place. The coadestone pillars would be erected shortly. Some plants had been uplifted to prepare for this but would be returned.

**241.6g Traders' Association** had a very positive meeting with PHS pupils about the 2007 calendar; Sheila Scott praised the very high quality of work.

- \* **Action:** Sheila Scott/Aileen Ward to bring a copy for circulation at the next meeting.

**241.6h Portobello Online.** Maria reported that Bob Jefferson had stepped down as moderator on the Forum, but would continue as administrator. Robert formally thanked Bob Jefferson for his work as moderator. There were several additions to the Portobello Telly section, including interviews with Margaret Munro and Lawrence Marshall about the collapse of the kiln and an interview with the latter on the trial hovercraft link.

**241.6i Community Development Planning.** Following Lottery rejection of funding for the Re-a-pier proposal, Robert was anxious not to lose momentum. He proposed to organise a meeting to discuss a landmark building by the pier. He asked for initial funding of around £200 to host a lunch in the Community Centre, inviting people to discuss ideas for such a project and formally constituting a group to take this forward. It would also link with PODs commissioning of public art. This funding was agreed.

- \* **Action:** Robert Gatliff to organise this meeting.

**241.6j: Councillors' Reports.** Maureen circulated her August report. Lawrence highlighted the very positive impact of the good weather for local traders and thanked the organisers of the various events held in the area. He noted that the refuse collection had coped well with the number of visitors. He had raised his disappointment with officials that the public toilet on Straiton Place appeared to be in constant disuse. Lawrence reported a proposal by Stagecoach **to trial a hovercraft route between Kirkcaldy and Portobello.** An increase in trains to the Fireworks display on 3rd September had been requested by Scotrail but rejected by Network rail because of engineering works.

## 241.7 Any Other Business

**241.7a** Maria circulated and read extracts from a letter from Morag Edward, a local resident and wheelchair user. Morag could not attend due to illness, but wanted to highlight **how access to the beach and the sea could be improved.** She had started her campaign on *Porty Online*. There was already a lot of potential but more understanding, awareness and commitment were required. SNH had agreed to consider a contribution to any future proposal for improvements. *Porty Online* had offered Morag a private forum in response to her request for a website for the project. At this stage, Morag was asking for recognition of the issue from the Community Council and support to bring back proposals to a future meeting. The Evening News had expressed interest in her project.

- \* **Action:** Maria Devoy to convey to Morag the PCC's full support and invite her to submit proposals to PCC when these are available.

**241.7b The collapse of the kiln.** John Stewart set out a chronology of contacts with the City Council since 2000 asking for repairs to be started. Celia Butterworth had talked to Scottish Monuments. The reason for the collapse was unclear and an investigation was underway. This should help identify whether the collapse would have happened, even if there had not been a delay.

Margaret Munro had met Historic Scotland. It appeared that the Council did not apply for a special permit or ask for advice before undertaking the repair, and there were serious concerns that the proper process had not been followed. Lawrence Marshall praised the safety procedures that were in place to ensure sufficient scaffolding to protect the workmen. Thankfully, no one had been seriously injured, although one workman was not yet back at work due to the stress caused. The Council reported that the other kiln was not in such a serious state of disrepair.

There was a proposal to rebuild the kiln. The bricks were being removed and stored. John Stewart said a decision would be required on whether it should be rebuilt as a working kiln or simply as a shell. The question of funding a rebuild was likely to be complex and long drawn-out. Margaret would comment on this on behalf of the PCC for the next edition of the *Portobello Reporter*.

- \* **Action:** Margaret, John and Celia to report development to the Community Council.

**241.7c.** Linda Kelly circulated leaflets about the **Festival of Learning** taking place in Portobello Town Hall on 9th September.

**241.7d** A pre-brief on the Council's report on the **redevelopment of Portobello High School and St John's Primary School** would be held on 5th September.

- \* **Action:** Kathleen Marshall and William Wilson would represent the Community Council.

**241.7e** A conference '**Realising the Rooftop Revolution**' looking at the scope for community schemes for the installation of solar panels would be held on 15th September.

- \* **Action:** Stephen Hawkins would represent Community Council, and it was agreed to pay the attendance fee of £75.

**241.7f Portobello Reporter** would be issued on 11th September.

#### **241.8 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: 25th September 2006; subsequent meetings are on 30th October 2006 and 27th November 2006