



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 261st meeting held on 25th August 2008 in The Beach Café, Promenade, Portobello

Present: Robert Gatliff (Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer)
Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl (PEDAL), Brenda Molony (*Party Reporter*), Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), Margaret Smith (Portobello Labour Party), John Stewart (PAS), William Wilson.

Apologies: James Hunter (CEC), Bob Jefferson (*Party Online*), Lawrence Marshall, Kenneth Owen (Portobello Police), Sheila Scott (Merchants & Hoteliers), Tom Smith, David Turner (Amnesty Group).

In attendance: Martin Bates (Broadway Malyan), Jonathan Bendit, Cllr Maureen Child, F. Graham, L. Graham, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Sam Moran (Broadway Malyan), G. Morgan (Broadway Malyan), D.J. Johnston-Smith, Linda Kelly, Anne Ward.

261.1 Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff welcomed everyone to a meeting which for a one-off special occasion was taking place in the premises of the new Beach Café, in support of a welcome new venture in Portobello. Proprietor Jonathan Bendit explained that the café would be opening in early September, and would become the administrative centre for the Sailing Club which would be opening in 2009 once all the legal processes had been completed.

The Chairman announced that Nick Stroud was having to withdraw from the Community Council for personal reasons. He then introduced speakers from the architects' firm Broadway Malyan, to explain initial plans for redeveloping the old Scottish Power site.

261.2 First plans for North West Portobello

Martin Bates and Sam Moran outlined the broad plans being prepared for a preliminary planning application. They had been guided by the community consultation of 2006 and the City Council's development brief for North West Portobello published early in 2008, and had taken care to ensure that their proposals related sensitively to the surrounding environment and architecture. The proposal was for a development of 350 units in buildings up to six storeys high, but not exceeding the height of the neighbouring tenement in Fishwives' Causeway. There would be pedestrian access to a central square with clear visual lines to the beach; car-parking would be partly underground or screened from general view. All the proposed units were flats, from affordable one-bedroom flats to four-bedroom two-storey maisonettes, but no houses. Negotiations were under way with arts organisation 'Out of the Blue' and other businesses to explore the scope for including small commercial premises.

Several further points were made in response to questions. The architects had not been told of any plans for Baileyfield Cottages, which were outwith the area presently under consideration for development. The chosen building material was to be brick to reflect this aspect of Portobello's history, though it was pointed out that Portobello's bricks were used for internal walls in Edinburgh's New Town, and there were few brick buildings in Portobello itself. There was some opposition to the proposed Copper cladding as it was felt this would not wear well. It was pointed out that this development would bring in more school-age children, yet the local Primary and Secondary schools were already full; no one was able to explain how this was to be handled. Plans were in place to cope with the extra traffic.

The architects invited comments and feedback, and were happy to spend time discussing the plans with interested people; please contact them at 524 0250 or by email to M.Bates@broadwaymalyan.com.

It was agreed to make this a major topic for the next meeting, when more detailed plans would be available.

261.3 Minutes of June meeting

Celia Butterworth pointed out that she had not been at the meeting, and that it was John Stewart who had presented the 'signs and plaques' report (item 260.7g).

With this correction the minutes were accepted: proposed by Kathleen Hart, seconded by Brenda Molony.

261.4 Matters arising from June meeting

261.4a participation in Neighbourhood Partnership (minute 260.7c)

Peter McColl had drafted a letter for the Secretary to send, requesting that procedures be established to make it easier for the Community Council to participate in the Neighbourhood Partnership.

261.4b project funding by Neighbourhood Partnership (minute 260.7c)

Peter McColl had drafted a letter for the Secretary to send to the Edinburgh Partnership, objecting to the restrictions placed on project funding.

261.4c project funding by Neighbourhood Partnership (minute 260.7c)

- * **Action:** Peter McColl to draft a letter to the Neighbourhood Partnership requesting more money for local projects.

261.4d grants made by Neighbourhood Partnership (minute 260.7c)

Peter McColl had circulated a list of grants made by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

261.4e Ghost Train site (minute 260.7f)

John Stewart had written objecting to the new planning criteria for the Ghost Train site.

261.4f waste transfer site application (minute 260.7f)

Peter McColl had duly presented the Community Council's objections to the proposed waste transfer site at the Planning Committee meeting on 30th July. The Chairman thanked and congratulated everyone who had helped to get the application rejected.

261.4g actions carried over from previous meetings

Nick Stroud agreed to report on the matters arising from the April, May and June meetings which had been held over for lack of time.

- * **Action:** Nick Stroud to summarise previous 'matters arising' and actions taken.

261.5 Reports

261.5a Police: no report this time.

261.5b Treasurer: Treasurer's Account: £3,520.14; Joppa Tennis Courts: £8,451.30. Ring-fenced money in the Treasurer's Account totals £1,971 (for Golden Days, Christmas Lights and Website). The City Council's annual grant of £796.18 had been received, which included provision for the hire of premises, and which had had our annual insurance premium deducted.

261.5c Neighbourhood Partnership: Peter McColl reported that the next meeting was due to take place on 3rd September.

261.5d Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time; Robert Gatliff mentioned that the annual open competition had taken place the previous week.

261.5e Environmental Update: James Hunter reported on several issues by email. New planters had been installed at the Town Hall and would be planted up shortly; he asked if local volunteers could help with the watering, but John Stewart pointed out that it was unfair for the City Council to maintain plants in the centre of Edinburgh and not elsewhere in the city. Following discussions with Cllr Hawkins, James Hunter plans to set up a working group to review the exclusion zone and management of the area, and he would welcome Community Council representation on this group. He had arranged for repairs to be carried out to the new noticeboards and proposed to remove the old wooden one outside the Town Hall. New padlocks and signs, and improved bollards, were in course of being installed around the Western section of the Promenade.

Margaret Smith observed that she had met James Hunter at the beginning of July, when it had been agreed that planting would be carried out within a week, so she regretted the delay of almost two months. Caroline Hosking appreciated the weeding that had taken place around the Bridge Street car park, but wanted to see this followed up with some new planting. There was general agreement that Edinburgh was doing poorly in

this respect compared to neighbouring Musselburgh.

- * **Action:** Secretary to contact James Hunter regretting that the City Council would not water the plants at the Town Hall.
- * **Action:** anyone interested in joining the new group to develop the exclusion zone to contact James Hunter.
- * **Action:** Tom Smith to contact James Hunter to decide what to do with our old noticeboard at the Town Hall.
- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to contact James Hunter about new planting around the Bridge Street car park.

261.5f Planning: John Stewart reported that he had objected on the Community Council's behalf to a new application to run an HMO for ten people at 6 John Street, and that others could still send written objections to the Planning Department provided they pointed out in their letters that the applicant had failed to display the local notice of the application at the statutory time. He was also concerned about plans to convert the Brunstane Steading into housing, since this would involve the probable destruction of some 17th/18th century buildings and encroachment on to the Green Belt.

261.5g Signs, Plaques and coade-stone: Celia Butterworth reported that the main recent event had been the installation of the new top on the third coade-stone pillar in the Community Garden, and the associated 'topping-out' celebration the previous day. The sub-committee was now raising the extra funds needed to pay the installation fee; Stephen Hawkins suggested that a ceilidh be organised to help with this. The meeting congratulated Alison Robinson on her achievement in creating the new coade-stone top.

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to write to Alison Robinson to thank and congratulate her for her achievement.

261.5h Portobello Traders: no report this time.

261.5i Party Online: no report this time.

261.5j Portobello High School: no report this time.

261.5k Community development planning: no report this time.

261.5l Community Centre: David Scott reported that the next management meeting would take place on 9th September, and that the regular activities were all getting into full swing again after the Summer break. Stephen Hawkins reported that City Council officials were exploring options for developing a new centre.

261.5m Communicating with communities: no report this time.

261.5n Councillors:

Maureen Child apologised for not circulating her usual report, as she had been distracted by the activities on the Prom the previous day. She congratulated everyone involved with those celebrations, and all those who had encouraged the Planning Committee to reject the application to build a waste transfer site. She had received conflicting reports about the attempts by the Portobello Music School to set up in John Street, and was investigating the present position.

Stephen Hawkins circulated a written report.

261.6 New constitution

The Secretary had circulated a proposed new constitution for Portobello Community Council, based on the template provided by the City Council. After extensive discussion about what should be included in it and how it could be adopted, Maureen Child pointed out that the health of any organisation is inversely proportional to the amount of time it spends discussing administrative matters. William Watson promptly proposed that the new constitution be adopted, seconded by Maria Devoy, and there were no major objections.

261.7 Sharing the load

The meeting agreed that the amount of work expected of the Secretary had increased dramatically over the past few years, with more and more requests for information, responses to consultations and attendance at meetings, including the added burden of the Neighbourhood Partnerships. It was suggested that the work should be divided amongst more people. A second option would be to employ someone to carry out the basic administration. The Treasurer pointed out that this was impossible with the current level of funding, so it was agreed to explore ways of increasing the funding for community councils so that the position of

Secretary could receive some financial support. The Chair agreed to submit the following motion to the Association of Scottish Community Councils in support of this:

Portobello Community Council proposes that Local Authorities should provide funding to every community council specifically to pay a monthly stipend to the Secretary of each community council, to reflect the increased importance of the role in recent years.

The Chair would write a short supporting statement.

Diana Cairns and Caroline Hosking agreed to prepare the agenda and take minutes for the September meeting. Robert Gatliff asked that reports be circulated in advance to streamline that part of the business, so that meetings could concentrate on substantive matters. Caroline Hosking suggested that work should be divided amongst several people so that no one person gets overloaded, and she hoped that people would volunteer to help at the next meeting. Maureen Child pointed out that a lot of people are already doing invaluable work in our community, and the Community Council shouldn't get too distressed if it can't do everything; in particular, there was no need to respond to every consultation. Linda Kelly observed that she regards Portobello as a successful community. Ideally, though, the Community Council needs more people to help do the essential work.

It was agreed that the Community Council's operating procedures would be a major topic for the September meeting.

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to submit a motion to the ASCC requesting more support for community councils.

261.8 Any Other Business

261.8a Save Meadowbank Campaign

The Campaign had been in touch to ask for our support; it was unanimously agreed to give this.

261.8b Portobello car-free day

Diana Cairns reported that there would be a car-free day on 21st September, with Rosefield Avenue closed to traffic and a 'village show' with many attractions in Rosefield Park.

261.8c PEDAL public space consultation

Peter McColl announced that PEDAL was consulting on public spaces in Portobello, with focus group meetings for community organisations on 25th September and an open-space event on 4th October.

261.9 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 29th September 2008

Subsequent dates are: 27th October 2008
24th November 2008
26th January 2009 (no meeting in December)
23rd February 2009