



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 271st meeting held on 31st August 2009 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Celia Butterworth, Archie Burns (PPAG), Diana Cairns (PCATS), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Robert Gatliff, Caroline Hosking, Kathleen Hart (CAB), Brenda Molony (Portobello Reporter), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Peter McColl (PEDAL), Margaret Smith (Labour Party), John Stewart (PAS), Sean Watters (PFANS), Clive Andrew (M&HA) David Turner (Amnesty Group).

Apologies: James Hunter (CEC), Kenny MacAskill MSP, Lawrence Marshall, Sarah Potter (Portobello Police), Margaret Williamson (PHS), William Wilson.

In attendance: Susan Carr (Minutes), Cllr Maureen Child, Bob Mason (Portobello Police), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), A Fyfe, A Robinson, D Killeen, Ian Campbell, L Graham, T Graham, Cathy Cherizard (City of Edinburgh Council).

Town Centre Presentation: Tom Fahey and Helen Platts (CEC SfC), Brenda Donaldson (Land Engineering), Roger Clark (Ironsides Farrar).

271.1 Chair's welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and indicated that it may be necessary to cut some of the standard agenda items to accommodate several presentations. He also requested a volunteer to open this venue for the next meeting as he had taken a turn tonight and someone else is needed for the next meeting, after which it would be the responsibility of the new community council. Margaret Munro agreed to take responsibility for the next meeting.

271.2 Town Centre Regeneration Fund

Ms Platts of Services for Communities, City of Edinburgh Council, explained that the Scottish Government had made around £60 million available for Town Centre Regeneration for the whole country and gave a very tight timescale for bids. The bid had to demonstrate that the work was needed and could be completed by the end of this financial year. CEC was successful in securing £582,000 for Portobello Town Centre using data previously collected and plans that had been worked up when the last improvements were carried out. The background is that the information came from the previous study that was scoped out in 2006 and held by CEC.

A summary diagram was tabled and showed that similar materials will be used in the previous work, e.g. paving slabs and furniture at crossing points and establishing links to the promenade for visitors, e.g. signage. There are further monies for Bridge Street car park (Environmental Forum) which will be spent at the same time. Currently work is being carried out on promenades in the city and this probably helped the bid as this work can help tie in all of the work together and a coherent scheme is important strategically.

CEC feels that it is important that the procurement process for the contract can deliver a contractor that can complete the work in the required timescale and needs someone that can deliver the work effectively and efficiently and be able to work in a busy streetscape setting. Land Engineering is the councils contractor and a table-top meeting was to take place on Thursday 3 September to look at traffic management. They will also speak to shopkeepers and residents to ensure that they are consulted and it is also anticipated that some of the work will be completed outside working hours.

Questions were invited and the following were asked;

Q Is it possible to smooth ramping so that there is no ramp?

A 0-6 mm is standard and this should be done as it is essential to maintain access for people with mobility problems.

Q What is the difference between an orientation sign and a finger post?

A A finger post just gives direction and an orientation sign will give linkages to the wider area.

It is also important not to have too many so that the area does not become cluttered. There will be a signage strategy and if there is already an existing post in place then it will be used.

Q A principle consideration is programming and last year traders were affected over the Christmas period last year and this year it looks as if the work will not start before October.

A Land Engineering will speak to the traders and try to prepare a programme that the traders agree with. There is a considerable quantity of work to get through and every effort will be made to ensure that the traders are not disadvantaged so robust management will be put in place. It was noted that the contractors close on 18th December over the holiday period.

Q How was this decision made and who decided to apply for the funding?

A Initially officers from the local office including Jim Hunter, the NP manager, Mary Dunbar, Information manager, and James Hunter, Environment manager, had a discussion and took in to account the "You said – we did" survey/programme.

Q Bridge Street Car Park: there is work required to bring this up to standard. Is this area included in the programme?

A It is not part of the Town Centre proposal but there are other funds available which do not have to be spent by the end of March.

Q Where is cycle parking?

A It is not in the detailed design as yet but provision will be made available.

Finally, it was noted that they are taking part in the "Let's Get Together" event on 2 October and will be available to discuss street furniture and cycle racks on the day. It was agreed that plans and consultation cards will be displayed in the library.

271.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were proposed as a correct record by Margaret Munro and seconded by Sean Watters.

271.4 Matters Arising

268.9d King's Road/Seafield junction

Cllr Bridgman advised that the camera was in place to monitor traffic at the new Seafield junction and is currently out of service.

Cllr Hawkins has looked in to the reported problems with the confusing layout and problems for cyclists but has not yet received a satisfactory explanation and is currently awaiting further information.

269.7 Portobello Sailing/kayaking Club

Further to a recent conversation with the Chair regarding whether there is a specific proposal for the funding – It has been explained that in order for the club to be recognised it needs a boat, tractor and a shed to keep them in. They require a shed costing £2500 and have already received almost £2000 from the Portobello/ Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership and it is hoped that PCC will give the balance. The Club is concentrating on raising funds to buy a boat and equipment. They have already applied for planning consent which includes planting and are a charitable/non profit making organisation.

269.10a Open space strategy response

Diana Cairns had been asked to write a response to the Open Space Strategy on behalf of the community council but this had been taken out of her hands by the Chair.

270.2 Braid Burn Flood Prevention Presentation

Caroline is happy to follow up with the council on the flood prevention scheme for the final part of the Figgate Burn.

271.5 Agree AOCB

The trams item was withdrawn from the agenda.

Festival fireworks – Dawson requested that this be added.

Deputation to Planning Committee – HSG 13 &14 getting taken out of Greenbelt

271.6 Towerbank School

Sean Watters wanted to raise some issues currently facing the school. Although funds have been allocated to carry out all the work including the road, the timescale has been moved back. There are concerns that the school roll is continuing to rise and the school is already full. There are four general purpose rooms in the school although only one is in use and the annexe is not best used at present.

Currently the After School Club (ASC) uses rooms in the annex but could lose the use of them in the future. There are concerns that the ASC could be lost and a meeting with the head teacher is scheduled to look at what can be done to keep the service and they are looking for support from PCC to ensure that the ASC can

continue to function. It was noted that this has been a problem for some time because previously the gymnasium was built so that the annexe would not have to be used. It is no surprise that the school roll increases are having such an impact because they were determined eight years ago. There was a question over whether the catchment area could be changed but this may not solve the problem. It was also thought that the Town Hall is underused and may be a good venue for the ASC but it was noted that the Care Commission and HMI have strict criteria which must be adhered to and the Town Hall would probably not meet them.

It was suggested that the ASC may want to come to a future meeting of PCC.

271.7 Community Council Elections

There is comprehensive information on the CEC web page. The nomination period opens on 31 August until 4 pm on 14 September. Completed nominations should be handed in to Joyce Campbell at the Library for individuals and to Eileen Hewitt for group nominations. Individuals must be on the electoral roll, groups must be active in the area and the lowest age for participation is 16. The election is run in much the same way as a normal election and each person can nominate or second once. There are 15 spaces for individuals and 8 spaces for groups. By the time of the next meeting we should know whether there is a new community council or whether there has to be an election in October. It was noted that there must be a transition period for the Treasurer post as bank forms will have to be completed.

271.8 Consultations and how we participate in these

271.8a CEC Open Space Strategy

Last month it had been agreed for Diana to write a response to the CEC Open Space Strategy and circulate it around interested parties. However this proved to be contentious and agreement could not be reached so the Chair had taken it out of her hands. He thought that both the majority and minority opinions should be expressed in the letter. The final version had not been seen or agreed by all members.

There was a lengthy discussion around how best to deal with this in the future, which included the possibility of voting, for which there was strong support, so that it is democratically decided, although it was acknowledged that previously things like planning applications were usually decided by consensus. It was also noted that people are entitled to their individual opinion but the PCC is there to represent the views of the community and should be able to justify the stance taken to the community. There was also concern that some people are more vocal than others and that it was important that all views are heard and people feel that they have been fairly represented. It was also felt that there is clearly a split in the community over some issues and that this has the potential to be difficult unless some way forward was found. It was noted that this issue would not easily be resolved and that it was something that the new PCC could determine how to proceed when they form the new community council.

271.8b Garden and Designed Landscape consultation

The consultation started on 17 August and continues until 16 October. There is also a copy in the library and a meeting may be organised to discuss this proposal so if anyone want to attend they should contact Caroline.

271.9 Modernising Planning and Concordant on Community Engagement

Caroline noted that there are a number of leaflets published by the council on the recent changes in planning legislation and she has placed copies in the library.

The Concordat relates to community engagement.

The first point relates to the changes to planning law and is about process nationally. It states that form and delivery of community engagement and consultation should be agreed between the Council, the Community Council and the Developer prior to planning applications being made.

The second point relates to the Council's responsibility in ensuring that community engagement and consultation takes place as described above. This is supposed to remove the need for public local inquiries on disputed planning applications.

The third point states that Community Councils have to use all the resources at their disposal to encourage comment from as many people as possible on planning issues. Concern was expressed that community councils are already stretched to the limit and that this appears to be an attempt to push responsibility for consultation onto community councils which have very limited resources.

The fourth point states that Community Councils should be empowered by Developers and appears that PCC would have to do most of the consultation.

The fifth point states that the Council Planning Dept. will work with Developers and Community Councils to measure the success of the community engagement.

Caroline undertook to write a response on behalf of PCC, expressing our concerns.

271.10 Topics for future meetings

The plans for Baileyfield have been revised and the Council have said they will come to a future meeting. In the meantime if anyone wants to see the plans please inform Diana or Caroline.

271.11 Reports

271.11a Police The new sergeant, Bob Mason, introduced himself and explained that Sarah Potts was on holiday so he had come along in her place. He has responsibility for the Community Beat Officers in the area and it is his intention to have them out and about as much as possible. He noted that most of the crime locally is what he would term opportunistic crime, e.g. keys left in the car and bikes not secured. He noted that people can reduce the risk of being a victim by taking more care, although it should be noted that the crime statistics are down. He reported that there was an initiative to reduce numbers of underage drinkers around the promenade. He invited questions which were as follows:

Q How many Community Beat Officers are there?

A Currently there are six, as well as a school link officer at Portobello High School.

Q When is the Police station open?

A The station is open from 8 am to 8 pm if there are civilian employees available to staff the public desk. Other than that it depends on holidays and sick leave whether there are enough staff available, although police officers may well be in the station

but unable to come to the front desk. There is a public phone on the wall at the station to divert calls if needed.

Q Have there been many garden shed break-ins?

A There has only been one reported.

271.11b Treasurer Kathleen Hart reported that the Treasurer's Account balance is £1519.20 and the Joppa Tennis Courts account stands at £5159.16.

271.11c P/C Neighbourhood Partnership

The "Let's Get Together" event had been discussed by community council members and councillors the previous week and there were concerns about how the Partnership is working. It was agreed that the Partnership is heavy on process but light on outcomes for most of the sub groups that operate.

It should be noted that many PCC members are not available for daytime meetings and therefore there is no clear indication of how Portobello can provide a community input. It was felt that it would be better if there were themed PCC meetings and Council Officers came to us. Cllr Bridgman noted that some meetings had been held in the evenings and in Portobello but there was still a lack of attendance. There is a perception that Portobello does not wish to attend but that is not the case, it is more that the PCC has an increasing workload and there is a clear problem that most people cannot attend day time meetings and most of the sub groups meet during the day.

In the past the LDC meetings were held in the evenings and things could be raised under AOCB but now the NP meetings do not have AOCB as an agenda item. It was also noted that the LGT event is on a Friday afternoon and is therefore unlikely to attract much interest.

It was noted that when someone from Portobello attended a recent NP meeting in the evening there was hardly anyone from Portobello there and it did feel that perhaps not enough publicity is given to the meetings. It was suggested that if notification of all of the meetings are sent to Diana/Caroline they would circulate them to everyone on the mailing list.

If anyone can attend the LGT event there is one in Craigmillar on Saturday 26 September, from 11 am to 3 pm and another in Portobello on Friday 1 October, from 1 pm to 3 pm. Sean indicated that he would attend the Portobello event.

271.11d Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

Notification of the ASCC representative for Edinburgh is required.

271.11e Portobello Online No report given

271.11f Environmental Update A written update was circulated. Cathy Cherizard was attending on behalf of James Hunter. It was noted that there had been problems with weeding and private contractors will be taken on to deal with the backlog. The following issues were raised:

Drainage at Brighton Place: this issue will be addressed in the Town Centre works.

Barriers at Hope Lane: there has been a request by Bridge St. residents for PCC to lodge further objections to the Funpark planning application traffic report. It is believed that pile driving could affect some of the existing properties and that the Kilns will also be adversely affected. It was thought that the Developers are well aware of these concerns and it was further agreed that Caroline will write a letter to be added to the objections.

271.11g Planning No report given

271.12h Signs and plaques No report given

271.12i Portobello High School No report given.

271.12j Joppa Tennis Courts No report given.

271.12k Portobello Traders No report given.

271.12l Community Centre The next meeting will be in September.

271.12m Community development planning No report given.

271.12n Communicating with communities No report given due.

271.12o Councillors

Cllr Child gave a written report. Cllr Hawkins noted that he was pleased that the Town Centre had been awarded funding but doubted whether most people would have prioritised upgrading the pavements. He reported that TIE are looking at a Portobello Station (Brighton Place) and finally thanked everyone for their support during the recent refuse strike. Cllr Bridgman also was pleased that Portobello would have funding for the Town Centre and as always is available if anyone wants to raise any issues with him.

271.13 Any Other Competent Business

271.13a Peace and Justice Covenant

There was to be an event in the Town Hall on Saturday 6 September, from 11 am to 2 pm and a peace walk afterwards from St Philip's Church. Teas and Coffee to be served.

271.13b Bank of Scotland Fireworks

This event on was on 6 September there would be extra trains laid on to and from Newcraighall station to allow people to travel to the event.

271.13c Planning Deputation It was reported that objectors to the planning proposals for HSG 13 & 14 to be taken out of greenbelt would be sending a deputation to the committee at 2 pm on Thursday 3 September. Anyone wishing to attend would be most welcome.

271.14 Future meetings

The next meeting will take place on Monday 28th September 2009 at 7.30 pm in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

Subsequent meetings will take place on: Monday 26 October 2009, Monday 30 November 2009, Monday 25 January 2010.