



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 246th meeting held on 26th February 2007 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Robert Gatliff (Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer), Jackie Brock, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Zoe Dunn, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Peter McColl, Stephen McIntyre, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, Sheila Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, William Wilson, Betty Young.

Apologies: Maria Devoy, Alix Gaffney, Nora Mackenzie, John Smart, David Turner, Aileen Ward.

In attendance: Richard Briyill (Weber Shandwick), Cllr Maureen Child, Alison Connelly, Caroline Hosking, Neil McDonald (Broadway Malyan), Cllr Lawrence Marshall, Phil Myerscough (BL Developments), Kenny Owen, Anne Ward, Ian Wilson.

246.1 Chairman's welcome

Robert Gatliff welcomed members and visitors, and introduced Phil Myerscough of BL Developments for an update on their plans for redeveloping the Scottish Power site.

246.2 BL Developments

Phil Myerscough reported on the outcome of the public consultation exercise carried out in December and January, when 6,000 questionnaires had been distributed throughout Portobello. He circulated a brief summary of the results and would make the complete report available through *Porty Online*. Comments were welcome, by email to portobello@broadwaymalyan.com, and he would attend the March meeting to review the feedback.

Neil McDonald summarised the consultation exercise, which had been carried out by Broadway Malyan, specialists in involving the public in schemes to bring land back into productive use and with a lot of practical experience, for example at Shrubhill, Haddington, Manchester and London. 771 questionnaires had been returned, a response rate of 12.85%. The most popular desire was for homes, with support also for restaurants and a hotel, while warehouses, supermarket and minimarket attracted the least support. It was hoped that the redevelopment would benefit Portobello's existing businesses and enhance the entrance to the town. There was support for pedestrian areas and play spaces, but not for car parks or public art works. Most respondents lived in Portobello but worked elsewhere, using a wide range of transport methods; 72% said they would use public transport more if it were provided.

Robert Gatliff reported that the City Council had received five applications for the job of consultant for the redevelopment of Western Portobello, and an appointment would probably be made in March.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to put full copy of report in Portobello Library.**
- * **Action: all, to review the results of the public consultation and comment if desired.**

246.3 Minutes of the last meeting

Margaret Munro pointed out that she had not asked for the traffic light sequence to be changed (item 245.4f). With that correction the minutes were accepted: proposed by Brenda Molony, seconded by Margaret Munro.

246.4 Matters arising from January meeting

246.4a Portobello Online (minute 245.4b)

Bob Jefferson reported that no one had yet volunteered for the new website oversight committee, but he would be sending out reminders. Several people volunteered at the meeting.

246.4b Election hustings (minute 245.4c)

The Town Hall had been booked for an election meeting on 18th April. Tom Smith had a list of Council and Parliamentary candidates. Robert Gatliff agreed to pass details on to Alastair Cameron, who has volunteered to help arrange the meeting. Diana Cairns offered to help. It was suggested that Robert Gatliff chair one session and Mr Cameron be asked to chair the other.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to contact Alastair Cameron to take forward arrangements for the hustings.**

246.4c jet skis (minute 245.4d)

Stephen Hawkins and Diana Cairns had written to the Council seeking further information but had not yet received a response.

246.4d Viridor waste management (minute 245.4e)

It was suggested that we invite the City Council's John Paterson to a future meeting.

- * **Action: Secretary to invite John Paterson to a future meeting to talk about the City's waste management plans.**

246.4e High Street redevelopment (minute 245.4f)

Stuart Smith was in charge of this project for the City Council, and had made the following points:

- The stone bollards would be repositioned while tree planting and remedial works were being undertaken. A desire to minimise the impact of the work meant that completion would be delayed.
- The Council's Traffic Signals section had advised that the changes made to the traffic lights did not require signs.
- Water ponding had been tackled by re-laying some areas and installing new drainage gullies. Some smaller puddles were still to be tackled by the contractor.
- The contractor was awaiting a new Community Noticeboard from the manufacturer. The other noticeboards needed attention, and responsibility for their future maintenance had to be arranged.
- The Community Council was welcome to organise a site visit.

The remaining work would probably take several more weeks to complete, and the extra costs involved meant that the new work between Beach Lane and Figgate Street was indefinitely postponed.

Stephen Hawkins was concerned that the pedestrian crossing's lights had been linked to the main traffic lights and therefore didn't change so frequently as before, penalising pedestrians for the traffic overflow from Milton Road. Tom Nimmo had observed children crossing dangerously because of this unexpected delay, and had arranged a visit from a City Council official to observe the problem. It was generally agreed that the delays on Milton Road had made drivers more impatient. Lawrence Marshall was worried that the replacement of the roundabout at King's Road would lead to similar problems with the pedestrian crossing there, since the priority seemed to be to keep traffic moving rather than pedestrians safe.

- * **Action: Secretary to arrange site visit with Stuart Smith.**
- * **Action: Secretary to write to the City Council to complain about the increased threat to pedestrians, and to ask why a safety DVD had been distributed to schools but not to other sections of the community.**
- * **Action: Secretary to ask the police representative to remain longer at our meetings so that we can discuss issues such as this.**

246.4f The Baptist Church / Old Town Hall Clock (minute 245.4g)

Lawrence Marshall asked for a copy of the building's title deeds from Robert Gatliff, and would then follow this up.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to give Lawrence Marshall a copy of the Baptist Church's title deeds.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to investigate the issues about the restoration of the clock.**

246.4g Traffic problems caused by replacement of Milton Road roundabout (minute 245.4h)

Maureen Child reported that the Council had done all it could to minimise the disruption.

246.4h Funpark site (minute 245.5e)

John Stewart had written to Francis Newton of the City Council about proposals for this site but had not yet received a response. Caroline Hosking had heard that plans for a snooker hall would probably be accepted. The plans for new flats had been modified, and should be brought back to the Community Council before being submitted formally for planning permission, but no timescale was known for this.

246.4i Portobello Sailing Club (minute 245.5e)

The Secretary had written to the City Council in support of this proposed development, and received the assurance that the Community Council's backing for it would be taken into account. The new name for the development was The Portobello Dinghy and Kayak Club, and the owner was currently seeking charitable status for it.

246.5 Portobello Schools

Stephen McIntyre felt that the Community Council should respond to the letter sent to us by the chair of the School Board at the High School, and take the opportunity to tell the City Council what we think of the overall approach. Margaret Munro pointed out that the Community Council hadn't been able to agree a position on the new schools, but Stephen McIntyre replied that he simply wanted to make it clear that we wanted the best possible schools for Portobello. Robert Gatliff wanted to see definite proposals about land usage before we comment, and Margaret Munro thought we should wait to see what funding would be available, after the local and parliamentary elections. William Wilson argued that we should not leave the question of quality until the funding package became known, but should demand the best possible quality from the outset. Jackie Brock wanted the best possible design for the new schools and thought the Community Council should support the work done so far, without waiting for the outcome of the elections; she wanted a guarantee that the new City Council would not reverse decisions taken by the old one.

Lawrence Marshall was anxious that the Community Council should not reopen past divisions, and could therefore simply "note" the City Council's decision and welcome the almost unanimous party agreement for a new High School. It could be a backward step to try and endorse specific aspects before detailed plans are drawn up. All agreed that we want the best possible schools for Portobello.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to the chair of the School Board at the High School, offering our support for the best possible new school, and indicating our concern about the source of funding for it, which should not threaten existing resources.**

246.6 Meadowbank redevelopment

The City Council intends to sell most of the Meadowbank site for a development of 815 flats, in order to generate funds to refurbish the Commonwealth Pool and build a new sports stadium at Sighthill. One of the senior sports coaches at Meadowbank had set up a petition to try and save it, and there had been a big response to a support campaign. Caroline Hosking circulated a petition and drew attention to the campaign website at <http://www.savemeadowbank.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk>.

Dawson Currie noted that the City Council proposed to have a small public sports facility on the site but was concerned at the number of sports to be accommodated in a very small space, and regretted the loss of the running track and pitch which curtailed the range of activities which would attract young people. Lawrence Marshall found it difficult to argue for a major sports facility in east Edinburgh, but Brenda Molony said there should be sports facilities all over the city to encourage the fullest possible public participation.

It was generally agreed that there should be running tracks and sports fields in both east and west Edinburgh, especially given the threat to the football pitches in Portobello Park. There was also a feeling that more of the Meadowbank site should be kept for sport, including the five-a-side pitches, and less used for housing. Margaret Munro noted the threat to yet another large open public space in the city. Celia Butterworth wondered how well used the Meadowbank facilities were, but no one knew. Robert Gatliff thought it would be sufficient to have sporting space without spectator facilities to save some room. Dawson Currie wondered how much the City Council would make from the sale, and therefore how much it would cost not to sell it.

- * **Action: all, to send comments to Robert Gatliff as soon as possible.**
- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to the City Council summarising our views about Meadowbank.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to find out how much the Council expects to raise by selling Meadowbank.**

246.7 Reports

246.7a Police: the police had dealt with around 1,400 calls in February, some 240 involving the High Street – broadly similar to the preceding months. There had been a lot of vandalism the previous weekend.

246.7b Treasurer: The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £3,292.02; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,129.28.

246.7c Joppa Tennis Courts: the AGM would be held in March and Robert Gatliff would report on that.

246.7d Task Force: no report this time.

* **Action: Secretary to ask for news, a visit or a report.**

246.7e Planning: John Stewart reported on a number of issues. The City Council had refused an application for an HMO licence at 6 John Street but the owner might appeal against the decision. He had written about the application concerning 1 Duddingston Crescent but his letter had been rejected for being too late.

Maureen Child agreed that there had been a mix-up over dates but was hopeful that a public meeting would be arranged to allow the objectors and the applicant to meet. There were plans to build several blocks of flats within Queen's Bay, which was not a problem in itself except that better designs were needed and several good trees required protecting. There were possible concerns of over-provision about the plan to replace the Pop Inn with a bookmaker's. Margaret Smith was worried that the Lunn Poly shop was to be taken over by another charity shop, but there was no further news about this.

246.7f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Alison Robinson was making a new top for one of the coadestone pillars in the community garden, to be installed in May. An interpretation board was being prepared, and the garden would be participating in this year's 'open garden' scheme from noon to 5pm on 5th May. The contractors' sign and the wooden fencing should have been removed in time for the open day, and the final plants added. The Laing and Miller plaques were to be cleaned up as they were becoming illegible.

246.7g Portobello Traders: Sheila Scott had surveyed the local charity shops and identified those which were selling excessive amounts of new goods. The 'Purple Love Day' had gone well, and the BBC had made a programme in Portobello about High Streets fighting to keep supermarkets at bay.

246.7h Portobello Online: Bob Jefferson reported that details of the separation of the website and Discussion Forum were still being worked out. The Forum had registered the name talkporty.org and was moving to a new web-hosting service. Meanwhile a collection of local postcards was being scanned into the website and there were new items in Portobello Telly. Sheila Scott asked if *Porty Online* was going to cover the election; Bob Jefferson replied that this hadn't been decided but he hoped so.

246.7i Community development planning: no report this time.

246.7j Community Centre: no report this time.

246.7k Councillors:

Maureen Child's main issue had been the knock-on effects of the roadworks on Milton Road, so she had produced a FAQ sheet to answer some of the questions. She was particularly concerned about the safety of children crossing to Brunstane School, as drivers were ignoring the pedestrian crossing there. The major delays experienced in the first weeks had been anticipated but had not been notified to the people who might have been able to deal with them. The first roundabout should be replaced within 20 weeks then the second within ten, and it was hoped that the lessons learned on Milton Road would make the King's Road work go more smoothly (though that work would not be done until the Autumn or even next year). Dawson Currie asked that the City Council note the traffic problems caused by these roadworks, and that it should not allow any new major traffic-generating schemes, for example on the Freightliner site. He hoped the Council would continue to maximise bus priority rather than traffic flow; Maureen Child was confident that bus patronage would continue to rise, but observed that bus priority measures slowed down other traffic.

Lawrence Marshall had investigated the possibility of having both roundabout and traffic lights at King's Road in view of the difficulties at Milton Road, but found that this arrangement only worked at very big roundabouts, and drastically reduced the capacity of the junction – although it was the safest option. He looked forward to seeing trees reinstated in the High Street redevelopment in March and the removal of the builders' compound from the Bridge Street car park in April. The application for a snooker club at FunPark would be considered within a week, and he thought it would be a shame not to support the UK's second oldest fun park, which was older than most of the houses around it. He had made representations to Lothian

Buses about its no. 12 service, and welcomed the reopening of the Orcadia trampolines on 2nd March. He was delighted that private sponsors had negotiated £8.5m – almost half of the anticipated cost – to support the reopening of the South Suburban Railway.

246.8 Any Other Business

246.8a End-of-year accounts: Kathleen Hart pointed out that the March meeting was the last before the end of the Financial Year, and asked that all bills be presented to her by then.

246.8b Tree care: John Stewart asked Lawrence Marshall to relay to Stuart Smith the need to water the new trees adequately to keep them alive, and also not to use excessively tight strapping to support them.

- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to emphasise tree care to Stuart Smith.**

246.6c Police attendance: Dawson Currie said it would be helpful to have the police representative attend a whole meeting when relevant issues were likely to arise, such as the problems caused by excess local traffic.

- * **Action: Secretary to pass on this request to Inspector Ward.**

246.9 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 26th March 2007.

Subsequent dates are: 30th April 2007
 28th May 2007
 25th June 2007