



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **DRAFT Minutes of the 256th meeting held on 25th February 2008 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Robert Gatliff, Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer)  
Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Bob Jefferson (Porty Online), Peter McColl (PEDAL),  
Lawrence Marshall, Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), Margaret Smith (Portobello Labour Party),  
Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS), David Turner (Portobello Amnesty Group), Sean Watters (PFANS),  
William Wilson.

**Apologies:** Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Jet Cameron (PPAG), James Hunter (CEC),  
Nora Mackenzie, Brenda Molony (Porty Reporter), Margaret Munro, Kenneth Owen (Police), Sheila Scott  
(Merchants & Hoteliers).

**In attendance:** Jonathan Bendit, Archie Burns, Cllr Maureen Child, Alison Connelly, Dave Connelly,  
Alma and Brian Cope (Portobello Music School), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Scott Thomson (CEC), Anne Ward,  
Margaret Williamson (Portobello High School).

### **256.1 Chair's welcome**

Robert Gatliff took the chair again and apologised for having had to miss several meetings through work commitments. He first introduced Brian Cope to talk about plans for Portobello Music School.

### **256.2 Portobello Music School**

Brian and Alma Cope set up a music school in Portobello in 2006 and have been running classes for children at Towerbank and for adults at the High School, Town Hall and St Philips church. The venture now needed more settled premises, for which 6 John Street seemed eminently suitable. Mr and Mrs Cope had therefore embarked on a series of consultations with the John Street Action Group, local residents and community groups to see if the idea of setting up Portobello Music School in John Street would be supported. The plan would be to convert the basement into family accommodation for the owners, with 12-14 music and meeting rooms in the rest of the building. There would be classes on some weekday mornings, and on Saturdays from 9am to 2pm. The house's main room could accommodate piano recitals and chamber concerts for 50-60 people. There was potential for art space also.

Several further points were made in response to questions. The City Council's planning department has said that the main requirement is that local people are consulted and accept the plan. Permission for change of use would be required but was not thought to be a major problem. John Stewart observed that the nursing home in this house had run into difficulties over safety regulations, and he thought that major work might be needed to get the building up to the necessary public safety standards. Peter McColl pointed out that PEDAL was pursuing similar initiatives to this, and welcomed the assurance that the Music School was keen to coordinate its activities with other local groups. Stephen Hawkins recalled the success of the Helen Hopekirk concert and was pleased that this initiative would build on that local achievement.

The Community Council warmly welcomed the plan for a Music School in John Street, and agreed to write in support of any planning application that might be submitted.

- \* **Action:** Secretary to write to City Council in support of Portobello Music School at 6 John Street.

### **256.3 The plight of Portobello High School**

William Wilson and Bob Jefferson organised the showing of a video made by Queen Margaret University about the deteriorating state of the High School. Ten hours of recording had been edited down to eight minutes of pupils and staff making a strong case for a new school. William Wilson reported that he was having difficulty getting information from the City Council but believed there was enough money now available to build a new school. He pointed out that new schools tend to attract the best teachers, and that conversely a deteriorating school would drive families away from Portobello. If nothing were done to build a new school, it was likely that the present school would have to close for six months within five years to allow the building to be refurbished. He urged the Community Council to support the case for a new school, one which would be an asset for local people outwith school hours.

Robert Gatliff was clear that the Community Council supported the case for a new school; the problem was on agreeing a site for it. Stephen Hawkins said the City Council had enough money to build one new high school but five were needed, so 80% of the total funding package remained to be found, perhaps from the Scottish Government. Stephen Hawkins and Maureen Child agreed that it was theoretically possible for the City Council to put all its money into one school, but the community would have to use all the levers it could to make that case. Even then, the City Council would have to sell assets in order to raise the funds for the planning process, since this could not be paid out of capital money.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write to the City Council and the Scottish Government, urging action and asking for a timetable to be drawn up as soon as possible.

- \* **Action:** Chairman to write to City Council and Scottish Government in support of a new High School, and asking for a timetable for achieving it.

### **256.4 Portobello Sailing and Kayaking Club**

Concerns had been expressed about access to the proposed boat storage area from neighbouring streets, so Jonathan Bendit attended this meeting to clarify the plans and report on progress. The planning permission which had been granted for the Club included the use of the Promenade for boat-handling, and the intention was to bring boats on to the Prom at Pittville Street for transfer to the storage area at Straiton Place. A management committee had been appointed, a constitution drawn up and a bank account opened so that applications could be made for funding to create the secure area and buy some boats. This would take some time, so there was as yet no date for the Club to open.

### **256.5 Minutes of the previous meeting**

In section 255.4b, the letter about shopfronts was to be written by Brenda Molony and submitted by Margaret Munro.

In section 255.7, Dawson Currie had agreed to report back on a communication strategy, but not to any specific timescale.

In section 255.11b, the licence for the Funfair had not yet been granted: the application was coming up for consideration.

With these corrections the minutes were approved: proposed Tom Smith, seconded Dawson Currie.

### **256.6 Matters arising from November meeting**

- \* **256.6a Report from Stagecoach's public meeting about the hovercraft? (minute 255.2)**  
*There had been no further developments at or since the public meeting on the 18th.*
- \* **256.6b Updated membership list and constitution (minute 255.4a)**  
*In process.*
- 256.6c Protection for Portobello shop fronts (minute 255.4b)**  
*Done.*

- \* **256.6d Secretary to supply missing minutes to website (minute 255.4c)**  
*Ongoing.*
- \* **256.6e Joppa Shore tourist leaflet (minute 255.4d)**  
*In progress.*
- 256.6f Keys for Community Council noticeboard (minute 255.4e)**  
*Robert Gatliff clarified the process for opening the noticeboards.*
- 256.6g Diana Cairns to draft letter to City Council about waste disposal strategy (minute 255.4g)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6h Maureen Child to circulate number of responses to Viridor application (minute 255.4h)**  
*Done.*
- \* **256.6i Chairman and Secretary to apply for a ‘communication’ grant (minute 255.4i)**  
*Ongoing.*
- \* **256.6j Stephen Hawkins to find out about Baptist Church clock (minute 255.4q)**  
*Ongoing.*
- \* **256.6k Chairman to discuss display of Calor Gas awards with Librarian (minute 255.4s)**  
*Ongoing.*
- 256.6l Diana Cairns to circulate information about Masterplan meeting with students (minute 255.6)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6m Secretary to circulate draft PAS letter (minute 255.6)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6n Secretary to circulate results of Masterplan survey (minute 255.6)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6o Secretary to write to City Council deploring loss of Community Centre worker (minute 255.6)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6p Secretary to circulate draft PMAG letter about the Masterplan (minute 255.6)**  
*Done.*
- 256.6q All, to write individually about the Masterplan (minute 255.6)**  
*The deadline for further letters had now passed.*
- 256.6r Dawson Currie to report suggestions for Community Council communications (minute 255.7)**  
*See item 7.*
- \* **256.6s Kenny Owen to find out if environmental wardens check playparks (minute 255.10b)**  
*Ongoing.*

## **256.7 Community Council communications**

Dawson Currie reported that the group was not yet ready to make any recommendations.

- \* **Action:** Dawson Currie to report as soon as possible on plans for an electronic display in the Library, for the contents of the community noticeboards, and for a Community Council insert in the *Porty Reporter*.

## **256.8 Morton Street bench**

Held over in Celia Butterworth’s absence.

- \* **Action:** Celia Butterworth to raise this issue at the March meeting.

## 256.9 Police custody visiting scheme

The Secretary circulated a letter received from the clerk to the Lothian and Borders Police Board about the custody visiting scheme through which volunteers visit people in police custody to ensure that they are being looked after appropriately. New recruits are needed for this scheme, and there was to be a public meeting about it on 1st March at the City Chambers. It was decided that anyone who was interested in this should follow it up individually.

- \* **Action: all**, to contact the Secretary if interested in finding out more about the police custody visiting scheme.

## 256.10 Scotland's National Planning Framework

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation to help guide Scotland's spatial development to 2030, through the second National Planning Framework. The consultation would run until 15th April. Further information was available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/07093039/0> and <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/planning/national-planning>

## 256.11 Reports

**256.11a Police:** Calls to the police continued at about the level of previous months. Joint lunchtime patrols with the City Council's environmental wardens were continuing. There had been no interest amongst young people in the midnight football league, but efforts to set this up would continue.

**256.11b Treasurer:** Treasurer's Account: £3,291.46; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,533.29.

**256.11c Joppa Tennis Courts:** no report this time; the Club's AGM was imminent.

**256.11d Task Force:** Scott Thomson reported on James Hunter's behalf. High standards were being maintained over litter; new roses were being planted in several local parks; flood prevention measures around Rosefield Park and the Adelphis were in hand; all local trees were in good health. Robert Gatliff asked if the broken fences on the sea wall at the Eastfield terminus were to be repaired; this work has been delayed by staff illness but was out to tender and the work was expected to be done in March or April.

**256.11e Planning:** John Stewart had objected to the low-quality materials proposed for extensions to a guest house in Duddingston Crescent, but the application had been granted as it stood.

**256.11f Signs, Plaques and coadestone:** no report this time.

**256.11g Portobello Traders:** no report this time.

**256.11h Party Online:** no report this time.

### 256.11i Portobello High School

There was no news of the redevelopment of the School. A video had been made about the current poor state of the School, and could be viewed world-wide on YouTube ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_U4yQsLYaw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_U4yQsLYaw)). All S4 pupils had recently had the opportunity of a week's work experience. A few pupils had spoken on environmental issues at the Scottish Parliament (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/education/oeof/>). A programme of jazz workshops with professional musicians would culminate in a concert. Seven senior pupils had won assisted places to further their education in Georgia. The School had twinned with a school in Kenya and was fund-raising to help rebuild dormitories burnt down in an arson attack. Under-13s, under-14s, senior boys and senior girls had all reached semi-finals in basketball cup ties.

**256.11j Community development planning:** no report this time.

**256.11k Community Centre:** no report this time.

**256.11l Neighbourhood Partnership:** no report this time. The next meeting would be on 23rd April, with a business meeting before it. There was to be a meeting on 26th February to organise voluntary sector representation on the Partnership.

### 256.11m Councillors:

Stephen Hawkins circulated a report at the meeting. He drew attention to the closing dates for comments on the North West Portobello Masterplan (3rd March) and for objections to the incinerator at Dunbar (29th

February); refusal of the latter would diminish the case for a waste transfer station at Portobello. A new worker would be appointed at the Community Centre when the present one retires. The City Council was looking at ways to stop car drivers rat-running along the Prom from Seafield to the foot of King's Road; Scott Thomson agreed to follow this up. The 26 bus route would be diverted for several months when Shandwick Place closes for tram preparation work. There was a petition at Banana Republic against the City Council's rules for fruit displays on pavements.

Maureen Child circulated her usual report before the meeting. She highlighted a few of its points. The City Council had found that Christian Path was owned by, and should therefore be maintained by, the residual British Railways Board, but they were not responding to requests about the Path. The City Council would be enforcing the ban on bus engines idling at the Eastfield terminus. The planning application for the funfair at the Scottish Power site would be considered on 7th March. Suggestions were invited for names for the new streets in Craigmillar.

- \* **Action:** Scott Thomson to report on measures to close the western Promenade to rat-running traffic.

## **256.12 Any Other Business**

### **256.12a Restoration of 12/32 bus services to Portobello**

Margaret Smith asked if the 12 and 32 bus routes could be extended to include Portobello once again. Stephen Hawkins replied that the City Council had looked at this in its budget review, and that restoration was unlikely unless in conjunction with a new hovercraft service.

### **256.12b The third Councillor**

Peter McColl asked if Cllr Mike Bridgeman had been invited to Portobello Community Council meetings. He certainly has, but the Secretary was asked to repeat the invitation.

- \* **Action:** Secretary to invite Cllr Mike Bridgeman to future meetings.

### **256.12c North West Masterplan letters**

Robert Gatliff was keen to make sure that all the points made in his draft letter and in other places were submitted to the Council by the deadline of 3rd March. Maureen Child said that it would be best to send in as many different letters as possible, and there was no need to try and fit every point into one letter.

- \* **Action: all,** to write to the City Council planning department with views on the North West Portobello Masterplan proposals.

### **256.12d King's Road roundabout**

Stephen Hawkins reported that the tenders for this work had been over the available budget. The specification was therefore being trimmed, and he expected work to begin within a few months.

### **256.12e The Porty Shopper**

Peter McColl and Stephen Hawkins had several of these rugged canvas bags for sale at £2 each, as part of a campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags.

### **256.12f Shrinking investment in young people**

David Turner mentioned the 'Dare to Care' campaign to emphasise the need to improve support for young people. He was afraid that many young people don't feel involved in their local community because that community doesn't seem to have anything to offer them. Caroline Hosking thought that a meeting with the youth group at the Community Centre would be a good place to start investigating this. Lawrence Marshall expressed disappointment that the City Councillors had not mentioned the Council's decision to cut back investment in Towerbank, which could result in a loss of amenity for young people. Sean Watters agreed, though was still trying to find out what could be lost; one casualty might be the after-school club.

- \* **Action:** Secretary to include this item on the agenda for the March meeting.

## **256.13 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.

The next meeting is on 31st March 2008.

Subsequent dates are: 28th April 2008  
26th May 2008  
30th June 2008  
(no meeting in July)