



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **DRAFT Minutes of the 276th meeting held on 22nd February 2010 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Lilian Graham, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Leon Thompson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parent Council), Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

**Apologies:** Maria Devoy, Sarah Potter (Portobello Police), Gavin Strang M.P., William Wilson.

**In attendance:** Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, Archie Foley, Kathleen Hart, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, George Kerevan, Helen Platts (CEC), Gillian Smith (Ironsides Farrar), Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, Iain Wilson.

### **276.1 Chair's welcome**

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting, and presented Kathleen Hart with a unique hand-crafted ceramic pot as a token of gratitude for the 15 years in which she was the Community Council's treasurer. He then introduced Helen Platts of the City Council and Gillian Smith of consultants Ironsides Farrar to talk about plans for Portobello.

### **276.2 Presentation on the Town Centre Regeneration Programme**

Helen Platts gave an update on work currently in progress to renew pavements along the High Street, which was largely on schedule though slightly delayed by a request to install ducting for new street lights (which had led to misleading reports in the Evening News). The opportunity had been taken to check drains because of regular localised flooding; blocked drains had been cleared, but some were broken and could not be fixed without expensive and disruptive works. Bike-parking was being installed wherever possible, either standalone or as special-purpose loops on existing street poles, while redundant poles were being removed wherever possible as part of the City Council's 'street decluttering' policy. Several other points were made and Helen agreed to look into them. Maureen Child praised the quality of the new pavements, and reported that several people had commented on the workmen's politeness and consideration.

Gillian Smith then described the initial ideas for encouraging more tourism in Portobello, building on the work she had previously done at the Town Hall. She noted the many existing features like sign boards and finger-posts, and was keen to integrate these into the future plans, in particular to tie them in with the redevelopment of the Promenade. Edinburgh recognised great tourist potential in Portobello, and wanted to develop this with high-quality maps and information displays, matching similar signage elsewhere in the city. The first idea was to install a map in the square by the Bank of Scotland, and a survey had been carried out to identify the features people wanted to see identified on the map. The survey was repeated at the meeting, and forms would be available in the Library to encourage further local participation. Peter McColl pointed out that most visitors to Portobello would arrive from Edinburgh by bus and therefore be on the other side of the street from the proposed orientation point; Gillian agreed to think about how to address this.

It was agreed to set up a sub-group to help the City Council develop their plans, with Celia Butterworth, Archie Foley, Margaret Munro, John Stewart and Nick Stroud.

- \* **Action: Secretary to circulate further information about development plans.**
- \* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to find out if/why the new pavement has already been dug up outside Buddy's Hairdressers (237 High Street).**
- \* **Action: Helen Platts to find what plans there are to renew broken drains.**
- \* **Action: Helen Platts to look for opportunities to remove redundant street poles.**

- \* **Action: Helen Platts to reinstate the bench lost from the vicinity of the bus shelters on the south side of the High Street (though not necessarily in the same place).**
- \* **Action: Helen Platts to locate and reinstate the ‘Welcome to Portobello’ sign removed during the King’s Road roadworks.**
- \* **Action: Helen Platts to investigate the possibility of installing a sign pointing to the Bridge Street car park.**
- \* **Action: Gillian Smith to consider a tourist information point at the bus stops on the north side of the High Street.**
- \* **Action: Celia Butterworth, Archie Foley, Margaret Munro, John Stewart and Nick Stroud to meet the planners to help develop ideas.**
- \* **Action: All, to return completed ‘signage’ forms to John Stewart (4a Elcho Terrace) or Helen Platts (address on form) by 1st March.**

### **276.3 Minutes of January meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a correct record: proposed by Diana Cairns, seconded by Anne Ward.

### **276.4 Matters arising from January meeting**

**276.4a** Robert Gatliff to seek funding to repair Baptist Church so clock can be put back in place (275.3b). Robert has identified several possible sources of funding and will apply to them. Ongoing.

**276.4b** Stephen Hawkins to let the Community Council know of Neighbourhood Partnership meetings relevant to Portobello (275.3d); continuous.

**276.4c** Stephen Hawkins to arrange a meeting of Council official and William Wilson at swingpark (275.3f); in hand.

**276.4d** Stephen Hawkins to repeat his request to BL Developments that they improve the security of their site (275.3g). Stephen has now written formally to Phil Myerscough. Done.

**276.4e** John Stewart to talk to Joyce Campbell about the Community Council’s presence in the Library (275.3k). Joyce has unfortunately been ill. Ongoing.

**276.4f** Diana Cairns to put paper copies of key documents in the Library (274.8). Ongoing

**276.4g** Sarah Potter to get more detailed police information through which to assess the impact of replacing the King’s Road roundabout with traffic lights (275.3s). Sarah has unfortunately been ill. Considered done.

**276.4h** Community Council to clarify its relationship with Portobello Amenity Society (275.5). John Stewart explained that PAS looked at all planning applications affecting Portobello and notified the Community Council of any which cause particular concern. It is completely separate from the Community Council, though with several members in common, and the two act independently.

**276.4i** John Stewart to write to the Mortgage People thanking them for presenting their case to the Community Council (275.5). Done.

**276.4j** Anyone interested in the public inquiry into the Viridor planning application should consider attending when they can (275.6). Done.

**276.4k** Diana Cairns to put details of the Viridor planning inquiry into the community noticeboards, and notify local schools (275.6). Done.

**276.4l** John Stewart to object to specific aspects of the proposed hovercraft terminal (275.7). Done; letter circulated with agenda.

**276.4m** John Stewart to ask the Sailing Club for its views of the hovercraft proposal (275.7). John had been in touch with Jonathan Bendit of the Sailing Club and found him in favour of the proposal, which he didn’t think would have any effect on his own business.

**276.4n** Cathy Cherizard to organise an evening public meeting to discuss priorities for pavement and road improvements (275.8). This is arranged for 6:30pm on 31st March.

- \* **Action: Secretary to circulate details of this meeting.**

**276.4o** Secretary to circulate form for suggestions for pavement and road improvements (275.8). Done.

**276.4p** Tom Ballantine to write about the Community Council for *Portobello Reporter* (275.9). Done.

**276.4q** Sarah Potter to request a Crimestoppers article for *Portobello Reporter* (275.10a). Sarah had been ill, and no information was forthcoming from other police sources.

**276.4r** Anyone interested in being Community Council treasurer to talk to John Stewart (275.10b). Sandra Blake agreed to take on this role, after retiring treasurer Kathleen Hart assured the meeting that very little work was involved.

**276.4s** Cathy Cherizard to consider organising an evening public meeting to discuss waste services and recycling (275.10e). Done; meeting is on 10th March in the Town Hall; details circulated separately. Expected attendees include Waste Services, the Task Force, Environmental Wardens and school representatives. It is important to get a good turnout at this meeting to show that people care about the issue. Brenda Molony expressed her disappointment that news of the meeting was not circulated in time to be included in the *Reporter*, which had only just gone to print; she asked that the *Reporter* be included whenever such announcements are made in future.

**276.4t** Cathy Cherizard to request definite plans to replace lost trees in Rosefield Park (275.10e). Done; details circulated separately.

\* **Action: Diana Cairns to liaise with Cathy Cherizard on a consultation event for Brighton and Rosefield Residents' Association.**

**276.4u** All, to suggest priorities for planting along the High Street (275.9). Done.

**276.4v** Cathy Cherizard to find out if the City Council will maintain the new planting (275.10e). Maps indicating areas and types of planting circulated separately.

**276.4w** Cathy Cherizard to investigate progress in fixing drainage outside the Town Hall (275.10e). Done; this has been added to the City Council's list of commitments, with an update due in April.

**276.4x** Cathy Cherizard to investigate 'leaf sludge' in Sandford Gardens (275.10e). Done; the street was cleaned on 24th January.

**276.4y** Cathy Cherizard to investigate a fallen fence in Windsor Place (275.10e). Done; the problem has been added to the City Council's commitments for the new financial year.

**276.4z** John Stewart to object to proposed developments in Bellfield Lane (275.10f). Done; letters circulated with agenda.

**276.4aa** Diana Cairns to recirculate details of the 'Meet the Funders' meeting (275.11a). Done. Margaret Munro had attended the event, along with a great many other people and organisations seeking funding; she brought back a large quantity of literature which Celia Butterworth agreed to investigate.

**276.4bb** All, to consider meeting potential funders on 28th January (275.11a). Done.

**276.4cc** Peter McColl to circulate thoughts on improving use of the Town Hall (275.11c).

**276.4dd** Cathy Cherizard to find out how well the Town Hall is used, and whether there has been a change in recent years (275.11c). Done; report to be circulated separately; the Town Hall seems to be well used, with further marketing due shortly.

Brenda Molony had studied the figures obtained by Cathy and determined that there was very little local use, even though the Hall seemed to be quite well used. The high cost was a significant deterrent. It was generally agreed to be a valuable space, and had hosted some highly valued events when adequate funding had been available to support it. PEDAL had looked into possible uses of the hall but felt that it would take a great deal of work to agree the best use for its space. It could be an important hall for the whole of Edinburgh, and its future should be considered alongside that of the complementary community centre. It was agreed to set up a working group to consider options, which might include organising a public meeting, with Sandra Blake, Diana Cairns, Stephen Hawkins, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro, John Stewart, Sean Watters and Franny Wraith. Iain Abbot and Tom Black would be invited to join. Cathy Cherizard agreed to look at improving online information about the Hall.

\* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to see if online information about the Town Hall can be improved.**

**276.4ee** All, to complete the Community Council 'skills matrix' questionnaire (275.11d). Diana Cairns said

she had still only received seven forms, and asked those who had not yet done so to complete and return theirs as soon as possible. Ongoing.

**276.4ff** John Stewart to investigate plans to open a new retail centre at the old 'Big W' (275.11e). John reported that he and Diana would be meeting the developers the following day, and that there would be a public exhibition of the plans from 10am to 6pm on Saturday 27th February in the Treetops Suite of the Kings Manor Hotel. Diana would circulate further details before that event.

**276.4gg** Diana Cairns to circulate information about visiting people in police custody (275.11g). Done.

## **276.4 Matters for Any Other Business**

Several items were identified for discussion in Any Other Business.

## **276.5 The Viridor public inquiry**

Diana Cairns summarised the proceedings, highlighting the important contributions made by the Community Council, PAS, PONGS, local residents' groups, local politicians and expert witnesses, especially the planning expert and the QC. Viridor had conceded that the proposed facility did not fulfil a need in waste strategy terms, only in commercial terms for them to position themselves in the marketplace. Their pollution figures were completely discredited. Diana also praised all the members of the public who had attended, which had made a strong impression on the reporters. The decision would be announced "in early Summer".

Brenda Molony praised the work of everyone involved, and the very thorough and professional submissions and presentations. The entire Community Council recorded its warm appreciation of everyone who had contributed to the inquiry.

## **276.6 Portobello Heritage Trust**

Margaret Munro reported that Portobello Heritage Trust was now registered at Companies House and fully established. The six founding members were Margaret Munro (chair), Archie Foley (administrative secretary), Mike Brown (treasurer), John Stewart, Alison Robinson and John Munro. The Trust came into being in the wake of the campaign to get the collapsed kiln rebuilt, and with this under way would expand its activities with the following aims:

- to record, promote and encourage the conservation, protection and enhancement of the historical, architectural and landscape heritage in and around Portobello;
- to advance knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Portobello's cultural and industrial heritage within and beyond the community.

A public meeting was to be held in St John's church hall at 7:30pm on 14th April to present and plan activities. Margaret would be meeting Council officials on 5th March to discuss the future care of the kilns, and was to record an interview at the kilns for broadcast on Radio Scotland at 11:30am on 15th March.

It was agreed that the Community Council would join the Trust as an associate member, and individuals were urged to consider personal membership, which costs £10 per year.

- \* **Action: Treasurer to seek associate membership of the Trust for the Community Council.**
- \* **Action: All, to consider joining the Trust as individual members.**

## **276.7 Election hustings**

David Turner, a former member of the Community Council, had suggested that the Community Council should organise a hustings event for the forthcoming General Election, as it had done for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2007. This was agreed, and a sub-group of Tom Ballantine, Diana Cairns, Andrew Patterson and Nick Stroud was set up to arrange it.

- \* **Action: Sub-group to organise hustings for the General Election.**

## **276.8 Communications and public image**

There was some discussion about how to handle the large volume of communications which come into the Community Council, mostly from the City Council, and how the Community Council could improve communication to and from the local community that it is expected to represent. John Stewart asked that

group representatives use their networks to spread relevant news further afield, while appreciating that the Community Council still has several vacancies for group representatives. It was suggested that the City Council distinguish between information intended mainly for the Community Council itself, and information intended for wider circulation; it was also expected that the City Council would use every means at its disposal to distribute public information, rather than expecting community councils to do it all.

Several suggestions were made for the Community Council to distribute news, including a newsletter, the community website, the Neighbourhood Partnership website, and a yahoo group. John Stewart asked that everyone give some thought to how we improve our communication with our community. He mentioned that he and Brenda Molony are assembling a list of contact details for all members of the Community Council, for our own use, and everyone agreed to be included on this.

- \* **Action: Group representatives to use their networks to feed news in and out.**
- \* **Action: Community Council to fill remaining group vacancies.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to ask Eileen Hewitt (City Council) to distinguish news for community councils and news for public consumption, and to let us know what other channels are used for the latter.**
- \* **Action: All, to consider how to improve our communication networks.**
- \* **Action: All, to send contact information to Brenda Molony.**

## **276.9 Reports**

**276.9a Police:** No report available.

**276.9b Treasurer:** Kathleen Hart gave her final report as Community Council Treasurer before handing over the books. There was £1,350.25 in the general account and £3,989.16 in the Joppa Tennis Courts account. There were also ring-fenced sums of £1,662 for the Gilberstoun noticeboard and £151.56 for the website. Kathleen asked that all expense claims be submitted before the end of March so that the annual statement of accounts could be drawn up and audited.

**276.9c Neighbourhood Partnership:** No report available.

**276.9d Joppa Tennis Courts:** No report available.

**276.9e Environmental Update:** Cathy Cherizard had reported on most items earlier in the meeting, but mentioned that there was to be a consultation and initiative on public toilets in the near future; she would pass on information as soon as it was available. Cathy was warmly thanked for all her hard work for the Community Council in the preceding week.

**276.9f Planning:** John Stewart reported that the application concerning 17 Bellfield Lane was due to be considered on Wednesday (24th February), and he asked Maureen Child to request a site visit. He mentioned that the City Council had produced new planning guidelines for community councils, and asked that all members read these so that they could be discussed at the March meeting.

It was reported that the BL planning application would be coming before the planning committee towards the end of March, and the City Councillors were asked to circulate information about this as soon as possible. There was no further news of plans for Phoenix House.

- \* **Action: Secretary to circulate City Council's new planning guidance to all members.**
- \* **Action: All, to read City Council's new planning guidance before the next meeting.**
- \* **Action: City Councillors to circulate the planning department's report concerning the BL application as soon as it becomes available.**

**276.9g Signs, Plaques and coade-stone:** The plaque for The Tower, Portobello's oldest surviving building, has been ordered.

**276.9h Portobello High School:** No report this time.

**276.9i Portobello Community Centre:** No report this time.

**276.9j Councillors:**

Maureen Child and Stephen Hawkins circulated written reports.

## **276.10 Any Other Business**

### **276.10a ASCC elections**

Diana Cairns had previously circulated information about the three candidates standing for election to the board of the Association of Scottish Community Councils. She asked that everyone indicate their preference to her before 15th March so that she could record our vote.

- \* **Action: All, to let Diana Cairns know before 15th March who they would like to see elected to the ASCC.**

### **276.10b Association of Scottish Community Councils**

Dawson Currie reported that all seemed not to be well in the ASCC, a limited company, and that we should consider suspending our membership. Mike Bridgman mentioned that Craigmillar Community Council was concerned at reports of infighting in the ASCC.

### **276.10c Edinburgh Association of Community Councils**

Dawson Currie reported that the EACC is now happy for community councils to send more than one member to its meetings, and he suggested that anyone who would like to attend should contact him through the Secretary for necessary details. There was to be an EACC meeting with the Chief Constable and Police Committee at the City Chambers on 6th March, and a meeting about transport on 10th April.

- \* **Action: Anyone interested in attending an EACC meeting to contact the Secretary.**

### **276.10d Community Council Development sub-committee**

Dawson Currie wished to revive the dormant Community Council sub-committee which is supposed to be pursuing local development opportunities, especially as the Community Council itself does not seem to have enough time to do everything it should. He tabled a brief paper suggesting the sort of activities he thought this sub-group could undertake, but as there was not time to consider them at this meeting it was agreed to include them on the agenda for March. It was agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

- \* **Action: Community Council to consider the points raised by Dawson Currie at a future meeting.**

### **276.10e land monitoring at old power station site**

Several people were concerned by reports that the City Council were carrying out safety checks in the grounds of the old power station, now a housing estate. Stephen Hawkins reassured the meeting that this kind of survey was a legal requirement, and was carried out regularly throughout the city. Sometimes it is simply to replace missing records, and it can also be part of a regular survey of possible contaminants.

## **276.12 Topics for future meetings**

Suggestions for topics for future meetings include:

- Usage of the Town Hall: not as good as it should be, and not a sufficiently local resource.
- Water efficiency (speaker offered).
- Refurbishment of the swingpark on the Promenade in front of Towerbank.
- Traffic problems in Portobello (Community Council discussion, then City Council visitor).
- Making the Community Council more proactive in improving Portobello.
- Public Art Plan for Portobello.
- Further consideration of the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- A discussion of general planning issues with a City Council official.

## **276.13 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 29th March 2010

Subsequent dates are: 26th April 2010  
31st May 2010  
28th June 2010  
30th August (no meeting in July)