



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 240th meeting held on 26th June 2006 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Jackie Brock, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Zoe Dunn, Alix Gaffney, Kathleen Hart, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Peter McColl, Stephen McIntyre, Karen MacLean, Brenda Molony, Margaret Munro, David Scott, Sheila Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, William Wilson, Betty Young.

Apologies: Robert Gatliff, John Smart, Sandy Smith, David Turner.

In attendance: Jonathan Bendit, Cllr Maureen Child, Caroline Hosking, Lawrence Marshall, Caroline Muirhead, Phil Myerscough (BL Developments), Kenny Owen, Aileen Ward, Anne Ward, Ian Wilson, Shirley Wilson.

240.1 Vice Chair's welcome

Margaret Munro took the chair in Robert Gatliff's absence, welcoming everyone to a full meeting with a busy agenda. She first introduced a group from BL Developments to make a presentation about the plans for the Scottish Power site.

240.2 Presentation by BL Developments

Phil Myerscough gave a short presentation on the status of the attempts to redevelop the former Scottish Power site and surrounding area. The City Council had taken much longer than hoped to produce a master plan for western Portobello, but had now done so. There was to be a three-week consultation period for the document before it became the design brief for a consultant to deliver a detailed strategy and enable development to proceed; one of those weeks had already gone. A major surprise in the Council's draft document was a requirement that the redevelopment should devote 50–60% of its floor-space to employment purposes — whereas BLD wanted to use the site primarily for housing, perhaps with some shops and studio space along the High Street. There was a fear that the 50% employment requirement could reopen the possibility of a superstore development, and that once the Council's brief was finalised, the consultant would have very little scope to ignore any of its stipulations.

Two architects working with BLD then reviewed the options for the redevelopment of the site. Their idea was that a housing development here would link in well with the existing high-quality residential areas further east, and that the industrial and business areas should be confined south of the railway. The western end of the site had significant potential to act as the western gateway to Portobello when approached along Portobello Road or Seafield Road, and the proposed linear park northwards along the Figgate Burn would link the site with the Promenade and the proposed coastal boardwalk.

Several points were then made in answer to questions:

The City Council's plan to replace the King's Road roundabout with traffic lights was about to be implemented, so would not be able to take account of the possible redevelopment of the Scottish Power site.

The design brief had slightly different proposals for the various zones of the overall area. It was pointed out that research carried out in relation to the superstore proposal had revealed that there was not a lot of demand for industrial use in the Baileyfield area, signalling the end of its long historical use.

There were no detailed plans for the front (west end) of the site beyond the desire to "signal the entrance to Portobello".

Maureen Child and Lawrence Marshall both expected that they should have been shown copies of the design brief, but neither had been. Neither had made any contribution to its creation.

Lawrence Marshall said he could understand the Council's desire to retain small businesses on the site, to stop them being crowded out of the city, but was surprised that the level was set as high as 50–60%

Maureen Child observed that the whole point of the consultation was to make a fresh start with open minds and no preconceptions, so hoped that it would still be possible to submit new proposals even after the consultant had been appointed.

Concern was expressed that the Community Council hadn't received a copy of the design brief, and that the proposed consultation period was only three weeks, when the Community Council and Amenity Society both met only monthly.

John Stewart pointed out that the draft Edinburgh Local Plan proposed the building of many new houses on greenbelt land at Newcraighall, and it would be unfortunate if this were the result of requiring too much employment zoning on the Scottish Power site.

Phil Myerscough confirmed that BL Developments does own the Scottish Power site outright.

Maureen Child pointed out that this was not a public document and it therefore didn't offer to accept feedback from the public. Anyone wishing to comment should do so to herself or Lawrence Marshall.

John Stewart announced that the Amenity Society (PAS) would discuss the document at its meeting on Wednesday 28th June, and that anyone who wished to join in was welcome to attend the meeting for this item (further details from 669 6466). The PAS meeting would consider whether it would be helpful to set up a group specifically to consider this issue.

- * **Action: Maureen Child and Lawrence Marshall to discuss the document with City Council officials and find out its status.**
- * **Action: anyone who wishes to express an opinion on this development brief should do so to the local City Councillors.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to add this issue to the PAS agenda and consider setting up a group specifically to look at the redevelopment of Western Portobello.**

240.3 Presentation about Portobello's Air Training Corps

Zoe Dunn spoke about the local ATC group, which she had joined as a cadet 18 years ago, and where she was now a warrant officer. The local squadron was 40 years old, and was currently building itself up again after a drop in support; it was now seeking to re-establish itself as a useful community resource. Its cadets range in age from 13 to 20, and it operates under the rules and regulations of the RAF. It promotes respect and discipline, and helps young people to develop practical skills through such activities as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, to complement the education they receive in school.

The squadron was now looking for opportunities to help in community events and projects, since service is a vital part of cadet experience and training. All cadets receive first aid training. Zoe asked that anyone with ideas for making use of the squadron's services should get in touch with her, by email to zd011s0374@blueyonder.co.uk.

It was suggested that the POD event planned for 13th August would be one possibility for ATC help. Bob Jefferson pointed out that various sections of the local burns are badly littered, and a clean-up organised in conjunction with the city's Task Force would be of major community benefit.

240.4 Community art course

Caroline Muirhead gave a short presentation about her role as a public art development worker with Big Things on the Beach, based in the Community Centre. She was arranging a course of evening classes which would run in the Autumn and Spring to cover the entire process of commissioning a public work of art to be displayed on or near the beach in 2007. Posters sponsored by Standard Life would be displayed locally in the coming weeks. Anyone interested in the project and the night class was invited to contact Caroline by email to caroline.muirhead@yahoo.co.uk.

240.5 Initiatives in the High School

Aileen Ward gave a short presentation describing efforts being made in the High School to tackle problem behaviour. The School was operating a Choices Programme which was unique in Edinburgh, and giving young people an incentive to re-engage with education. There had been improvements, but it was clear that the initiative would have to be sustained in order to maintain them.

In another initiative, funding had been obtained from Fast Forward to help tackle alcohol problems. This was a difficult area in which to act, but the School was determined to do what it could to help prevent any abuse. This health promotion work was based in the Community Centre, and as a response to local problems was unique in the local area.

The School was also in the process of launching a citizenship focus event, which would be organised by pupils and would probably take place next March. Suggestions for community involvement in this would be most welcome, since the idea behind it was to improve relations with the local community.

These projects were all generally welcomed, and it was suggested that they should be reported to local politicians as worthy of receiving more support. Aileen Ward added that other long-standing initiatives such as 'Party for the Planet' were still carrying on, and that environmental awareness was now firmly embedded in the curriculum.

240.6 Minutes of the AGM and the 239th Meeting:

The minutes of the AGM were held over until the next ordinary meeting in order to rectify an anomaly with the nomination of the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous ordinary meeting, number 239, should have recorded Dawson Currie's apologies rather than his presence. With this correction the minutes were accepted: Proposed: Diana Cairns, Seconded: Maria Devoy.

240.7 Matters arising from previous meeting

240.7a 'desirable graffiti': Maureen Child had not yet had a chance to find out the name of the professional graffiti artist working in Craigmillar, but would keep looking.

- * **Action: Maureen Child to find out how we might encourage 'desirable graffiti' in Portobello.**

240.7b Duddingston House Properties: Lawrence Marshall reported that a Council official had told him that DHP does not now have a formal interest in Portobello.

240.7c charity shops: Lawrence Marshall had taken this up with Gavin Strang, who had replied that it was a national issue and would need to be considered at UK level. Maureen Child included this topic in her monthly newsletter, pointing out that charity shops perform a useful function in recycling goods that might otherwise go into expensive land-fill; she circulated copies of the Edinburgh Charity Map which would help to promote this recycling. It was generally agreed that the matter needed further consideration, and Sheila Scott was asked to get the local traders' association to write formally to Lawrence Marshall about the issue.

- * **Action: Sheila Scott to ask the traders' association to write to Lawrence Marshall requesting help with unfair competition from charity shops.**

240.7d the future of the Kilns: Lawrence Marshall reported that the City Council had identified funds for work on the kilns.

240.7e the old town hall clock: John Stewart asked Lawrence Marshall to pursue the reinstatement of the first town clock on the building now occupied by the Baptist Church. Tom Smith reported that the clock itself belongs to the City Council, and that a Baptist Church representative had written to the Council requesting clarification of the position, without response.

- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to trace the progress of this letter and any consequences arising from it.**

240.7f unauthorised vehicular access to the beach: Diana Cairns agreed to follow up the request to Robert Davidson to look into the possibility of blocking access ramps to the beach (without affecting wheelchairs).

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to find out the City Council's plans for access ramps to the beach.**

240.7g Brighton sundial and litter bins: Robert Davidson had had the graffiti removed from the sundial in Brighton Park, and had ordered new litter bins for Brighton Place.

240.7h response to planning consultation: John Stewart reported that he had sent a draft Community Council response to Robert Gatliff ready to be returned to the City Council by the deadline of 30th June.

Jackie Brock asked that the High School and St John's should be included in the section on schools, since Boroughmuir was already mentioned there, and if the High School was in a worse state of repair it should take precedence. It was generally agreed that the High School should be included in the report in the same terms as Boroughmuir.

- * **Action: Secretary to ensure that the Chairman has received this letter.**

240.8 Reports

240.8a Police: the police had dealt with 1,200 calls in the month, fewer than usual, but with more than expected relating to the High Street and Joppa. There had been two break-ins, two stolen cars, three stolen motorcycles, three stolen bikes (two from the Swim Centre), three minor road accidents, and three minor assaults. There had been 60 youth calls, with much alcohol confiscated and several warnings issued. There had been at least one case of a bogus caller, posing as a fire officer, operating in the area.

The police were still interested in receiving suggestions of groups that would like a visit from them under the auspices of the 'Safer Communities' initiative.

240.8b Treasurer: The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £5,116.89; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,526.28.

Kathleen Hart reported that the Helen Hopekirk concert had brought in £516 more in grants and ticket sales than it had cost. This surplus was presently in the Community Council's account, but would be used exclusively to promote Helen Hopekirk's music.

240.8c Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time.

240.8d Task Force: no report this time.

240.8e Planning: John Stewart had objected to an application to erect a 12m mobile phone mast near the cemetery in Milton Road East. He was concerned by recent planning applications for scores of new recycling bins to be located throughout Portobello, aiming to provide one for every 125 properties. Maureen Child confirmed that the provision of extra recycling facilities did indeed encourage more recycling, and pointed out that new legislation and increasing fees for land-fill both pointed to the need to recycle more. Lawrence Marshall said that it was not an option to continue the present relatively low rate of recycling, and suggested that a City Council recycling official be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issues.

240.8f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that the Ned Barnie plaque would be unveiled on 16th July, thanks to generous contributions from the swimming community. The coadestone pillars had been cleaned and looked good; plans were being finalised for their installation in the Community Garden, probably in the Autumn. The National Portrait Gallery had accepted the Helen Hopekirk portrait.

240.8g Portobello Traders: no report this time.

240.8h Portobello Online: Maria Devoy reported that there had always been general guidelines for contributors to the Online Forums, but no formal and transparent complaints procedure. One had now been introduced (see Appendix) in response to recent problems on the site, and it was hoped that this would help to sort out future problems before they got out of hand. The administrators and the moderators were currently the same three people, but it was intended to rectify this shortly. There had been some interesting new contributions to the TV section of the site.

- * **Action: Maria Devoy to arrange a meeting of the Porty Online sub-committee as soon as possible to deal with the present difficulty and report back to the next meeting of the Community Council.**

240.8i Community development planning: Robert Gatliff asked for volunteers to join this group.

- * **Action: Secretary to arrange a meeting of the development group.**

240.8j Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her usual monthly report. She drew particular attention to the Jewel and Esk Valley College's refurbishment plans which were likely to have a significant impact on the neighbourhood.

Lawrence Marshall requested the more timely circulation of Community Council minutes so that he had a chance to follow up his action points in time for the following meeting. He was concerned about unauthorised vehicles using the Prom, and had asked the City Council to reinstate a stolen gate and block access at the bandstand.

240.9 Any Other Business

240.9a Visit to High School: Jackie Brock proposed a vote of thanks to Aileen Ward and the pupils who had shown a group of Community Councillors around the High School, which was warmly agreed.

- * **Action: Secretary to circulate notes from the visit.**

240.9b Sailing school: Jonathan Bendit introduced himself as a keen sailor who had been looking into the history of Portobello Water Sports Club and who now wanted to revive local boating activity by opening a sailing school, possibly at and alongside the new development at the Granny's Attic site. The two ground-floor premises here were still looking for suitable use, and other necessary components were in place. The proposal was generally welcomed.

- * **Action: Secretary to write to local City Councillors in support of the Sailing School proposal.**

240.9c Community planning: Dawson Currie asked that this be a major item for the August meeting, possibly requiring the setting up of a new sub-committee.

- * **Action: August meeting to consider setting up a Community Planning sub-committee.**

240.9d Portobello ties and scarves: Margaret Munro showed examples of ties and scarves that can be produced by Maddocks and Dick, recently arrived in Portobello High Street. It was agreed to consider a possible order at the August meeting.

- * **Action: August meeting to consider ordering and marketing Portobello-branded ties and scarves.**

240.9e Portobello celebrities: The City Council has asked to be notified of any Portobello citizens who have recently received any awards.

- * **Action: all, to notify the Secretary of any local people receiving awards.**

240.9f Community Council meetings and procedures: suggestions and comments on the format of Community Council meetings were requested.

- * **Action: all, to notify the Secretary of possible improvements to Community Council meetings and procedures before the September meeting.**

240.6 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 28th August 2006.

Subsequent dates are: 25th September 2006
30th October 2006
27th November 2006

Appendix: Complaints Procedure for *Porty Online* Forums

The Portobello Online forums are expected to be largely self-moderating. All members should be fully conversant with current Posting Guidelines and must adhere to them at all times, both in letter and in spirit.

Additionally, you are reminded of the Registration Agreement Terms, acceptance of which is a condition of membership.

The Forum Moderators will enforce the guidelines in a fair and consistent manner to the best of their ability.

Inevitably, however, in any community there will be areas of dispute and the Complaints Procedure is designed to deal with such situations.

STEP 1

If you are aggrieved by something someone has written your first step is to either;

a) Reply to them in a reasonable manner and set out the facts without inviting an argument.

OR

b) Use the private messaging facility to discuss it in private.

Most conflicts can be amicably resolved by these means.

STEP 2

If you fail to resolve the problem using Step 1 then your next option is to contact one of the Moderators, who currently are:

Bob Jefferson

Paula Williams (Bellybabe)

Maria Devoy (Marya)

Please provide the Moderators with as much information as possible and be specific about your complaint. This will both speed up the process and help us to arrive at the correct decision.

All complaints are taken very seriously and will be dealt with as quickly as possible. We may, at our discretion, choose to take temporary actions in the meantime.

You will be informed of the Moderators' decision.

STEP 3

If you have followed the first two steps and are still dissatisfied, or if your complaint relates directly to a Moderator, then you should contact an Administrator. The Administrators currently are:

Bob Jefferson

Paula Williams (Bellybabe)

Maria Devoy (Marya)

Complaints may take several days to resolve. You will be informed of the Administrators' decision.

STEP 4

If the matter is still not resolved to your satisfaction then you may request that your complaint be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Council sub-committee, which was set up to oversee the development of the website. Current membership of this committee consists of:

Maureen Child, Maria Devoy, Bob Jefferson, Lawrence Marshall, Brenda Molony (Portobello Reporter), Nick Stroud (PCC Secretary), John Stewart (PAS Chair) and Paula Williams.

The decision of this sub-committee is final and no further correspondence will be entered into.