



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 250th meeting held on 25th June 2007 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Robert Gatliff (Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer)
Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy (Porty Online), Bob Jefferson,
Peter McColl (PEDAL), Stephen McIntyre, Nora Mackenzie, Karen MacLean (PPAG), Brenda Molony
(Porty Reporter), Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), David Scott, Margaret Smith
(Portobello Labour Party), Sandy Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS), Sean Watters (PFANS),
William Wilson, Betty Young.

Apologies: Joyce Campbell, Margaret Downie, Alix Gaffney, Joyce Gilmour, Bernadette Heron,
Giacomo Modina, George Murray, John Smart, Sheila Scott, Gavin Strang, Scott Thomson, David Turner,
Norman Ward.

In attendance: Jonathan Bendit, John Butterworth, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins,
Caroline Hosking, James Hunter (CEC), Maggie Le May, Peigi MacArthur, Kenny MacAskill, Joe Madden,
Lawrence Marshall, Colin O'Brien, Kenny Owen, Lesley Reid, A. Robinson, Cllr Marjorie Thomas,
Bill Thomson, Honor Thomson, Aileen Ward, Anne Ward, Shirley Wilson, Dorian Wiszniewski and
several others.

250.0 Election to Community Council

Following a secret ballot immediately before the meeting began, the three vacancies on the Community Council were filled by Lawrence Marshall, Maria Devoy and Caroline Hosking.

250.1 Chairman's welcome

Robert Gatliff welcomed a good turnout to this, the 250th meeting of Portobello Community Council.

The Secretary circulated a card for members to sign to send best wishes and sympathy to Community Councillor Alix Gaffney, who is seriously ill.

250.2 Minutes of the AGM and previous meeting

The minutes of the 25th AGM were accepted as an accurate record: proposed by Celia Butterworth, seconded by Peter McColl.

Brenda Molony pointed out that the decision recorded in item 249.4c was in fact that Peter McColl would be our representative in the Neighbourhood Partnership with Dawson Currie as substitute. With this correction the minutes were accepted: proposed by Peter McColl, seconded by Brenda Molony.

250.3 Matters arising from May meeting

250.3a Request for more recycling facilities (minute 249.2)

* *Ongoing.*

250.3b Redevelopment of the Funpark site (minute 249.a)

Robert Gatliff circulated the letter he had written to Francis Newton on this subject.

250.3c PCC representative for Neighbourhood Partnership (minute 249.c)

The names of our representatives for the Neighbourhood Partnership have been notified to the City Council.

250.3d Updated membership list and constitution (minute 249.4f)

- * The Secretary has yet to circulate these: *ongoing*.

250.3e Ownership of Christian Path (minute 249.5d)

- * Stephen Hawkins is investigating this: *ongoing*.

250.3f Viridor (minute 249.5e)

On agenda for this meeting.

250.3g Community development plans (minute 249.5i)

- * Secretary to circulate further details: *ongoing*.

250.3e Floral displays around Town Hall (minute 249.6b)

James Hunter reported that he has been dealing with these matters.

250.3e Removing through traffic from Portobello (minute 249.6c)

- * Robert Gatliff has yet to write: *ongoing*.

250.4 North West Development Plan

Plans were to be on display in the Library from the following day; all members were encouraged to view them and submit comments.

- * **Action: all, to comment as much as possible on the plans for redeveloping North West Portobello.**

250.5 Viridor

The Action Group would be meeting at St James' church hall at 7:30pm on Tuesday 26th June.

William Wilson expressed his concern that the Community Council might be being used as a pawn in negotiations.

John Stewart summarised feedback from the public exhibition. The proposal seemed to be for a rail-based operation which would be screened by trees, all waste being transferred indoors, with no hazardous waste, operating from 7:30am to 5:30pm, with one train per day and marginal increase in road traffic.

One worry was that this would be the thin end of a wedge, with more trains and round-the-clock operation to be introduced in due course. Even the operation proposed would generate 105 lorry movements a day, in and then out again. It was not clear that this was the uniquely best site, nor what the impact of Powderhall's closure might be.

Diana Cairns reported that different people were getting different answers to the same questions, which raised doubts about the state of the plans. Caroline Hosking wondered why this application had to go ahead before the City Council had determined its waste management strategy. No one was aware of any advantage to Portobello in the plans, and there could be a negative impact on local residential areas. Stephen McIntyre wondered if there would still be a lot of extra traffic on the Sir Harry Lauder Road if this site were placed at Millerhill, but the feeling was that the increase wouldn't be so great. Margaret Munro observed that Viridor hadn't known about the roundabout replacement at Milton Road, which undermined their traffic planning arguments, and pointed out that East Lothian had plans for residential developments around Millerhill.

William Wilson was concerned that the site for a future Portobello station wasn't sufficiently clear. Robert Gatliff wondered about alternative uses for the site, such as train and/or bus stations, and pointed out that the site would be lost for ever once redeveloped. John Stewart wanted to see more detailed plans for the operation at Seafield, since the plan for a boardwalk didn't yet take account of the waste management operation there. Dawson Currie was worried that the waste transfer building could be four storeys high, and very visible around the area. Maureen Child noted the many concerns, but was confident that the Council's planning process would be able to take them all into account.

Robert Gatliff summed up the general feeling of the meeting that there were a lot of concerns and no particular advantage for Portobello. He would write to the City Council reporting this discussion, and asking if the possibility of sea transport from Seafield had been investigated.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to City Council summarising concerns about Viridor's proposals.**

250.5 Edinburgh plan

John Stewart reported that the finalised new Edinburgh City Local Plan was available for comment until 6th July, and suggested that the Community Council should take this opportunity. The main concerns identified by the Amenity Society were: the proposal to build 420 new houses at Newcraighall; the threat to open green spaces; plans for waste management; the plans to build a new High School on Portobello Park; and the future of Meadowbank. Comments could be made using a form available on the City Council's website.

250.5a Housing

William Wilson wondered if the planning process were helping to sustain Edinburgh's artificially high house prices. Robert Gatliff thought it would be good to have more housing at Newcraighall since there was a train station there, and the concept of the green belt was out-dated; Stephen Hawkins was concerned to keep a gap between Edinburgh and Musselburgh, but there were no other strong feelings either way. Robert Gatliff mentioned that the City Council was also consulting on its private housing strategy, and he would respond to request more affordable housing, acknowledging that there were funding and supply problems which City Council policy could not affect.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to City Council to request more information about the proposals for housing at Newcraighall.**
- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to City Council asking for more affordable housing in Edinburgh.**

250.5b Open spaces

John Stewart reported that the City Council's policy on open spaces was becoming less clear-cut and more unreliable. Sean Watters thought that the definitions of what was allowed were still strict, and offered a high degree of protection, but it was generally felt that too much depended on forms of wording, and that outcomes might depend on arbitrary definitions of 'community benefit'. Caroline Hosking felt that the policy was not about protecting green spaces but about permitting as much development as possible, and Lawrence Marshall was worried that Portobello didn't have a lot of green space and must protect this as much as possible. The plans didn't seem to distinguish between 'officially-designated' and 'other' open spaces, and should do.

Robert Gatliff wanted to see a general presumption against developing on green spaces unless there were very special circumstances. Bob Jefferson didn't think that the Community Council could reach a consensus on this issue, reminding the meeting that common sense, compromise and consensus should underpin any stance we adopted. If that consensus couldn't be achieved, we should not try and enforce it, but individual members should make their own personal responses. William Wilson agreed that a vote taken on any particular issue might not adequately reflect the views of members.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to draft a letter to City Council pointing out that the Community Council was effectively split on the policy on open spaces, with some members totally opposed to it and others content with it.**

250.5c Waste management

There was a general feeling that Portobello did not want a waste management facility.

250.5d Portobello High School

A site for the new School was identified in the Plan, with recognition that the proposal had to go through the full planning process. Caroline Hosking wondered why the land should be earmarked before planning approval had been obtained; Maureen Child responded that the site had to be safeguarded in this way, though Stephen Hawkins suggested that no extra safeguarding was needed. Sean Watters felt it was an entirely reasonable procedure which didn't pre-empt or pre-judge the planning process in any way. Lawrence Marshall suggested that we should note the proposal but not seek a stance on it until the planning process got under way.

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to draft a letter to City Council reflecting the diversity of opinion on the issue of a new High School.**

250.5e Meadowbank

It was agreed that if Meadowbank were to be closed, plenty of alternative facilities should be provided for East Edinburgh. Lawrence Marshall observed that a reported plan to demolish the interior and retain the stadium was the exact opposite of what was required.

250.6 Reports

Most reports were postponed to the August meeting.

250.6a Treasurer: The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £2,573.05; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,060.28.

250.7 Chairman's closing remarks

In closing the meeting and inviting all present to join in a celebration of Portobello Community Council's 25th birthday, Robert Gatliff drew attention to the benefits of having a forum such as this, at which people from a range of backgrounds could air and share views, building partnerships which would bring lasting benefits to our community. He thanked everyone for their contributions, and looked forward to a bright and positive future.

250.8 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 27th August 2007.

Subsequent dates are: 24th September 2007
29th October 2007
26th November 2007
(no meeting in December)

