



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 260th meeting held on 30th June 2008 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Margaret Munro (Vice Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer), Archie Burns (PPAG), Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl (PEDAL), Brenda Molony (*Party Reporter*), Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), Margaret Smith (Portobello Labour Party), Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS).

Apologies: Diana Cairns (PCATS), Robert Gatliff, Celia Butterworth, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, James Hunter (CEC), Linda Kelly, Lawrence Marshall, Sheila Scott (Merchants & Hoteliers), Margaret Williamson (High School).

In attendance: Cllr Maureen Child, Arthur Jeffery, D.J. Johnston-Smith, Kenny MacAskill MSP, Jaap Prins, Anne Ward.

260.1 Vice Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff was again called away from Edinburgh on business, so the chair was taken by Margaret Munro. She welcomed everyone to an unusually small meeting, and announced that Diana Cairns was missing this meeting because of the recent death of her sister; the meeting sent deep sympathies and condolences to Diana.

260.2 Minutes of the AGM on 26th May

The Treasurer pointed out that in section 26.3 the £500 had already been given to POD, rather than just "offered"; and that the balance of the Helen Hopekirk fund could definitely come to the Community Council – not "presumably".

With these corrections the minutes were accepted: proposed by Tom Smith, seconded by Margaret Smith.

260.3 Matters arising from AGM

Margaret Smith reported that she had arranged a meeting with James Hunter on 1st July to discuss maintenance of the Harry Lauder Garden (item 26.3); she would also be seeking clarification from the City Council's environmental task force on several other local issues.

No one had contacted the Secretary about recruiting new members for the Community Council (item 26.4), but this was now of academic interest since the City Council indicated that we could not fill our vacancies until the election in October 2009.

260.4 Minutes of Ordinary Meeting on 26th May

Caroline Hosking pointed out that she had only thanked the City Council for *agreeing* to clean up the 'unnamed square'; they hadn't actually done any work there yet.

With this correction the minutes were accepted: proposed Brenda Molony; seconded John Stewart.

260.5 Matters arising from previous meetings

The matters arising from the April and May meetings were held over to the August meeting.

260.6 Extraordinary General Meeting in August

There seems to be steadily more work for the Community Council to do, and increasing expectations from the City Council and Scottish Government that we will impartially and proactively represent the views of everyone in our community area in response to any consultation sent to us. This workload is becoming very heavy. Cllr Child suggested that we should just send back any work we don't want to take on, so that we can concentrate our scarce resources on the matters that are important to us, but this is potentially denying a voice to the whole of Portobello; we should at least have a mechanism to report to the community when there is any opportunity to participate in local democracy. Diana Cairns had previously made the suggestion that we should appoint more office bearers to share out the work. She had suggested having a minutes secretary and a correspondence secretary. Nick Stroud built on this idea by suggesting that the 'correspondence secretary' (effectively the Secretary) should be supported by a group of people to handle incoming and outgoing work, and that there should also be dedicated people to handle communication, fund-raising, and chairing the Community Development sub-group. The Neighbourhood Partnership is becoming increasingly significant and demanding, and our representative on that – Peter McColl – might like some help and support in that connection.

A member of the public pointed out that our venue for meetings – a church hall – might put some people off attending and participating in our meetings; the problem is that there were few if any alternatives that were so central and that we could afford. It was generally agreed that we could use online resources more effectively.

Further discussion was deferred to the August meeting.

260.7 Reports

260.7a Police: no report this time.

260.7b Treasurer: Treasurer's Account: £2,768.17; Joppa Tennis Courts: £9,616.30. Ring-fenced money in the Treasurer's Account totals £1,971 (for Golden Days, Christmas Lights and Website), leaving just £797.17 of general-purpose funds (though we have still to receive our City Council grant for this year).

260.7c Neighbourhood Partnership: Peter McColl reported on the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting held the previous Wednesday. A problem arose when Maureen Child submitted a motion on devolved services and Peter hadn't known how to respond to this on behalf of the Community Council since we had not had a chance to discuss the motion. It was agreed that we ask that all Neighbourhood Partnership papers be circulated well before meetings to give us a chance to agree our response to them.

The central Edinburgh Partnership has told the 17 individual Neighbourhood Partnerships that they may only distribute money from the Fairer Scotland Fund for three of the eight possible categories, employability, health or early intervention. This arbitrary restriction will have a negative impact on some local organisations, and make community engagement much more difficult. There was also concern that our Neighbourhood Partnership had already distributed most or all of its annual grant after only three months, had not treated the whole area evenly, and had not ensured that everyone in Portobello who might want to apply for a grant knew how to do so. Peter McColl agreed to draft letters on these two topics, requesting for more money for local projects and asking what arrangements would be made for its distribution in future. The Treasurer asked for a list of successful grant applications; Peter McColl agreed to try and get one.

- * **Action:** Peter McColl to draft a letter for the Secretary to send, requesting that procedures be established to make it easier for the Community Council to participate in the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- * **Action:** Peter McColl to draft a letter to the Edinburgh Partnership objecting to the restrictions placed on project funding.
- * **Action:** Peter McColl to draft a letter to the Neighbourhood Partnership requesting more money for local projects.
- * **Action:** Peter McColl to request a list of grants made by the Neighbourhood Partnership.

260.7d Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time.

260.7e Environmental Update: James Hunter reported on several issues by email. He would shortly be arranging a meeting with Margaret Smith and Kathleen Hart to discuss grass-cutting in the Harry Lauder Garden. General ground maintenance was slightly behind schedule at this busiest time of year but teams

were working hard to catch up. Damage caused by the weed-clearing machine in the pedestrian square at Bridge Street was regretted and steps were being taken to replace damaged paving stones; there were plans for new planting here and at Eastfield in late Summer or early Autumn. The damaged noticeboards were being assessed for repair.

Caroline Hosking recorded her thanks to the Task Force for the installation of bollards on the Promenade at the foot of King's Road, but noted that the gates were loose and not padlocked.

260.7f Planning: John Stewart reported that the 'Edinburgh Plan' had overruled the Local Plan in specifying what could be done with the 'Ghost Train site' at 19–24 Promenade; the Amenity Society had objected, and it was agreed that the Community Council would object also. Viridor's application to build a waste transfer site was to be determined by the City Council's Planning Committee on 30th July. PONGS and PAS would be attending to present objections; Peter McColl agreed to attend on the Community Council's behalf.

- * **Action:** John Stewart to draft a letter objecting to new planning criteria for the Ghost Train site.
- * **Action:** Peter McColl to present the Community Council's objections to the waste transfer site at the Planning Committee meeting on 30th July.

260.7g Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that the horizon board at the foot of King's Road had been removed by vandalism, and would cost £1,000–£1,500 to repair. It was one of the first to be installed and had survived for eight years, in which time the Signs and Plaques sub-committee had learned much about vandal-proofing.

260.7h Portobello Traders: no report this time.

260.7i Party Online: Bob Jefferson reported that there was a film about the Portobello High School art competition on YouTube. (*It is at* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojn5E7Assik>)

260.7j Portobello High School: no report this time.

260.7k Community development planning: no report this time. Margaret Munro suggested that as the Community Council didn't have a meeting in July, that 'vacant Monday' could be used to discuss the future of this group.

- * **Action:** Anyone interested in an informal discussion of proactive community development planning was invited to the Barelio Bar in the High Street, at 8pm on Monday 28th July.

260.7l Community Centre: David Scott reported the appointment of new office bearers; David Ewing is the new chairman, and Gillian Dunn the new administrator, working four days a week. Maureen Child reported that plans for a new Library, Community Centre and flats on the current Library site had been dropped from City Council plans.

260.7m Communicating with communities: no report this time.

260.7n Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her regular report, highlighting the Neighbourhood Partnership meeting the previous Wednesday, the detailed plans for the new junction at King's Road, and efforts to clarify ownership and planning restrictions at the Ghost Train site.

260.7o Member of the Scottish Parliament

Kenny MacAskill gave an off-the-cuff report to update a number of local issues. He hoped to see flexibility and broad interpretation in distribution of the Fairer Scotland Fund. He had objected to the plan for a waste transfer site in Portobello, and was looking into new plans for the housing development at Milton Road. The Scottish Government had launched a public consultation on dealing with alcohol-related problems, and feedback from the Community Council on this would be welcome. He also alluded to the interesting developments in the Scottish Parliament, and mentioned that Norma Graham – who had recently been appointed as Scotland's first Chief Constable, in Fife – had worked in Portobello early in her career.

260.8 Any Other Business

260.8a King's Road roundabout

It was reported that there had already been two accidents, both involving the same dumper-truck driver, and that a vixen and cubs that had been living on the old roundabout had been re-homed.

260.8b Festival of Learning

The theme for the Summer event this year was to be health and wellbeing, in Portobello and Craigmillar on consecutive Saturdays in August. November's theme would be history.

260.8c Craigmillar online community information point

Margaret Munro circulated information about this initiative and suggested that it would be a good way to promote local organisations and to foster more joint working across our Partnership area.

260.8d Figgate Burn flood prevention work

Carillion had written to residents in the area affected by this work to say that they were investigating a new way to carry out the necessary work that would have less impact on local people, and that a temporary bridge was to be installed in Rosefield Park while the permanent one was out of commission.

260.9 Future meetings

The Vice Chair closed proceedings by noting that there would as usual be no meeting in July, and she wished everyone a good Summer.

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 July 2008 (informal meeting at Barelio, 251 Portobello High Street)
25th August 2008 (next ordinary meeting, and EGM).

Subsequent dates are: 29th September 2008
27th October 2008
24th November 2008
26th January 2009 (no meeting in December)