



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **DRAFT Minutes of the 280th meeting held on 28th June 2010 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Tom Ballantine, Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Lilian Graham, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Leon Thompson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council), William Wilson.

**Apologies:** Sandra Blake, Sheila Gilmore M.P., David Hamilton, Matthew Higson (Portobello Police), Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

**In attendance:** Tom Black (PEDAL), Cllr Mike Bridgman, D. Cameron, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, Hugh Crawford, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Arthur Jeffrey, Kenny MacAskill (MSP), Suzanne McIntosh, Lawrence Marshall, Tom Smith, Karol Swanson, and several members of the public.

### **280.1 Chair's welcome**

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked everyone who had helped achieve the excellent result in the Viridor inquiry, in particular local resident and planning expert Suzanne McIntosh. He reported that Sandra Blake was home from hospital but still not at all well and therefore having to relinquish the post of treasurer.

### **280.2 Presentation about PEDAL**

Tom Black, Project Manager with PEDAL ('Portobello Transition Town'), gave a presentation on the many initiatives PEDAL is working on to help the local environment. PEDAL has just obtained a large grant from the Government's Climate Change Fund, so has been able to create three FTE posts and move into an office in Baileyfield Road, from where they are managing ten new projects this year on the themes of energy and food – in addition to continuing such existing projects as the Porty shopper (thousands sold, around the world), car-free days, cycling promotion and the community orchard. As well as Tom, the PEDAL staff are Charlotte Bickmore (Energy Worker), Polly Cooke and Peter Upton (sharing the post of Food Worker).

The ten projects are:

- Warm Tenements Scheme (40% of Portobello residents live in tenements; this scheme aims to get at least ten tenements maximally insulated)
- Dig in Porty (a series of courses to help local people grow and use veg and fruit)
- Solar Porty (plans to bulk-buy solar hot water panels and help with their installation; trials in Fife have demonstrated significant savings)
- Hotspot Insulation Scheme (insulation advice and support for non-tenemental households)
- Portobello Organic Market (a monthly market for locally-produced and/or organic food, aiming to support and complement local traders)
- Wind Energy Project (a major project, aiming to set up a wind turbine by the bus depot to cut carbon emissions and eventually generate income for Portobello)
- Fruitful Porty (aiming to establish and exploit a town-wide orchard)
- Donkey Field Orchard (over 30 fruit trees have been planted, with local schools involved)

- Edinburgh Garden Share Scheme (help for people who have difficulty looking after their own gardens)
- Portobello Community Farm (exploring the feasibility of operating a local farm on several linked sites, an idea which has worked well in New York)

Several individual events are planned for the Summer, including an Energy Fair on 10th July and a Food Fair on 7th August, both in the Town Hall 11am–4pm. There are full details online at <http://pedal-porty.org.uk/>

## **280.5 Community councils and planning**

Karol Swanson (planner and mediator) and Hugh Crawford (architect, planner, and a mediator formerly attached to the Government’s Reporters Unit) described the help and training they offer to community councils and other local representatives all over Scotland to engage with the new planning system. Karol observed that one of the strengths of community councils is that they represent the views of a wide range of interests, and if all members agree on a particular issue there’s a danger that they may not be accurately representing all the points of view in their community. The techniques of mediation are proving useful in minimising conflicts within community councils or between community councils and their community, which is important as developers can exploit such conflicts to their own advantage.

Karol and Hugh were therefore offering a free, independent, impartial mediation session to Portobello Community Council to help resolve problems and issues and help us to cope with new challenges and pull strongly together for the benefit of our whole community. Such a session would last two hours with about a dozen people chosen to represent a full range of views, with some preparation beforehand and a follow-up session if necessary. The current training is largely exploratory, to gain experience of the new planning legislation.

It was agreed that this could be useful for a variety of issues, and that while it might not solve every problem it was always important to find as much common ground as possible in order to move forward respectfully for the benefit of the whole community. It was thus generally agreed that we would like to benefit from this opportunity and acquire useful skills.

It was agreed that a group would meet on 2nd or 5th August, in the evening, depending on the availability of a venue.

- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to find a venue for the mediation group meeting.**
- \* **Action: All, to let Diana Cairns know if they would be interested in joining the mediation group.**

## **280.4 Minutes of AGM and May meeting**

The minutes of the 28th AGM were accepted: proposed by Diana Cairns, seconded by Margaret Munro.

The minutes of the 279th ordinary meeting were accepted: proposed by Celia Butterworth, seconded by Caroline Hosking.

## **280.5 Matters arising from May meeting**

**280.5a** Helen Platts to reinstate the bench lost from the vicinity of the bus shelters on the south side of the High Street, if appropriate (though not necessarily in the same place) (279.3a). Ongoing.

**280.5b** Helen Platts to try and locate and reinstate the ‘Welcome to Portobello’ sign removed during the King’s Road roadworks (279.3b). The original is lost; Helen Platts is investigating the possibility of getting a replacement, and will consult the Community Council about this. Ongoing.

**280.5c** Cathy Cherizard to consider requesting a second sign to the Bridge Street car park (279.3c). This is in hand; everyone was happy with Cathy’s proposal.

**280.5d** Robert Gatliff to seek funding to repair Baptist Church so clock can be put back in place (279.3e). Robert has identified several possible sources of funding and will apply to them. Ongoing.

**280.5e** Stephen Hawkins to arrange a meeting of Council official and William Wilson at swingpark (279.3f). Ongoing; a date has been organised.

**280.5f** Diana Cairns to organise a consultation event for Brighton and Rosefield Residents' Association (279.3g). PAS is also now involved, and good plans are being developed with the City Council. In hand.

**280.5g** Peter McColl to circulate notes on discussions about the use of the Town Hall (279.3h). Peter had organised a meeting to discuss this, and circulated a report at the meeting.

**280.5h** Anyone who has not done so to complete the Community Council 'skills' questionnaire (279.3j).

**280.5i** Diana Cairns to ask POD, PEDAL, Holyrood and St Johns if they would like to join the Community Council, and Tom Ballantine to ask the Head Teacher and Parent Teacher Council at the High School (279.3i). Ongoing.

**280.5j** Cathy Cherizard to follow up as many as possible of the anti-littering suggestions (279.3m). Cathy reported on a campaign to deter littering on the beach and Prom this Summer, involving the Community Safety Team, the police, Environmental Wardens, portable CCTV cameras and posters.

**280.5k** Peter McColl to arrange the first meeting of a sub-committee to identify local traffic problems and recommend ways of dealing with them, focusing first on Bath Street to Bellfield Street (279.3p). Peter circulated a report at the meeting.

**280.5l** David Hamilton to check on the possibility of using the triangle of railway land next to Gilberstoun for allotments (279.3r). Ongoing.

**280.5m** Sandra Blake to agree with Elsie Thom how the Tennis Club accounts are to operate (279.3s). The Tennis Club was asked to decide whether it wanted to be a sub-group or a nominated group of the Community Council; it was suggested that they see how a similar club at Juniper Green operates. Meanwhile John Stewart agreed to speak to Kathleen Hart about public liability insurance and paying this year's rent for the courts.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to speak to Kathleen Hart about paying this year's rent, and about public liability insurance.**

**280.5n** Diana Cairns to seek clarification of the relationship between the Community Council and Joppa Tennis Courts from Eileen Hewitt of the City Council (279.4d). Done.

**280.5o** Cathy Cherizard to circulate an Environmental Update by email (279.4e). Done.

**280.5p** Stephen Hawkins to investigate plans for Christian Path (279.4e). Ongoing.

**280.5q** Cathy Cherizard to report what action will be taken to repair storm damage (279.4e). Cathy reported that Alvin Barber is investigating, and costing necessary work, but she didn't know what the timescale would be; she agreed to find out if this will include restoring sand to the beach.

- \* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to find out if the beach is to be replenished.**

**280.5r** John Stewart to write to the City Council's Director of Planning (279.4f). Done.

**280.5s** John Stewart and Peter McColl to write a paper for Dawson Currie to raise planning issues at the EACC (279.4f).

## **280.6 Agree agenda and AOB**

The agenda, with the points already raised for AOB, was agreed.

## **280.7 Application to redevelop 'Big W' site**

A planning application has been lodged to permit food to be sold on this site, and comments requested by 23rd July, though Diana Cairns has requested an extension. She is collecting grounds for objection.

- \* **Action: All, to encourage as many people as possible to object to this application.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to write objecting to the application.**

## **280.8 BL Developments: Proposal of Application Notice**

There was to be a public meeting in the Town Hall at 7:30pm on 16th July at which amended plans would be presented. It was agreed that a Friday evening in Trades Fortnight was not acceptable, and that the meeting should be delayed.

- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to ask Jo-Anne Laidlaw at the City Council's Planning department to ask BL to postpone the meeting.**

## **280.9 August meeting**

There is no meeting in July, so three external agencies are asking to make presentations about major planning applications at the August meeting: Cadell and EDI, the High School architects, and BL Developments. John Stewart therefore proposed that this meeting concentrate solely on these three presentations, and postpone all its regular business. It is possible that at least one of the presentations may be delayed. If all three go ahead then the August meeting will start at 7pm, and the order will be BL Developments (15 minutes presentation plus 15 minutes question-and-answer), the Newcraighall developers (15+15), then the High School architects (20 + unlimited questions).

## **280.10 Reports**

**280.10a Police:** No report available; the new Police representative will be PC Matthew Higson.

**280.10b Treasurer:** Sandra Blake having had to relinquish the treasurer's post through illness, John Stewart requested another volunteer. Leon Thompson offered to take over, and the meeting accepted with pleasure.

**280.10c Neighbourhood Partnership:** No report this time.

**280.10d Joppa Tennis Courts:** No report this time.

**280.10e Environmental Update:** Cathy Cherizard circulated an instructive and well-received report.

### **280.10f Planning:**

The application by a Portobello couple to build a three-bedroom house at 9/2 Bellfield Lane was discussed at length. The Community Council had previously objected to applications to build houses at 17 and 19 in the Lane on the grounds of over-development, traffic problems, inappropriate materials, out of sympathy with the conservation area, and for effectively creating a two-sided street. The City Council's planning department had accepted most of these arguments, but they did not all apply to the current case. Margaret Munro expressed concern about emergency access. Stephen Hawkins and Archie Burns emphasised the need to be consistent, and while sympathising with the reason for this application they thought it would be incompatible with the conservation area. William Wilson supported the proposal, mentioning that because of the shortage of local housing, only two of the people he had known at primary school still lived locally. Maria Devoy pointed out that this was not a back-garden development and that traffic could access the site.

It was agreed to hold a vote; 8 people objected to the proposal, 7 supported it, 4 abstained.

John agreed to draft a letter citing worries over emergency access, over-development, incompatibility of materials in a conservation area, and general safety issues, and circulate it for comment.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to write to the City Council's Planning Department summarising concerns about the proposed development.**

**280.10g Signs, Plaques and coade-stone:** No report this time.

**280.10h Portobello Community Centre:** No report this time.

### **280.10i Councillors:**

Maureen Child circulated a written report.

Stephen Hawkins mentioned the funeral of Dickie Alexander, long-time Portobello resident and former City Councillor.

Mike Bridgman had been working on the same issues as his colleagues, and was coordinating objections to the proposed development at Newcraighall.

## **280.11 Any Other Business**

### **280.11a road re-alignment at Towerbank**

Sean Watters reported that Maryfield was to be moved to the back of the ash pitch, to make emergency access easier. The expanding school roll meant that a planned extension at the School would not be able to accommodate the pupils from the Annexe; the Education Department and the School Board were therefore reconsidering the options.

### **280.11b Row Party**

Leon Thompson mentioned the regatta to be held on 24th July, and agreed to circulate details by email.

- \* **Action: Leon Thompson to circulate details of Regatta by email.**

### **280.11c Early closure of public toilets**

Lilian Graham reported that the public toilets on the Promenade were being closed unreasonably early, with unnecessary antisocial consequences. Nick Stroud was asked to write to the City Council asking for much longer opening hours.

- \* **Action: Nick Stroud to ask that public toilets stay open much longer during the Summer months.**

## **280.12 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 30th August (no meeting in July) – **starting at 7pm**

Subsequent dates are: 27th September 2010  
25th October 2010  
29th November 2010  
31st January 2011 (no meeting in December)