



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 247th meeting held on 26th March 2007 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Margaret Munro (Vice Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Zoe Dunn, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony, Tom Nimmo, Sheila Scott, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, David Turner, Sean Watters, Betty Young.

Apologies: Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Alix Gaffney, Robert Gatliff, Kathleen Hart, Caroline Hosking, Stephen McIntyre, Nora Mackenzie, Karen McLean, Aileen Ward, William Wilson.

In attendance: Cllr Maureen Child, Arthur Jeffery, Pat Jeffery, Neil McDonald (Broadway Malyan), Cllr Lawrence Marshall, Kenny Owen, Anne Ward, Ian Wilson.

247.1 Vice Chair's welcome

With Robert Gatliff at an important meeting in London Margaret Munro took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting, reminding people of the general desire for friendly and orderly meetings with all contributions made through the chair.

247.2 BL Developments

Neil McDonald of Broadway Malyan responded to various points. No meeting had yet been held with a hotel group, pending assessment of local opinion; a hotel might occupy quite a large area but not necessarily employ many people. BL was awaiting the Council consultant's report and would hope to organise or participate in a planning day; the consultants appointed were Cadell2 LLP, and they would be sent a copy of the questionnaire results as background for a community planning day. Planning processes would probably take too long for any construction to begin this year.

247.3 Minutes of the last meeting

Bob Jefferson was asked what had been intended by "covering" the election in *Porty Online* (item 246.7h); it was agreed that the intention was only to put candidates's names there. With this clarification the minutes were accepted: proposed by Brenda Molony, seconded by Sheila Scott.

247.4 Matters arising from January meeting

247.4a Election hustings (minute 246.4b)

See item 247.6 below.

247.4b City Council's waste management strategy (minute 246.4d)

- * **Action: Secretary to invite John Paterson to a future meeting to talk about the City's waste management plans.**

247.4c High Street redevelopment (minute 246.4e)

Stuart Smith was in charge of this project for the City Council, and had agreed to come to a meeting on-site to discuss problems; Stephen Hawkins, Brenda Molony, Margaret Smith and John Stewart expressed an interest in participating in such a meeting.

Concerns about danger from increased traffic continued. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the police representative could stay for longer, and for the whole meeting once or twice a year. Meanwhile, people with specific questions for the police could send them to the Secretary for forwarding by email.

- * **Action: Secretary to arrange site visit with Stuart Smith.**
- * **Action: Secretary to complain to the City Council about the increased threat to pedestrians, and to ask why a safety DVD had been distributed to schools but not to other sections of the community.**
- * **Action: Secretary to ask the police representative to remain longer at our meetings so that we can discuss emerging issues such as traffic problems.**

247.4d The Baptist Church / Old Town Hall Clock (minute 246.4f)

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to give Lawrence Marshall a copy of the Baptist Church's title deeds.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to investigate the issues about the restoration of the clock.**

247.4e Portobello schools (minute 246.5)

- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to the chair of the School Board at the High School, offering our support for the best possible new school, and indicating our concern about the source of funding for it, which should not threaten existing resources.**

247.4f Meadowbank redevelopment (minute 246.6)

- * **Action: all, to send comments to Robert Gatliff as soon as possible.**
- * **Action: Robert Gatliff to write to the City Council summarising our views about Meadowbank.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to find out how much the Council expects to raise by selling Meadowbank.**

247.5 Neighbourhood Partnership and LDC

Margaret Munro reported that the Local Development Committee meeting on 27th March would be the final one. The manager for the new Neighbourhood Partnership would be introduced at this meeting and the Neighbourhood Partnership would then take over from the LDC.

A meeting on 22nd March had been told that Neighbourhood Partnerships would be advisory rather than voting committees of the City Council, though Maureen Child pointed out that 90% of Council business is achieved through agreement rather than voting, and that the Partnerships would be playing a significant role.

Margaret Munro and Maureen Child emphasised the importance of finding a representative from Portobello Community Council to balance the representation from Craigmillar; if we don't take up our place it would be given to someone from the voluntary sector and we wouldn't be able to get it back, to our probable detriment. The effort required would probably amount to four meetings a year with business and local meetings in between those. Dawson Currie suggested that the Chair and Secretary were already well placed to take on this role.

Margaret Munro mentioned the judicial review currently being undertaken of the conduct of affairs at Craigmillar Community Council, and other unpleasantness which was likely to have an impact on us.

Bob Jefferson recalled the valuable work done by the City Council's 'Portobello Group' and wondered if that could be revived. It was agreed that this had been very useful, but was not as big as the Partnerships which for example involved police and health representatives.

The Community Council committee was asked to find a representative to go the Neighbourhood Partnership meetings.

- * **Action: committee to find a representative to go to Neighbourhood Partnership meetings.**

247.6 Election hustings

The Secretary was asked to arrange a meeting of the organisers in the coming week, to finalise details for publicity and contacting candidates and media. David Turner reported that Jim Jack, minister at Duddingston, had offered to help chair the event.

Bob Jefferson summarised plans to cover the elections in *Porty Online*, for the benefit of people who could not attend the hustings event. The public would be invited to submit questions by email and a selection of these would be forwarded to all candidates, whose responses would be put on the website. Margaret Munro pointed out that this had not been requested by the Community Council, so candidates could not be pressured to participate. Concern was expressed about the way in which questions would be chosen, and Stephen

Hawkins observed that the original message to candidates had not mentioned this filtering process. Anne Ward was worried that decisions were being taken outwith Community Council meetings.

It was agreed that this should be seen as an independent *Party Online* initiative, and that candidates should be free to participate or not as they chose. Bob Jefferson invited people to send questions to him which he would select with Robert Gatliff's help before sending them to candidates. He was also investigating the possibility of offering candidates the opportunity of making short video clips to be made available online; these could be followed up with discussions in *talk-party* which would be moderated by Maria Devoy.

247.7 Party's Portable Theme Park

Lawrence Marshall remarked that he had only heard about the arrival of the funfair when nothing could be done to move it elsewhere. He was confident that all relevant rules had been observed, and that the City Council had imposed several important conditions before granting the temporary licence. The Council would monitor noise levels in local homes and enforce the agreed level; if anyone needed to complain about noise, the relevant contact information was provided under 'Noise' in the Council's A-Z list. Kenny Owen reported that the police had received no advance notice of the fair, and said he would discuss the implications with Inspector Ward and the local Youth Action Team.

247.8 Community Council vacancies

There have been at least two enquiries about the vacancy caused by Avril Scott's retirement, in relation to which people have found that two versions of our constitution are in circulation. With seven members of the Community Council standing in May's local election it is possible that there could be more vacancies shortly, so it was agreed to leave consideration of this until the May meeting.

- * **Action: Secretary to circulate the correct version of our constitution.**

247.9 Reports

247.9a Police: the police had dealt with around 1,100 calls in March, of which 174 involved the High Street – noticeably fewer than in preceding months. These figures include domestic problems as well as crimes and disorders. There followed a wide-ranging discussion about the challenges facing the police. Each beat area has one officer assigned to patrol it, and when that officer was absent for any reason there was no replacement. There hadn't been a beat officer on duty at the time of a recent incident at the funfair, following which seven people had been arrested with more likely to follow. Beats would be enlarged in April but still have only one associated police officer. It was observed that many youth disorders were caused by incomers. Dawson Currie asked PC Owen to find out how many police officers are employed in Portobello and how they are organised (for example in the Youth Action Team). Continuing traffic problems at the roadworks in Milton Road were noted.

- * **Action: Kenny Owen to find out how many police work in Portobello, and in what teams.**

247.9b Treasurer: The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £2,797.05; Joppa Tennis Courts: £6,929.28.

The JTC account would shortly be depleted by around £3,500 invested in electrical work at the clubhouse. The latest payment to the gardener for maintaining the Harry Lauder Garden had used up the rest of the funds raised in 1999. Dawson Currie agreed to look for other funding sources and the Secretary was asked to find out if the Council would adopt the Garden. It was agreed to continue maintaining the Garden out of our own resources meantime.

It was pointed out that we have been using the Baptist Church Hall since 1996 for a constant annual rent of £100. It was agreed to increase this to £120, and Tom Smith was asked to convey our thanks to the Church authorities for the use of the Hall, which is much appreciated.

- * **Action: Dawson Currie to seek alternative funding to maintain the Harry Lauder Garden.**
- * **Action: Secretary to ask if the City Council will take over maintenance of the Harry Lauder Garden.**
- * **Action: Tom Smith to thank Baptist Church for use of the Hall for our meetings.**

247.9c Joppa Tennis Courts: the AGM would be held in March and Robert Gatliff would report on that.

247.9d Task Force: no report this time.

* **Action: Secretary to ask for news, a visit or a report.**

247.9e Planning: John Stewart had objected to the conversion of the Pop Inn into a betting shop, but this was to be allowed. He reported that the City Council's Planning Department had lost several objections to the Duddingston Crescent HMO application, including one sent by recorded delivery. There was due to be a public meeting about this, probably in mid-April. Radical changes were planned for the frontage of the old Lunn Poly shop, about which more information was being sought. An application for an off-street parking space for a Georgian cottage opposite the George in Bath Street had shown up a problem with planning regulations, which required that parking spaces could not be added to existing buildings in a conservation area, but must be added to new developments such as the one next door in Bath Street. The Blue Bean cafe had applied for a licence until 11pm and for permission to add two doors to its frontage. An appeal had been lodged against the City Council's rejection of a planning application for a two-storey house in Regent Street.

247.9f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: The interpretation board for the coadestone pillars in the community garden was about to be installed. The garden would be part of Edinburgh's Public Gardens Open Day on 5th May, brochures for which were available in the Library. The David Laing and Hugh Miller plaques had been cleaned to make them more legible.

247.9g Portobello Traders: no report this time.

247.9h Portobello Online: Bob Jefferson reported that much background work was being done, including preparation of a Porty TV town trail, election films and a new postcard gallery.

247.9i Community development planning: no report this time.

247.9j Community Centre: no report this time.

247.9k Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her regular report.

Lawrence Marshall clarified his comments at the last meeting about the plans to redevelop the Meadowbank site, saying that he would still like to see a major sports venue in East Edinburgh. He reported that the Promenade railings were being renewed and that the replacement trees were being planted in the High Street redevelopment. He was concerned about rumours of problems at the British Legion and hoped to have more information shortly.

247.10 Any Other Business

247.10a Information in Library: There were two items of topical interest in the Library. One was a report on important views in Edinburgh, which included the view from Portobello Park currently threatened with the development of the new High School. The other was the latest SPOKES leaflet which contained details of two Capital Rail Action Group initiatives.

247.11 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 April 2007.

Subsequent dates are: 28th May 2007 (including the AGM)
25th June 2007 (our 250th meeting)
27th August 2007
24th September 2007