



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 257th meeting held on 31st March 2008 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Robert Gatliff, Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer)
Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Bob Jefferson (Porty Online), Brenda Molony (Porty Reporter), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Margaret Smith (Portobello Labour Party), Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS), David Turner (Portobello Amnesty Group), William Wilson.

Apologies: Jet Cameron (PPAG), Cllr Maureen Child, Kenny MacAskill MSP, Peter McColl (PEDAL), Lawrence Marshall, Nora Mackenzie, Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), Kenneth Owen (Police), Sheila Scott (Merchants & Hoteliers).

In attendance: Alison Connelly, Archie Foley, Tom Forsyth (Friends of Figgate Park), James Hunter (CEC), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Arthur Jeffery, Anne Ward, Ian Wilson.

257.1 Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Stuart Mackay, Liaison Manager at Carillion Ltd, the company which is carrying out flood prevention work around Adelphi Place.

257.2 Figgate Burn flood prevention work

Carillion had recently distributed a letter to all households in the neighbourhood of the impending work to install a flood-prevention culvert for the Figgate Burn. The chosen option, B, would be the least disruptive, its main impact being on the industrial estate. A start date was to be chosen in May, and a newsletter with more detailed information would be distributed to local residents. The work would take around eight months to complete, depending on the construction method chosen. A site works would be set up in Rosefield Park, but removed and made good on completion; the footbridge would be temporarily out of use.

Several other points were made in response to questions. The City Council had appointed engineers to survey local properties before and after the associated pile-driving work to ensure no damage to property. Any effects of similar work being carried out at Liberton would be reported. 'Screens', or gratings, to prevent debris entering the culvert would need to be cleaned periodically, and hard-standing was to be installed to allow vehicles to do this. Extensive consultation work had been carried out by the City Council and by Carillion, with reports, plans and an engineer available in the Library at advertised times, but only three members of the public had taken that opportunity. The plans had also been advertised on posters and in local papers, and the necessary planning application went through all due process. It wasn't yet known how much construction traffic would be involved, but most of it would be in the industrial estate and have little impact on residential streets. Once completed, the City Council would take over ongoing maintenance.

[Anyone needing more information can contact Stuart Mackay on 0131 664 8977 or 07779 585 762]

257.3 Friends of Figgate Park

Tom Forsyth, of Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council, reported the formation of a new local group, the Friends of Figgate Park, to maintain this important local amenity by minimising litter and encouraging such improvements as picnic benches, swing parks, footpaths, nesting boxes and information boards. The new Group was the 24th 'friend of parks' in the City Council's scheme, and hoped to achieve the Green Flag standard for the Park in due course. Individuals were welcome to join the Group for a fee of £1, and it was agreed that Portobello Community Council would join as a group, making a slightly higher donation. Contact and joining details would be given on notices to be erected in the Park soon.

- * **Action:** Treasurer to send a donation to the Friends of Figgate Park to affiliate the Community Council.

[Note: there is a cleanup of Rosefield Park on Saturday 26th April, from 10am to 12noon, organized by Brightons and Rosefield Residents Association]

257.4 Planting at Eastfield

John Stewart noted that the railings along the sea wall at the Eastfield bus terminus were being replaced, and suggested that this would be a good time to augment the original planting in the neighbouring grassy area. James Hunter agreed to work with the Amenity Society to increase the range of colour and seasonal displays.

- * **Action:** James Hunter and John Stewart to explore possibilities for new planting at Eastfield.

257.5 Jet skis

There was concern that the marker buoys which defined an exclusion zone for powered craft had disappeared, and that the gates and concrete blocks which kept vehicles off the Prom at the foot of King's Road had been removed. James Hunter reported that the City Council intended to replace the gates with more rugged ones as soon as repair work on the sea wall was completed. He noted that the signs along the Prom which defined the exclusion zone were still in place and he was keen to have the buoys restored.

- * **Action:** Diana Cairns to write to the City Council to emphasise the Community Council's desire that the marker buoys be reinstated as soon as possible, and placed suitably far out from the low tide line.

257.6 Portobello High School

Robert Gatliff had drafted a letter to the City Council urging action in the replacement of the High School; several comments were made on this draft. A member of the public asked that St Johns primary school be included, and asked that the letter be more obviously neutral about the range of solutions so far put forward. The message should be that we all agree that new schools are needed, while we do not agree on where and how they should be provided. Stephen Hawkins pointed out that the Council had been working on aspects of the problem behind the scenes, so it wouldn't be true to say that nothing had been done; the letter needed to make our request clearer. William Wilson observed that the City Council had been told that no more money was available; it was still asking for the missing 80%, suggesting that a stalemate had been reached.

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to redraft his letter, taking account of these comments, and circulate for information, but to send to the City Council as soon as possible.

257.7 Community Noticeboards

The noticeboards are ready to be used, and should be as soon as possible, though there is no particular process for this. A door on one of the noticeboards was reported to be broken.

- * **Action:** James Hunter to find out about fixing damaged noticeboards.
- * **Action:** Nick Stroud to produce a new map for the central noticeboard.
- * **Action:** Secretary to add details about the Community Council.

257.8 South Suburban Railway

Stephen Hawkins reported the outcome of a recent study which suggested that the cost of reopening this line was too high, there would be capacity problems between Portobello and Waverley, and trains would possibly take more people from buses than from cars. New tram and bus services alongside this line would be even more expensive. The best chance for Portobello to get a train station was felt to be through the reopening of the Waverley line – the Borders rail link to Tweedbank.

- * **Action:** Secretary to write in support of the South Suburban Railway and asking that Portobello get a train station as soon as possible.

257.9 Morton Street bench

There used to be a bench in the Morton Street triangle, and there had been a complaint about its removal. However this had been done to tackle a problem with youth behaviour, so it was unlikely that the bench would be reinstated.

257.10 Minutes of the previous meeting

Stephen Hawkins said that the point about money for new schools in 256.3 had been made by Maureen Child only, not by himself. Dawson Currie said that the action on himself in 256.7 had not been agreed. Bob Jefferson pointed out that the report on Party Online (item 256.11h) had been circulated before the meeting. With these corrections the minutes were approved: proposed Kathleen Hart, seconded David Turner.

257.11 Matters arising from February meeting

257.11a Portobello Music School (minute 256.2)

The Secretary had written in support of this; there was no further news.

257.11b support for a new High School (minute 256.3)

The Chairman had circulated his draft letter; see item 257.6.

257.11c updated membership list and constitution (minute 256.6b)

* *This is ongoing with the Secretary.*

257.11d Secretary to supply missing minutes to website (minute 256.6d)

* *Ongoing.*

257.11e Joppa Shore geology leaflet (minute 256.6e)

Robert Gatliff reported that this was on its way to be printed, and it was hoped it would be ready for an Edinburgh Geology Society field trip to Joppa Rocks at 7pm on 16th July.

257.11f Chairman and Secretary to apply for a ‘communication’ grant (minute 256.6i)

* *This was in hand.*

257.11g the Baptist Church clock (minute 256.6j)

* *This is ongoing with Stephen Hawkins.*

257.11h display of Calor Gas awards in the Library (minute 256.6k)

* *Robert Gatliff to discuss this with the Librarian.*

257.11i rat-running traffic on the western Promenade (minute 256.11m)

James Hunter and Scott Thomson had investigated and reported on this.

257.11j Secretary to invite Cllr Mike Bridgeman to our meetings (minute 256.12b)

* *Ongoing.*

257.11k making young people feel part of the community (minute 256.12f)

* *To be a topic in the April meeting.*

257.12 Reports

257.12a Police: no report this time.

257.12b Treasurer: Treasurer’s Account: £3,344.04; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,251.30.

This represented the position at the end of the current financial year.

257.12c Joppa Tennis Courts: Kathleen Hart had attended the Club’s AGM in mid March. It was reported that £400 had been spent on replacing windows and £300 on new keys and locks. Clubhouse facilities had been improved, and with a healthy interest in the Club the financial position remained comfortable.

257.12d Task Force: James Hunter reported on many aspects. Street cleaning is monitored four times a year by Keep Scotland Beautiful, and local standards were above average in the latest survey. A new anti-litter initiative in conjunction with the High School was to start in Summer. Grass cutting had resumed, there had been some planting in local parks, the Baileyfield Road entrance to the Figgy Park had been tidied up, and there were new windowboxes for the Town Hall. Roadworks were due to begin to install traffic lights at the A1 roundabout at Newcraighall; work would last for around 16 weeks and would probably cause some local congestion. The Harry Lauder Road would be closed on Sunday 13th April, or the 20th, for maintenance.

Celia Butterworth requested more plants around the pillars in the John Street Community Garden. Stephen Hawkins asked about succession planting for the trees in Rosefield Park; James Hunter was happy with the present reinstatement programme, but was afraid that more elm trees would be lost in the near future. Bob Jefferson reported that a litter bin had been thrown into the burn.

257.12e Planning: John Stewart reported that an application to convert a garage in Brunstane Road North into a house had been withdrawn, and that a new application to build houses in St Mary's Place Lane had been rejected by the City Council and had now been appealed to the Secretary of State.

257.12f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that all 32 pieces of the new top for the third pillar in the John Street Community Garden were now drying out, and were due to be installed in June.

257.12g Portobello Traders: no report this time.

257.12h Porty Online: Bob Jefferson reported that there was a new 'Local Planning Applications' section at <http://porty.org.uk/planning> which was hoped to be useful and user-friendly; feedback on this was requested, to inform future development. The Gallery section had been expanded to include local artists (as well as not so local artists who have chosen to depict Portobello); so far this included work by Allan Pendreigh, Martin Fowler and Evi Carmichael, with further galleries planned for Mike Kinane, Lindsay McCrea and Ken Lochhead. Suggestions for other local artists would be welcome. There were plans to host a gallery of photographs and paintings relating to Portobello from the Capital Collections archive, part of the City Library and Information Service's Image Library. Events for inclusion in the 'What's On' guide should be notified to events@porty.org.uk, and the address to update group information is groups@porty.org.uk.

* **Action: All**, to comment on the new 'Planning' section of the website and suggest local artists for inclusion in the 'Gallery' section.

257.12i Portobello High School: there was no report on this occasion, but the subject of litter was raised. William Wilson suggested that local traders who make such a lot of money from High School pupils could do more to deal with litter, especially as school pupils were not the only source of the problem.

257.12j Community development planning: no report this time.

257.12k Community Centre: no report this time.

257.12l Neighbourhood Partnership: no report this time. The next meeting would be on 23rd April, with a business meeting before it.

257.12m Councillors:

Stephen Hawkins circulated a report at the meeting.

Maureen Child had circulated her report before going on holiday.

257.13 Any Other Business

257.13a Notification of agenda

Diana Cairns asked that the agenda for each meeting be circulated at least a week in advance.

257.13b Youth initiative

Brian Greatorex had written to ask for the Community Council's support for his grant application for funding to advance youth work locally; this was readily agreed.

* **Action:** Secretary to write in support of this application.

257.13c Community Centre worker

It was noted that a new worker for the Community Centre was to be appointed, but only for six months. Stephen Hawkins said that this was normal practice, and he was confident that the post would not be lost.

257.14 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 April 2008.

Subsequent dates are: 26th May 2008 (this is the AGM)
30th June 2008
(no meeting in July)
25th August 2008