



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 277th meeting held on 29th March 2010 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Lilian Graham, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Leon Thompson, Sean Watters (Towerbank Parent Council), William Wilson, Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

Apologies: Archie Burns, Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), Sarah Potter (Portobello Police), Margaret Rae (PPAG), Gavin Strang M.P., Anne Ward (PCATS).

In attendance: Peter Allan (Dalrymple Estates), Cllr Mike Bridgman, Johnny Cadell (EDI), Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, T. Dobson, Kathleen Doyle, Kathleen Hart, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Lyn Jones, George Kerevan, D. Killeen, Simon Leslie (Dalrymple Estates), Kuan Loh (EDI), Kenny MacAskill MSP, Lawrence Marshall, Alex Orr (Indigo), John Quinn (EDI), David Scott, Tom Smith, Alan Stewart (Dalrymple Estates), C. Thomson, Catherine Thomson, Ian Wilson.

277.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed an excellent turnout on a cold wet evening, and introduced Alex Orr and delegation to talk about plans for Newcraighall.

277.2 Development plans for Newcraighall North and East

Alex Orr introduced several colleagues from the Dalrymple Trust and EDI who described proposals to develop two areas of land at Newcraighall for housing. The plan was to build 220 houses in the East site, and 200 in the North site filling in the entire area between Newcraighall and Gilberstoun. There would be pedestrian and cycle access between Gilberstoun and Newcraighall, but all vehicle access would be from the Newcraighall Road. The aim was to try and take priority away from cars, and create more of a community feeling by careful planning. Whitehill Street would become the heart of a new community instead of a rat run. Green space on either side of the site, including the existing recreation park, would be protected. The development would have a diversity of human-scale buildings with courtyards, streets and avenues.

Most of the questions that were put following the formal presentation were on the subject of traffic and its expected increase in an already congested area. The developers recognised this potential problem, and said they intended to build traffic-calming measures into their plans. Many people at the meeting however felt that such measures would not solve the huge traffic problems that a development of this size in this location would create, and asked the developers to think again about how they would manage the traffic issues which would arise. The developers asked to return to the April meeting to provide further details, following their submission of a formal application for planning permission to the City Council.

277.3 The Big W proposal

John Stewart and Diana Cairns reported on two meetings they had attended with Big W representatives. When ASDA had sold the site, it had insisted that no food could be sold from it, but the current proposal was to change this and allow 60% food and 40% non-food to be sold here. It was thought that one of the big four supermarkets would be interested in the proposal, and wanting 24-hour opening and deliveries. The planning application was expected in May. If the development was allowed and went ahead, it was thought likely that 80% to 90% of its custom would be taken from other supermarkets. That would however still leave 10% to 20% of business to be taken from Portobello High Street and other local shops near the site, and several of our local shops would not be able to survive such an attack on their business. A possible price war between two neighbouring superstores would be likely to lead to further damage to our shops. It was generally agreed that there was no need for another superstore in our area, and that the Community Council should object to

the change of consent. Diana Cairns distributed comment forms for people to submit their own comments if they wished. Several people warned that developers who offered inducements to local communities to encourage them not to object to a particular application usually withdrew those inducements once they had got what they wanted.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to object to any application to permit food retailing at the Big W site.**
- * **Action: All, to submit comments on feedback forms if wished.**

277.4 Minutes of February meeting

In item 276.4h John Stewart pointed out that PAS is authorised to object to planning applications on behalf of the Community Council when timescales warrant this.

In item 276.4cc, Peter McColl had agreed to circulate notes on discussions about the Town Hall, not thoughts on improving its use.

In item 276.9b, the amount held for the website should have read £154.11.

Item 276.9j should have recorded Cllr Mike Bridgman's point that paving slabs in the High Street were not having to be relaid but had been left in a temporary state until electrical conduits had been installed beneath.

277.5 Matters arising from February meeting

277.5a Secretary to circulate further information about development plans (276.2). *Done.*

277.5b Cathy Cherizard to find out if/why the new pavement has already been dug up outside Buddy's Hairdressers (237 High Street) (276.2). *This was to repair a broken utility.*

277.5c Helen Platts to find what plans there are to renew broken drains (276.2). *Helen has raised this problem with Andy Matheson, the City Council's roads manager.*

277.5d Helen Platts to look for opportunities to remove redundant street poles (276.2). *In hand.*

277.5e 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) (276.2). *In hand.*

277.5f Helen Platts to try and locate and reinstate the 'Welcome to Portobello' sign removed during the King's Road roadworks (276.2). *Ongoing.*

277.5g Helen Platts to investigate the possibility of installing a sign pointing to the Bridge Street car park (276.2). *Ongoing.*

277.5h Gillian Smith to consider a tourist information point at the bus stops on the north side of the High Street (276.2). *Ongoing.*

277.5i Celia Butterworth, Archie Foley, Margaret Munro, John Stewart and Nick Stroud to meet the planners to help develop ideas (276.2). *The first meeting took place on 24th March at Waverley Court, and a strategy was agreed for choosing text and photos. Archie Foley has had to withdraw from this group.*

277.5j All, to return completed 'signage' forms to John Stewart (4a Elcho Terrace) or Helen Platts (address on form) by 1st March (276.2). *Done.*

277.5k Robert Gatliff to seek funding to repair Baptist Church so clock can be put back in place (276.4a). Robert has identified several possible sources of funding and will apply to them. *Ongoing.*

277.5l Stephen Hawkins to arrange a meeting of Council official and William Wilson at swingpark (276.4c). *In hand.*

277.5m John Stewart to talk to Joyce Campbell about the Community Council's presence in the Library (276.4e). *Done; see item 10 on agenda.*

277.5n Diana Cairns to put paper copies of key documents in the Library (276.4f). *Done; see item 10 on agenda.*

277.5o Secretary to circulate details of meeting on 31st March about pavement and road improvements (276.4n). *(Further information awaited.)*

277.5p Diana Cairns to liaise with Cathy Cherizard on a consultation event for Brighton and Rosefield Residents' Association (276.4t). *Ongoing.*

277.5q Peter McColl to circulate notes on discussions about the use of the Town Hall (276.4cc).

277.5r Cathy Cherizard to see if online information about the Town Hall can be improved (276.4dd). *Cathy Cherizard reported that the City Council was reviewing its entire website, and the Community Halls letting team would be considering its information pages as part of this exercise at some point this year. Cathy was asked to see if it would be possible for the Community Council to have an input to the revision.*

- * **Action: Cathy Cherizard to see if the Community Council could comment on the description of the Town Hall in the City Council's website.**

277.5s All, to complete the Community Council 'skills matrix' questionnaire (276.4ee). *Several people still haven't returned these, and were requested to do so as soon as possible. Further copies of the questionnaire can be obtained from Diana Cairns.*

- * **Action: Anyone who has not already done so to complete the 'skills audit' questionnaire.**

277.5t Treasurer to apply for Community Council to have associate membership of Portobello Heritage Trust (276.6). *Done.*

277.5u Sub-group to organise hustings for the General Election (276.7). *In hand; Diana Cairns was organising a planning meeting.*

277.5v Community Council to consider how to fill its vacancies for group representatives (276.8). *We welcome Andrew Patterson for the Portobello Council of Churches. Applications are in the pipeline for Joppa Tennis Courts and Portobello Older People's Project. That would leave five vacancies to fill.*

- * **Action: Community Council to consider how to fill its remaining five places for group representatives.**

277.5w Diana Cairns to ask Eileen Hewitt to distinguish between news for community councils and news for the general public, and to let us know what other channels are used for the latter (276.8).

277.5x All, to consider how the Community Council can improve its communication networks (276.8).

277.5y All, to send contact information to Brenda Molony (276.8). *(Done, and Brenda has circulated the collected information to all Community Councillors)*

277.5z Secretary to circulate City Council's new planning guidance to all members (276.9f). *Done: circulated by Diana Cairns on 16th March.*

277.5aa All, to read City Council's new planning guidance before next meeting (276.9f).

277.5bb City Councillors to circulate the planning department's report concerning the BL application as soon as it becomes available. *Stephen Hawkins reported that the expected publication date was 28th April, and that the closure of the British Legion building was unlikely to affect this.*

277.5cc All, to let Diana Cairns know before 15th March who they would like to see elected to the ASCC (276.10a). *Done.*

277.5dd Anyone interested in attending an EACC meeting to contact the Secretary (276.10c). *Continuous.*

277.5ee Community Council to consider Dawson Currie's paper on the Community Council's 'Development' sub-committee (276.10d). *See item 8 on Agenda.*

277.6 Matters for Any Other Business

Some items were identified for discussion in Any Other Business.

277.7 Litter in the High Street

John Stewart reported that the main problem preoccupying people at the City Councils waste strategy meeting on 10th March had been litter in the High Street. Cathy Cherizard circulated a report of the meeting, and asked the secretary to circulate it by email. She reported that several members of City Council staff had to be reassigned from regular duties on school days in order to clean up the High Street, at a notional cost of around £30,000 a year. There was negligible litter in school holidays and at weekends. Several suggestions were made to tackle the problem, including the installation of more litter bins, giving more encouragement

and incentive to use them, requesting more responsible attitudes from the outlets where the children buy the food that generates the litter, the use of litter wardens, letting the High School know that this is a continuing worry in the community, and asking them what their policy is in educating pupils about litter. It was conceded that it is only a minority of High School pupils who cause this problem, and that adults create a lot of the litter which is a problem for Edinburgh as a whole.

- * **Action: Cathy Cherizard to follow up as many of these anti-littering suggestions as she can.**

277.8 Portobello Community Council organisation

Dawson Currie circulated a paper offering ways of taking pressure off the regular Community Council meetings, by creating a sub-committee to handle some of the routine business. He suggested this tentatively-named Development Sub-committee might alternate its meetings with the full Community Council, but it was generally agreed that the Community Council shouldn't meet any less than its present ten times a year, as it had so much work to do, and also needed to sustain transparency and group cohesiveness. Celia Butterworth's 'signs and plaques' sub-committee was mentioned as a model of how a sub-group could do useful work for the Community Council while making minimal demands on it; another sub-committee might help the Community Council to achieve more if suitable tasks could be found for it. It was generally agreed that meetings needed to be run more tightly, with visitor presentations in particular tightly controlled, so that all meetings would finish by 9:30. Peter McColl suggested starting meetings at 7pm when there were external presentations to be made, and it was agreed to experiment with this. John Stewart wished to have the traffic issue as a major topic at the April meeting, in order to start following up the suggestions that had been made for future meetings.

- * **Action: The April meeting will begin at 7pm with an update on the Newcraighall proposals.**

277.9 Consultations

Diana Cairns mentioned several consultation requests she had received:

- 'Advertisements, Sponsorship and City Dressing', on what is allowed to be put on public buildings and in public streets
- on the City Council's open space strategy (it was agreed to have this on the agenda for the April meeting); there was to be a workshop around this in Portobello Library from 6:30 to 8pm on 12th May
- on draft guidelines for planning applications for the change of use of residential properties (for nurseries, guest houses etc, not for HMOs)
- draft planning guidance on good practice when considering Biodiversity (on one hand) and Landscape and Development (on another).

She also mentioned that the pre-application consultation for the new High School would begin in May.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to circulate details of these consultations by email.**

277.10 Communications and public image

John Stewart and Diana Cairns reported that they had met Joyce Campbell and Mary Dunbar to discuss ways of raising the Community Council's profile in the Library, and were told that we were eligible for a grant of £500 from the Neighbourhood Partnership for each of the financial years ending on 5th April and beginning on 6th April – for a total of £1,000. They had therefore applied for both these grants and planned to use them for a dedicated display and shelving in the Library, together with some kind of feedback facility. We would also be able to advertise particular events and issues on the large plasma display screen about to be installed in the Library window.

Maria Devoy offered the Community Council the use of the Portobello website, and Brenda Molony wondered if there was still a plan to produce an annual report, as South Queensferry Community Council does, for distribution with the Portobello Reporter. David Hamilton mentioned the community noticeboard about to be installed at Gilberstoun which could be used for our material. Sean Watters asked if the names of community councillors were available to the public anywhere, and it was thought not; John Stewart said he would arrange for contact details for the Chairman and Secretary to be advertised on the Library noticeboard along with the list of groups represented on the Community Council.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to arrange for some Community Council details to be displayed in the Library.**

277.11 Reports

277.11a Police: No report available.

277.11b Treasurer: Kathleen Hart had agreed to remain as Treasurer until the end of the financial year, and gave her very final report. There was £3,002.25 (of which £1,662 was ring-fenced for the Gilberstoun noticeboard and £154.22 for the website), and £4,797.34 in the Joppa Tennis Courts account. The books had been balanced for the end of the financial year and now had to be audited by two people who were not members of the organisation. [Was anyone nominated, or did they volunteer?]

277.11c Neighbourhood Partnership: The next meeting was due to be held at 6:30pm on 31st March at the Hays Centre. The restoration of Niddrie Burn and local policing priorities were prominent issues currently under consideration. Community grants of up to £5,000 would be available in the new financial year beginning in April.

(The partnership website is at http://www.edinburghnp.org.uk/page/Portobello__and__Craigmillar.aspx)

277.11d Joppa Tennis Courts: No report available.

277.11e Environmental Update: Cathy Cherizard reported that there was to be a meeting at 6:30pm on 9th April at the East Edinburgh local office to present plans for projects to be undertaken in this area. A consultation on several Council standards was currently under way and Cathy distributed copies at the meeting. Cathy agreed to find out what had been decided at a meeting to discuss flooding in Rosefield Park and circulate this, and to send an inspector to investigate flooding on the pavement across from the police station and at the pedestrian crossing at the top of Bellfield Street.

* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to report on the meeting about flooding in Rosefield Park.**

* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to organise an inspection of pavements that are liable to flooding.**

277.11f Planning: John Stewart reported that the City Council Planning Committee was minded to refuse the applications for two developments in Bellfield Lane, and to clarify the reasons for this decision at its next meeting. Diana Cairns had circulated revised planning guidelines, and John Stewart circulated further information about community council involvement in planning. Stephen Hawkins expressed anxiety about people who obtained planning permission for a particular standard of construction and then changed such details as type of window, without any notice being taken; John Stewart suggested that it was important to keep checking such details through the Council's planning portal until construction was complete.

277.11g Signs, Plaques and coade-stone: Celia Butterworth reported that the plaque for The Tower, one of Portobello's oldest surviving buildings, had arrived and was due to be mounted within a few weeks.

277.11h Portobello High School: No report this time.

277.11i Portobello Community Centre: David Scott said that the next planning meeting had been arranged for 13th April.

277.11j Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated a written report.

Stephen Hawkins reported that a paper was to be considered at the next Council transport committee meeting on how to accommodate cars and pedestrians together in narrow streets such as Portobello's. He also said that the City Council had reneged on the promise to provide replacement public space should the new High School be built on public park land, and had asked the Neighbourhood Partnership to identify some, even though the City Council could not.

Mike Bridgman welcomed the idea that Portobello should at last gain its own war memorial, a possibility that arises in the wake of the closure of the British Legion.

277.12 Any Other Business

277.12a Big Things on the Beach

Damian Killeen invited everyone to attend the latest art installation created by Big Things on the Beach, an after-hours projection in the darkened waters of the big pool at the Swim Centre. He reported that someone who had been attracted to Portobello specifically to view this had commented that it was better than anything he ever expected to find here.

277.12b British Legion

Lawrence Marshall expressed his sorrow at the demise of the British Legion, and also some surprise, as he had understood it to have around 700 members, which should have been enough to sustain it. Maureen Child responded that these members had not been sufficiently active to sustain the club's finances, and that it had used up all its cash reserves over the past seven years. She hoped the Legion would be able to open a new club in Portobello in due course, but it could not be in these premises.

277.12c Christian Path

Maureen Child reported that work is continuing to upgrade Christian Path as a cycling and pedestrian route which had been one of the Amenity Society's first projects 30 years previously. The work would not make any significant change in Windsor Place, though the Environment Manager had arranged for the removal of some redundant fencing and accumulated rubbish.

277.12d Friends of Figgate Park

Nick Stroud reported contact from the Friends of Figgate Park, who had given a presentation to the Community Council two years previously and since achieved a tremendous improvement in the Park in collaboration with the City Council's Parks Department. They are now aiming to qualify for a Green Flag Award and invite all Friends to renew their membership (to do this please send a cheque for £1 to Friends of the Figgate Park to the treasurer, Christine Kerr, 89 Northfield Drive, Edinburgh EH8 7RG). There is to be a park clean-up on 11th April, starting at 10am from the noticeboard near the loch.

(The Friends' website is at <http://www.figgatepark.org.uk/>)

277.12e Sailing Club programme published

Nick Stroud reported that Portobello Sailing and Kayaking Club had published its programme for this year, which included several sailing and kayaking courses for adults as well as young people. Full details are available by emailing info@sailporty.org.uk.

277.13 Topics for future meetings

Suggestions for topics for future meetings include:

- Usage of the Town Hall: not as good as it should be, and not a sufficiently local resource.
- Water efficiency (speaker offered).
- Refurbishment of the swingpark on the Promenade in front of Towerbank.
- Traffic problems in Portobello (Community Council discussion, then City Council visitor).
- Making the Community Council more proactive in improving Portobello.
- Public Art Plan for Portobello.
- Further consideration of the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- A discussion of general planning issues with a City Council official.

277.14 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 26th April 2010 — **starting at 7pm**

Subsequent dates are: 31st May 2010
28th June 2010
30th August (no meeting in July)
27th September 2010