

## **Minutes of the 239th meeting held on 29th May 2006 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Jackie Brock, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Zoe Dunn, Alix Gaffney, Robert Gatliff, Kathleen Hart, Stephen Hawkins, Bob Jefferson, Peter McColl, Nora Mackenzie, Karen MacLean, Margaret Munro, Tom Nimmo, Avril Scott, John Smart, Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, John Stewart, Nick Stroud, David Turner, William Wilson, Betty Young.

**Apologies:** Stephen McIntyre, Cllr Lawrence Marshall, Brenda Molony, Sheila Scott, Sandy Smith.

**In attendance:** John Butterworth, Joyce Campbell, Cllr Maureen Child, Robert Davidson, Liz McMahon, Kenny Owen, Aileen Ward, Anne Ward.

### **239.1 Chairman's welcome:**

Robert Gatliff welcomed everyone to the first ordinary meeting of the new Community Council, saying that he would follow what had become the traditional format for meetings but would be happy to receive suggestions of alternative ways of doing things.

### **239.2 Minutes of the 238th Meeting:**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted: Proposed: Margaret Smith, Seconded: Betty Young.

### **239.3 Matters arising from previous meeting**

239.3a 'desirable graffiti': Maureen Child had not yet had a chance to find out the name of the professional graffiti artist working in Craigmillar, but would keep looking.

- \* Action: Maureen Child to find out how we might encourage 'desirable graffiti' in Portobello.

239.3b Duddingston House Properties: There had been no further information about DHP's possible involvement in Portobello. Lezley Cameron of BL Developments didn't know about any involvement, but was keen for the City Council to publish its master plan for redeveloping the western end of the town. BL was keen to get to work, and welcomed any local feedback about what people would like to see in the redevelopment. She also asked the Community Council to encourage the City Council to produce its master plan for the area. Maureen Child reported that neither she nor Lawrence Marshall had heard any more about this, and expressed her disappointment that there had not been more progress.

- \* Action: Lawrence Marshall to find out if Duddingston House Properties still had an interest in Portobello.
- \* Action: Secretary to write to Francis Newton to ask about the programme and timetable for redeveloping Western Portobello.

239.3c charity shops: The Secretary had written to Gavin Strang and Susan Deacon about unfair advantages charity shops have over regular businesses in the High Street. Gavin Strang's office had been in touch with Maureen Child to get more information about the financing of charity shops, and similar complaints were being made all over Edinburgh. There was a rule that charity shops had to sell more donated goods than new ones, but it wasn't clear how this was defined or checked.

- \* Action: Lawrence Marshall to discuss unfair competition between charity shops and local businesses with Susan Deacon and Gavin Strang.

239.3d the future of the Kilns: Lawrence Marshall has yet to follow up anxieties about the only remaining links to Portobello's extensive pottery industry. It was pointed out that plants are now damaging the kilns.

- \* Action: Lawrence Marshall to try and ensure the safe preservation of the two kilns.

239.3e meeting at the High School: this was arranged for 12th June.

### **239.4 Reports**

**239.4a Police**: the police had dealt with 1,400 calls in the month, around 200 concerning problems in the High Street. Youth-related calls had halved, and were at a typical average level; the Youth Action Team

based at Craigmillar were planning new initiatives. There had been the usual level of minor assaults, thefts and road accidents. The police caravan would be in place close to the Funpark from 1st July to 13th August, and the police marine unit would be around as well; it was hoped that this would discourage people from taking vehicles on to the beach. New signs were awaited, and buoys were to be put out, to constrain the activities of jet-skiers, and the Forth by-laws which bar vessels from causing harm to others probably apply to jet-skis. The knife amnesty was running to the end of June; knives could be dropped in to a box at the police station. The 'PubWatch' initiative had been launched on 29th May; all local pubs had signed up to this, and alcohol-related violence had halved. Police officers were visiting local groups as part of the 'Safer Communities' project, and invited suggestions of groups that would like a visit – especially for older people.

Diana Cairns asked if there were any plans to block vehicular access to the beach; Robert Davidson offered to follow this up.

Jackie Brock mentioned problems of people driving and parking around schools without care and consideration for children, and requested a police presence at the beginning and end of the school day. Kenny Owen agreed to discuss this with Inspector Ward, but said that if the registration numbers of offending vehicles were reported to the police, they would be followed up.

- \* Action: all, to suggest groups that would like a visit from the police in the 'Safer Communities' initiative.
- \* Action: Robert Davidson to investigate the possibility of blocking access ramps to the beach.
- \* Action: Kenny Owen to discuss the problem of careless driving around schools.

**239.4b Treasurer:** The current balances were:

Treasurer's Account: £7,676.32; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,861.28.

**239.4c Joppa Tennis Courts:** no report this time.

**239.4d Task Force:** Robert Davidson is now a Task Force manager for the whole of Edinburgh, responsible for the Portobello and Cramond seafronts, all cycle-ways, bus shelters, bulk litter, and the removal of chewing gum and graffiti. He was warmly welcomed back to the Community Council, where his past efforts were much appreciated.

Robert Davidson reported that 12 staff and three vehicles had been added to the city-wide team tackling graffiti seven days a week, and new procedures for reporting, recording and financing this work were being developed. This included monitoring sales of spray paint and using CCTV where appropriate, and the team would be working on Joppa Quarry Park and the neighbouring footbridge. An anti-graffiti coating had been applied to around 400 items of street furniture – such as BT and Telewest cabinets – throughout the city, the eventual target being 1,200; priorities for this work were welcomed (email Robert.Davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk). Two new tractors and beach-cleaning machines should help meet the target of cleaning the beach every day. New metal litter bins were having to be installed, as the indoor smoking ban had led to around five bin fires a day.

Alix Gaffney wondered if people should email examples of graffiti but was told it would be sufficient to email the location of the problem. Maria Devoy mentioned graffiti on the sundial in Brighton Park, and asked that litter bins be reinstated in Brighton Place; Robert Davidson agreed to check up on these items. Maria Devoy also wanted to see more effort put into discouraging graffiti by encouraging more imaginative and decorative street art.

- \* **Action:** Robert Davidson to check graffiti on sundial in Brighton Park.
- \* **Action:** Robert Davidson to get litter bins reinstated in Brighton Place.

**239.4e Planning:** John Stewart reported that there had been no response from planning enforcement about work at the Seahaven Hotel, and the objection to advertising notices on the bypass had been rejected. The main planning issue was the publication of the 134-page draft Edinburgh City Local Plan. John Stewart had studied this, and circulated a map and a summary list of relevant points, though he regretted that such plans didn't always prevent unsuitable developments such as the one at Granny's Attic. It was intended that 25% of new housing be 'affordable'; there could be a new bit of parkland at Newcraighall; the Jack Kane Centre would be upgraded when Meadowbank was sold for housing, and a new outdoor football facility created; there would be a new cemetery near the Royal Infirmary; areas were reserved for business and industry, though not all were readily accessible; and new housing was proposed around Newcraighall, even though it encroached on a narrow section of the green belt and Estate Agents suggested that there was not a lot of demand for such housing.

The full plan is available via *Party Online*, or direct from the City Council website at [http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Environment/Planning\\_buildings\\_i\\_i\\_/Planning/Planning\\_policies/Local\\_plans/CEC\\_south\\_east\\_edinburgh\\_local\\_plan](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Environment/Planning_buildings_i_i_/Planning/Planning_policies/Local_plans/CEC_south_east_edinburgh_local_plan)

John Stewart drew attention to two particular proposals which might cause concern.

Seafield was identified as one of three possible sites for a waste transfer point to replace the one at Powderhall, and although the proposal was for an enclosed building, this might lead to local smells, excessive traffic, and difficulties for the proposed boardwalk. Maureen Child reported that there were very few complaints from neighbours at the Powderhall site, and since there was no proposal to process waste at Seafield – only to transfer it – she didn't think there would be a problem.

The other issue was a watering down of the principle of protecting open space; John Stewart urged that all open space in the city should be protected, and this proposal vigorously opposed. Maureen Child suggested that open space was only likely to be taken over if it were derelict and lacking in community benefit. William Wilson thought it would be difficult to take a definite stance on any issue since there might always be others who took a different viewpoint. Robert Gatliff agreed that it might be difficult to find a single Community Council response to the proposals, but asked John Stewart to circulate a draft letter on which others could comment; issues on which there wasn't agreement could be omitted, and all groups and individuals were welcome to make their own responses. Maureen Child emphasised the importance of submitting feedback to the plans, supporting good proposals as well as opposing bad ones.

Tom Nimmo was concerned that not enough affordable housing was being built, for example in the Waterfront Project where 25% was supposed to be affordable. Maureen Child replied that the City Council was being very assertive in ensuring that affordable and family homes were being built before other developments could be sold.

\* **Action:** John Stewart to circulate draft feedback for comment.

**239.4f Signs, Plaques and coadestone:** Celia Butterworth reported that the Helen Hopekirk plaque had been unveiled on 20th May in the presence of Helen Hopekirk's nephew. The Ned Barnie plaque was in place and would be unveiled shortly. Robert Gatliff recorded the widespread appreciation for Archie Foley and his helpers in organising the excellent concert in memory of Helen Hopekirk.

**239.4g Portobello Traders:** no report this time.

**239.4h Portobello website:** no report this time.

**239.4i Community development planning:** Robert Gatliff asked for volunteers to join this group.

\* **Action:** Secretary to ask for people to join the development group.

**239.4j Councillors:**

Maureen Child circulated her usual monthly report. She added that Bill Hopekirk had presented the city with a portrait of Helen Hopekirk which now needed a home. The Portrait Gallery was more interested in the quality of the painting than in the subject, so it might go into the City Art Collection, and might be exhibited at the Library at some point.

## 239.5 Any Other Business

**239.5a Community of the Year competition:** Robert Gatliff reported that entries were now being invited for this year's competition, and asked if anyone would like to enter for Portobello. Bob Jefferson said he would be entering the website.

**239.5b POD events:** Diana Cairns mentioned the opening of the John Street Community Garden, the Victorian Walk and other entertainments organised by Portobello Open Door, taking place on 3rd June.

**239.5c Fund-raising for Maggie's Centre:** Diana Cairns announced that a coffee morning would be held from 10am to 12noon on 3rd June, at St James Church. Joyce Campbell mentioned a ceilidh at St Philips Church at 8pm, also on the 3rd, for which tickets were available from the Library.

**239.5d PAS AGM:** John Stewart invited everyone to the Amenity Society's AGM, at 7:30pm on 31st May, in St Marks Church, where the speaker would be Paul McAulay, keeper of monuments.

In closing the meeting, Robert Gatliff invited comments on the way Community Council meetings should be run, and offered the usual thanks to Kathleen Hart and Margaret Smith for organising the excellent refreshments which followed the meeting.

### **239.6 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 June 2006.

Subsequent dates are:   28th August 2006  
                              25th September 2006  
                              30th October 2006  
                              27th November 2006

The Task Force is happy to receive reports from the public about any problem within its remit, on 078 101 81039, from 6:30am to 5:30pm, seven days a week.