



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **DRAFT Minutes of the 279th meeting held on 31st May 2010 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Leon Thomson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council), William Wilson, Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

**Apologies:** Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Lilian Graham, Nelson Johnstone, Lawrence Marshall, Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches).

**In attendance:** Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cllr Maureen Child, Robert Gatliff, Sheila Gilmore M.P., Kathleen Hart, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Kenny MacAskill (MSP), Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, C. Thomson, Catherine Thomson.

### **279.1 Chair's welcome**

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the ordinary meeting following on from the AGM, particularly including David Scott who is now formally back on the Community Council representing the Community Centre, and Sheila Gilmore, newly-elected Member of the Westminster Parliament, who was warmly congratulated on her victory in the recent General Election.

### **279.2 Minutes of April meeting**

Celia Butterworth pointed out that Archie Foley was not on the group that met the City Council about local signage (item 278.3g). The minutes were then accepted: proposed by Brenda Molony, seconded by Caroline Hosking.

### **279.3 Matters arising from April meeting**

**279.3a** 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) (278.3c). In hand and ongoing.

**279.3b** Helen Platts to try and locate and reinstate the 'Welcome to Portobello' sign removed during the King's Road roadworks (278.3d). The original is lost; Helen Platts is investigating the possibility of getting a replacement, and will consult the Community Council about this. Ongoing.

**279.3c** Cathy Cherizard to get an inspector to check the sign pointing to the Bridge Street car park (278.3e). The sign is not sufficiently visible from both directions. Caroline Hosking asked that the City Council consider erecting a new sign on the north side of the High Street.

\* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to consider requesting a second sign to the Bridge Street car park.**

**279.3d** Gillian Smith to consider placing a tourist information point at the bus stops on the north side of the High Street (278.3f). Done.

**279.3e** Robert Gatliff to seek funding to repair Baptist Church so clock can be put back in place (278.3f). Robert has identified several possible sources of funding and will apply to them. Ongoing.

**279.3f** Stephen Hawkins to arrange a meeting of Council official and William Wilson at swingpark (277.51). Ongoing.

**279.3g** Diana Cairns to organise a consultation event for Brighton and Rosefield Residents' Association (278.3j). In hand.

**279.3h** Peter McColl to circulate notes on discussions about the use of the Town Hall (278.3k). Peter had organised a meeting to discuss this and produce a considered report.

- 279.3i** Cathy Cherizard to feed back our comments on the new City Council website (278.3i). Done.
- 279.3j** Anyone who has not done so to complete the Community Council 'skills' questionnaire (278.3m).
- 279.3k** Sub-group to organise hustings for the General Election (278.3n). Done.
- 279.3l** 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 (278.3o). Ongoing.
- 279.3m** Cathy Cherizard to follow up as many as possible of the anti-littering suggestions (278.3r). Ongoing.
- 279.3n** Diana Cairns to circulate the details of several consultations by email (277.9). Done.
- 279.3o** Diana Cairns to ask the Library for temporary information space until our permanent arrangement can be made (279.3t). Done.
- 279.3p** 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 (278.5). In hand.
- 279.3q** Diana Cairns to draft a letter responding to the draft action plan for Portobello (278.6). Done.
- 279.3r** David Hamilton to check on the possibility of using the triangle of railway land next to Gilbertstoun for allotments (278.6). In hand.
- 279.3s** Sandra Blake to agree with Elsie Thom how the Tennis Club accounts are to operate (278.9d). Ongoing.
- 279.3t** All to read the Proposal of Application Notice and send comments to John Stewart (278.9f). Done.
- 279.3u** John Stewart to respond to Proposal of Application Notice (278.9f). Done.
- 279.3v** John Stewart to circulate details of workshop in Library on 12th May (278.9f). Done.
- 279.3w** Christian Path fencing (277.12c). William Wilson reported that the fence had been repaired.

## **279.4 Reports**

**279.4a Police:** No report available.

**279.4b Treasurer:** In Sandra Blake's absence Kathleen Hart reported that the Community Council had £1,340.25 of its own in the bank, with extra funds ring-fenced for other projects, and there was £4,797.34 in the Joppa Tennis Courts account.

**279.4c Neighbourhood Partnership:** Peter McColl advised that the Environment Forum would be meeting on 2nd June, and the Neighbourhood Partnership on 9th June.

**279.4d Joppa Tennis Courts:** Robert Gatliff reported that he had met Sandra Blake and Nick Stroud to discuss what needed to be done to formalise the Tennis Club's relationship with the Community Council. The Club had been set up in 1983 as a sub-committee of the Community Council as the only way the City Council would permit the lease. The two had not kept in regular touch since except through the good offices of treasurer Kathleen Hart, and with Sandra Blake taking over as treasurer it was time to review the arrangement. The Tennis Club would like the arrangement to continue as before, but recognised that it would have to adopt a new constitution for this purpose. Robert circulated a draft constitution which he hoped would be reviewed by Sandra Blake and then agreed and ratified with the City Council. Several people expressed concern that the position needed to be clarified to ensure that there was no unreasonable liability for the Community Council, but otherwise expressed the desire that the Tennis Club should continue operating the courts. Kathleen Hart pointed out that the City Council charged us a very low rent for use of the courts, and we should not do anything to jeopardise that.

\* **Action: Diana Cairns to seek clarification of the position from Eileen Hewitt of the City Council.**

**279.4e Environmental Update:** Cathy Cherizard could not attend this meeting, but had offered to circulate a report by email.

Franny Wraith welcomed the removal of rubbish from Christian Path but asked what plans there were to improve it, as several trees had been felled and the area looked awful. Stephen Hawkins reported that the trees had been felled by Scottish Power to protect the overhead power lines, but as a result the noise from the

bypass was now much worse. He observed that the Neighbourhood Partnership had contributed to the restoration of the Path, and he agreed to find out about any further plans for it.

Peter McColl asked what plans there were to repair the seafront infrastructure that had been damaged in recent storms, and Caroline Hosking asked similarly about storm damage in the Bridge Street neighbourhood.

Caroline Hosking asked how jet-skiers had been able to launch from the beach; Stephen Hawkins responded that they had been able to take advantage of gates being opened for the Marathon, and they couldn't usually get on to the beach.

- \* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to circulate an Environmental Update by email.**
- \* **Action: Stephen Hawkins to investigate plans for Christian Path.**
- \* **Action: Cathy Cherizard to report what action will be taken to repair storm damage.**

**279.4f Planning:** John Stewart reported that he had noticed some changes to the hovercraft application on the City Council's planning portal: noise was suggested to be less significant than previously thought; the route would now be to the east of Inchkeith as there were fewer birds there; and Stagecoach and the City Council were discussing the design of the terminal building and ramp.

John also said that planning permission had been granted for a language school in Phoenix House, to be called the Bellfield School; and that permission was sought to convert the old Congregational Church in Marlborough Street into a single dwelling. (Planning application on the City Council planning portal: [http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/publicaccess/tdc/DcApplication/application\\_detailview.aspx?caseno=L2EVWREW01T00](http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/publicaccess/tdc/DcApplication/application_detailview.aspx?caseno=L2EVWREW01T00) )

Several points were made in response to the City Council planning committee's recent decision not to grant permission for BL Development's plans for the Scottish Power site. Diana Cairns pointed out that air pollution in Portobello already breaches European guidelines; David Hamilton thought the City Council should quantify the level of air pollution it was prepared to accept. Stephen Hawkins regretted the lack of convergence in the community's and developers' aspirations, and wondered if relevant reports were entirely unbiased. Dawson Currie wanted an explanation to be sought about the great difference between the detailed design and the North West Portobello Development Brief. Sheila Gilmore asked if the new pre-planning process had made things worse for local interests, with Edinburgh's Director of Planning apparently interpreting the new guidelines less helpfully for the local community than in other authorities. Caroline Hosking wondered why the transport department never questioned increases in through traffic. There was general agreement that we wanted to see housing on this site and that John Stewart should write to the City Council requesting clarification of these and other issues, first circulating his draft letter for comment. He would be joining a new group being set up by the City Council through which community councils could discuss the effectiveness of the new planning consultation process. Peter McColl suggested that we should write to all City Councillors to explain the shortcomings of the new arrangements, which threatened to be a real gag on the community, and it was agreed that to start with he and John Stewart should write a report with which Dawson Currie could raise our concerns at the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils.

Sean Watters circulated a letter to the Community Council outlining a local couple's wish to build an accessible family home in Bellfield Lane for the benefit of their disabled daughter. He offered to notify the Community Council when the planning application was made.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to write to the City Council's Director of Planning.**
- \* **Action: John Stewart and Peter McColl to write a paper for Dawson Currie to raise planning issues at the EACC.**

**279.4g Signs, Plaques and coade-stone:** Celia Butterworth reminded the meeting of the new plaque on the Tower.

**279.4h Portobello Community Centre:** David Scott reported that the Community Centre would be holding its AGM on 8th June. The Association had received a grant to improve the stage, sound and lighting systems which would help local drama groups.

**279.4i Councillors and Members of Parliament:**

Maureen Child circulated a written report, and drew attention to an article in the *Guardian* which praised Portobello beach.

Stephen Hawkins pointed out that bike stands and benches were now being installed on pavements to prevent parking, and the City Council was confident that good quality would be maintained since it would be relatively cheap to replace broken paving slabs.

Mike Bridgman reported that larger fire appliances had difficulty reaching Towerbank Primary School, so the City Council was looking at the possibility of realigning the access road.

Sheila Gilmore, our new MP, thanked the entire local community for support, and described the strange atmosphere at Westminster, finding this a strange way to run the country. She would be continuing with Gavin Strang's timetable of constituency surgeries for a while, but might change it in due course.

Kenny MacAskill MSP had listened with interest to the discussion about planning and offered to take up relevant issues at national level if necessary, suggesting a possible refinement of guidelines.

## **279.5 Any Other Business**

### **279.5a Clean-up at Gilberstoun**

David Hamilton reported a successful community event at Gilberstoun, in which 45 bags of litter had been collected.

### **279.5b Big Things on the Beach**

The arts group had requested sponsorship for its 'Imagine Party Promenade' in the Edinburgh Festival. It was agreed that, although we generally preferred to invest in permanent installations, we would offer a £50 grant in this case and would like our contribution to be indicated in the exhibition.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to arrange a grant of £50 to Big Things on the Beach.**

### **279.5c Traffic calming in Gilberstoun**

David Hamilton outlined a number of concerns about traffic in Gilberstoun, and requested the Community Council's support in seeking speed-reducing measures, especially in view of the City Council's apparent policy that traffic calming will only be considered once an accident has happened. Nick Stroud asked that the entrances to Brunstane station be included in any plans, especially as this was a key route for blind people to reach the RNIB unit at the Jewel & Esk Valley College. William Wilson pointed out that the same problems exist in Windsor Place and other local streets plagued by rat-running, and Mike Bridgman said it was a problem throughout the city which needs better education of all concerned. Maureen Child requested Community Council support for her efforts to get a local speed limit of 20mph imposed. Archie Burns pointed out that Cathy Cherizard has a budget for traffic calming, and he asked Kenny MacAskill and Sheila Gilmore to make it illegal to park cars on footpaths.

- \* **Action: David Hamilton to draft letters to the Chief Constable (cc local chief inspector) and the Director of the City Council's Services for Communities, and circulate it for comments.**
- \* **Action: Kenny MacAskill to check the law about parking cars on footpaths.**

## **279.6 Topics for future meetings**

All the suggestions made so far are currently in hand.

## **279.7 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 June 2010

Subsequent dates are: 30th August (no meeting in July)  
27th September 2010  
25th October 2010