



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 254th meeting held on 26th November 2007 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Margaret Munro (Vice Chair), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer) Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Jet Cameron (PPAG), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl (PEDAL), Brenda Molony (Porty Reporter), Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), Margaret Smith (Portobello Labour Party), Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS), David Turner (Portobello Amnesty Group), Sean Watters (PFANS), William Wilson.

Apologies: Robert Gatliff, Bob Jefferson (Porty Online), Stephen McIntyre, Nora Mackenzie, Lawrence Marshall, Sheila Scott (Merchants & Hoteliers), Sandy Smith.

In attendance: John Butterworth, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, James Hunter, Arthur Jeffery, Linda Kelly, Kenny MacAskill (MSP), Kenneth Owen (Police), Mike Robb, Anne Ward, Margaret Williamson (Portobello High School), Ian Wilson.

254.1 Vice Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff was detained on work-related business elsewhere, so Margaret Munro took the Chair. She welcomed Margaret Williamson as the new representative from the High School, and reported the sad news that Community Councillor Nora Mackenzie is terminally ill.

254.2 Minutes of the previous meeting

Item sederunt: Stephen McIntyre had not been present but had tendered apologies.

Item 253.8f: It was not the History Society which organised the talk on Coade Stone, but the Community Council's own Signs, Plaques and Coadestone sub-committee.

With these corrections the minutes were approved: proposed Peter McColl, seconded John Stewart.

254.3 Matters arising from September meeting

254.3a Updated membership list and constitution (minute 253.4b)

- * The Secretary was still working on this and would distribute it in due course.

254.3b Community development plans (minute 253.4c)

A small meeting had taken place, and an ongoing series had been arranged. *See item 254.7i below.*

254.3c Removing through traffic from Portobello (minute 253.4d)

Stephen Hawkins had discovered that the City Council conducted traffic surveys before changing road layouts but not afterwards unless increased congestion warranted it. Anecdotal feedback from bus drivers suggested that they were happy with the removal of the roundabouts on Milton Road, but this was not quantified.

254.3d Protection for Portobello's shop fronts (minute 253.4i)

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to write to the Minister for Sustainable Communities regretting the lowering of planning standards in Portobello.

254.3e Secretary to supply missing Community Council minutes for website (minute 252.9h)

- * *Ongoing.*

254.3f Viridor (minute 253.5)

Lawrence Marshall had supplied information about the Lothian Buses garage, and John Stewart had submitted his letter of objection before the deadline.

254.3g Joppa Shore tourist leaflet (minute 253.8i)

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to let RIGS know that local funding would be available, then seek it in due course from the Community Council, Amenity Society and History Society.

254.3h Keys for noticeboard (minute 253.10b)

- * **Action:** Robert Gatliff to acquire new keys to match the one he has.

254.4 Hovercraft

Caroline Hosking reported that Stagecoach was planning to introduce a permanent hovercraft link across the Forth, and that it hoped to carry on using Portobello until a new pontoon at Leith was ready, though it needed planning permission from the City Council for these. Stagecoach had offered to present its plans to January's Community Council meeting; it was agreed to accept this offer, and also to suggest that the company organise an additional evening meeting for the general public.

- * **Action:** Secretary to invite Stagecoach to the January meeting to discuss the plans for a hovercraft service, and to suggest they organise an open public meeting as well.

254.5 Viridor

Maureen Child reported that the City Council had discovered more letters and petition forms that had been held up waiting for processing. Letters carried more weight than petitions, and there were thought to be around 670 of these. The letters would be placed on public view on the Planning portal in due course. Diana Cairns was concerned that Viridor was not honouring its commitments, for example to report on the balance between objections and letters of support, or to provide the video of its London operation. She suggested that the City Council be asked to devise its waste management strategy rather than being driven by Viridor, and that the Community Council write to the Director of Sustainable Communities to ask for this; she agreed to draft a letter and pass it to the Secretary to send.

- * **Action:** Diana Cairns to draft a letter asking the City Council to devise its waste management strategy before determining the Viridor application, and give it to the Secretary to send to the Council.
- * **Action:** Maureen Child to circulate the final figures for letters and petition forms submitted to the Council on the Viridor application, when these are known.

254.6 North West Master Plan

Stephen Hawkins thanked everyone who had attended the public meeting and mentioned that the next event would be for 'stakeholders' at the Town Hall on 3rd December. The Master Plan would then be submitted to the City Council's Planning Committee on 6th December for initial consideration, before being presented to a local public meeting to be arranged by the City Council in February. The planning consultants' work would be complete at that point, and the Master Plan would become the property and responsibility of the City Council. It would probably be more helpful to think of an 'Urban Design Framework' rather than a 'Master Plan'.

Caroline Hosking asked how significant the meeting on 6th December would be; Stephen Hawkins thought it would have little significance at this point. Maureen Child said that the Portobello/Craigmillar Partnership would be meeting on 28th November and would discuss how the community consultation might be carried forward. Dawson Currie asked if there was a record of the public meeting on the 14th, but there was not. Caroline Hosking reported that the Master Plan Action Group had analysed 155 completed questionnaires but still had more to look at. The Group had asked the City Council to choose a name for 'the unnamed square' from the best suggestions: 'Kiln Square', 'Seaview Square' and 'Figgy Burn Square'.

254.7 Reports

254.7a Police: Kenny Owen regretted that staffing levels and other commitments meant that a police representative could only attend Community Council meetings when he himself was on duty at the time. He reported average numbers of calls – around 1,100 – in October and November. Particular highlights were the new manager at the PowerLeague soccer pitches reintroducing football tournaments for local young people, and a mobile CCTV unit which was needed in Princes Street gardens in December but would be coming to the Prom in January. In response to an enquiry from Stephen Hawkins he said that the burnt-out car in Pipe Street was the result of vandalism, and that the City Council was responsible for removing it, in due course.

254.7b Treasurer: Treasurer's Account: £3,490.98; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,533.29.

Kathleen Hart reported that there was news from the Neighbourhood Partnership of a £20,000 fund to encourage community engagement, with up to £500 available for any particular project; she passed the details to the Secretary. We could use this to produce a fact-sheet to be distributed with the *Party Reporter*.

- * **Action:** Chairman and Secretary to apply for a grant for a community news-sheet.

254.7c Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time.

254.7d Task Force: James Hunter agreed to be co-opted on to the Community Council as a private individual and as an expert contact with the City Council: he is the local environment manager in the new neighbourhood structure, with responsibility for street cleaning, ground maintenance, minor road repairs, road signage and parks.

James Hunter reported on local activities: street cleaning was continuing as usual, with the particular challenge at this time of year of dealing with fallen leaves; the mild weather meant that grass would have to be cut one more time; bulbs would be planted in local parks, and trees maintained; lunchtime litter was still a problem, but was being tackled; and a Portobello Beach Coordinating Group had been set up to involve stakeholders, not all of whom were local, and would meet as often as necessary.

Caroline Hosking asked if the 'Kilns Neighbourhood Watch Group' had been in touch, requesting better maintenance of 'the unnamed square'; James Hunter agreed to check up on this. John Stewart pointed out that the Amenity Society plants bulbs in local parks, and asked that the City Council's work be coordinated with the Amenity Society's. Celia Butterworth wondered if the City Council had the power to fine people who dropped litter, and Maureen Child pointed out that local people had already been fined; James Hunter agreed to report statistics to future meetings. Margaret Williamson emphasised that the High School works hard to tackle the litter issue with pupils: the School was very keen to win its environmental green flag, and 250 pupils had recently been out on a litter-pick, though the time for such community activity was limited, and pupils were outwith the School's jurisdiction at lunch times. William Wilson pointed out that it wasn't just school pupils who dropped litter, since there was a significant problem in the vicinity of fast food outlets in the evenings. A member of the public suggested that the location of litter bins be checked. Diana Cairns was concerned about the City Council's strategy for replacing old trees; James Hunter agreed to find out about this.

- * **Action:** James Hunter to see if 'the unnamed square' by the Kilns could be better maintained.
- * **Action:** James Hunter and John Stewart to coordinate bulb-planting activities.
- * **Action:** James Hunter to provide statistics on littering and fines to future meetings.
- * **Action:** all, to let James Hunter know of any improvements that could be made in the provision of litter bins.
- * **Action:** James Hunter to check up on the City Council's strategy for replacing old trees.

254.7e Planning: John Stewart reported that the application for 1 Eastfield had been passed, as had that to convert Hamilton Lodge into flats, though with several amendments: the only external change would now be the conversion of a window to a door.

254.7f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that the Coade Stone talk had been very interesting, though not very well attended, and that the top for the third coadestone pillar would be installed in the Spring.

254.7g Portobello Traders: no report this time.

254.7h Party Online and Discussion Forum: no report this time.

254.7i Community development planning: a short meeting had taken place. Bob Jefferson had agreed to explore the possibilities of a measured mile on the Prom and a Portobello flag at the Town Hall. A regular programme of meetings was being arranged.

254.7j Community Centre: no report this time.

254.7k Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her usual monthly newsletter.

Stephen Hawkins pointed out that although our third local City Councillor, Michael Bridgeman, hadn't been to any of our meetings, he was working hard for the local Partnership area in other ways.

Stephen Hawkins reported that he was discussing the Kilns with the City's museums department and pursuing the refurbishment of the High School's toilets. His latest information about the replacement of the King's Road roundabout was that work was likely to begin in April.

254.8 Any Other Business

254.8a Community Council business plan

Although we have often talked about streamlining our meetings, we haven't actually done much about it. We will therefore discuss a proactive programme of meetings for 2008 at our January meeting, and reduce time spent on routine matters by having more information – such as reports – circulated in advance.

- * **Action:** Secretary to arrange a more efficient January meeting.

254.8b Activity in Scottish Power site

A member of the public reported that funfair lorries had been parked in this site, now owned by BLD. No licence had been granted for amusements at this location, however, so it was felt that this was probably just a storage facility for the entertainments in Edinburgh.

254.8c POD ceilidh

Diana Cairns reminded the meeting of the St Andrew's Night ceilidh being organised at the Town Hall by Portobello Open Door; tickets were available from Kitcheners.

254.8d Content for Noticeboards

John Stewart pointed out that the recent training meeting had not discussed what to put in our Community Noticeboards, so asked that this be on the January agenda.

- * **Action:** Secretary to include this item in the January meeting.

254.8e Baptist Church clock

John Stewart asked what had happened to Portobello's first civic clock; Stephen Hawkins agreed to find out.

- * **Action:** Stephen Hawkins to find out why the clock has not been restored to the Baptist Church.

254.8f Communicating with Communities

Dawson Currie observed that he had been asking for some time that this item be discussed.

- * **Action:** Secretary to include this item in the January meeting.

254.8g Display of Calor Gas awards

Tom Smith pointed out that there was no room to display our awards at the Library; Dawson Currie suggested building a special framework, or using a video screen.

- * **Action:** Chairman to discuss possibilities with the Librarian.

254.9 Future meetings

The Vice Chair closed the meeting by wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

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 January 2008 (no meeting in December).

Subsequent dates are: 25th February 2008
31st March 2008
28th April 2008
26th May 2008