



# PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## **DRAFT Minutes of the 274th meeting held on 30th November 2009 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall**

**Present:** Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Lilian Graham, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl, John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Leon Thomson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parent Council), William Wilson, Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

**Apologies:** Celia Butterworth, Brenda Molony (*Party Reporter*), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Margaret Rae (PPAG), Gavin Strang M.P.

**In attendance:** Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, Robert Gatliff, Sheila Gilmore, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Arthur Jeffery, George Kerevan, Lawrence Marshall, Sarah Potter (Portobello Police), A. Robinson, David Scott (Portobello Centre), Margaret Smith, Tom Smith, Ian Wilson.

### **274.1 Chair's welcome**

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **274.2 Minutes of October meeting**

It was noted that Tom Black was not present and Tom Ballantine was; also that Celia Butterworth referred to nine plaques in her report on Signs, Plaques & Coadestone (minute 273.10g), not 11.

### **274.3 Matters arising from October meeting**

**274.3a** John Stewart to write to Planning Department in support of International Language School proposal (273.2). John is waiting until the Language School submits a planning application. **Ongoing.**

**274.3b** Secretary to ask Lothian Buses to extend the 15 route up to Queen Margaret University (273.2). The Managing Director of Lothian Buses has responded that they would have no operational problem with this, but it could not be done without extra funding, which they are currently discussing with East Lothian Council. Done.

**274.3c** Cllr Maureen Child to see if City Council has Bath Street study report, and to relay City Council plans to minimise traffic damage (273.4b). Nick Stroud found a copy of the report amongst old Community Council papers and gave it to John Stewart to pass to Suzanne McIntosh. Done.

**274.3d** Robert Gatliff to seek funding to repair Baptist Church so clock can be put back in place (273.4c). Robert has identified several possible sources of funding and will apply to them. **Ongoing.**

**274.3e** Treasurer to send £500 to Portobello Sailing Club (273.4e). Done.

**274.3f** Diana Cairns to write to City Council's John Bury and Jim Lowrie pointing out that major development proposals ignore the design aspirations adopted by the City Council itself for NW Portobello (273.4f). Diana and John Stewart had both written, and both had their requests rejected. Peter McColl wanted to take the matter further straight away, but Stephen Hawkins had spoken to officials and recommended waiting until the report was published. This was agreed.

**274.3g** Diana Cairns to consult Eileen Hewitt about aspects of the new constitution (273.6). Eileen's response was that the items we were concerned about had been agreed nationally, so shouldn't be laid aside lightly. It was agreed to discuss this further at the January meeting.

**274.3h** Office Bearers to consider how to put letters and other Community Council documents in the public domain (273.6); John Stewart will discuss this with Joyce Campbell when the Library reopens. **Ongoing.**

**274.3i** John Stewart to write to chair of Neighbourhood Partnership asking how we can best improve our interaction with and participation in the Partnership (273.7); this is still **ongoing**.

**274.3j** Peter McColl to circulate Community Council with list of Neighbourhood Partnership sub-groups so we can identify issues most relevant to us (273.6); Peter had done this but with an out-of-date mailing list. The sub-groups are as follows:

- Health and Well Being
- Environmental
- Area Board
- FSF Funding Panel
- Community Safety
- Children and Young People
- Economic Development & Employment
- Housing & Regeneration
- Voluntary Sector

**274.3k** Sandra Blake, Maria Devoy and volunteers to provide refreshments for November meeting (273.8). This was achieved triumphantly, and Sandra and Maria were warmly thanked by all.

**274.3l** Cllrs Child and Hawkins to try and get a new bus shelter installed at the Coillesdenes (273.9): Maureen Child had written to request this, and Stephen Hawkins had spoken to the relevant official.

**274.3m** Stephen Hawkins to ask that bollards be installed at key points to keep lorries off pavements (273.10); in hand.

**274.3n** All community councillors to let Stephen Hawkins know where bollards are particularly needed (273.10); no other suggestions had been forthcoming.

**274.3o** Cllr Hawkins to arrange a meeting of Council official and William Wilson at swingpark (273.10); in hand.

**274.3p** John Stewart to emphasise Community Council's objections to destruction of Green Belt (273.10); John had written about this and also about the ghost train site. Done.

**274.3q** John Stewart to write a Community Council article for the *Porty Reporter* (273.11a). Done.

**274.3r** Stephen Hawkins to ask BL Developments to improve the security of their site (273.11b). Stephen had spoken to Phil Myerscough but there had been no visible improvement in security and rubbish was still being dumped there, so he would try again. **Ongoing**.

**274.3s** Stephen Hawkins to check that Jack's snacks is licensed to operate (273.11c). Stephen reported that the business does have a licence, but that a notice had been served requiring that noise nuisance to neighbours should cease, and if it doesn't then the licence could be revoked. Done.

**274.3t** Portobello Police to check for obvious nuisance (273.11c). Done.

**274.3u** Diana Cairns to write to Environmental Health to request their advice (273.11c). Done.

**274.3v** Sandra Blake to ask the City Council's Alvin Barber about the state of Portobello beach (273.11d). Sandra had done this and officials were now checking the beach. Done.

**274.3w** Treasurer to send £50 to the Librarian (273.11e). No information; **ongoing**.

**274.3x** Diana Cairns to complete and return the voting papers for the ASCC election (273.11f). Done.

## **274.5 Matters for Any Other Business**

The following items were identified for discussion under Any Other Business:

- letter from The Mortgage People
- Imagine Porty Prom
- Porty High School golf prize
- Climate change rally in Glasgow
- Road safety at King's Road junction

## **274.6 Application for permanent hovercraft service**

Stagecoach would be organising a meeting in the Town Hall at 7:30pm on 16th December, to present their proposal to operate a permanent cross-Forth hovercraft service between Portobello and Kirkcaldy. Two 150-seat hovercraft were to be built, to provide crossings every 25 minutes at peak times and hourly at other times. The company would be applying for planning permission before the end of the year.

The proposed Portobello terminal was further west than that used in the trial in Summer 2007, so noise should not be an issue for local residents. Other possible problems were suggested to be obstruction to cyclists and pedestrians on the Promenade, obstruction to sailors, increased traffic, impact on wildlife in this scientifically important area, and the inability to buy travel tickets locally. These matters could be raised at the public meeting in December. In addition Steve Walker, Stagecoach Operations Director for the project, had offered to deal with questions directly (telephone 01592 645660).

### **274.7 Proposed waste facility at Millerhill**

The Scottish Government has adopted a Zero Waste policy, in response to which the Midlothian and Edinburgh Councils have bought derelict land at Millerhill and applied for planning permission to create a waste treatment facility on it. If successful a private contractor would then be invited to design, build and operate a suitable facility.

A joint Council Project called 'Zero Waste: Edinburgh and Midlothian' had been set up and was now carrying out a range of consultations over the proposals, the next one being at 7pm on Tuesday 1st December at Danderhall Community Centre, Newtonchurch Road, EH22 1LU. John Stewart and Diana Cairns planned to attend this and invited anyone else interested to join them, since the outcome of this proposal would probably affect Viridor's application for a waste transfer site at Portobello.

- \* **Action: all interested to attend the Zero Waste public meeting in Danderhall.**

### **274.8 Communications**

The Community Council has a key role to play in enabling communication between local residents and the City Council, and several ways of fostering this role were suggested. It was recognised that no one method will reach everyone, and that we should look at several different options.

Sean Watters thought that it was important for local people to be able to find out who their community councillors are. There has always been an area in the community website reserved for Community Council use; this currently holds meeting minutes but little else, and it was agreed that all those who wanted to could have a photograph and short introduction added to the website.

It was also agreed that it would be helpful to have a prominent Community Council information point in the Library. Once these two foundations had been established we could build on them, for example by publishing a newsletter like South Queensferry Community Council's, and distribute it with the *Porty Reporter* (Robert Gatliff pointed out that it should be possible to obtain a Neighbourhood Partnership grant to pay for this, and that April would be the best time to apply for this).

The Community Council receives a great many communications every month, some simply for information, some requiring a response but which is of no local benefit, and some needing definite action. At present all electronic communications are circulated to all Community Council members in the expectation that everyone will deal responsibly and appropriately with each one, but this risks duplicated and wasted effort. It was generally agreed that the City Council expects far too much from community councillors, and that we should not be afraid to refuse their requests. It was also agreed that paper copies of key communications should be made available in the Library, for the benefit of those who don't have email access, and that other aspects of the topic should be considered at future meetings.

- \* **Action: Nick Stroud to collect photos and introductory paragraphs for the website.**
- \* **Action: John Stewart to talk to Joyce Campbell about the Community Council's presence in the Library.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to let the City Council know when we decide not to respond to any of its communications.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to put paper copies of key documents in the Library.**

### **274.9 Reports**

**274.9a Police:** Sarah Potter reported that Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes had passed well, with just one youth having to be charged with throwing fireworks. There had been a few break-ins to houses and shops, and to cars where valuable objects had been left in full view.

**274.9b Treasurer:** No report available.

**274.9c Neighbourhood Partnership:** The next meeting was to be on 20th January.

**274.9d Edinburgh Association of Community Councils:** Dawson Currie reported that the meeting arranged for 5th December had been postponed to make way for the City Council's training day for new community councillors.

**274.9e Association of Scottish Community Councils:** Diana Cairns reported on this national meeting which had taken place in the Scottish Parliament on 14th November. It had been an interesting day with plenty of subjects discussed and good opportunities for networking, but with too many topics for one day.

**274.9f Joppa Tennis Courts:** Robert Gatliff observed that little goes on at this quiet time of year.

**274.9g Environmental Update:** Cathy Cherizard summarised local work, which included the start of the Winter Works Programme to collect leaves and prune trees; street cleaning; completion of pavement refurbishment by mid March, with all footways clear between 18th December and 6th January; and assessment of private trade bins on roads.

**274.9h Planning:** John Stewart reported that three residents in Bellfield Lane were objecting to an application to build a new house in a back garden there. Several other houses had already been built in this way, effectively creating a new street in this conservation area. It was generally agreed that the Community Council should support the neighbours' objections on the grounds of over-development and health & safety.

Diana Cairns mentioned the Planning Concordat, feeling that it was unreasonable of the City Council to expect us to respond to it. Very few other community councils seemed to have responded, but those that don't respond by 11th December risked having policies imposed upon them. It was generally agreed that Diana should register our objection to this demand.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to object to the proposed development in Bellfield Lane.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to object to the City Council's handling of the Planning Concordat.**

**274.9i Signs, Plaques and coade-stone:** Celia Butterworth sent in a report: (1) a map showing the Community Council's nine interpretive boards had been sent to James Hunter, suggesting they be included in phase 1 of Promenade design; (2) the David Laing plaque at the junction of Laing Terrace and Promenade had been cleaned (paid by PAS) and placed on the front of the tenement at a lower more readable position; (3) PAS had been granted £483 from the Neighbourhood Partnership Community Grants Fund to make a plaque for the Tower; the Tower's owner Mark Noble had agreed to pay for the plaque's placement.

**274.9j Portobello High School:** no report on this occasion.

**274.9k Community Centre:** No report this time.

#### **274.9l Councillors:**

Mike Bridgman reported that he was dealing with a range of issues for constituents.

Maureen Child circulated her usual written report.

Stephen Hawkins mentioned the realignment of the road around Towerbank, to permit the School's extension.

## **274.10 Any Other Business**

### **274.10a Complaint from The Mortgage People**

John Stewart reported that he had received a complaint from The Mortgage People, part of local business The Portobello Partnership, about the way the Community Council had dealt with a planning application for land in Marlborough Street. John itemised the components of the complaint and his responses to them. After a wide-ranging discussion it was agreed that the correct way to handle the complaint was to go through an open and transparent process which would be equally applicable in any situation. It was therefore agreed to invite representatives from The Mortgage People to the January meeting.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to invite The Mortgage People to the January meeting.**
- \* **Action: Nick Stroud to circulate the letter of complaint with the minutes.**

- \* **Action: John Stewart to circulate his responses to the individual components of the complaint.**

#### **274.10b *Imagine Porty Promenade***

Diana Cairns reminded the meeting of the message from Big Things on the Beach that she had circulated by email the previous day. This concerned the initiative to “*Imagine Porty Prom*”, in the Portobello Public Art House at the foot of King’s Road, from 1pm to 5pm on Fridays and Saturdays until 19th December.

#### **274.10c *Golf competition trophy***

John Stewart reported that the High School had initiated an open schools’ golf competition which would be played at Craigenfinny’s 18-hole course, and were requesting sponsorship of around £40 for a trophy. It was agreed to do this, with the suggestion that the trophy should be named The Portobello Shield, though the final choice of name would be left to the School.

- \* **Action: John Stewart to arrange for cheque to be sent to High School for golf trophy.**

#### **274.10d *Climate Change rally in Glasgow***

Tom Ballantine reminded the meeting of the climate change rally *The Wave* which was taking place in Glasgow on Saturday 5th December (and also in London). He had organised two coaches for people wishing to attend the rally and places were still available. The coaches would leave from the Town Hall at 9am and return at about 4:30pm; tickets cost £6 from Tom (tel 669 0582, email ballantinehome@tiscali.co.uk).

There is information about the event at <http://www.the-wave.org.uk/scotland/>

#### **274.10e *Road safety at King’s Road/Portobello High Street***

It was reported that there had been potentially dangerous accidents at the newly-installed traffic lights at the top of King’s Road, meaning that the disruptive removal of the roundabout hadn’t necessarily made this junction safer. Sarah Potter was asked to get accident statistics for the junction, and it was agreed that this should be a topic for the January meeting.

- \* **Action: Sarah Potter to get police statistics about the safety of the junction.**
- \* **Action: Diana Cairns to invite a City Council traffic engineer to the January meeting.**

#### **274.10f *Education cuts***

William Wilson expressed anxiety about the continuing cuts in education funding, which were already harmful but more were promised, so that the High School was threatened with having to lose teaching posts. He urged community councillors to write to the City Council objecting to the cuts, and he offered to report further details to future meetings.

- \* **Action: All, to consider objecting to the City Council about cuts in education funding.**

#### **274.10g *Water efficiency***

Diana Cairns reported that the Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre was currently running a pilot project to improve the efficiency of water use in Edinburgh, and had offered to provide a speaker for a future meeting. It was agreed to add this to the list of possibilities for future meetings.

### **274.11 *Topics for future meetings***

Suggestions for topics for future meetings include:

- 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.

## **274.12 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 25th January 2010 (no meeting in December)

Subsequent dates are: 22nd February 2010  
29th March 2010  
26th April 2010