



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 253rd meeting held on 29th October 2007 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Robert Gatliff (Chairman), Nick Stroud (Secretary), Kathleen Hart (Treasurer)
Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns (PCATS), Jet Cameron (PPAG), Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy,
Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl (PEDAL), Stephen McIntyre, Lawrence Marshall, Brenda Molony
(Porty Reporter), Margaret Munro (History Society), Tom Nimmo (Brighton Residents), Margaret Smith
(Portobello Labour Party), Tom Smith, John Stewart (PAS), David Turner (Portobello Amnesty Group),
William Wilson.

Apologies: Bob Jefferson (Porty Online), Sheila Scott (Merchants & Hoteliers).

In attendance: Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Cllr Maureen Child.

253.1 Vice Chair's welcome

Robert Gatliff returned after missing two meetings while doing research in the Atlantic. He welcomed Jet Cameron as the new representative of the Portobello Park Action Group, then invited Peter McColl to say something about the group he represents on the Community Council.

253.2 PEDAL

Peter McColl talked about the work and aspirations of the Portobello Energy Descent and Land Reform Group – PEDAL. There is an increasingly urgent need to move away from dependence on oil, which might be past its peak availability as soon as 2011. PEDAL is modelled on a group in Ireland, and was set up when the fate of the Scottish Power site was in doubt. Its most recent activity had been to organise a local car-free day which had been quite successful, with around 300 people participating, and it would shortly be launching an eco-friendly shopping bag. Other initiatives being explored included a community orchard, minimisation of food-miles, and establishing an appropriate community refreshment business. It would not be sensible for PEDAL to set up its own development trust, but it was keen to support such an initiative. It was currently constituted as a small trust, and was investigating charitable status. New members were always welcome, and would help PEDAL with activities and participation in national initiatives. There was an obvious local need to explore the possibilities of micro power generation, but more active participants were required to do this. It was suggested that the City Council could take a lead in fostering a neighbourhood power scheme, but Stephen Hawkins replied that there was a quicker return by concentrating on getting homes well insulated, and using condensing combi-boilers. Robert Gatliff suggested that PEDAL explore opportunities for getting the Waterfront Project to include tidal power generation in its plans for the coastal boardwalk.

Several people asked about PEDAL's hope of setting up a new licensed 'community space' when so many pubs in Portobello seemed to be having trouble staying in business. Peter McColl explained that there was a need for something a bit different to fill a gap in the market, offering tea, coffee and food as well as alcohol, and that several 'community pubs' being set up in Scotland would act as models.

253.3 Minutes of the previous meeting

Item 252.4k: the Librarian's comment to Maureen Child about the best location for the Portobello Library had been a personal one, not an official one; she had expressed concern about moving the Library to the 'Pitz site' and thought felt that a High Street location would be extremely favourable for the Library.

Item 252.9k: Lawrence Marshall pointed out that SUSTRANS, the Sustainable Transport charity – not SESTRAN – was responsible for the maintenance of Christian Path.

Item 252.7: Caroline Hosking pointed out that we now had a Masterplan, not a Development Plan.

With these corrections the minutes were approved: proposed Kathleen Hart, seconded Margaret Smith.

253.4 Matters arising from September meeting

253.4a Training for Community Councillors (minute 253.2)

The Chairman thanked everyone who had attended the first session the previous week and summarised the outcomes, including the idea that we consider making an annual or quarterly report or review for our community, perhaps distributed in the Party Reporter. The second training session would be held on Monday 12th November (at 7:30 in the Baptist Church Hall), when one possibility would be to decide what to say in such a report; other suggestions for the evening's activities were welcome.

253.4b Updated membership list and constitution (minute 252.4b)

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

253.4c Community development plans (minute 252.4c)

- * Meeting to be arranged in due course.

253.4d Removing through traffic from Portobello (minute 252.4d)

- * The Chairman and the Amenity Society had both written to the City Council, but there was little chance of halting the replacement of roundabouts with traffic lights as this was part of a national bus-priority scheme. Meanwhile Germany is apparently replacing traffic lights with roundabouts. Stephen Hawkins agreed to ask the City Council what were its intentions concerning traffic monitoring before and after replacement of the King's Road roundabout. John Stewart reported that he had asked for replacement planting; there was general regret that so much vegetation had been replaced with tarmac.

253.4e Viridor proposals (minute 252.4e)

Robert Gatliff confirmed that he had written following our discussions of the Edinburgh Plan in June.

253.4f Plans for housing at Newcraighall (minute 252.4f)

Robert Gatliff confirmed that he had written following our discussions of the Edinburgh Plan in June.

253.4g Affordable housing in Edinburgh (minute 252.4g)

Robert Gatliff confirmed that he had written following our discussions of the Edinburgh Plan in June.

253.4h Open spaces in Portobello (minute 252.4h)

Robert Gatliff confirmed that he had written following our discussions of the Edinburgh Plan in June.

253.4i Protection for Portobello's shop fronts (minute 252.4m)

John Stewart reported that there had been a 'walkabout' with City Council officials to review some of the controversial local developments, but its dispiriting outcome was that the officials suggested that Portobello had been allowed to decline too far, and it would be pointless to report anything to them unless it was actually offensive. Our status as a conservation area was therefore effectively meaningless. Celia Butterworth had written to the City Council and Kenny MacAskill MSP to complain about this. Peter McColl suggested taking this up with the Minister for Sustainable Communities.

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

253.4j Association of Scottish Community Councils survey (minute 252.5)

The Secretary had completed the questionnaire using the decisions made at the September meeting.

253.4k Viridor appeal deadline (minute 252.6)

The deadline for comments to the City Council on the Viridor planning application had been extended to 5th November. *See item 253.5 below.*

253.4l James Hunter to be invited to join Portobello Community Council (minute 252.8)

This was in hand. Stephen Hawkins queried if this was to be a personal or a representative position; it was the former.

253.4m Sean Watter and Peter McColl to comment on technical aspects of Viridor application, John Stewart to draft a letter of objection (minute 252.9e)

See item 253.5 below.

253.4n Secretary to supply missing Community Council minutes for website (minute 252.9h)

- * *In hand.*

253.5 Viridor

John Stewart had drafted a long letter of objection, in sections according to the topics to be objected to, and he thanked Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl and members of the Amenity Society for their help with it; he was thanked and congratulated on doing such a good job. Robert Gatliff pointed out that it would not be unreasonable for Portobello to deal with its own waste, but that every other part of Edinburgh should handle its own waste locally also. Caroline Hosking was concerned about Viridor's related plans for an incinerator at Dunbar, and she circulated a petition for signature; she can also provide a standard letter of objection for anyone who would like help in writing their own. Stephen Hawkins thought that guarantees should be sought that the application for five-day working be adhered to, since there was seven-day working at Powderhall. Lawrence Marshall pointed out that the City Council has a policy to upgrade Edinburgh's coastline with a 'boardwalk', which would require the Lothian Buses garage to be moved; the former Freightliner terminal was the obvious place for this, and better than a waste transfer station. William Wilson wondered what was best practice in waste management, but Peter McColl thought there probably wasn't one.

- * **Action:** Lawrence Marshall to send John Stewart some text about the Lothian Buses garage.
- **Action:** John Stewart to complete his letter of objection and send it in before 5th November.

253.6 Portobello Community Council training

Brenda Molony expressed disappointment that more members had not turned up for the training session on 22nd October. The Secretary was asked to write to the non-attenders asking them to attend the session on 12th November, at 7:30pm in the Baptist Church Hall. Everyone was invited to feed back ideas for this training session by 5th November

253.7 North West Masterplan

Caroline Hosking reported that there was to be a public meeting about the Masterplan in the Town Hall at 7:30pm in the Town Hall. Stephen Hawkins had requested that members of the City Council's Planning Department attend; local developers would be there, though it was not known if the consultants would be. The meeting would provide an important opportunity for the public to put views to the Planning Committee. Caroline Hosking asked for help in distributing leaflets about the meeting, and pointed out that a questionnaire about the housing plans was available in the Library and local shops.

253.8 Reports

253.8a Police: no report this time.

253.8b Treasurer: Treasurer's Account: £3,483.67; Joppa Tennis Courts: £7,533.29.

Kathleen Hart reported that she had sent a donation in the Community Council's name to the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association in memory of former colleague Betty Young.

253.8c Joppa Tennis Courts: no report this time.

253.8d Task Force: no report this time. Brenda Molony reported on a meeting of the Portobello Beach Coordinating Group, where there had been discussions about jet-skis (there was no budget for marker buoys and more had to be scrounged from somewhere), antisocial behaviour and cycling on the Prom. Susan Mooney was the new City Council official coordinating work in our area. Future meetings would be arranged as required. It was agreed that we would expand the 'Task Force' item on the agenda for future meetings to include this aspect.

253.8e Planning: John Stewart reported that the Secretary of State had refused permission for two mews houses in St Mary's Place, and that a site visit was being arranged for the afternoon of Thursday 1st November to consider the application at Eastfield.

253.8f Signs, Plaques and coadestone: Celia Butterworth reported that the top for the third coadestone pillar was still being manufactured. The History Society was planning to have a talk about the history of coadestone in general, at 7:30pm on 22nd November in St John's Church Hall; details were available from 657 2866.

253.8g Portobello Traders: no report this time.

253.8h Party Online and Discussion Forum: no report this time.

253.8i Community development planning: Robert Gatliff circulated a leaflet about Craigleith Quarry which had been produced with SNH funding, then showed a leaflet about Joppa Shore which he had had produced by a geology student. This would qualify for RIGS funding if some contribution to the cost was forthcoming from local organisations, and the leaflet could then be distributed freely through local outlets. It was agreed to support this initiative.

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

253.8j Community Centre: no report this time.

253.8k Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her usual monthly newsletter, drawing particular attention to the HMO decision now in the pipeline, the fine-tuning of the new Milton Road traffic lights to maximise traffic flow, and a meeting on 30th October about the redevelopment of the High School. She mentioned a new social event for Portobello, 'Salsa Tea Dances' with band *Salsa Celtica* in the Beach Lane Social Club on Sundays.

Stephen Hawkins mentioned the POD St Andrew's Night ceilidh with the *Belle Stars*. He felt that the city's new trams would have an indirect benefit for Portobello. He reported that Stagecoach was planning to introduce a permanent hovercraft link across the Forth but it would go to Leith rather than Portobello. The City Council was holding a public consultation until 21st December on how to handle changes to properties already in the Green Belt. Finally he asked that people go on reporting antisocial behaviour to the police, since this enabled important ongoing work behind the scenes, even if no short-term action appeared to be taken.

253.9 Any Other Business

253.9a Portobello's neglected civic square

Caroline Hosking reported that around 50 names had been suggested for the neglected square; the outcome would be reported at the public meeting.

253.10b new noticeboard

John Stewart asked how we would be using our newly-reinstated noticeboard. Celia Butterworth agreed to find out where the key was. Robert Gatliff thought this would be a good topic for the training meeting on 12th November.

- * **Action:** Celia Butterworth to find missing key for the community noticeboard.

253.10 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 November 2007.

Subsequent dates are: (no meeting in December)
28th January 2008
25th February 2008
31st March 2008
28th April 2008