



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 272nd meeting held on 28 September 2009 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Robert Gatliff (Joppa Tennis Club), Lilian Graham, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Brenda Molony (Portobello Reporter), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Peter McColl, John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parent Council), William Wilson, Frances Wraith (Brighton and Rosefield Residents' Association).

Apologies: James Hunter (CEC), Celia Butterworth, Lawrence Marshall, Margaret Rae (Portobello Park Action Group).

In attendance: Cllr Maureen Child, Sarah Potter (Portobello Police), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Cllr Mike Bridgman, Kenny MacAskill MSP, A Robinson, Damian Killeen (Big Things on the Beach), Joyce Campbell (Portobello Library), Kathleen Hart, Ian Wilson, Tom Smith, Margaret Smith, S Gilmore, A Robinson, Suzanne McIntosh.

272.1 Returning Officer's welcome

The Returning Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that she would be chairing the meeting until the election of office bearers. She thanked the members of the community council and the office bearers for their work during the last year.

272.2 Presentation by BL Developments on amended plans for the former Scottish Power site

BL Developments had affixed several images of the proposed changes to their plans to the wall and invited members to have a look then ask questions.

John Stewart mentioned the CC's concerns about heights and density and asked BL whether they had addressed them and asked what the planning dept had asked them to revise in the light of public comment and the NW Portobello Development Brief (NWPDB).

Phil Myerscough said that all of their buildings confirmed to the NWPDB as none is higher than the King's Road tenements. On density, BL Developments said that there would be 56% open space in the development, including a community garden and private open space. BL agreed that the density was high, owing to the high number of "starter" homes which they believe is addressing a need in Portobello but that as they are small units the development will not generate as many people. BL said they had

been given no specific guidance from the council Planning dept about issues raised in the objections brought to their attention but some had been given more emphasis than others.

Caroline pointed out that the NWPDB says the only heights to be derived from the King's Road tenements are those on the Sir Harry Lauder edge but that these would be much higher than the existing Baileyfield cottages and the Fishwives Causeway tenements. The brief clearly states that other heights should be derived from adjacent buildings and fit in with the existing urban grain.

BL Devts said that the NWPDB sets out the aspirations for this area of Portobello for the next 20 years, that the Baileyfield cottages will eventually disappear and that the development is not out of line with the urban grain of Portobello. It was eventually clarified that the buildings will get higher as they go up the hill towards the Harry Lauder Road edge of the site.

There were questions about parking and BL said that there would be 526 parking spaces allowed on the site in accordance with council guidelines. The number of units has been decreased from 738 to 710 units.

Damian Killeen said that the corner of the site would be an ideal place to have an artistic feature to celebrate Portobello and encouraged PCC to ask for such a feature as planning gain and to engage with the public about it. BL explained that they had asked Scottish Power to install a smaller electricity sub-station on the site to make way for such a feature as they (BL) own that part of the site. However this had proved to be problematic so they had parked the issue.

Margaret Munro asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the green space and BL said they will discuss with the Council whether they will maintain the public square. If the Council declines to do this its maintenance will be included in the factoring charge to residents of the development.

Archie Burns asked how parking would be managed, and where people using the British Legion and Out of the Blue would park. BL said that parking would be unallocated, that it would be split between commercial and private users. It will effectively be a free-for-all, including the undercroft parking and they have to work out how people will get in. There will be 135 surface parking spaces for visitors.

There was a question about what discussions the developers had had with Planning about possible planning gain. BL Devts said that they were just starting to have discussions but that there would be a contribution towards improvements to the high street; 25% affordable housing and the incorporation of Out of the Blue, which is a non-profit making organisation, into the development.

272.3 Library refurbishment - Joyce Campbell

Joyce explained that the library would be closing for refurbishment on 12 October. There will be a mobile library parked outside the building for the next two months in place of the benches, which will be replaced when the refurbishment is complete. The library has been carrying out consultation for around two months. Some of the changes include: a self issue and return facility (optional), cafe and gallery areas, a cuddle book

corner, a space for young people, new shelving, flooring and carpets. The colour scheme will be neutral, with white walls and accented with brightly coloured furniture.

272.4. Election of office bearers

John Stewart was nominated for the position of Chair by Diana Cairns and seconded by Brenda Molony. As there were no other nominations, John was duly elected Chair.

Margaret Munro was nominated as Vice-chair by Caroline Hosking and seconded by Anne Ward. As there were no other nominations, Margaret was duly elected Vice-chair.

There were no nominations or volunteers for the position of Treasurer but Anne Ward said she would consider the position. Kathleen Hart said the post takes up a minimal amount of time each month and said she would explain how the position worked to Anne. She agreed to continue as Treasurer for the next couple of months during the transitional period.

Margaret Munro suggested that as the role of Secretary has a heavy workload it would make sense for the role to be shared by two people. Nick Stroud was nominated by Dawson Currie and seconded by Maria Devoy. Diana Cairns was nominated by Margaret Munro and seconded by Archie Burns. As there were no other nominations, Nick and Diana were duly elected Joint Secretaries. Diana said that she would be happy to work with Nick and that they would need to work out how they would share the workload.

Joyce thanked the outgoing office bearers, Robert Gatliff, Kathleen Hart and Caroline Hosking for all their hard work and handed the chairing of the meeting over to John Stewart. John reiterated his thanks to Robert, Kathleen and Caroline and also thanked Joyce for chairing the meeting up to that point. John then asked all the members of the new community council to introduce themselves and state whether they were an individual member or state which group they represented.

272.5. Minutes of the previous meeting

There were two amendments to the minutes:

271.6 Towerbank - there are four general purpose rooms but they are being used as classrooms.

271.11f Two items had been run together. Hope Lane barriers on the cycleway had been altered so cyclists can ride through them. The Bridge Street issue was separate.

Following the amendments, the minutes were proposed as true record by Brenda Molony and seconded by Margaret Munro.

272.6. Matters arising

268.9d Seafeld junction: Cllr Hawkins said that the traffic engineers had monitored the site and made minor amendments. He asked cyclists to get in touch about any difficulties at the new Seafeld junction, particularly at Fishwives Causeway.

270.2 Braidburn flood prevention scheme: Caroline had had a response from Alvin Barber of the council who did not believe that there was a great risk of flooding at the foot of the Figgate Burn but that there was a possibility of flooding at the site of the proposed arcades in the Funpark development.

271.9 Modernising planning: Caroline had written a response about the Modernising Planning Concordat on Community Engagement, as discussed at the previous meeting.

271.11c Neighbourhood partnership: Sean Watters was to attend the Neighbourhood Partnership “Let’s Get Together” event in the Town Hall on Friday 2 October. The feedback from the previous week’s event was that it had been attended mainly by members of the participating groups.

272.7. Agree AOCB

1. PONGS finances
2. Rota for opening / closing up Baptist church hall for CC meetings.
3. Insurance (this was covered under the Treasure’s report).
4. Temporary barrier at the foot of Beach Lane - it was agreed that this would be carried over to the next meeting.

Action: Cllr Hawkins is to investigate No 4.

272.8. Traffic/noise/parking problems in Bath Street

Suzanne McIntosh described the problems currently faced by Bath Street residents, for example the high number of articulated vehicles using the street and mounting the pavement. Suzanne has raised the matter several times and has recently been talking to neighbours, commercial premises and councillors. The HGVs pose many safety issues and the Promenade improvements offer an opportunity to address some of these. There is no consistent area standard for the public realm and help is needed from the council. Cllr Child said she had spoken to Andrew Matheson at the Council and that he will arrange a site meeting. There is problem with the number of bins at the foot of Bath Street, which needs to be rationalised. The non-council bins do not have planning permission and the whole area needs to be looked at.

John Stewart pointed out the PAS did support a one-way system between Bath Street and Bellfield Street and that there had been a Promenade design study done in the past for Bath Street.

Action: John Stewart to look out previous Bath Street study.

Cllr Hawkins said that Andrew Matheson does not support a one-way system but that that did not mean that we should not pursue it and that maybe a homezone would be appropriate for the area. Suzanne said she would do some research on homezones and thought it might be possible for residents to take ownership of the street, in which case Portobello would be the first area in the UK to do this. William Wilson expressed concerns about parking. John Stewart suggested the project be taken forward in stages.

Action: Cllr Child to arrange an meeting and let the CC know. She will also approach an urban design specialist

Action: Suzanne will gather ideas and come back to the CC.

Frances Wraith noted that there are also problems exiting Sandford Gardens into Brighton Place and suggested that this could be looked into at the same time.

272.9. Kilns

Margaret Munro gave an update on the situation. There had been a meeting about the kilns on 23 September attended by Cllr Bridgman. The rebuild is scheduled to start by

beginning of November and the contract is for three months. Visitors from local schools will be invited and health and safety considerations will have to be observed.

The Portobello Heritage Trust has been set up and will form a company limited by guarantee. The members are: Margaret Munro, Archie Foley, Alison Robinson, John Stewart, John Munro and Mike Brown. It aims to become a charity and then seek funding. The Trust will look for support from the community.

Brian Sibbald of the council's Property Conservation dept has the coat of arms from the power station in storage, as well as the portico from Windsor Place Lodge. A future project might be to reinstate one or both of these items. Margaret also mentioned the refurbishment of Baptist Church clock, which she is determined to have reinstated.

272.10. Topics for future meetings

Barriers at the foot of Beach Lane - W Wilson.

Archie Burns suggested that we should ask for a member of the Council's Traffic dept to come and address the CC about traffic problems in the area.

Discussion as to how the CC becomes more proactive - N Stroud.

Public Art Plan for Portobello - Damian Killeen would like to come and do a presentation about the project at the start and feed back on progress at a later meeting.

Purpose of the Neighbourhood Partnership - Peter McColl.

272.11. Reports

272.11a Police

There had been a few opportunistic crimes, for example, bike theft, shed break-ins.

The most serious crime had been bogus workmen in St Mark's Place. WPC Potter and the Crime Prevention Officer had been doing presentations to old people's groups.

WPC Potter told the meeting that anyone can ask the Crime prevention Officer to come out and assess their home security.

There had also been youth gang fights involving groups from outside Portobello on the Promenade in the late evenings and at weekends.

272.11b Treasurer Kathleen Hart reported that the Treasurer's Account balance is £2319.88 and the Joppa Tennis Courts account stands at £5159.16. It was agreed that, as Portobello Online is no longer represented on PCC, they would set up their own bank account and transfer their funds into it.

Kathleen explained that we receive a grant of £752.68 and £100 towards the hire of the hall.

The quotation for public liability insurance for the boards has risen from £65.40 to £444. This was because there had been a claim for £867.04 for a damaged board. This had been the only claim in the last five years. As the insurance had not yet been renewed this meant that the boards were not currently insured.

Action: John Stewart to contact Celia Butterworth about this as we agreed that the insurance needed to be arranged as soon as possible.

272.11c P/C Neighbourhood Partnership

Peter McColl informed the meeting that the next NP meeting would take place on 11 November. The last meeting had been the previous week and had been attended by five members of the public. Damian Killeen of Big Things on the Beach had given an excellent presentation on the organisation. Peter said he was still unsure about the purpose of the NP and we agreed to add it to our list of topics for future meetings.

272.11d Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

Dawson Currie had attended a meeting the previous week, which had been attended by three Neighbourhood Managers.

272.11e Portobello Online

Maria Devoy asked that this item be removed from reports as the group is not represented on the community council as it is unconstituted. It was agreed that any matters to do with the website may be raised under any AOCB in the future.

272.11f Environmental Update

There was no report given from James Hunter.

272.11g Planning

We discussed our response to the latest BL Devts plans for the Baileyfield site. There were 21 days from the meeting in which to make further representation. It was agreed that John Stewart, Caroline Hosking, Celia Butterworth, Anne Ward and Diana Cairns would meet to discuss the plans so that they could respond to them. Caroline Hosking was asked to convene the meeting. We agreed that BL Devts have not listened to our concerns. The plans have been changed to allow more light into the courtyards but the development would still present a monolithic aspect along Portobello High Street.

Archie Burns raised concerns about the parking and traffic impact and agreed to send points about traffic and parking to the group. Dawson Currie said he still had concerns about the block with the vennels (Block E) and Margaret Munro expressed concerns about maintenance of the public areas, especially if it was taken on by the council. Caroline Hosking expressed concern about the loss of vistas, particularly because of the higher blocks behind the high street frontage.

John Stewart said we should ask for materials to be changed from brick, or at least to a different colour of brick. Suzanne McIntosh suggested that we request that 1% of the value of the whole development be set aside for some kind of art work. The scheme is called "Percentage for Art" and a legal agreement needs to be put in place at the outset of the development.

Action: Suzanne to send bullet points to John for inclusion in the CC's letter.

We agreed that responses would be made by BRR, PMAG, PCATS and PAS, as well as PCC.

We had been told that the BL Developments plan and the Funpark development would both be considered at the planning committee meeting of 28 October.

Action: John Stewart to write to John Bury and Jim Lowrie to ask for both plans to go to the full planning committee. It was agreed that John would make a deputation on behalf of PAS and that Diana would make a deputation on behalf of PCC. Cllr Hawkins said he would address the committee as ward councillor.

We discussed the Funpark development. The City Archaeologist has asked for a mitigation strategy to be put in place for the kilns, in order to protect them from damage during the construction period. Historic Scotland has objected strongly to the development, expressing concerns about the safety of the kilns. We agreed to refer to their objections in our letters.

SEPA has withdrawn its objections. The level of the site is 0.6m - 0.9m above the surrounding ground levels; this will necessitate the wall height to be raised, or for a wave return wall to be built. The ramp previously shown at the front of the building should be within the curtilage of the building but the latest plans do not show the ramp. Alison Robinson mentioned that the promenade surface was to be continued to the kilns instead of the ramp.

Action: John Stewart to check this with the planning officer, Lesley Carus.

Damian Killeen mentioned the fact that there was no mention in the application of the Design Brief for the Promenade. Caroline Hosking said that she was concerned that, with pushing the development back from the Promenade, it was going to encroach more on the Bridge St square and would mean the loss of trees and shrubs which are an essential part of the enjoyment of this space by residents and which encourage wild birds to the square.

272.11h Signs and plaques No report given

272.11i Portobello High School No report given.

272.11j Joppa Tennis Courts No report given.

272.11k Portobello Traders No report given but Clive Andrew had been in touch to say he hoped that the Traders would become constituted and would therefore be able to take up a place on the CC soon.

272.11l Community Centre The next meeting will be in September.

272.11m Community development planning No report given.

272.11n Communicating with communities No report given.

272.11o Councillors

Cllr Child gave a written report. Cllr Bridgman said that all three councillors supported the green belt land at Newcraighall/Gilberstoun being retained and for no building to take place there. There is a petition circulating which has been signed by Kenny MacAskill MSP.

Cllr Bridgman had attended the Village Show on 27 September and the meeting about the kilns. He encouraged members to take up the offer of free fire safety checks to their homes.

Cllr Hawkins also expressed his support for the campaign to keep the green belt at Newcraighall/Gilberstoun development-free. The Baptist Church clock is repaired but there is a legal problem regarding who should take responsibility for re-installing it. He

mentioned that he had helped with judging at this year's Village Show and that the Science Festival would celebrate marine life next year and would be holding an event on Portobello beach.

272.12 Any Other Competent Business

Diana Cairns gave an update on PONGS fundraising. There had been no objections, following the article in the Portobello Reporter, to the suggestion for PCATS to donate some of its residual funds to the campaign PLI funds. There had been a fantastic response to the appeal for funds which showed the support in the community for the campaign. She noted that the new date for the PLI is now w/c 8 February 2010.

There was brief discussion about recent press coverage of the council's plans to buy the site at Millerhill for a waste transfer station and incinerator. Cllr Child said that it could be a joint venture between Edinburgh and Midlothian councils for dealing with residual waste and, if it materialises, would obviate the need for a waste transfer station at Portobello.

John Stewart suggested that we set up a rota for two volunteers to open and close the hall before and after CC meetings. John and Margaret had started the rota and after doing it for four times they would hand on the duty to another pair of community council members.

John Stewart welcomed the new members and thanked them for volunteering for the CC. He asked if they had any questions or points they wished to raise.

Nelson Johnstone mentioned problems with grass cutting at the Coillesdene sheltered accommodation where he lives.

Action: Cllr Child undertook to follow this up.

Brenda Molony proposed a vote of thanks to PEDAL for the Car Free Day event and to POD and PEDAL for the Village Show.

David Hamilton said that he was trying to get the Gilberstoun residents' association up and running and that he hoped that people would support them by signing the petition against the proposal to build on green belt land in the area.

272.13 Future meetings

The next meeting will take place on Monday 26 October 2009 at 7.30 pm in Portobello Baptist Church Hall, 185 Portobello High Street.

Subsequent meetings will take place on:

Monday 30 November 2009,
Monday 25 January 2010,
Monday 22 February 2010,
Monday 29 March 2010.