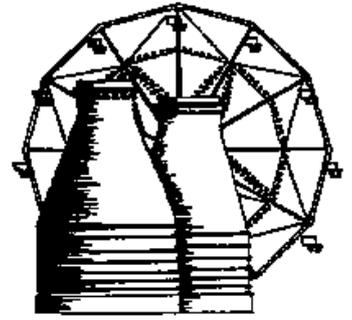


# PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY

Newsletter - Winter 2010



## Green Flag Status for the Community Garden

The society is delighted that two of our local parks, the Figgate Park and Portobello Community Garden, have recently been awarded green flag status. For many years we have been closely involved in the creation of Portobello Community Garden on the Promenade. This garden was designed as a setting for the three historic Coade Stone pillars which form its centre piece. These pillars date to the early 19th Century and used to stand elsewhere in Portobello. With the aid of a Heritage Lottery Grant of £50,000 the society had these pillars restored and re-erected by Graciela Ainsworth and her team of stone conservators, this work being completed in 2008. Missing capitals to two of the pillars were made by a local potter and PAS member, Alison Robinson.



The John Street Community Garden.

*Photo Celia Butterworth*

The Green Flag Award scheme sets the national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK. It was first launched in 1996 to recognise and reward the best green spaces in the country. It provides the high level of quality against which our parks and green spaces are measured and encourages high environmental standards, setting a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.

That the garden has been awarded green flag status is a tribute to all involved in its design and maintenance. Particular credit should go to landscape architect Marta McGlynn who designed the layout of the garden to complement the pillars and whose choice of wind and salt resistant plants

has proved so successful. The Council and Scott Thomson and his team also deserve credit for the maintenance of the garden and their determination to improve this part of the Promenade. Final thanks should also go to Celia Butterworth, of Portobello Amenity Society, who organised the restoration of the pillars which form such a dramatic focus to this beautiful Community Garden which well deserves its green flag status.

## Waste Transfer Site Appeal Rejected

Members of the Amenity Society were involved in the campaign against the proposal to build a waste transfer site off the Sir Harry Lauder Road. The chairman, John Stewart, gave evidence at the public inquiry in February concerning Viridor's appeal against the Council's rejection of their application. The area of evidence he dealt with was the effect that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the Portobello Conservation Area and the area round Brighton Park in particular. And the Reporters, in dismissing Viridor's appeal, gave this as one of the main reasons for refusal; the other being the company's failure to demonstrate an economic need for such a proposal. As well as the personal involvement of its members, PAS donated £1000 towards the cost of fighting the appeal. Particular thanks must go to Diana Cairns and Suzanne Macintosh and to the rest of the P.O.N.G.S. team for fighting such a successful campaign. Although the appeal has been defeated, the future of the appeal site is still unresolved.

## **The Former Scottish Power Site**

BL Developments Ltd., are about to lodge a revised planning application regarding the above site, bordered by Portobello High Street and Fishwives Causeway. PAS objected to this proposal on several grounds, arguing that the development would have a detrimental impact on both the surrounding townscape and on local amenity. We objected to the height, scale and form of the development, as well as the choice of materials. There would also be, in our view, serious traffic and parking implications as well as a very noticeable increase in air pollution. The planning committee fortunately agreed with our views and rejected the application.

The developer has now revised his proposals for the site. He has stated that the height of the development will be reduced by one storey across the site, reducing the number of proposed units from 710 to between 550 / 500. However, he has also stated that, to keep the scheme economically viable, he needs to introduce a food retail element into the proposal which was not present in the original application. This would entail building a food retail store on the High Street as part of the development with a floor retail space of 18,000 sq. ft. This would be 20% bigger than the existing Scotmid off Bath Street.

A possible positive aspect of the revised application might be that there could be approximately 1000 extra local residents who might be shopping on the High Street. A possible negative aspect of the revised application might be that a food retail store of this size might pose a threat to existing independent retailers on the High Street.

More details can be found on the Council's planning portal:  
<http://citydev-portal.edinburgh.gov.uk/portal/portal.jsp> under 10/01733/PAN,  
although the actual application itself has not yet been lodged.

PAS would like to know what its members feel about the proposed application, and would appreciate it if you would email your response to PAS Chairman, John Stewart, [johnmacgregorstewart@talktalk.net](mailto:johnmacgregorstewart@talktalk.net) saying whether you are, or are not, in favour of such a food retail store as part of this development. A brief reason for your view would also be helpful in determining PAS's response to this application once it is lodged. Alternatively, phone 669 6466.

## **The Portobello Fun-Park Site**

The other major planning application we objected to this year was the application to build 73 flats on the Fun Park site. Here we felt that the proposed building was both far too high and far too monolithic, as it would not only cast huge shadows on both the beach and the promenade but also dwarf the kilns and hide them almost completely from view. Despite 83 letters of objection, the planning committee granted the application: Voting on the proposal was even and it was only granted on the casting vote of the chairman.

## **Pre-Application Consultations**

Pre application consultations have started on three other major applications affecting the Portobello area.

EDI plans to build 200 houses North of Newcraighall. The first step in the public consultation was a public exhibition in Newcraighall Primary. The Dalrymple Estates also plan to build 200 houses East of Newcraighall. They too have held a public exhibition in Newcraighall Primary regarding their proposals.

June saw the start of phase 2 of the pre application consultation regarding the proposal to build a new High School on Portobello Park, on the golf course, bordering Milton Road. There has been an exhibition in the library and a number of public meetings. PAS, as part of this consultation, wrote to the architects outlining the major traffic problems associated with building a new school on this particular site. Now, as this newsletter goes to press, the formal planning application has been lodged, and PAS's response is being prepared.

## New Plaque for Tower



The New Plaque

Photo Celia Butterworth

The octagonal Tower, just up from the Promenade on Beach Lane, is probably the oldest building in Portobello and is a listed building. It was built in 1785 as a summerhouse for James Cunningham, an Edinburgh lawyer. Incorporation of stone and brick and decorative pieces from demolished buildings in Edinburgh and possibly from St Andrew's Cathedral, give the Tower its distinctive, idiosyncratic appearance. During the 19th and 20th centuries the Tower fell into disrepair. Recently the Tower has been extensively and sensitively renovated by the present owner, Mark Noble. In April 2010 the Amenity Society placed a plaque on the Beach Lane wall of the Tower. The plaque was paid for by a

community grant to the Amenity Society from Portobello and Craigmillar Partnership and its placement paid for by Mark Noble.

The plaque is made of cast aluminium which we have found withstands seaside conditions better than bronze.

This is the tenth plaque that Portobello Amenity Society, in conjunction with Portobello Community Council, has erected, over a period of eight years, on buildings of historical or other interest in Portobello.

## “Stroll Round Portobello” Maps

A digital print of this map was placed in the large black information board at Joppa Pumping Station in April 2010. This print, which faded in the sunlight, will be re-placed by an up-dated map printed using UV-fast inks. The map, created by Nick Stroud as a “Stroll Round Portobello” illustrates many points of interest in Portobello including the interpretive boards and building plaques erected by the Amenity Society in collaboration with the Community Council. “Stroll Round Portobello” maps will be placed in each of the three black information boards which were erected by the Council at Joppa Pumping Station, Bank Square and the Bowling Centre. The “Stroll” maps will complement the navigational sign placed by the Council on the north side of the High Street near Williamson's fish shop. The latter, on the north side pavement near Williamson's fish-shop, was erected by the Council in May 2010. Members of PAS drafted the text and submitted photographs used for the final design. Navigational signs of the same shape and similar design have been placed in different locations throughout Edinburgh.

## Miscellaneous Matters

In a joint project with the newly formed Portobello Heritage Trust, the Heritage Trail leaflet, which PAS first published as long ago as 1992 and which is still on sale in several local shops, will be updated and revised to include the Coade Stone columns which PAS had restored and re-erected in the Community Garden.

PAS has also lobbied the Council to reinstate the Portobello Town Scheme that has done such valuable work in the past, by giving grants towards the reinstatement of original features such as railings, astragals and fanlights. Unfortunately, as the Council is so cash strapped at present, our request has met with a direct refusal.

PAS continues to be represented at meetings of Portobello Community Council and the Edinburgh Civic Forum.

## **P.A.S. Monthly Meetings**

Would you like to find out more about what is happening in Portobello? Would you like something done about Portobello's traffic and parking problems? Are you interested in protecting and enhancing Portobello's many listed buildings? Would you like to see the amenity of Portobello improved and environmental and landscaping projects carried out? If the answer to any or all of the above questions is yes, then you are most welcome to come along to any of P.A.S.'s regular monthly meetings to air your views and to find out just what the society is doing to improve Portobello for everyone who lives and works here. For details of meetings, please phone John Stewart on 669 6466.

## **Local Business Support For P.A.S.**

Please use our excellent local businesses, especially those which help the society to make Portobello a pleasant place to live and to work. The society is very grateful to the following businesses for their continued support as associate business members: -

Allan's, Chemist; Robin Bond, CA; Boots, Chemist; Findlay Meats; Brian Forde, Optician; Gordons, Butchers; Joppa Turrets, Guest House; H.S.Kidd, Chemist; The King's Manor Hotel; Kitchener's Delicatessen; Kristoffersen Carpets; McIntyre Lewis, Solicitors & Estate Agents; J & S Penman, Vets; Portobello Library; Jas. Scott, Funeral Directors; Shapes Hair; St James's Church.

Please support our local businesses, especially those who themselves support our local community.

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## **Subscriptions**

Subscriptions for the year April 2010 – March 2011 are now due. If you have not already paid for this year, please complete this slip and send it to:

Dr P.K.Wraith, 3 East Brighton Crescent, Portobello, Edinburgh EH15 1LR.

Name:

Address:

I enclose my subscription of:-

£5 per household (normal)

£2 per household (retired/unwaged)

(Please tick as appropriate)