

## **Portobello Amenity Society Chairman's Report June 2008**

- Work has continued to complete the Heritage Lottery project concerning the erection of the three Coade stone pillars in the Community Garden. A new top in modern Coade stone has been made by a PAS member for the middle pillar and is being put in place in August. Once this is done the project will be complete. A talk on the pillars' history and restoration was given in November.
- This year we monitored 138 planning applications for the Portobello area and wrote objecting to 33. Many of our objections related to inappropriate shop fronts and shop signage and overlarge extensions and development in mews lanes.
- PAS also responded to the public consultation concerning the N.W. Portobello Masterplan, a process started last year. We helped the Masterplan Action Group in their campaign to raise the planning department's awareness of local people's views and opinions. Over 200 letters were received and the planners, as a result, have reduced the size of the proposed flats along the Sir Harry Lauder Road and decided not to move either the library or the community centre for the time being. The revised development brief for this N.W. Portobello area will be used to determine future planning applications.
- PAS members have also been actively involved in the PONGS campaign to prevent a private company – Viridor – from building a waste transfer site off the Sir Harry Lauder Road. If this planning application is granted, it could mean 928 extra lorry movements a day coming through the Portobello area. The application is due to come before the planning committee on July 30<sup>th</sup> and PAS has asked to give a presentation to the committee.
- PAS has also lodged an objection to the new Edinburgh City Local Plan concerning 19-24 Promenade, ( The Ghost Train Site ) as the Council no longer wishes to acquire this site for environmental improvement.
- PAS has also had continuing dialogue with the Council regarding the Figgate Burn flood prevention measures, road signage, shopfront paint colours, litter bin provision, and graffiti removal.
- PAS continues to be represented at meetings of Portobello Community Council and the Edinburgh Civic Forum. We hold regular meetings with the Council's Task Force officials at which we have raised various issues such as street cleaning and park maintenance.
- We have deliberately carried out fewer planting projects this year. The Town Centre Improvements have meant that our hanging baskets had to be removed and they have not yet been replaced by the Council. We had hoped that plant pyramids would have replaced the window boxes and

hanging baskets but these too have proved problematic and the Council has not been able to install them for this year. Again we have not planted our usual number of bulbs in local parks as the Council did not let our previous bulbs die back before cutting the grass and so we are monitoring to see the effects of this on next year's bulb growth. We have however offered to make a contribution to the Council who are improving the quality of the landscaping at Eastfield and we have suggested appropriate plants and shrubs which would grow well in this situation.

- We continue to hold regular monthly meetings to which all members of the public are welcome.