



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the 285th meeting held on 31st January 2011 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Archie Burns, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, David Hamilton, Caroline Hosking, Nelson Johnstone, Joe Madden (Portobello Open Door), Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Leon Thompson, Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council), Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

Apologies: Sandra Blake, Cllr Mike Bridgman, Sheila Gilmore M.P., Lilian Graham, Peter McColl, Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), William Wilson.

In attendance: David Baines, Cathy Cherizard (CEC), Cllr Maureen Child, Rebecca Gordon (STV local), Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Kenny MacAskill MSP, Margaret Williamson (Portobello High School), John Young (Portobello Police).

285.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2011, and hoped that New Year Resolutions were still holding! He particularly welcomed Sgt. John Young, our new representative from Portobello Police.

285.2 Police report

John Young summarised local policing arrangements. Community policing covers the entire electoral ward; an inspector, two sergeants and 13 constables look after the three beats in our ward, with three constables assigned to Portobello and Joppa. They are based in the Safer Neighbourhood Team at Craigmillar Police Station, but there are still officers at Portobello police station who attend local calls. Community policing standards are currently being widely publicised, to encourage the public to notify local concerns to the police. A community safety subgroup, chaired by Cllr Mike Bridgman, then assigns priorities for police action from the notified concerns.

Contact details for the local Safer Neighbourhood Team are:

Tel: 0131 652 4147

Email: ADIVSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk

By post: Lothian and Borders Police, Craigmillar Police Station, 161 Duddingston Road West,
Edinburgh EH16 4UY

285.3 Environment Update

Cathy Cherizard summarised the main points of local activity:

- a survey of Straiton Park users has been carried out and a report will be published soon;
- there are new plants and a new low fence at Morton Street;
- the Towerbank play area shelter will be repaired this Spring;
- a second sign pointing to the Bridge Street car park would be installed in early February;
- the 'Welcome to Portobello' sign at King's Road would be reinstated during February; Lawrence Marshall suggested that a second, spare sign should be installed here also;
- flooding in the High Street was being investigated: a new contractor had taken over, causing some delay; 14 specific gullies were being checked;
- the plan to make Elcho Terrace one-way had been dropped;

- work had started to create a new road at Towerbank Primary School, and would last about ten weeks;
- the Task Force was now returning to regular duties after a prolonged period coping with snow. The first priority would be to clean up grit, but it would not be possible to re-use it because of contamination from dog-excrement; an audit was being undertaken of all grit bins to be ready for future episodes of Winter weather;
- all pot-holes should have been fixed by the end of February;
- a revised Neighbourhood Weather Plan would be circulated to community councils when ready.

The meeting was unanimous in its praise and thanks to Cathy and her Task Force colleagues for their magnificent work in clearing so much snow from Portobello's pavements and streets. Caroline Hosking was grateful for the plant maintenance that had been carried out in the Bridge Street car park. Cathy agreed to ask the task force to check for litter caused by high winds and overflowing paper recycling bins. Nelson Johnstone asked for a bus shelter at Milton Road East; Maureen Child reported that the City Council had said it had no budget for this, but it was suggested that it might be possible to move a redundant bus shelter from Sir Harry Lauder Road to this spot.

- * **Action: Cathy Cherizard to ask the Task Force to check for litter around recycling bins.**
- * **Action: Nick Stroud to write to City Development to ask for a bus shelter in Milton Road.**

285.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted: proposed by Margaret Munro, seconded by Caroline Hosking.

285.5 Matters arising

285.5a New constitution and standing orders (284.6); *see item 285.9.*

285.5b Dog-free area on beach (284.6f). Sean Watters reported the results of his investigations, which were that the City Council's stated view was basically correct, and that while legislation permitted the possibility of excluding dogs from specific areas, enforcement was a fundamental problem. Places which do implement a ban tend to do so through strongly-worded notices alone, as lack of resources prevents a stronger stance.

285.5c Joppa Tennis Club constitution (284.6i). Robert Gatliff had circulated a proposed constitution by email, for consideration at the February meeting.

285.5d Planning application for 21–23 Windsor Place (284.8f). Diana Cairns had written to the City Council Planning Department as requested.

285.5e Removal of planters from Town Hall to Library (284.9a). John Stewart had checked with donors Patricia and Jimmy Ralph that this move would be acceptable, and asked Scott Thomson to arrange it.

- * **285.5f** Restriction of community input at City Council planning meetings (284.9b). Diana Cairns had written to the City Council and other community councils as requested. It had not been necessary for Stephen Hawkins to make a representation at the Planning Committee meeting itself as, following a number of objections from community councils, it had been decided to carry out more thorough consultation on the proposals.

285.6 Agree Agenda and AOB

Several items were identified for discussion under AOB.

285.7 PCC website progress and update

Joe Madden reported that the new Community Council website was almost ready to be launched. The one remaining feature to be implemented before it could go live was the creation of a contact form from which comments could be routed automatically to the appropriate people. It was agreed that John Stewart and Diana Cairns would be the initial recipients and Joe would install their email addresses in the website; he would also consider implementing an auto-response mechanism to acknowledge receipt of comments. It was agreed that the arrangement would be kept as simple as possible at first, and only made more sophisticated if

required in the light of experience. It was noted that this feature was only to allow people to communicate with the Community Council, not to vote on issues. It was further emphasised that this facility was not to encourage discussion, but simply to contact the Community Council; comments would not be made public on the website.

Diana Cairns reported that the Neighbourhood Partnership had awarded £500 for developing the website, in addition to its funding for the Community Council cabinet, display stands and banner in the Library.

Margaret Munro pointed out that the website had now reached a stage where it would be useful to have comments from the Community Council, and she asked everyone to have a look at the site and bring their comments to the February meeting. David Hamilton pointed out the necessity of future-proofing the maintenance of the website by documenting its management; John Stewart, Diana Cairns, Joe Madden, Margaret Munro and David Hamilton agreed to meet to discuss this aspect.

John Stewart thanked Joe, Margaret and David for bringing the website to this stage.

- * **Action: Joe Madden to implement contact page.**
- * **Action: All, to view new website at www.wip.oneuk.com and bring comments to next meeting.**
- * **Action: John Stewart and Diana Cairns to discuss site maintenance with sub-group.**

285.8 Credit Union

Maureen Child summarised the history of the local Credit Union. She had joined its Board two years ago, since when the Union had expanded to cover all the Neighbourhood Partnership area and a bit more, and increased its membership by 30%, now including all local political representatives. She suggested that all community councillors should consider joining, as it is now more important than ever to encourage people to save and to borrow wisely, which credit unions do. They thus help to keep people out of the hands of loan sharks. A Credit Committee scrutinises every application for a loan, and life insurance is applied automatically. People currently have to go to the office at 2 Niddrie Mains Road, Craigmillar, to join, taking photographic identification, National Insurance number, proof of address, and £4. The Union would be moving to the newly refurbished White House in June, and would be employing someone for six months to develop the service. Maureen acknowledged invaluable help from the very big Credit Union in Stockbridge, and summarised the various mechanisms that were in place to ensure that depositors' money would be safe. The interest rate on loans is 2% per month on a reducing balance, equivalent to 26.8% APR (so for example the total interest on a £1,000 loan would be £127.06, repaid at £25 a week over one year, which includes a small weekly savings requirement). There is no penalty for early repayment, unlike banks, and no arrangement fees.

Craigmillar Credit Union Ltd
2 Niddrie Mains Road, Edinburgh EH16 4BG
0131 661 9942
craigmillarcu@googlemail.com
www.craigmillarcreditunion.co.uk

- * **Action: All, to consider joining the local Credit Union.**

285.9 PCC Constitution and Standing Orders

Diana Cairns reminded the meeting that the Community Council had been willing to adopt the City Council's model constitution and standing orders, with the exception that we wished to retain 50 people as the minimum to require us to organise an extraordinary meeting, and to clarify timescales for the distribution of minutes and agendas. It was agreed to adopt the new constitution, provided that the City Council would allow us to retain the limit of 50 people in clause 11(g), and also to adopt the new standing orders, which are ambiguous about when minutes should be circulated, so it was agreed that we should aim to have them distributed within 14 days of meetings. There was a definite requirement that minutes and agenda be circulated at least seven days before a meeting. From now on the Secretary is to amend the draft minutes and circulate them to community councillors and for the website; the agenda also would be put on the website as soon as it is ready.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to ratify our constitution with the City Council, with the stipulation of 50 people to require an extraordinary meeting.**
- * **Action: Community Council Secretary to circulate draft minutes within 14 days of the meeting, to circulate the agenda at least seven days before the meeting, and to circulate corrected minutes to community councillors and the website directly after each meeting.**

285.10 Decision-making in planning applications

Stephen Hawkins reported that new procedures had been drawn up for City Council planning meetings, and comments could be made to David Leslie before 21st February. There still didn't seem to be a 'level playing field' between developers and community, since developers would continue to have unrestricted access to planning officers, and planning officers would not be restricted in their presentations to the Planning Committee. The process therefore still seemed to be skewed against the community. It was agreed that John Stewart should submit a response to the proposals, circulating a draft to the Community Council for comment before sending it to the City Council; he would draw on previous comments made by Margaret Munro, Diana Cairns and other community councillors.

- * **Action: John Stewart to write to City Council about proposed restrictions on community input to planning decisions.**

285.11 Reports

285.11a Police: *See item 285.2.*

285.11b Treasurer: Leon Thompson reported spending of £11.74 to register the website domain name, £42.99 for refreshments at the November meeting, and a £50 donation to Big Things on the Beach. This left £3,314.09 in the account (of which £1,662 is ring-fenced for the Gilberstoun noticeboard).

285.11c Neighbourhood Partnership: the next meeting would be at Portobello High School on 23rd February, and would include a consultation on the new Craigmillar Library.

285.11d Environmental Update: *See item 285.3.*

285.11e Planning: John Stewart reported that the application for a superstore at the former Big W site had been refused, on the grounds of sufficient local food retail already available and a negative impact on Craigmillar's local centre.

He thanked David Hamilton for drawing up the Community Council's response to the proposed development at Fort Kinnaird.

John moved on to the proposed developments at Newcraighall North and East, and thanked David Hamilton for circulating plans and his thoughts. David requested that the Community Council object to the applications. The main problems were false statements in support of the transport assessment, the risk of flooding which didn't seem to be adequately addressed, and the possibility that insufficient account was taken of old mine workings. It was agreed that David should draw up a Community Council response to the planning applications, circulating the draft for all to comment, though time was short as responses had to be delivered by Friday, 4th February. He would write separate letters for the two developments.

The Community Council has been asked to make a ten-minute presentation when the City Council Planning Committee considers the application for the new High School on 23rd February. John Stewart said he was happy to do this and would circulate his thoughts beforehand; it would be important to reflect the local community's division over the proposed location.

- * **Action: David Hamilton to write on behalf of the Community Council objecting to the proposals for developments at Newcraighall North and East.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to summarise the Community Council's view of the plans for the new High School at the Planning Committee meeting on 23rd February.**

285.11f Signs, Plaques and coade-stone: Celia Butterworth reported that the map of a 'stroll round Portobello' had been professionally printed and encapsulated, and would be put in the community noticeboards shortly.

285.11g Portobello Community Centre: David Scott reported that the next Community Centre meeting would be on 8th February, following the usual plan of the second Tuesday of the month.

285.11h Councillors:

Maureen Child circulated her regular written report, drawing particular attention to the impending decision on the new High School and to the withdrawal of First Edinburgh's 129 bus service. The bus company had made the notifications it was legally required to do, but the news hadn't reached all those affected, so the City Council would in future circulate bus service news more widely than it does at present.

Stephen Hawkins circulated a written report, mentioning in particular that the HMO licence for 6 John Street had expired in August; the house was now back on the market.

285.12 Any Other Business

285.12a Cyrenians

The local charity Edinburgh Cyrenians had contacted John Stewart to ask for help in publicising their services for the unemployed, which include a drop-in centre at the library on Wednesday afternoons, leaflets in the Library, and an article in the next issue of the *Portobello Reporter*. It was suggested that they could also leave leaflets in the Community Centre.

285.12b STV Local

STV journalist Rebecca Gordon summarised plans to launch new local websites in Edinburgh, to cover South & East, West and North of the city. These would highlight community news, and are therefore looking for community input. They would be highly interactive, and it would be easy and free to upload information. The websites would be launched during February, and feedback would be welcome (they should be easy to find by doing a web-search for "STV local"). Contact details for further information and to notify news items are:

rebecca.gordon@stv.tv
07713 074345

285.12c Concert for Valentine's Day

Joe Madden reported that Portobello Open Door would be hosting an evening in the Town Hall with the Loveboat swing band on Friday 18th February. Tickets are available from Woodwares, and online from the POD website at <http://www.the-pod.org/forthcoming%20events.html>

285.12d Edinburgh Association of Community Councils

Dawson Currie reported that the EACC was looking at ways of taking over some of the functions of the national association, and that it would be holding a meeting on poverty on 5th March – for which Diana Cairns had circulated details by email. He encouraged community councillors to attend this important meeting.

- * **Action: All, to consider attending EACC meeting on poverty on 5th March.**

285.12e Waiting restrictions

Diana Cairns reported that she had received notification of minor traffic restrictions to be made in Moira Terrace and Duddingston. Stephen Hawkins pointed out that double yellow lines in conservation areas such as Duddingston had to be narrower than normal.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to remind City Council planners that double yellow lines must be narrower than normal in conservation areas.**

285.13 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 28th February 2011

Subsequent dates are: 28th March 2011
25th April 2011
30th May 2011
27th June 2011