



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 290th meeting held on 27th June 2011 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Celia Butterworth, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Lilian Graham, Nelson Johnstone, Joe Madden (Portobello Open Door), Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council).

Apologies: Cllr Mike Bridgman, Archie Burns, Caroline Hosking, Peter McColl, Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Margaret Munro (Portobello History Society), Leon Thompson, Margaret Williamson (Portobello High School), William Wilson, John Young (Portobello Police).

In attendance: Cllr Maureen Child, Sheila Gilmore M.P., Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Ben McLeish (Gilberstoun Residents), Katie Quinn (CEC) and several members of the public.

290.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting, and announced that Margaret Munro had resigned from the Community Council since she had been the group representative for the History Society which had folded; Diana Cairns had given her flowers and a card to thank her for her valuable contribution as member and Vice Chair over many years.

290.2 Police report

John Young was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a report by email. There had been 54 reported crimes in Portobello/Joppa so far in June, with 30 already cleared up for a solvency rate of 55%. Ten of these involved vandalism, of which three had been solved. The Safer Neighbourhood Team was continuing its successful work to reduce antisocial behaviour and under-age drinking. Operation Drift would increase police presence on the Promenade from 1st July to 15th August, with a caravan at the foot of Bridge Street throughout. Cyclists would be able to have their bikes marked and tagged at the caravan, for a small fee, on 21st and 28th July, and 4th August.

Sgt Young distributed a form seeking feedback to help the police plan their priorities. Comments on up to three priorities for police and City Council to tackle can be emailed to ADivSNTCraigmillarPortobello@lbp.pnn.police.uk

Lilian Graham asked for police help in tackling a problem of dangerous high-speed driving in Bridge Street. Andrew Patterson reported that a significant amount of lead had been stolen from the Old Parish Church a few weeks previously, and warned everyone to be aware of the increase in such thefts in the economic recession. There was continuing disquiet about people urinating in Bath Street and surrounding areas.

* **Action: Nick Stroud to pass these points on to John Young.**

290.3 Environment Update

Katie Quinn reported several items:

- the City Council automatically consults utility companies before resurfacing roads, and will be doing so in due course before resurfacing the High Street in September. She would circulate further information nearer the time if relevant.
- problematic drains were about to be power-cleaned, and inspected by camera.
- the blocked toby outside the Fair Trade shop would be fixed in July.
- weeds around a tree outside the Bank of Scotland had been dealt with.
- a 'hit squad' would be moving into Portobello in September, aiming to tackle any and all problems in specific localised areas in one coordinated set of remedial actions.

Katie was asked to follow up some specific points:

- there are no ramps for buggy/wheelchair users around the gas-pipe renewal work at the top of Pittville Street.
- a gully at West Brighton Crescent regularly floods and needs attention.
- a tree is dangerously overhanging the Bridge Street car park.
- road resurfacing work in the Coillesdene area has not been linked smoothly to its surroundings.

* **Action: Katie Quinn to follow up these points.**

290.4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the May meeting were accepted: proposed by Diana Cairns, seconded by Anne Ward.

The minutes of the 29th AGM, held in May, were accepted: proposed by Lilian Graham, seconded by Celia Butterworth.

290.5 Matters arising

* **290.5a** People urinating in Bath Street (289.2). *Ongoing.*

* **290.5b** Vandalism in local shops (289.2). *Ongoing.*

* **290.5c** Community safety and Neighbourhood Watch schemes (289.2). *Ongoing.*

290.5d Flooding at Brighton Place (289.3). In hand (see item 290.3).

290.5e Blocked access to water main (289.3). In hand (see item 290.3).

290.5f Coordination of High Street resurfacing with utilities work (289.3). In hand (see item 290.3).

290.5g New constitution (289.5e). Diana Cairns had received notification from the City Council that we could retain the requirement of 50 people to instigate a special meeting. We therefore now have a new constitution, based on the City Council's template for community councils.

290.5h Double yellow lines in conservation areas (289.5f). The City Council has agreed to liaise over future recommendations.

290.5i Maintenance of Harry Lauder memorial garden (285g). John Stewart had written to Scott Thomson as requested.

290.5j Community consultation (289.5i). The sub-group had met twice and was now refining a questionnaire to be distributed alongside an explanatory article in the next issue of the *Portobello Reporter*.

290.5k Towerbank planning application (289.8e). Nick Stroud had written to comment, as requested.

290.5l Planning application for flats by 78 High Street (289.8e). Diana Cairns had written to object, as requested.

290.5m EACC nomination forms (288.12a). John Stewart and Diana Cairns had completed the forms as requested.

290.6 Agree Agenda and AOB

One item was identified for discussion under AOB.

290.7 Joppa Tennis Courts

John Stewart circulated a proposal to clarify the relationship between the Joppa Tennis Courts Club and the Community Council. After discussion it was agreed that the Club should become a group represented on the Community Council, and that the Community Council's treasurer would be on the Club's committee. The Club's minutes and annual accounts would be presented to the Community Council, and the times of its meetings notified to community councillors. The Club's constitution would need to be amended to reflect this position, after which a Club representative would be welcomed on to the Community Council.

* **Action: Joppa Tennis Courts Club to amend constitution and apply for CC membership.**

290.8 Topics for future meetings

John Stewart reported that he had invited Sarah Woodford, the City Council's new Town Centre Manager for Leith and Portobello, to the August meeting, and Duncan Monteith to the September meeting to talk about cycling on the Promenade. He asked for other suggestions for future meetings.

Celia Butterworth recalled that the Community Council had published a report on cycling on the Prom some ten years ago. Tom Ballantine asked that the discussion should focus on cycling throughout Portobello, and not just on the Prom.

Nick Stroud asked that the Community Council spend more time on initiatives, rather than simply reacting to events.

- * **Action: John Stewart to inform Duncan Monteith that a copy of the 'cycling' report is available in Portobello Library.**
- * **Action: All, to think of topics/speakers for future Community Council meetings.**

290.9 War Memorial

Nick Stroud reminded the meeting that there had been some interest in Portobello having its own War Memorial when the subject had been mentioned at our meeting in March 2010. The three aspects of a Memorial would be what form it should take, where it should be, and how to pay for it. Joe Madden pointed out that the British Legion had a memorial plaque and would be installing it in its new premises as soon as it had managed to sell its old building, but agreed that this would not be suitable for a public, outdoor memorial that could be used for Remembrance Day events. Maureen Child thought there was local feeling that Portobello should have a Memorial. John Stewart thought that the two ionic columns and the pediment saved from Windsor Place Lodge could make a good surround for a Memorial, if installed against a wall, and this might release heritage funding for the project. Celia Butterworth thought that a location on the Promenade would be most appropriate, possibly in the Community Garden at John Street. Andrew Patterson said that some work had been done at the Old Parish Church which would be useful to such a project. Nick Stroud agreed to write an article for the next issue of the *Portobello Reporter*, to see if there would be much interest in taking this further.

- * **Action: Nick Stroud to write an article about a War Memorial for the *Portobello Reporter*.**

290.10 Reports

290.10a Police: *See item 290.2.*

290.10b Treasurer: The Community Council has £1,785.88, with outgoings this month for Peter McColl to attend a conference; insurance for display boards; donation to the Cruden Cup; and the Library display stand, totalling an expenditure of £791.21.

290.10c Neighbourhood Partnership: no report this time.

290.10d Environmental Update: *See item 290.3.*

290.10e Planning: John Stewart presented four issues for discussion:

195 Portobello High Street: the branch of Pizza Hut (just a few doors along from the Community Council's regular meeting place) had applied for a one-year licence to open every day until 3am. It was agreed to object to this application on the grounds of its impact on the local community, suggesting that a shorter extension might be acceptable

Kinnaird Park: the applicant had suggested that our request for better consideration of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists would be more appropriately handled at a later stage of the planning process should the outline application be granted. This was agreed.

121 Portobello High Street cafe: there was an application regarding the former clothes shop on the corner of the High Street and Rosefield Avenue, to change its use to a cafe with a take-away element. Most of the subsequent discussion focused on the balance between retail and non-retail in Portobello's shops. It was suggested that a cafe would be preferable to an empty or boarded-up shop, and that it might be appropriate for a seaside resort to have a higher proportion of cafes than other town centres. It was agreed by 11 votes to two not to object to this application but to submit a comment. John Stewart was asked to do this.

11 Rosefield Street: an application has been made to demolish an original house, c. 1870, in the conservation area and to build a larger house in its place. John Stewart circulated several of the plans to illustrate the proposal. It was felt that the proposal constituted over-development, as the applicant proposed to build a much larger house on a comparatively small plot of land. There was general concern at the amount of traffic this reconstruction would generate, but Maureen Child pointed out that this is not relevant in the specific planning process. It was generally agreed that the existing building should be retained if possible. If it really did need to be demolished on safety grounds, as implied by its present owner, then the replacement should be far more in keeping with its surroundings than that proposed, with a front elevation of natural stone and not render with stone dressings. John Stewart was asked to object on these grounds.

Dawson Currie asked about Newcraighall and Gilberstoun development plans; John Stewart said there was no further news about these.

- * **Action: John Stewart to object to Pizza Hut being open until 3am seven days a week.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to agree to the applicant's suggestion about Kinnaird Park.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to comment on the application to create a cafe at 121 High Street.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to object to the proposal to demolish the house at 11 Rosefield Street.**

290.10f Signs and Plaques: Celia Butterworth reported that a new backdrop was being printed for the three community noticeboards, using a photograph kindly provided by Lee Kindness. The seaside board was due to be reprinted, once funding had been obtained. The geology board had been wrenched off its mount; it was hoped that it could be reinstated through its insurance, but that the insurance premium would probably increase as a result.

290.10g MP and Councillors

Sheila Gilmore pointed out some examples of developers withdrawing unpopular proposals in the face of strong local opposition, and welcomed this aspect of community involvement and power. Stephen Hawkins reported briefly on a meeting about the Towerbank extension and had checked on the progress of the Big W appeal. He noted that an appeal against refusal of advertising boards on the former Scottish Power site had been refused. Maureen Child circulated copies of her latest report.

290.11 Any Other Business

290.11a Cars parked in Fishwives' Causeway

Anne Ward reported that cars were being parked inconsiderately in Fishwives' Causeway, forcing pedestrians, wheelchairs and buggies into the road. There were also problems of antisocial behaviour connected with the demolition work currently being carried out on the site, because the perimeter fencing was inadequate. Stephen Hawkins suggested writing about these issues to the Community Safety Officer at the Neighbourhood Office.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write to the Neighbourhood Office about problems in Fishwives' Causeway.**

290.12 Future meetings

John Stewart closed the meeting by wishing everyone a happy Summer, the next meeting being at the end of August.

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, Edinburgh EH15 1EU.

The next meeting is on 29th August 2011 (no meeting in July)

Subsequent dates are: 26th September 2011
31st October 2011
28th November 2011