



PORTOBELLO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the 294th meeting held on 28th November 2011 in Portobello Baptist Church Hall

Present: Tom Ballantine, Sandra Blake, Archie Burns, Diana Cairns, Dawson Currie, Maria Devoy, Caroline Hosking, Lawrence Marshall (Portobello Older People's Project), Brenda Molony (*Portobello Reporter*), Andrew Patterson (Portobello Council of Churches), David Scott (Portobello Community Centre), John Stewart (PAS), Nick Stroud, Ros Sutherland (PPAG), Anne Ward (PCATS), Sean Watters (Towerbank Parents Council).

Apologies: Celia Butterworth, Robert Gatliff (Joppa Tennis Courts Club), Sheila Gilmore M.P., Lilian Graham, Peter McColl, Joe Madden (Portobello Open Door), Eva Schonveld (PEDAL), Leon Thompson, Frances Wraith (Brightons & Rosefield Residents).

In attendance: Cllr Mike Bridgman, Cllr Maureen Child, Cllr Stephen Hawkins, Kenny MacAskill MSP, Ben McLeish (Gilberstoun Residents), Allyson Thomson (CEC), John Young (Portobello Police), Margaret Williamson (High School).

294.1 Chair's welcome

John Stewart welcomed everyone to the meeting, and hoped that the Christmas decorations in the hall would put everyone in the right spirit to enjoy the refreshments at the end of this, the last meeting of 2011.

294.2 Police report

In response to requests at the previous meeting, John Young reported that the police were not aware of any accidents involving bikes on the Promenade in the previous nine months; and that 15 crimes had been reported from the Gilberstoun area of which 12 involved vandalism and 11 had already been solved (many of them being due to one individual). He then summarised the main points from his report which he circulated at the meeting: 65 crimes had been reported so far in November and 58% of those already cleared up; thieves were currently targeting garages and garden sheds; the Bonfire Night operation had been very successful; and plans were in hand to contain crime over the Christmas and New Year period.

Dawson Currie asked for a list of the coordinators of local Neighbourhood Watch groups which Sgt. Young agreed to forward via the Secretary. Andrew Patterson listed several local instances of metal theft and warned of the need for vigilance over this. He also mentioned a 'scam' in which a postcard is delivered advising of a parcel awaiting collection, but the telephone number to ring (which starts with 9) results in a call to Belize which can cost £300.

* **Action: Sgt. Young to send the Secretary a list of local Neighbourhood Watch coordinators.**

(Sgt. Young's full report is appended to these minutes, and includes a link to advice about enjoying festive nights out safely.)

294.3 Environmental update

Allyson Thomson reported, in response to a request at the previous meeting, that the City Council would only remove major debris from the Figgate Burn, but was working with local schools and would also support initiatives by other local groups to keep the Burn clean. The recycling bins at Bridge Street had been moved as requested, so as not to obstruct the view of drivers turning into the High Street, though Caroline Hosking thought there might still be a problem. Dawson Currie asked about progress in reinstating the bench at the Town Hall, and Allyson agreed to find out about this. Lawrence Marshall asked why the gas main work beside the King's Road junction was taking so long to finish, as it was causing significant hold-ups by blocking a traffic lane; Allyson agreed to investigate. Lawrence also observed that the traffic light sequence timing at the junction between the High Street and Fishwives' Causeway was not well matched to traffic demand; Maureen Child believed this to be a temporary consequence of the recent road resurfacing work in the area, and that the City Council was aware of the problem and about to fix it.

- * **Action: Allyson Thomson to enquire about progress in reinstating the bench at the Town Hall bus stops.**
- * **Action: Allyson Thomson to ask the Roads Team to check the siting of all recycling bins near the junction between Bridge Street and the High Street.**

294.4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the October meeting were accepted without change: proposed by Dawson Currie, seconded by Diana Cairns.

294.5 Matters arising

294.5a Crime statistics for Gilberstoun area (293.2). Done (see item 294.2 above).

294.5b Removal of debris from Figgate Burn (293.3). Done (see item 294.3 above).

294.5c Siting of recycling bins at Bridge Street (293.3). Done (see item 294.3 above).

294.5d Joppa Tennis Courts (293.5c): the new JTC Club constitution had been circulated as requested, the main change being the addition of the clause “(iv) will undertake all responsibilities concerning the employment of any individual” in the section on insurance and liabilities. Stephen Hawkins asked for clarification of Community Council representation at the Club and vice versa, and that Club minutes be circulated to the Community Council. The constitution was approved subject to this clarification, but it was agreed that minutes should only be added to the Community Council website, not circulated to members.

294.5e VAT on privatised Council services (293.5f). Ben McLeish had not given relevant information to Stephen Hawkins, noting that the City Council’s decision not to privatise services at this stage had made this redundant.

294.5f ‘Big W’ public inquiry (293.5j). John Stewart had circulated the draft of the Community Council precognition as requested, and he and Diana had attended the Public Inquiry. A decision was expected before Christmas.

294.5g Privatisation of City Council services (293.5k). Peter McColl had circulated details of the City Council’s consultation meeting on this topic, as requested.

294.5h Evening News articles about PPAG (293.5l). Diana Cairns circulated the requested links on behalf of Ros Sutherland. (*They are:*)

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/home-news/council-fight-legal-bid-to-stop-new-school-1.1123495>

http://www.scotsman.com/edinburgh-evening-news/education/maclaren_to_fight_last_ditch_legal_bid_to_block_new_school_1_1844366

- * **294.5i** Town Centre sub-group to consider ideas for new signs in Portobello (293.7). Ben McLeish noted that the sub-group had not met since this request was made. *Ongoing*.

- * **Action: John Stewart to let Ben McLeish have Paul Lambie’s email address.**

294.5j Portobello a Fair Trade Town (293.8). John Stewart had reported the Community Council’s support for this, as requested.

294.5k Community Council survey (293.9). Sean Watters reported that all responses were now in the online spreadsheet, and that it was now up to the sub-group to meet and produce reports for the *Portobello Reporter* and the website.

- * **Action: Diana Cairns to arrange a meeting of the survey sub-group in time to report to the January meeting.**

294.5l Repair of road surface in Brighton Place (293.10): Nick Stroud had written to Andy Matheson as requested.

- * **294.5m** Buses to reduce speed in Brighton Place (293.10). Diana Cairns had not yet written to Lothian Buses to request this speed reduction. *Ongoing*.

294.5n Main Issues Report and SESplan (293.11e): Diana Cairns had circulated links to these as requested.

294.51 Sunday tennis (293.11h): JTC to consult neighbours. *Ongoing*.

294.51 Portobello to remain in Edinburgh (293.12a): Peter McColl had written as requested in support of Portobello remaining in an Edinburgh parliamentary constituency.

294.6 Agree Agenda and AOB

Tom Ballantine reminded the meeting to vote for PEDAL's wind turbine project before 5pm on 3rd December.

294.7 Strategic and Local Development plans

John Stewart handed out paper copies of the two reports and mentioned that responses were required by mid-December in the case of the SESplan, and the end of January for the Local Development Plan. Sean Watters noted that the SESplan was close to being finalised, so it would be more useful to concentrate on the Main Issues Report

It was agreed that the particular issues relevant to Portobello identified in the SESplan were retail, housing, green-belt and waste strategy. The figures on housing requirements presented in the report were thought to be unreliable, and therefore not justifying erosion of the green belt. There was general agreement that brown-field sites should be used before green-belt ones. There was general resentment of the presumption (for example in paragraph 42) that West Edinburgh's landscape was better than East Edinburgh's and therefore more important to conserve. The safeguarding of Millerhill as a site for waste treatment facilities was welcomed.

The Main Issues Report identified six key issues, then presented 20 questions with suggested answers, and asked for comments. These 20 aspects were discussed individually, focusing on those most relevant to Portobello. Several people were asked to contribute paragraphs to the general Community Council response:

Question 1: What matters most for the future of Edinburgh?

Nick Stroud pointed out that sustainability was a crucial issue which underpinned all the more specific strategies such as for housing, economic growth, shopping and quality of place. Tom Ballantine agreed to write a paragraph in response to this question.

Question 2: Housing in West Edinburgh

It was agreed to leave this question to those directly affected.

Question 3: Proposed sites for a thousand new houses in East Edinburgh

John Stewart thought the proposed developments would have an adverse effect on the setting of Brunstane House, and would anyway encroach on the green belt which should only be permitted once all Edinburgh's brown-field sites and empty housing had been used. Caroline Hosking observed that there should be a general principle that new housing should fit in well with the existing environment. John agreed to write this section of the Community Council's response.

Question 4: Housing on green-field sites

It was generally agreed that green-field sites should only be considered once all Edinburgh's brown-field sites and empty housing had been used. John Stewart agreed to write this section of the Community Council's response.

Question 5: Housing in built-up areas

It was generally agreed that such developments should not be solely for accommodation, but that employment opportunities, transport implications and other infrastructure aspects be taken into account.

Question 6: Future role of Leith Docks

Preference was expressed for mixed housing and small-scale business development, encouraging local employment opportunities. Lawrence Marshall emphasised the importance of having dock-related industry, coordinated with similar developments in Fife, and several people wished to see continued support for visiting ferries and liners.

Question 7: Housing on regeneration sites

This question was felt to be of greater concern to areas other than Portobello.

Question 8: Houses in Multiple Occupation

There was general support for the 'Reasonable Alternative' (the status quo) in this case.

Question 9: Developer-contribution to infrastructure

There was general agreement that developers should contribute more to providing infrastructure, and certainly not less. Ben McLeish agreed to provide a paragraph in response to this question.

Question 10: Office space

There was general support for the Report's preferred option of protecting existing business and industry, for example to protect Portobello's shops from encroaching office development, and also for encouraging employment. The lack of use of Phoenix House is a matter of continuing regret.

Question 11: Meeting the needs of small businesses

There was general agreement that small businesses should be encouraged.

Question 12: Planning for new retail development

It was generally agreed that the preferred option of promoting town-centre and city-centre health was the right one.

Question 13: Non-retail options for Princes Street

Opinion was divided on this issue: Lawrence Marshall wanted to see more people living in Princes Street, and some cafes; Stephen Hawkins wanted only shops; Mike Bridgman pointed out that a development initiative was already under way, making it pointless to comment. It was therefore agreed not to comment on this option.

Question 14: Non-retail options for town centres

There was a prolonged discussion on the implications of the preferred and alternative policies. Diana Cairns pointed out that Portobello's primary retail frontage already includes more non-retail premises than recommended in the City Council's planning policies, and that a certain critical mass of shops was essential to ensure that people still come to Portobello to shop. Tom Ballantine viewed the preferred option of removing numerical limits on non-retail businesses in the primary retail frontage as a slippery slope, but Sean Watters urged against having a mechanistic policy that didn't take account of our evolving society, and Maria Devoy saw potential in abandoning a rigid policy. Although a vote backed the 'reasonable alternative' against the 'preferred option' by 10 to 4, there was a feeling that this question needed a third possible answer, in which viability, vitality and innovation all thrived, in keeping with Portobello's status as a designated town centre.

It was agreed that Tom Ballantine and Diana Cairns would write paragraphs taking into account the 'preferred option' and Ros Sutherland and Ben McLeish would write about the need for robust supplementary planning guidance.

Question 15: Excluding settlements from the green belt

There was continuing support for taking every opportunity to protect the green belt, and specifically for preserving Wanton Walls Farm's designation to maintain separation between Edinburgh and Musselburgh.

Question 16: Central Scotland Green Network

There was no comment on this question.

Question 17: Changes of use of local centres and facilities

Diana Cairns agreed to write a paragraph on this, with reference to the discussion around Question 14.

Question 18: Carbon reduction initiatives

Sean Watters agreed to write a paragraph on this, in support of the 'preferred option'.

Question 19: Waste management

There was general agreement with the 'preferred option', and for retaining the safeguarded site for a waste facility at Seafield. It was also agreed that there should be greater community involvement in the discussion of implementing such facilities. Diana Cairns agreed to write a paragraph on this.

Question 20: Other possible changes

Stephen Hawkins drew attention to the map of supermarkets in Edinburgh and the Report's suggestion that there are quite enough of these. The meeting agreed, and Diana Cairns would write a paragraph accordingly.

There was support for the provision and adequate regulation of more affordable housing in the city. Caroline Hosking agreed to write a paragraph in support of this.

Dawson Currie observed that there was nothing about transport in this report; Maureen Child pointed out that this is dealt with in other city policy documents, but Tom Ballantine agreed to say something about it in his response to Question 1. Lawrence Marshall observed that it could be quicker to reach Edinburgh city centre from surrounding towns than from the suburbs of the city itself; he agreed to write a paragraph on this aspect.

- * **Action: all, to let John Stewart have any comments on the SESplan by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Tom Ballantine to write a response to Question 1, including mention of sustainability and transport issues, and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to write a response to Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15.**
- * **Action: all, to notify any comments on protecting and enhancing Portobello's town centre with reference to Question 14 to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Tom Ballantine and Diana Cairns to write paragraphs taking into account the 'preferred option' and the 'reasonable alternative' for Question 14 and send them to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Ben McLeish and Ros Sutherland to write in support of robust supplementary planning guidance in the context of Question 14 and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: John Stewart to combine the foregoing responses to Question 14.**
- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write a response to Question 17 and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Sean Watters to write a response to Question 18 and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write a response to Question 19 and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Diana Cairns to write a response to Question 20 supporting the Report's position that there is no need for any increase in the number of Edinburgh's supermarkets, and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Caroline Hosking to write a response to Question 20 urging the provision of more affordable housing in Edinburgh, and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Lawrence Marshall to write a response to Question 20 pointing out the need for better mobility within the city, and send it to John Stewart by 9th December.**
- * **Action: Anyone else with views on any of the Report's proposals should send comments to John Stewart by 19th December.**

294.8 Reports

294.8a Treasurer: John Stewart reported, on behalf of the Treasurer, the payment of £22.97 in the unsuccessful attempt to repair the Geology Board, leaving £2,181.83 in the current account.

294.8b Neighbourhood Partnership: no report this time.

294.8c Planning: no report this time.

294.8d Signs and Plaques: no report this time.

294.8e Community Centre: David Scott reported that the next management meeting, on Tuesday 13th December, would include seasonal refreshments.

294.8f Joppa Tennis Courts: no further report (see item 294.5d above).

294.8g Councillors

Maureen Child circulated her usual written report.

Mike Bridgman welcomed the City Council's decision to shelve its Alternative Business Model, and as well as working on many of the issues covered in Maureen Child's report, was also concerned about the level of recycling from residential properties.

Stephen Hawkins had attended the Public Inquiry into the future of the Big W site, and led an expression of thanks to John Stewart and Diana Cairns for their work there on behalf of the community.

294.9 Any Other Business

John Stewart reminded the meeting that the Community Council mailing list was intended for the dissemination of information by office bearers, not for general discussion of issues – not least because some community councillors didn't use email. He then closed the meeting by thanking Diana Cairns, Maria Devoy, Sandra Blake and Sean Watters for providing the refreshments to be enjoyed after the meeting, and wished everyone a pleasant Festive break.

294.10 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, Edinburgh EH15 1EU.

The next meeting is on 30th January 2012

Subsequent dates are: 27th February 2012
26th March 2012
30th April 2012

Portobello Community Council on the Web: <http://www.portobelloc.org/>

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Portobello/Joppa Beat Update

Crime Update

There have been 65 crimes recorded during November with 58% having so far been solved. Recently there has been an increase in thefts from garden sheds and garages (see crime prevention advice section). As a result of investigations a male has been arrested and a report submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

Bonfire Night – Operation Draft

With fine weather over bonfire weekend the number of people attending bonfires across the East Neighbourhood was significant. The SNT deployed extra resources on both Friday and Saturday evenings. Officers were deployed on foot and mobile patrols at various locations across both wards, Holyrood Park, outside Meadowbank Stadium and at the Promenade, working jointly with City of Edinburgh (CEC) Community Safety Teams and Task Force, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service and Historic Scotland. The CEC mobile CCTV van was situated at the Promenade on both evenings.

It was pleasing to note that despite the increase in numbers of people attending at the various locations the amount of calls to the emergency services on both nights was considerably less than in previous years.

Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) – On the Beat

The SNT continue to listen to your concerns and endeavour to tackle and/or find solutions to areas of complaint.

Inconsiderate / Careless Cycling – SNT officers will be giving attention to persons riding on footpaths and at the Promenade, providing safety and crime prevention advice and when necessary enforcement.

Christmas Initiatives

Patrols – Officers from the SNT will also be conducting extra high-visibility and plain-clothed patrols as part of Operation Dresser leading up to Christmas and into the New Year in the High Street and at Meadowbank and Fort Kinnaird shopping areas, to provide reassurance and to deter and detect any criminals.

Festive drink-drive campaign – Despite many years of education and enforcement, unfortunately some drivers still drive whilst under the influence of alcohol and/ or drugs. These actions cost lives and often end in tragedy.

In December 2011 and January 2012 Lothian and Borders Police will take part in the Festive National Drink Drive Campaign. Across the entire force area officers will be conducting extra patrols and road checks to clamp down on these and other road traffic offences.

For anyone caught, an extended driving ban and a large fine are highly likely. Officers now also have the power to seize the vehicles of repeat offenders.

We are asking drivers not to take any risks with their safety, or their driving licence this festive season.

By all means enjoy the Christmas season and a good night out, but nominate a designated driver or arrange for other transport home.

Christmas Crime Prevention Advice

At this time of year criminals take the opportunities afforded them by the extra shopping we do, the hustle and bustle of town centres and the value of the goods we buy. We might also be more trusting and generous at Christmas when requests for charity are made, giving the unscrupulous a chance to collect for their own causes.

So what can we do?

At Home

The advice below is often common sense, but you might overlook it in your haste to get everything ready. Don't make it easy for someone to steal from your home. Keep attractive items out of sight until last thing on Christmas Eve. If you hide or store larger items such as bicycles in a shed, make sure they are very secure. Now is a good time to check that you know what you have, both normally (TV, Video etc) and with the extra presents you have bought. Take the frame numbers of new cycles and the serial numbers of new electrical equipment for future reference. Remember, empty boxes left outside advertise that you have new goods inside – dispose of packing carefully.

Strangers at the door – genuine delivery personnel usually have uniforms and liveried vehicles and should not need to come into your home. Charity collectors will have identification and will not be offended if you ask to see it. If you are not sure but want to make a donation, ask whether these can be made in other ways, perhaps through a bank.

On-line

Please ensure that you don't fall foul of online fraudsters in the run-up to Christmas. 'Get Safe Online' is a website where you can obtain security tips and general information to ensure safe online shopping: <http://www.getsafeonline.org/>

Good nights out get home safely

Alcohol can change people's behaviour and result in risky situations. This handy pocket guide gives you top tips for staying safe, and even doubles as an emergency phone book if you lose your mobile.

Remember Edinburgh and Portobello are essentially safe places to live, however, the festive period is a very busy time for Lothian and Borders Police. So follow this advice and make sure your Christmas is one to remember for all the right reasons!

You can download the pocket guide from
http://lbpcmsstaging/Internet/about_us/careers/special_constable_recruitment.aspx

You Said We Did.

At the Neighbourhood Community Safety Sub Group meeting held on Tuesday 8th November it was decided to continue with the following priorities:

1. Tackle and Reduce fly-tipping at Greendykes and Wauchope areas
2. Tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour at Thistle Foundation
3. Improve road safety around local primary schools, parking and waiting in restricted areas and double parking

The next meeting of the Community Safety Sub Group is due to be held at 2pm on Wednesday 18th January 2012 at the Jack Kane Centre.

If you cannot attend or wish to be added to our mailing list, please email the SNT mail box or phone the office to request a priority questionnaire so we can act on your concerns.

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