

Councillor's Report April 2010

Maureen Child, Labour Councillor for Portobello/Craigmillar

This is an account of just a few of my many and varied activities in the whole area, and a bit of what's been going on recently. I do welcome feedback, and I am happy to deal with questions and take up individual requests for action on any Council matter. If you need more information, or if you want me to do anything else for you, please don't hesitate to get in touch. My contact details are at the end.

Storm Damage and Coastal Defences

The recent high spring tides and on-shore gales combined to give us all a battering, most keenly felt along the coastline, including Portobello through to Eastfield. The damage to the sea wall and railings, coastal defences, loss of sand, destruction of the groyne at the eastern end - all needs to be assessed and money found to give us protection against the elements in future. I have asked for an urgent report to Councillors on all of this, and I very much hope my Council Motion will be accepted on 29 April so that we all know what is involved.

Cleaning up the Promenade and Beach

When the awesome storm died down, Council work started to clear the debris. 125 tonnes of waste was removed from the Promenade in 4 days. More than 250 tonnes were mechanically removed from the beach and 2 tonnes of sand were manually returned to the beach. Each tide is still bringing in more weed and uncovering waste buried by the storm - so the clean up work still goes on, day after day.

Advertising Portobello Beach on Buses

I have asked Lothian Buses about the possibility of advertising Portobello Beach as part of the new livery that they plan for Edinburgh's buses. This suggestion is being discussed on Party Online and in the Big Things on the Beach display in their Art House at the foot of Kings Road (well worth a visit, by the way!). I emailed the boss of Lothian Buses, Ian Craig, and got the instant response that they will do this. It won't make as big a splash as the Zoo buses livery - which cost about £10,000, but Ian Craig guarantees our beach *will* feature on buses bound for Portobello, and he gave me permission to tell you so. My next task is to get the Council to put up a 'To the Beach' type sign or two from the City Centre.

New Portobello High School Plans

The pre-planning consultation phase for a new Portobello High School begins on May 10 and will last until the end of August. If you want, I can give you a copy of the information pack, which has been sent to key local organisations. The pack outlines the process and timeline. It is very important that everyone, who has a stake in this school and in the Park and surrounding area, does take part in this whole process so that we can get the best possible outcome. That remains true whatever your point of view and whatever your starting point may be.

Refuse Collection - May Monday Holidays

The bin men's industrial action is still taking place in Edinburgh and this has particularly affected Monday collections, for example in Magdalene. The head of waste management told me that for the two May Monday holiday weeks to come, there will be extra private sector resources used to ensure that the refuse will be collected Monday Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. The Council advice is to leave the bin out until it is emptied.

Lismore School Demolition Delayed By Scottish Power

The decision having been taken to close, then to demolish the Lismore Primary School building, the people of Bingham have been concerned about its safety and security. I made enquiries recently, and found out that the delay is in getting Scottish Power to shut off the electricity supply. They do not share any sense of urgency and have said it would be months before they get around to it. Scottish Power seem to be a law unto itself, and far less efficient at this aspect of its work that it used to be.

Brunstane Road – South/North Road Crossing

You take your life in your hands sometimes in crossing the Milton Road East road from Brunstane Road South to Brunstane Road itself, as one constituent recently reminded me. I have requested that an assessment be made for a controlled crossing at this junction. I do know there are a lot of other traffic problems in this area, about which I have asked for a report some time ago – and it has yet to materialise.

Poplar Tree at No 5 Bus Stop

A vigilant constituent told me that a branch was hanging off the poplar tree, opposite the No 5 terminus at Milton Road and could be a danger the public. I asked for this branch to be lopped, but the whole tree may have to go, if it is judged unsafe. Poplars don't last as long as some other trees. Council officers suggested that the grassy area, on part of which there used to be a small playground, could take a few new trees, but I have said that nearby residents in Christians and the Brands need to be consulted first.

Site Investigations – Craigmillar

People may have noticed some activity on the Niddrie Mains Road site opposite the Craigmillar Health Centre on Monday 19 April, as I did. Apparently this was the start of site investigations of the ground conditions where the Council plan to build a new Council Local Neighbourhood Office and a new Craigmillar Library. Both projects are still on the drawing board, so it is still very early stages.

Portobello High Street Improvements

Generally I have had very good reports about the quality work being done on Portobello High Street pavements, albeit beyond schedule due to the weather. The workmen have been very helpful and cooperative. They have been asked to be more careful when exiting and entering their 'depot' off Adelphi Place. Another concern is that their use of a concrete 'wash' is affecting the drains. I have been assured that all the Portobello High Street drains have been investigated and all will be sorted and cleaned out once the work pavement has been finished.

Craigmillar Heritage Hopes

I recently took part in a meeting with the city archaeologist and other Council officers to discuss the way forward for the restoration of the Wauchope family grave. This is an important part of Craigmillar's heritage, tucked away behind houses in the Niddrie House estate. With continued support from neighbours and community, who have a keen interest in the project, we aim to raise funds to restore it and show it off.

My Contact Details

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PS If you want to receive this regularly (preferably!) by email, do just let me know.