

PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO GET THE FACTS ON THE PLANNED NEW PORTOBELLO HIGH SCHOOL

Our belief – A Community is more than just where you live. A good community respects the views of the majority, tells the truth and gives a very high priority to the education and well being of its children and young people.

THE FACTS

Portobello High School is no longer fit for purpose as a building suitable to deliver a 21st century education to the 1400 children who attend it - everyone agrees that it needs to be replaced.

- A new Portobello High School has been planned since 2005.
- 15 sites were carefully considered and investigated.
- After an extensive public consultation, Portobello Park was chosen and approved by City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Government. A budget of £41.5 M was set aside.
- Responses to the planning application indicated that a clear and significant majority of the community was in support of the school being built on ground at the top of the park.
- The contract went out to tender and was due to be awarded but work was delayed because of last minute legal action brought by a group opposed to the project, the Portobello Park Action Group (PPAG).
- Their case was heard in February 2012 and dismissed in March when the judge, Lady Dorrian ruled that PPAG had delayed too long in bringing the action. She also stated that she would have rejected PPAG's case on merit.
- On 27 March 2012 PPAG lodged an Appeal - this can take many months to be heard and more for a judgement to be issued.
- If the appeal proceeds it is almost certain the tender due to be accepted will be withdrawn

The effects of the PPAG Appeal and the loss of tender are likely to be

- costs to the council taxpayer will rise
- At best a year or more of delay before building can start
- At worst an indefinite wait – and no guarantee of money for a new school for Portobello
- Less money available to replace or refurbish other city schools, including St Johns, St Crispins, Boroughmuir and James Gillespies
- Millions wasted on keeping the existing high school safe and functioning

PPAG appears to be working against the interests of the community of Portobello – and the wider interests of parents with children at state schools across the City.

PPAG CLAIMS – AND THE TRUTH

PPAG have a fund raising web site. On that site they claim:

CLAIM - if the school is built on part of the park - 'housing will be built on the whole area' of the park.

TRUTH - There are no plans for any housing on the Park as the Council has confirmed many times. Housing on the Park is not compatible with the *Common Good* status of the land or planning policies.

CLAIM - 'the golf course will be lost if the school is built on the park'

TRUTH - the school has been carefully designed to complement the golf course. The only alteration will be improved paths around the outside, to make the area more accessible.

CLAIM - PPAG asserts (in the opening line of their web site) that they –'represent the SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY' (sic) of the community.

TRUTH - PPAG has no basis for this claim; responses to the planning application showed a clear majority of local residents in favour of proposals. We suspect PPAG now represent a small minority in the community.

CLAIM - PPAG claim that the Judge's decision has 'implications for the whole of Scotland' because it - 'means that councils, especially in these cash-strapped times, could sell... common good assets'.

TRUTH - A sale would be classed as a 'disposal'. All parties to the recent court case, including PPAG, agreed that this case has nothing to do with the disposal of common good assets.

AND SOME CREATIVE ACCOUNTING:

PPAG claim that if the school is built Portobello will lose 25% of its park land; that is only true if you leave out Bingham Park, The Jewel, the golf course, and the new playing fields in that description. Portobello Park, including the golf course, is around 50 acres. The new school including all weather pitches will take up less than 25% of Portobello park never mind Portobello green spaces.

NOTE: By open letter of 15th October 2011, PPAG were asked to remove their misrepresentations from their web site. The letter was ignored until the matter was due to come before a community council meeting of 28th November 2011. In exchange for the matter being left off the community council agenda, PPAG agreed to review their web site and respond to the letter within 14 days. No proper reply was ever given and the web site continues to misrepresent the position.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Sign the petition at asking PPAG to drop their appeal – go to www.facebook.com/new.phs.park

Display the front of this leaflet in your window.

BUILD OUR SCHOOL NOW

**WITHDRAW
THE APPEAL**

**END THE
DELAY**

START THE BUILD TODAY

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