

Opinion : New Portobello High School may take years



The Council have approval to build a new school in Portobello, but the campaign group, [PPAG](#), who do not want the new school built in Portobello Park, has intimated that it will appeal a recent Court of Session decision, perhaps meaning more delay. Parents are up in arms, and have set up an online petition to ask PPAG not to appeal as it will mean a further delay in building new premises.

Sean Watters on behalf of Portobello For A New School writes:-

The recent news that the new Portobello High School could be delayed for years is causing great anger and dismay within the local community. The school has long been in need of replacement and when planning permission was granted a year ago, it seemed as if work would finally proceed. However, when the project was out to tender the Portobello Park Action Group launched a court action to stop the new school, preventing the contract being awarded. The inevitable delay caused by this was frustrating, not least because of the late timing, but people recognised that due process had to be followed.

In early March the Portobello Park Action Group lost their court action. The principal reason was the considerable delay in bringing a legal action but the Judge [noted that](#), even if the case had been brought in good time, she “*would nevertheless have refused the petition on the merits.*”

Their case was dismissed so comprehensively, that it makes it all the more difficult to understand why the Portobello Park Action Group has now chosen to lodge an appeal. There is no realistic prospect of success, but even a short delay could put the project back years, at huge additional cost. Perhaps the hope is that further expense will be enough to cancel the

project.

The impact of this has already been felt at Porty High, where pupils and staff have been hugely upset by the legal appeal, but it could also affect other schools. Until the project proceeds, the Council may not be able to bid for more capital investment money from the Scottish Government. Much needed work to other schools across Edinburgh could also be delayed.

I have been involved with the campaign for a [new Portobello High School](#) for six years, and followed every twist and turn of what has been a long and sometimes difficult process. I also understand that some people are still strongly against what is being proposed; but most people within the community simply want to see the new school built.

In less than a week over a thousand people have signed a [petition](#) urging the legal appeal to be dropped. The Portobello Park Action Group continues to claim they represent the significant majority of the community, despite the most responses to the planning application supporting the school. They claim that housing will be built on the golf course when no such proposals exist or would even be possible given the Common Good nature of the land. They also claim that the recent court ruling will lead to Common Good land being sold off, even though the case has nothing at all to do with selling Common Good land; such misrepresentations only inflame local opinion further.

Enough is enough; the Portobello Park Action Group had their day in court and they lost. To drag this out further, only to cause more distress, disruption and cost, serves nobody. We can only hope that the Portobello Park Action Group stop to consider the damage they are doing and stop their legal action."

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/opinions/2012CS0H38.html>

<http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/dear-ppag-please-drop-the->

[appeal.html](#)

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