

Campaigners urge MSPs to vote against the Portobello Park Bill



Portobello Park Action Group warns MSPs of setting dangerous precedent over Portobello Park

Portobello Park Action Group (PPAG) is urging MSPs to vote against a Private Bill that would allow the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to build a new school on the inalienable common good land of Portobello Park.

As the Scottish Parliament's Private Bill Committee is getting ready to hear evidence from the proposer's side today, campaigners have sought legal advice which they say confirms appropriation of the land would set a dangerous precedent with consequences reaching far beyond Edinburgh.

"We want a new high school for Portobello just as much as everybody else, but the Court of Session ruled in September 2012 that Portobello Park is inalienable common good land, making it illegal to build on the land", says PPAG spokeswoman Alison Connelly.

"We find it very strange that a new planning application has been submitted for Portobello Park when it is currently illegal to build on the land.

“It is inconceivable why the council would continue to waste money to pursue these plans, especially when alternative sites are readily available.

“The parliament’s own legal experts reviewed the case and found that the park is indeed inalienable. Changing its status to allow the City of Edinburgh Council to build on it will open the door to the appropriation of more parks throughout Scotland.

“Cash-strapped councils could quite simply use valuable green space to help fill their pockets by selling these prime sites to developers.”

Other parks being threatened by similar plans include Bogton Park in Forres, Coo’s Green in North Berwick and Cowan Park in Barrhead.

“We are also concerned about the Scottish Government getting involved in and deciding what is currently a local issue. This high-level involvement ensures that other councils can use the Government’s decision when facing similar issues in the future, leading to further loss of green space in our cities.”

PPAG has campaigned against building on Portobello Park since 2006. A full timeline and more detailed comments from PPAG of the Save Porty Park campaign can be found at www.portygreenkeepers.org.uk

You can read about the need for a new school here on the Council [website](#).