

# Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Maureen Child

✘ Councillor Maureen Child is the Labour councillor for Portobello/Craigmillar ward. She writes:

Dear All

**Portobello Open Door's (POD's) Village Show** is on this Sunday 4 September from 2-5pm in Rosefield Park. As always there will be lots going on from Dog Show to Duck Racing. This family friendly event has something for everyone. Why not enter one of the Show Competitions, see POD website for details, it's your chance to win a coveted Village Show medal. More here: <http://www.the-pod.org/forthcomingevents.html>

At the Portobello Village Show there are stalls selling things like lovely cakes and preserves made by the pupils at **Castlebrae Community High School** who run their own fab Reds Cafe. There are also campaigns and local groups looking for your support like **Portobello Book Festival**, **Portobello Community Council** the **Save Bellfield** community buy-out campaign. Do make sure you go to the PCC stall if you are interested in what Community Councils can do and especially if you are standing for election. The nominations kick off on Monday 5 September. As Returning Officer for Portobello's CC, I will make sure the forms you need are there on Sunday and any time thereafter until the nominations close in 3 weeks time. My contact details below if we don't meet up out and about.

Portobello Community Council support the [#MoreInCommon](#) campaign. We held an event on June 22 on Portobello Beach to celebrate the life and birthday of Jo Cox MP who was tragically murdered on the way to her regular local consultation session with her constituents, just six days before. A few of us local people met regularly on the Promenade at 12 noon on Saturdays, before the summer break, to underline the point Jo made in her House of Commons Maiden Speech : **“We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us”**. After the Brexit vote, that local meeting-up seemed even more essential. The [#MoreInCommon](#) message has been taken up by **Hope Not Hate** to try and ensure those human rights principles are sustained in our neighbourhoods and communities. This is a weekend coming is one of celebration [#MoreInCommon](#). If you want to wear a [#MoreInCommon](#) badge – this weekend especially – I have acquired more through Oxfam and will bring them along on Saturday and Sunday. There’s no charge, although you might feel like giving a donation to a related charity or campaign like **Oxfam, Hope not Hate or Amnesty International**.

I was still wearing my [#MoreInCommon](#) badge again this week when I visited **The Welcoming** which is one of the key voluntary organisations working with us in Edinburgh to ensure a smooth transition into Edinburgh life for migrants and refugees; 100 individuals so far in Edinburgh and 1000 in Scotland as a whole. Our Syrian families are coming to us through the **UK’s Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme**. These individuals were our particular focus this visit, along with the Scottish Government Minister for Communities Social Security and Equality, Angela Constance. It was a pleasure for me to meet Angela for the first time, to be listening together to the stories of some of Edinburgh’s Syrian refugees at a language class, and to be working together on this. We want to make sure that everyone who comes to live here gets a warm welcome,

and we can help them progress with their lives, no matter where they come from or how they got here.

Portobello Community Council is consulting on the new – now formal – application for 1330 units of housing on **Green Belt land at Brunstane.** More

here: <http://www.portobellocc.org/pccpn/2016/08/30/planning-application-for-1330-homes-school-local-centre-roads-at-brunstane-have-your-say/> This is the link to the application on the Council's planning portal. [16/04122/PPP | Proposed residential development \(including class 8 residential institutions, class 9 houses and sui generis flats\) primary school \(class 10 non-residential institutions\) local centre \(including class 1 retail, class 2 financial and professional services, class 3 food and drink, class 10 non residential institutions and class 11 assembly and leisure \), green network, means of access and transport links, infrastructure and associated ancillary works. | Land 445 Metres North Of 103 Newcraighall Road Edinburgh](#) Even although you might have had a say at the pre-application stage, it is very important indeed to put in your views on the detailed application now by email or on paper to the Council's planning department so they are taken into account when the application is being assessed.

I am deeply disappointed that the only retail branch bank in **Craigmillar's Trustee Saving Bank TSB**, is one of the UK branches that is being **closed** by the Bank, so that people will soon have to travel to Portobello or Cameron Toll to get the service they require. The local people, in concert with the MP Tommy Sheppard, are rightly challenging this decision on the part of TSB. <http://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/politics/craig-millar-bank-held-to-account-over-plans-to-close-city-branch-1-4215451> Mean time, we understand the Post Office in Londis is changing hands and people may not be able to open a Post Office Account in Craigmillar and will have to go to ASDA

at the Jewel. Many people particularly, elderly people are going to be hugely disadvantaged by this move. The Portobello/Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership is writing to TSB in support of the local campaign to keep the branch open.

**Castle Community Bank**, based a block away at 84 Niddrie Mains Road, is a community-based credit union, a financial cooperative. It does not provide a full banking service like the TSB or mainstream banks do. It only provides for savings and low-cost loans. More here at [www.castlecommunitybank.co.uk](http://www.castlecommunitybank.co.uk)

A reminder that **Portobello Market on Saturday!** Gates open at 9.30 and the market runs until 1.30pm. Bring your bicycle along for a free check by BG Cycles, listen to some buskers music while you wait or browse the stalls. Full list here: <http://www.pedal-party.org.uk/food/portobello-market/traders-for-the-september-3rd-portobello-market/>

Every time I went into the community room at Portobello Library and used to see the **portrait of the last Provost of Portobello**, Alexander Brand, sitting in the corner. I meant to do something about it. A few of us felt it needed a new home, maybe at Portobello Town Hall. I am glad to say it has now been re-housed in the foyer of the Town Hall, thanks to a timely reminder from John Stewart Chairman of Portobello Amenity Society and a very responsive facilities manager. We only needed to ask!

Some things are easy to fix, once you get the right person and actually ask! But others prove a little more tricky and long drawn out, even although they seem simple and straightforward. I am sure you can think of quite a few, as can I. Thanks to one dogged constituent's continual persistence, we now have **improved/new L.E.D. lighting at the Milton Link Cycle track underpass** – the 'tunnel' which takes pedestrians up to ASDA and surrounding areas. How long did *that* take, Ian? (-;

**Dad's Rock** runs a playgroup in Craigmillar for Dads and small children on a Saturday morning at **The Venchie** in Niddrie Mains Terrace. Dad's Rock set up a Just Giving page for those who would like to contribute or raise money for this really worthwhile cause. It is the Year of The Dad, after all! <https://www.justgiving.com/dads-rock>

I have signed up early to a **MacMillan Coffee Morning at Home Instead** for later on the month in the wonderful refurbished Castlebrae Business Centre, Peffer Place where they are now based – and you could too! I'll remind you nearer the time. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/macmillan-coffee-morning-focusing-on-companionship-for-older-people-tickets-26806579200>

A fantastic picture of **Joppa in 1954** here: <https://mobile.twitter.com/74frankfurt/status/769856167535382528/photo/1>

Joppa is the 6<sup>th</sup> most affluent/least deprived place in Scotland, according to the latest Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Figures, just released this week. But part of Niddrie is the highest for unemployment. Closing the gap between rich and poor in Edinburgh must be our top priority.

**Edinburgh Equality and Rights Network (EaRN)** is a member-led network that seeks to advance equality, promote human rights and tackle inequality and poverty in Edinburgh and surrounding areas. As a member-led network, EaRN's activities and focus are defined and driven by its membership base. This means that the best way to ensure equalities issues that matter to you are represented, is by joining and having your say! **You can now join EaRN as a Professional.** This membership subscription is intended for those who work in Edinburgh's public sector, and would like to join EaRN in their professional capacity. Your professional role will include an interest in or concerns about equality and rights issues, and/or inequality and poverty. This category includes elected members and all public, including third sector, officers. Please click on the

link to become a member: <http://equalityandrightsnetwork.org.uk/>

**Community growing** makes a difference to people's lives. It's not just a nice thing to do. It matters. **Fresh Start** recently put up wonderful pictures on social media of produce for their allotment space which is growing fresh vegetables and fruit. They had some fabulous photos. From their garden in Craigmillar, Fresh Start grow the vegetables to give to local churches to make meals for those in need. To give just one example, they say some of their produce made a soup for a family who had not eaten for a week.

Orienteering happening this weekend in **Figgate Park**. See here: <http://www.esoc.org.uk/events/esoc-ultrasprint-figgate-park-edinburgh-sep-4-2016>



From the 1-8 September is **Childhood Cancer Awareness Week**, so many of the landmarks around Britain and abroad will be lit in Gold. [#GlowGold](#)

**Vintage Vibes** are organising a new short weekly walk for older folks on Wednesdays at 10.30 am from Portobello Swim centre. More here: <http://vintagevibes.org.uk/>

**School Streets** were on the agenda for Transport and Environment Committee this week. See more here: [http://www.streetsaheadedinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school\\_travel/87/school\\_streets](http://www.streetsaheadedinburgh.org.uk/streetsahead/info/35/school_travel/87/school_streets) and here:

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4002/transport\\_and\\_environment\\_committee#minutesDateSearchWidget](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4002/transport_and_environment_committee#minutesDateSearchWidget) Introduced In two phases from September 2015, the scheme restricts cars on streets around schools, aiming to encourage safe and sustainable travel by children and parents. Nine primary schools were chosen to take part in the 18-month pilot – **Duddingston, St John's, and Towerbank** among them. Now the

process to make these changes permanent will begin. Amongst the findings, an average speed reduction of 1.2mph was surveyed across both the School Streets and surrounding areas, while air quality was shown to have improved in all streets. In addition, the number of children walking to school has increased by 3% alongside a 6% drop in children being driven in. Perceptions of safety also improved, with around two-thirds of all respondents agreeing that School Streets felt safer during operating times.

Free workshops and drop-in sessions for black or ethnic minority community people to find out more about how they can **get involved in Community Councils**. Contact Edinburgh and Lothian Regional Equality Council (ELREC) Workshop is on 7 September 6pm-8.30pm and the drop-ins are Wednesdays 14 and 21 September 2-4pm. Contact Mizan Rahman, equality engagement officer at ELREC by email [mrahman@elrec.org.uk](mailto:mrahman@elrec.org.uk) or phone Mizan on 0131 556 0441 for more details [https://mobile.twitter.com/ELREC\\_EE/status/770791940459786240/photo/1](https://mobile.twitter.com/ELREC_EE/status/770791940459786240/photo/1)

It's so good that [Cressida the Octopus](#) sculpture is back in time for Art Walk Party this year. Here's Jon Davey's photo of here. <https://www.blipfoto.com/entry/2215939882600106125> As Jon says: "Cressida – the Tidal Octopus – was re-installed today, back where she belongs on Portobello Beach. After the installation in the afternoon, which all went very well, there was a small gathering on the sand this evening with the artist, a few of the Art Walk Party team and some other Party residents. We all had a drop of rum to toast Cressida's return as the tide came in" You can see her from the foot of Bath Street, and get up closer at low tide.

Yes, **ArtWalk Party** is started! Art at the Seaside. More than 70 artists. Over 48 locations.

Pick up a map from the popup gallery at A449 Architects, Portobello High Street, or at the Skylark, The Tide, Dalriada, or Portobello Library. See you around and about, I hope.

Have a great weekend!

Best wishes

Maureen

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