

Retired teacher Chris grafts to battle graffiti gremlins

Retired teacher Chris Cowie is on a roll in his campaign to spruce up large refuse bins positioned along Portobello Promenade.

With the popular beach destination attracting thousands of visitors each day during lockdown, and crowds expected to grow larger as the summer season approaches, extra refuses containers have been put in place at key points.

But some of the bins were plastered with unsightly messages or have been targeted by vandals, so Chris asked the city council if he could do something about it. The council donated paint and along with several volunteers, Chris has spent his spare time with a roller and tray working along the beach front and tidying up the bins.

Chris, 60, said: "I was just conscious that those bins are so ugly on our beautiful promenade and I wanted to see if we could get them covered up. I spoke to Robert Davidson at the council and he supplied me with the paint.

"I asked [Portobello Time Bank](#), a local voluntary group, if they would like to help and with a few volunteers from there, we have made a start. People seem to be pleased that the graffiti is being removed and that we are making an effort to make the place look nice."



Chris Cowie and fellow Portobello volunteers painting out graffiti menace along the Promenade

A Portobello resident for 50 years, community enthusiast Chris was a primary teacher at Craigmillar before spending 29 years at Gracemount Primary.

He added: “Portobello Beach has probably been the most populated place in Scotland during lockdown and it has been said that it is as busy now as it was back in its heyday in the 1950s. Anything that can be done to make it a nicer place should be encouraged.”

Chris has been supported in his anti-graffiti painting initiative by other local residents including Anne Stevenson, Emily and Maisie Wood and Colin Cornwall.