

## **CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL**

### **OBJECTION 7 – DAVID AND JANET KILKERR**

**This objection was signed by the objectors and reproduced in typed (electronic) form by the clerking team**

We, the undersigned, wish to register our objections to the bill promoted by the City of Edinburgh Council to allow the building of a new school on Portobello Park. We are objecting to the whole bill on two grounds, namely the precedent it will set and also the loss of amenity.

A judgement was recently given in the appeal court that there were no legal grounds for building on the proposed site, it having been gifted to the City of Edinburgh with the condition that it remain open space in perpetuity. By introducing this bill, Edinburgh City Council is seeking to overturn the law to achieve its own ends and, as such, a dangerous precedent would be set were they to succeed. The law is there to protect individuals and communities, and any potential subversion of its authority must be considered with the utmost care if it is not to fall into disrepute. This will happen if councils can ride roughshod over carefully considered decisions just because it suits their own ends, or because of political pressures from whatever quarter. Portobello needs a new school, and local parents and teachers are anxious for progress to be made; this does not and should not mean that the wider implications for future generations are ignored for what might seem to be the easiest course of action. There are alternative ways of providing a new school, but the Council is choosing to ignore them or claim that they are too difficult or expensive. This demonstrates a short-term expediency which should be resisted.

What will be lost to ourselves and future generations is open space, a vital and life-enhancing element of all cities. Edinburgh may be more fortunate than some other cities in this respect, but that should not provide an excuse for the cavalier destruction of a greenfield site, however convenient it might seem. We note that in the current rebuilding of James Gillespie's High School, taking place on its existing site, no suggestion was made to rebuild on a nearby and well-known green space, and nor should it have been. Equally, Portobello Park should be retained as a public amenity for now and the future.

We make these objections as local residents, but also as residents of Scotland, who wish to see the law upheld and amenities preserved for future citizens.

14 June 2013