

KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of
Kendal Town Council
held on Monday, 18th November 2013 at 7.30 p.m.
in the Town Council Chamber, the Town Hall, Kendal**

- PRESENT** The Town Mayor (Councillor Sylvia Emmott) in the Chair;
Councillors A. Robinson, C. Mayho, T. Clare, G. Vincent, G. Cook, P. Bramham,
J. Brook, C. Feeney-Johnson, J. Veevers, M. Kelly, G. Archibald, S. Coleman,
D. Evans, S. Evans, J. McCreesh, M. Severn, and L. Oldham.
- APOLOGIES** Councillors M. Deverill, P. Dixon, G. Tirvengadam, J. Willshaw and P. Walker.
- OFFICERS** Liz Richardson (Town Clerk), John Hutchinson (Town Treasurer) and Margaret
Graham (Secretary).

487/13/14 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor thanked all who had helped to support the Christmas Lights Switch-on and reported that a total of £459.25 had been raised for her Charity comprising the Street Collection (£161.65), a donation of £60, and proceeds from the Refreshment Stall (£237.60).

488/13/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor invited Declarations of Interest, and the following Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and Other Registrable Interests (ORIs) were declared:

- (1) Councillor Sylvia Emmott, the Mayor, declared an ORI in respect of Kendal College, of which she is a Governor;
- (2) Councillor Austen declared an ORI in respect of the Kendal Lions, of which he is a Member; and
- (3) Councillor Geoff Cook clarified that the grant application in respect of Sandgate Hydrotherapy Pool is made by the Trust; Cumbria County Council is responsible for the Pool, and Councillor Cook declared a DPI in any items relevant to Cumbria County Council because he is a Member of that Authority.

489/13/14 KENDAL COLLEGE : REQUEST FOR FUNDING RE CASTLE DAIRY

The College had provided additional information in respect of its request for financial support towards the provision of new kitchen equipment at the Castle Dairy. The Treasurer had passed on this information to Councillors by e-mail, and paper copies were circulated at the meeting.

Referring to the previous discussion of this request at the full Council meeting on 4th November 2013 (Minute 433/13/14 refers), the Mayor said that she had consulted Standing Orders and had sought advice from Debbie Storr at SLDC and it transpired that Council could have considered a further amendment to the proposal presented.

Councillor Graham Vincent felt that the report presented on 4th November 2013 had been misleading. He understood the cost of the kitchen equipment had been negotiated and a discount had been secured. He said that Kendal College needed top-class equipment to fulfil its aspirations for the Castle Dairy, and for its catering students.

Councillor Chris Mayho said that, as Chairman of the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee, he was obliged to bring to Members' attention those items which they can fund – for example grants (but not to political or religious groups, and not those items which it is the responsibility of the education authorities to provide). He said that the Council was not here to fund education. He felt that, if the Council was to consider funding educational equipment, and he was convinced that the kitchen equipment fell within this category, then it would also have to consider similar requests from both Secondary and Primary Schools. He pointed out that the Council can fund items of a social or community nature. Councillor Sylvia Emmott said she could recall two such grants to educational establishments, one to Queen Katherine School for the Community Garden and the other to Heron Hill School. Councillor John Veevers supported Councillor Mayho's line of reasoning.

The Treasurer confirmed that the Council has a fund (Schools of Science and Arts) which provides grants, usually to students/individuals, for specific educational opportunities, and a modest donation for Senior School Prize-givings.

Councillor Clare Feeney-Johnson felt that the Council was not being asked to fund part of the educational process and pointed out that the organisations mentioned previously, and other projects, are funded through the budgets of Council Committees (e.g. Kendal in Bloom and Christmas Lights and Festivals). She felt it was important to allow Kendal College to diversify, and to protect and safeguard the future of the Castle Dairy.

Councillor Austen Robinson said he would like to support the Kendal College request, but was not sure now whether the Council is allowed to do so. Councillor McCreesh said the paper submitted by the College was very useful and might have made a difference if it had been available at the last Council meeting. He referred to a recent Press Release publicising the £3.5 million award to the College, and asked if the request for kitchen equipment was still valid. Councillor Sylvia Emmott confirmed that the £3.5M grant was ring-fenced for the refurbishment of the Allen Building, and the rebuilding of the former Builders Supply premises.

Councillor Matt Severn put forward the view that the new kitchen equipment would improve students' proficiency and make them more employable through increased skills. He proposed that the College be awarded £5,000 towards the kitchen equipment, which was seconded by Councillor Stephen Coleman. Councillor Graham Vincent indicated that he was also in support of the proposal, saying that the case for a state-of-the art facility was compelling. Councillor Clare Feeney-Johnson agreed, pointing out the work Kendal College is carrying out to protect the Castle Dairy and the economic benefit to that part of the town. She felt the provision of state-of-the art equipment was a bonus.

Councillor Geoff Cook asked if the Governing Body had actually placed an order for the equipment, and this was confirmed. Councillor Marc Kelly commented that the cost of the kitchen equipment (£112,000) seemed excessive.

Councillor John Veevers commented that the College does not just educate people from Kendal, but provides an educational benefit to the whole of South Lakes.

The Treasurer was asked by Councillor David Evans if there were sufficient funds available within the current financial year. The Treasurer confirmed that £5,000 was available in the Development Fund, but pointed out that two further grant applications had been referred by the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee. Both are from Residents Associations in the Town seeking financial support for new playground equipment.

Councillor Jonathan Brook felt that, although community benefit had been touched on in relation to making the Castle Dairy more sustainable, on the whole the request did not meet the Council's grant criteria.

In the subsequent vote, the proposal to award £5,000 to Kendal College towards kitchen equipment for the Castle Dairy was lost by six votes in favour to nine against.

RESOLVED that the request from Kendal College be refused.

490/13/14 INVOICES OVER £2,000

The Treasurer presented two invoices over £2,000 for Council approval

- To J. Chappell for work at the Coley Barn allotment site (the Treasurer referred to Minute 440/13/14 of 4 November 2013. He understood that the work has been carried out in accordance with the job specification); and
- To Low Orchard for winter planting (as per contract)

It was proposed by Councillor Giles Archibald, and seconded by Councillor Geoff Cook, that payment of the invoices be approved.

RESOLVED unanimously, that the payment of invoices over £2,000 be approved.

AUDIT, GRANTS AND CHARITIES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2013 were presented by the Chairman, Councillor Chris Mayho.

491/13/14 External Auditor's Report for the year ended 31st March 2013

The Treasurer reported that the Auditors had raised concerns relating to the adoption/approval of the Council's Risk Assessments. He thought the Auditors had overlooked the point that full Council had approved the minutes of the meeting of the Committee where the Risk Assessment process had been discussed. Council was asked to approve that the Risk Assessment report be minuted, in future, as a separate item for the purposes of External Audit.

The Treasurer confirmed that, otherwise, the Auditors were satisfied with the way the Council was conducting its business.

RESOLVED that in future the Risk Assessment process and reports be minuted as a separate agenda item for the purposes of External Audit.

492/13/14 Finance Report for Six Months ended 30 September 2013

At its meeting on 28th October 2013, the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee had recommended that Council approve the Report.

The Treasurer had provided both written and numerical explanatory statements in support of the Financial Report, and highlighted points of interest for Members' information. Overall, the financial position of the Town Council was satisfactory

The Treasurer expanded on the Development Funds Position Statement, and confirmed that there had been an uncommitted balance of £12,550 in the Development Fund as at end September 2013. He pointed out that some projects had been achieved and funds were committed for other projects. £1,000 had been paid out recently for the Defibrillator purchased as a commitment to the Appeal Fund of the Chairman of Cumbria County Council. Councillor Geoff Cook pointed out that a substantial amount of underspend in the Kendal in Bloom Committee budget had now been allocated. Councillor Giles Archibald asked if there was any committed support in the Development Fund which was unlikely to be used. He was referred to the Draft Budget for 2014/15 - to be discussed later in the meeting - by the Treasurer, who commented that Members might want to reduce/amend some items.

RESOLVED that the Finance Report for the six months ended 30th September 2013 be approved.

493/13/14 Grant Applications for 2014/15 – Recommendations from the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee

Councillor Mayho then referred to the list of grant applications considered by the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee at its meeting on 28th October 2013, pointing out that the Committee had sought to ensure consistency and fairness. He invited questions from Members, and sought approval for the Committee's recommendations which appeared as an appendix to the minutes.

The Treasurer said that some grants had been recommended where an application has not been received but a grant has been given in the past and an assumption has been made that Council would wish to continue this support (e.g. North West Air Ambulance). He added that the recommended grants budget for 2014/15 is £55,000.

The recommendations were discussed and comments/proposed amendments were made on individual grants. Councillor Feeney-Johnson pointed out that the Food Festival and the (first) WoolFest had been hugely popular. WoolFest had enjoyed a good atmosphere at K Village and she felt it was appropriate to put in an amount to support this new Festival, suggesting £1,500. The view for supporting festivals in the town was endorsed by Councillor Robinson, and also by Councillor Clare who saw it as an element of the "Vision" for Kendal.

In discussing the Food Festival plans for 2014/15, it was reported that a Christmas Food Festival was envisaged in 2014. Therefore, it was suggested by Councillor Archibald that the amount be increased (from £2,000) to £5,000 as the cost was estimated at £7,000 and this Festival would enhance other events at Christmas-time. Councillor McCreesh was concerned at this amount, but indicated that he would support the £2,000 grant proposed.

Councillor Cook asked if the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee could give some guidance on the right amount to award, and asked if there were sufficient monies in the 2014/15 budget for grants.

Councillor Sylvia Emmott pointed out that a "Contingency Fund" for the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee had been suggested last year, but had been rejected by full Council. Councillor Feeney-Johnson explained that, while the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee had no control over the budget for Festivals, Members have met with representatives of Festival organisations and offered assistance and guidance. The Committee, however, is not allowed to make recommendations on grant amounts. This is at variance with the functions of other Committees, e.g. Kendal in Bloom and Environment and Highways, both of which have budgets and can agree funding for projects. The Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee has received comprehensive reports and presentations from Festival organisers about their intentions and aspirations, and Councillor Feeney-Johnson felt work was needed to introduce protocols so that the Committee is able to make recommendations directly to Council. This view was supported by Councillor Austen Robinson, who said that such a process would provide a more direct and efficient way to deal with festival organisers. A Contingency Fund would ensure that there were monies available to meet requests for funding, and any underspend could be directed to the General Reserves.

Councillor Clare pointed out that one of the budget headings, in respect of the increased precept in 2013/14, was Festivals. He felt that the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee should be enabled to advise Council on proposed festivals, and should be allowed to recommend financial awards. At the moment, the amount of grant is a recommendation from the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee. Councillor Chris Mayho pointed out that the AGC Committee is independent from organisations and other Committees, and it would be its responsibility to check that the process is appropriate.

Members noted the amount recommended to be awarded to One Voice, and it was proposed that this particular grant should be paid in instalments, although the Committee had thought that the organisation was achieving the grant criteria.

Councillor Graham Vincent pointed out that the contract for Lakes Leisure had been awarded to a different provider, and suggested that the award might want to be reconsidered. Councillor Mayho thanked him for clarification on this application.

The Treasurer reported that grant applications had now been received in respect of Comic Fest, Kendal Arts International and the Mary Wakefield Festival.

The Treasurer confirmed that the amount for the Food Festival, as recommended by the AGC Committee, was £2,000. Councillor Cook proposed that an additional £2,000 should be granted for the Food Festival in 2014/2014, and this was seconded by Councillor Christ Mayho. Councillor Giles Archibald had proposed previously that £5,000 be set aside for the Christmas Food Fair, which was seconded by Councillor John Veevers. In the ensuing vote, the proposal for £5,000 was passed.

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In respect of grant applications (applications not yet received appear *in italics**) it was

RESOLVED that the following amounts of grant be awarded from the budget for 2014/2015: -

	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Amount</u>
(1)	Annual Torchlight Carnival	£ 5,000
(2)	Kendal Arts International (Mintfest)	£ 5,000
(3)	Kendal Mountain Festival	£ 5,000
(4)	Mary Wakefield Festival	£ 500
(5)	Kendal Windows on Art	£ 750
(6)	Rotary Club of South Westmorland (Fireworks Display)	£ 3,300
(7)	Westmorland CAMRA Beer Festival (for Town Hall Banner)	£ 250
(8)	Comic Fest	£ 5,000
(9)	<i>Kendal Wool Gathering (WoolFest)* (amended from nil)</i>	£ 1,500
(10)	Kendal Festival of Food	£ 5,000
(11)	Brewery Arts Centre	£ 8,000
(12)	<i>Stricklandgate House Trust *</i>	£ 800
(13)	Abbot Hall, Lakeland Arts Trust	£ 1,000
(14)	Kendal-Rinteln Association	£ 1,200
(15)	<i>Kendal Old Folks Treat *</i>	£ 300
(16)	Christmas Tree Festival	Nil
(17)	Kendal and District Lions Club	£ 150
(18)	Kirkbarrow Residents Association (referred to Development Fund)	
(19)	Lakes Leisure	Nil
(20)	1127 Squadron (Kendal) Air Training Corps	£ 900
(21)	Great North Air Ambulance	£ 1,000
(22)	“One Voice” Centre for Independent Living (to be paid in instalments)	£ 2,000
(23)	The Quaker Tapestry at Kendal	£ 3,000
(24)	<i>North West Air Ambulance *</i>	£ 1,000
(25)	Kendal and District Homing Society	Nil
(26)	Hallgarth Community Centre (referred to Development Fund)	
(27)	Abbot Hall Public Bowling Club	£ 50
(28)	Sandgate Hydrotherapy Pool (Trust)	£ 2,500

494/13/14 Minutes of meeting held on 28th October 2012

Council was asked to approve the minutes of the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee held on 28th October 2013.

In respect of Minute 413/13/14, Councillor John McCreesh thanked the Treasurer for his attendance at the Kendal Community Grants event on 6th November 2013, and said this had been greatly appreciated.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee held on 28th October 2013 be approved as a correct record.

495/13/14 DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2014/2015

The Treasurer had prepared a draft budget for 2014/2015, based on the approved budget for 2013/2014 and the Year End Forecast position for 2013/2014. This also took into consideration the aspirations of Committees following consultations at the most recent meetings.

The Treasurer pointed out that the Council Tax Base for 2014/15, to be set by South Lakeland District Council, is not yet known but some fluctuations were anticipated. He drew attention to and elaborated on individual headings:

- Staff Expenses took account of current pay and staffing levels, allowing for pay increments and a 1% cost of living pay award
- The inclusion of £4,500 in the Mayoralty and Arts budget in respect of an Exhibition commemorating the outbreak of World War I (similar to amounts included in 2012/2013 for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations), £2,000 for specific projects at Kendal Museum, and including the carry-over of £1,000 unspent in the financial year 2013/2014
- Changes to staffing apportionments in relation to the Kendal in Bloom and Christmas Lights and Festivals Committees
- £300 for the Wainwright Award (because interest levels are very poor, it is felt necessary to include a realistic amount for the award)
- £5,000 as the Council's agreed annual contribution towards the Election Reserve

The Treasurer pointed out that the Development Fund could be increased or decreased in accordance with Council's wishes, and reminded Members of the two grant applications which had been referred by the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee.

Councillor Austen Robinson asked if the draft budget proposed an increase in the precept, mentioning concerns in respect of the cost of living and increased costs to residents. However, he was also concerned that there were insufficient contingency funds. The Treasurer reminded Councillors that the General Reserve had been set at £30,000 so there would be some leeway as a result of underspends.

The Treasurer was asked if there was sufficient in the 2014/2015 Development Fund to meet the grant applications from the Hallgarth Residents Association and the Kirkbarrow Residents Association towards playground equipment, and responded affirmatively.

Note: *At this point Councillors Paul Bramham and Matt Severn each declared an Other Registrable Interest in the Hallgarth application because they are the Members for the Underley and Fell Wards respectively.*

Councillor Giles Archibald said that the applications for playground equipment were very worthwhile, and proposed that £5,000 be awarded for each scheme.

Councillor John Veevers asked whether Kendal Futures would be disbanded in favour of the Business Improvement District projects. Councillor Geoff Cook pointed out that the BID is for the town centre, whereas KFB covers *all* of Kendal and not just businesses. Councillor David Evans said that the monies raised by the BID were not to be used to replace KFB but to be complementary and not in conflict.

In relation to the draft budget, Councillor Mayho was anxious to ensure that the Council precept would not be raised in 2014/15. He was concerned that the Council should not bring in additional monies that were not going to be spent, which would be the worst possible outcome for residents. This view was endorsed by Councillor John McCreesh. Councillor Austen Robinson felt that, although normally Council should take the opportunity to apply a modest increase in the precept, on this occasion he was happy to support a 0% increase.

The Treasurer said that he would be happy to update the draft budget for Councillors' further discussion/ratification at the meeting in January 2014. Councillor Clare felt that there was considerable flexibility in the budget, and hoped that there might be the opportunity to consider an increase (to £7,000) for the Kendal Mountain Festival,

The Town Clerk pointed out that the draft budget included no increase in Allotment Rents, pointing out that take-up of allotment plots has reduced. Councillor John Veevers, as Chairman of the Allotments Committee, said that this had been discussed at the most recent Committee meeting. A lot of older tenants were giving up plots because of increasing costs, and this had led to a loss of expertise and education with the result that there is nobody to nurture new, inexperienced allotment holders. He would welcome a 0% increase. Councillor Austen Robinson said that he and Councillor Lynne Oldham now serve on the Allotments Committee. He agreed with Councillor Veevers that older people are very sensitive about price increases and younger people are not taking up tenancies. He felt it was not realistic to increase allotment rents.

Councillor Geoff Cook said that he would support similar efforts to achieve a 0% increase in the precept.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Treasurer be requested to present an amended draft budget, based on that discussed but adjusted to achieve a 0% increase in the precept, to be submitted to full Council for ratification as its meeting on 6th January 2014;

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- (2) that Allotment Rents remain at the level set for 2013/2014;
- (3) the Hallgarth Community Centre Management Committee be awarded £5,000 from the Development Fund in 2014/2015 towards the provision of playground equipment; and
- (4) The Kirkbarrow Residents Association be awarded £5,000 from the Development Fund in 2014/2015 towards the provision of playground equipment

The meeting ended at 9.50 p.m.

Signed

Date