

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



Minutes of a meeting of Kendal Town Council held in the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, on Monday, 11 December 2023, at 7.34 p.m.

Councillors

G Archibald	Present	A Blackman	Apologies
S Blunden	Present	J Brook	Present
D Brown	Absent	A Campbell	Present
S Coleman	Present	J Cornthwaite (Vice-Chair)	Present
J Dunlop (Chair)	Present	L Edwards	Present
R Edwards	Present	D Evans	Apologies
A Finch	Apologies	C Hardy	Apologies
M Helme	Present	L Hendry	Present
E Hennessy	Apologies	H Ladhams	Present
S Long	Apologies	D Miles	Apologies
D Rathbone	Present	C Russell	Present
M Severn	Present	K Simpson	Apologies
G Supka	Apologies	R Sutton	Present
P Thornton	Apologies	G Tirvengadam	Apologies

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk) and Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant).

Public Participation

No items were brought forward by the public.

Matt Burke addressed Council on proposals for a **Humanise Festival** in Kendal. Humanise Festival of Play aimed to create the opportunity for a town-based festival offering new and inspiring digital games experiences for the community. Matt sought to emphasise that the festival would challenge the widely-held preconception that digital gaming was time-wasting and anti-social. The festival would help all to understand the advantages of digital gaming and how it offered social contact, with large communities of people interacting and, in particular, how it could be life-changing for some, for example disadvantaged groups. The festival, due to be held in June, would be a ground-breaking event, and the Town Council would shortly be receiving an application for grant funding.

Matt responded to questions raised by Members and the Mayor thanked hm for his contribution to the meeting, pointing out that his presentation had helped her to recognise the human element of digital gaming.

Matt Williams from Westmorland and Furness Council addressed Council about the **Levelling Up Fund** Round 3 award of £13.7 million to Kendal. The bid had been submitted to Government in July 2022, seeking £13.5 million towards Kendal Town Centre regeneration. This would be used to embed education in the heart of the Town, transforming under-used retail space and creating a better social, economic and built environment for all. The bid had been agreed by the Kendal Town Team, including representatives from Kendal Town Council, South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Kendal Futures. Government had now written to Westmorland and Furness Council to advise that

the bid had been successful for Round 3 of the Fund due to its quality and deliverability. An award of up to £13.5m had provisionally been made to Westmorland and Furness Council. Levelling-Up Fund expenditure had to remain in the spirit of the original bid and could not be used to support different projects, although the Government recognised that some project adjustments may be needed due to inflationary pressures. All projects had to be delivered by March 2026. Matt explained how the bid had been informed by Kendal Vision and Kendal Town Centre Strategy and he provided an overview of the projects and individual sums involved, totalling £13,476,700:

- Kendal College Town Centre Campus 2nd Phase - £2,162,700.
- Kendal Indoor Market Hall Renovation - £4,170,000.
- Kendal Market Place Enhancements - £4,115,000.
- Kent Street Public Realm Improvements - £1,520,000.
- Riverside Walking and Cycling Route - £1,509,000.

Matt outlined the next steps, which were:

- Engagement with Government and confirmation of funding.
- Internal approvals to receive the funding and enter into grant agreement.
- Review and update of project costs.
- Develop detailed designs and carry out required surveys.
- Establish a governance structure for project delivery.
- Engagement with key stakeholders and public to input into detailed designs.

Matt responded to questions raised by Members and the Mayor thanked him for his contribution to the meeting. She said that the Town Council looked forward to being involved in any consultations moving forward.

55/2023 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs A Blackman, D Evans, A Finch, C Hardy, E Hennessy, S Long, D Miles, K Simpson, G Supka, P Thornton and G Tirvengadam.

56/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

57/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

58/2023 Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 October 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

59/2023 Minute Action Sheet

Members considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings of the Council. Whilst the Town Clerk had nothing further to add, he explained that Item Ref. No.5 in relation to the Civility and Respect Pledge was taking some time to work through due to the current staffing situation.

Resolved: To note the report.

60/2023 Mayor's Communications and Announcements

The agenda included a report from the Mayor on her recent activities. The Mayor drew particular attention to a number of events, including the Kendal Amateur Operatic Society's production of the Addams Family Musical; a lunch, match and remembrance event at Kendal Rugby Club; and Kendal Town Council/Fellside Forum trails' launch at Serpentine Wood. She urged Members to visit Serpentine Wood and to look at the new leaflets which were excellent.

Resolved: To note the report.

61/2023 Committee Memberships

Council was asked to consider the addition of Cllr S Long to the membership of the Culture and Communities Committee.

Resolved: To include Cllr S Long in the membership of the Culture and Communities Committee, with immediate effect.

62/2023 Budget 2024/25

Cllr C Russell, on behalf of the Management Committee Finance Sub-Group, presented a report on the draft budget for 2024/25, stating that this was an ambitious budget for an ambitious Council. The draft budget would help the Council implement its Plan for Kendal which had been agreed in the summer. The Council was increasingly working as a partner with Kendal BID, Kendal Futures, the Festivals of the Town, local businesses, its local communities and Westmorland and Furness Council, to ensure it had a sustainable and thriving Town that all local people and visitors could enjoy.

The report indicated that, In the preceding months, each Council committee had considered its likely budget requirements for 2024/25. These requirements had been collated and considered by the Management Committee's Budget Working Group. The Budget Working Group had prepared a draft budget for the Council to adopt. The Budget related mostly to the activities that the Council would fund from the Council Tax or other sources of revenue in the following year. The other significant sources of revenue were the Council Tax Support Grant, from Westmorland and Furness Council, and rental income from allotment holders. The Council Tax Support Grant would be considered by Westmorland and Furness Council in December, but there was reasonable cause to believe that it would remain constant, at least in the next financial year. Allotment rents were collected in January, so it would be January 2025 before the rental increase agreed by the Allotments Committee at its last meeting took effect. When these two sources of income had been removed from the total amount required, the remainder would become the amount to be 'precepted' from Council Tax payers in Kendal in the financial year 2024/25 (from 1 April 2024) – known as 'the Precept'. It would be the new year before Kendal Town Council was able to confirm its 'Precept demand' based on an accurate calculation of residents' Council Tax bills. The February meeting of the Full Council would confirm this. In 2023/24 Kendal Town Council had set a Precept of £567,997, which meant that the Town Council collected £52.66 from Band D residents in the town. The draft Budget detailed within the report indicated that Precept of £627,637 would be sufficient to balance the Council's income against revenue-based expenditure. Other expenditure, previously agreed as Development Fund spending, would continue to be funded from the Reserves earmarked for that purpose. The Column within the table headed 'Probable Spend', represented the current estimated outturn figures based on the information available at the time of writing.

Expenditure plans which could not be met through the revenue budget in this way, might be met by drawing on Reserves, the largest of which was the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reserve. The allocation of CIL funding was managed by the Management Committee and was reported to the Full Council through the Committee's minutes.

A simplified analysis of current reserve projections was shown at the end of the report. The size of the General Reserve was still considered too low – as a rule it should represent three months revenue-funded expenditure. The Council maintained quite high levels of earmarked reserves. The Reserves also included money set aside from the Council Tax to contribute to the Flood wall, and money set aside to pay for elections every four years, and at least once per year as a by-election.

The Council's Management and Audit Committees would be looking at the medium term financial planning (MTFP) implications for this, with Management looking forward, and Audit reviewing expenditure to show how this would be rectified in the coming years.

Council was asked to approve the draft Revenue Budget shown within the report. The Budget would remain draft until the Council meeting in February 2024 when it would be confirmed following the publication of the Council Tax Support Grant, the various highway costs imposed by Westmorland and Furness Council and the Council Tax base.

Cllr Russell informed Council that, since publication of the report, news had been received that this year's Council Tax Support Grant of £33,000 from Westmorland and Furness Council would be paid, but that next year this figure, if required, would need to come from the precept or from other sources.

In presenting the report, Cllr Russell took the opportunity to thank both the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer, as well as all the Council Staff Team, for the work that they had undertaken with each committee to clarify each of the budget items.

In response to a query as to whether the Levelling-Up Fund award affected the draft budget, Cllr Russell explained that there had been an impact, although not in the direction hoped for.

Members welcomed the draft budget and the Chair expressed thanks to all involved in putting the figures together and a diligent and timely manner.

Resolved: To approve the draft Revenue Budget shown within the report and appended to these minutes.

63/2023 Reports and Minutes from Committees

The Council was presented with the following minutes from recent meetings of the Council's standing committees:-

- (a) Allotments Committee on 25 September 2023.
- (b) Audit Committee on 16 October 2023.
- (c) Culture and Communities Committee on 30 October 2023.
- (d) Environment Committee on 13 November 2023.
- (e) Kendal in Bloom Committee on 17 October 2023.
- (f) Management Committee on 6 November 2023.
- (g) Mayoralty and Heritage Committee on 9 October 2023.
- (h) Planning Committee on 2 October, 16 October, 6 November and 20 November 2023.

Cllr G Archibald, Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, in presenting the minutes of that Committee, took the opportunity to highlight a number of its achievements, namely the enhancement of Kendal's biodiversity; supporting Kendal Vision; footpath improvements; and a Kendal Pumptrack. In response to a query seeking details on the proposed Pumptrack, Cllr Archibald and the Town Clerk explained that Community Infrastructure Levy funding was available, subject to approval by the Management Committee in January 2024 and a final decision on the Budget by Council in February, and that external funding would also be sought. Funding had already been identified for the design, and visuals were awaited and would be consulted on with the residents of Sandylands where the Pumptrack was proposed to be sited.

Resolved: To receive the minutes of recent meetings of the Council's standing committees shown above.

64/2023 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

The Council considered the following reports from representatives on outside bodies:

- (a) Integrated Care Community Workshop (a written report from Cllr R Sutton).
- (b) South Lakeland Westmorland and Furness Diversity Equity and Inclusion Partnership (a written report from Cllr G Tirvengadam).
- (c) Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership Executive Meeting (a written report from Cllr L Hendry).

Resolved: To receive the reports from representatives on outside organisations.

65/2023 Notice of Motion – Israel-Hamas War

Cllr L Hendry presented the following Motion included within the agenda which had been proposed by herself and seconded by Cllr J Dunlop. Cllr Hendry drew attention to the detrimental effect of the conflict on the Jewish and Palestinian community and their families and friends within Kendal and the UK.

"This Council:

- *Expresses its deep sympathy for anyone in Kendal affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine, both in the Gaza strip and in the West Bank;*
- *Believes that Muslims, Jews and people of all faiths and none should feel safe and supported, in Kendal and throughout the world and condemns the increase of antisemitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK;*
- *Urges, the UK government, via a letter to the Foreign Secretary, to call for an immediate, and permanent, ceasefire so that all hostages can be safely returned and meaningful peace negotiations started, as opposed to brief 'humanitarian pauses';*
- *Urges the government to do all in its power to secure a just and lasting peace for the Palestinian people;*
- *Submits this motion, once passed, to Westmorland and Furness Council in order that it may pass it, or something like it, and enact it at the first opportunity."*

Since publication of the agenda, by agreement between Cllrs Hendry and Cornthwaite who was now acting as seconder for the motion, the penultimate bullet point had been altered to read, "Urges the government to do all in its power to secure and lasting peace for the Palestinian and Israeli people."

Cllr M Severn pointed out that people in Israel were also affected by the conflict and, therefore, proposed an amendment to the Motion, to end the first bullet point immediately after the word "Palestine", removing the remainder of the sentence. Both Cllrs Hendry and Cornthwaite were content to take the amendment on board.

Cllr G Archibald proposed a further amendment to remove the word "permanent" from the third bullet point, being of the opinion that the word "permanent" implied that Hamas could continue its campaign against Jewish people. Some discussion took place, during which Cllr Dunlop suggested that the word "permanent" might be replaced with "long-lasting". Cllrs Hendry and Cornthwaite agreed to take this amendment on board.

Following a vote, it was

Resolved: To carry the motion as amended prior to and at the meeting.

66/2023 Schedule of Payments

The Council was presented with the schedules of payments for September and October 2023. The Town Clerk highlighted a number of items contained within the schedules.

Resolved: To receive the schedules of payments for September and October 2023.

The meeting closed at 9.31 p.m.

Appendix

Kendal Town Council

DRAFT Revenue Budget 2024-2025

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Prob spend	From other sources	24-25	Change
Allotments	Water	1,800	1,800		1,950	8%
	Rent	950	1,040		1,050	11%
	Pest Control	3,000	3,000		3,200	7%
	Maintenance	8,800	8,800		9,000	2%
Bloom	Displays	26,500	26,500		30,000	13%
	Projects and Grants	8,500	6,000		6,000	-29%
Culture & Community	Community Grants	43,000	43,000		43,000	0%
	Festival Grants	25,000	25,000		23,000	-8%
	Christmas Lighting	18,000	18,000		30,000	67%
	Lights infrastructure	3,000	4,726		5,000	6%
	Electricity	850	850		1,100	29%
	Switch on	4,500	8,470		10,000	18%
	Bunting	1,250	1,100		1,500	20%
	Coronation	10,000	6,032		-	-100%
	Cultural initiatives	-	-		5,000	
Environment	Infrastructure Maintenance	3,700	3,700		5,000	-41%
	Footway lighting	4,200	4,200		5,000	19%
	Waste Bin servicing	3,000	2,650		3,250	8%
	Project Birdcage	-	-	5,000		
	Project Biodiversity Grants	-	-	-	10,000	
	Project Wildflower planting				6,400	
	Footpath enhancements	-	-	50,000		
	Project Easy Travel	-	-	50,000		
	Project Pumptrack	-	-	50,000		
Management	Premises Rent and services	16,872	16,872		17,000	1%

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Prob spend	From other sources	24-25	Change
	Premises Equipment	2,678	2,678		2,778	4%
	Premises Alarms	1,850	1,850		1,850	0%
	Premises PPE	100	100		1,000	900%
	IT Support	6,854	6,854		7,050	3%
	IT Website	1,250	1,250		1,500	20%
	IT Equipment/software	5,879	5,879		7,400	26%
	IT other	17	605		750	137%
	Newsletter	12,500	12,500		13,000	4%
	insurance	5,386	5,387		5,400	0%
	HR	2,930	4,000		4,500	13%
	Audit	2,800	2,800		3,800	36%
	Vouchers and Payroll	884	720		720	-19%
	Other	530	100		100	-81%
	Printing & Stationery	2,100	2,100		2,100	0%
	Equipment	1,000	1,000		1,000	0%
	Photocopier	1,398	1,398		1,500	7%
	General inc repairs	2,902	500		500	-83%
	Subscriptions	3,000	2,896		3,000	0%
	Vehicle fuel	1,250	1,000		1,200	-4%
	Vehicle Repairs	2,500	2,100		2,600	4%
	Insurance/tax/MOT	1,300	1,300		1,300	0%
	Staffing	278,000	280,000		310,700	12%
	Staffing Training	2,000	2,000		3,000	50%
	Elections Ward	-	-		-	
	Elections Fund	30,000	30,000		10,000	-67%
	Futures Manager	10,000	10,000		10,800	8%
	Futures Vision	5,500	5,500		5,000	-9%
	Kendal Vision support	-	-	30,000		
	Diversity	150	150			0%
Mayoralty & Heritage	Mayoral Allowance	5,524	5,000		5,000	-9%
	Mayoral Travel	800	500		800	0%
	Mayor Making	2,200	2,200		2,500	14%
	Torchlight	1,730	1,730		2,000	16%
	Remembrance	300	300		350	17%
	Pictures and others	100	100		250	150%
	Functions	3,170	3,170		4,000	26%

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Prob spend	From other sources	24-25	Change
	Twinning	1,500	1,500		1,500	0%
	Exhibition	1,000	1,000		1,000	0%
	Museum	2,000	2,000		2,000	0%
	Visit Kendal	16,600				
	Kirkland Banners		1,500		1,600	7%
	VK leaflets		8,280		9,000	9%
	VK Website		2,500		3,000	20%
	VK Content Coordinator		6,770		7,250	7%
Planning	Flood	20,000	20,000		20,000	0%
	Neighbourhood Planning	-	-		2,500	
	Training	-	-		2,500	
Total		623,624	622,807	185,000	684,248	9.7%
Income	W&F Support Grant	33,046			33,000	
	Allotment Rents	23,500			24,200	
	23/24 Precept	567,997		Proposed precept	627,637	10.5%
	Revenue total	624,543			684,837	

Reserves Projection at 27 November 2023

	1 April 2023	31 March 2024	Comments
General fund	30,260	36,853	
Development	151,019	6,140	Assuming all allocated funds to Projects are spent in year
Flood Scheme	110,000	130,000	Final allocation of £20,000 due 1 April 2024
Other Reserves	91,738	112,847	Other earmarked funds include Allotment, Arts, Wainwright and Elections reserves
CIL	82,981	157,962	Assuming no further allocations from CIL this year