

# Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED  
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Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Monday, 12 December 2022, in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, at 7.00 p.m.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice Chair)	Present	Cllr J Cornthwaite	Present
Cllr L Edwards	Present	Cllr A Finch	Present
Cllr C Hardy	Apologies		

## Site Representatives present

Castle Drive	E Kelly
Canal Head	Deborah Allison
Crow Tree	Bryan Williams
Underley Road	Chris Rowley

**Also present:** Cllr L Hendry

**In attendance:** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Janine Holt (Council Services Officer) and Pierre Labat (Townscape Officer).

## **A25/2022 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr C Hardy and from Site Representatives Ros Taylor (Wattsfield), Gwen Tordoff (Castle Hags).

## **A26/2022 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Finch reminded members of his previously declared interest as an allotment holder.

## **A27/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**

No issues were considered for exclusion.

## **A28/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Reference was made to the fact that Full Council had, on 5 December 2022, considered the minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Committee held on 31 October 2022. Attention had been drawn to an error contained within Minute No.A21/2022 (Canal Head Extension) and to the fact that "Head at Heron Hill School" should read "Head of Governors at Heron Hill School". This error had, therefore, been rectified within the hard copy due to be signed by the Chair and the electronic copy due to be published on the Council's Website.

It was noted that a query about asbestos at Underley had been answered at Full Council. The site was being reviewed in conjunction with Natural Kendal and colleagues from the Environment and Highways Committee.

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Allotments Committee held on 31 October 2022 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

#### **A29/2022      Review of Spend against 2022/23 Budget**

The Council Services Officer presented a report reviewing spend against budget at October/November 2022. She explained that around £1,000 remained in the Revenue budget for the year and this would be spent before the end of March. The Canal Head project would require the full £30,000 to complete, which would leave £10,000 drawn from the reserve to develop the small new site at Town View. It was noted that the Finance statement didn't include a Reserve statement, but that this was included in the budget report.

**Resolved:** To note the report. Future finance reports to include a Reserves statement.

#### **A30/2022      Canal Head Extension**

The Council Services Officer presented an update report on development of the new allotments at Canal Head.

On the Castle side of the site, the boundary fencing had been completed and rabbit proofed. The gate had had mesh fitted to prevent rabbits entering the plots. The drainage plan and the plot division was delayed first by the very wet weather then by the very cold weather but would be completed as soon as possible. The additional drainage work had been agreed with the Chair, previously and would cost in the region of £1,200.

A site visit has been arranged with Cumbria Wildlife Trust to assess how the pond/soakaway and surrounding planting could best maximise the site's biodiversity.

She hoped that the whole site would be complete by 31 March 2023.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **A31/2022      Waiting List**

The Council Services Officer reported that the waiting list currently stood at 140 individuals. The list had reduced by 32 individuals since the last meeting of the Committee. Four plots were vacant. 17 plots had been let since the last meeting. A breakdown of plots let by site was included within the report. There was some discussion concerning an un-listed plot at Underley Road which was formerly let by the District Council for a garden plot. This was now to be returned to the Town Council as a part of the larger allotment site. The Site Rep knew the history of the plot and had access to the large shed which occupied one side.

**Resolved:** The Council Services Officer will arrange a site visit with the Rep, to ascertain if volunteers could be found to manage the plot's fruit trees and re-purpose the shed.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

## **A32/2022      Site Representatives**

The Rep from Canal Head asked if further information could be found on fruit trees and hedges at sites. The Council Services Officer confirmed this would be discussed with the Site Reps meeting. Developing policy on trees and hedges would enable issues to be responded to at Crow Tree and elsewhere. The Rep from Castle Drive reported that rats did not appear to be a problem anymore, though one or two plots looked a little ragged. The Council Services Officer confirmed that that these were on her reporting list. The trees at Underley and Canal Head were beginning to cause issues of shading. The Council Services Officer confirmed that some of these would be discussed with the district tree officer, but others were in private ownership.

It was confirmed that contractors were used for the bigger tree and hedge working and that when a plot become vacant, subdivision was usually considered.

Further work would be done on the importance of biodiversity on allotment sites, and how the Town Council could maximise their value in this regard.

**Resolved:** To note the reports.

**Resolved:** To develop a plan for the maximisation of biodiversity on allotment sites, which may include a baseline survey.

## **A32/2022      Budget 2023-24 and Rental Charges 2024**

The Committee considered a proposed draft budget for the forthcoming financial year, 2023-24 and the plot rental charges for 2024. With regard to estimated rental incomes, although annual inflation for 2022 was running at around 11%, the Council had to balance this against the impact on Allotment Rents for 2024, by which time it was predicted that inflation would be significantly reduced. The proposed numbers represented the product of a 3% rise in rents in 2024, which was a compromise between necessary allowance for some rising costs and an acknowledgement by the Council that Allotments met a Climate Change priority and were subsequently required not to be prohibitively expensive.

Following discussion, it was suggested that the increase be quoted as price per square metre. This was currently 39p and about to rise to 40p in January. The Committee agreed that this should be limited to a penny increase on the square metre rate (the equivalent of 2.5%). It was noted that this would have little impact on the budget income, which also allowed for uncollected rents and the development of new plots.

It was noted that the projected Reserve spend was limited to the £10k earmarked for Town View. It was noted that the Committee had previously agreed a position that would see the Reserve drawn down to ensure a good level of investment in the estate. The Town Clerk observed that he would advise against spending capital on the sites the Council did not own as secure freehold, and that perhaps the Council should use this opportunity to seek the transfer of the remaining freeholds from the principal authority (currently SLDC but soon to be Westmorland & Furness). The Council Services Officer would report on the existing capital plan, with an additional draw down of £15,000 for the coming year to complete outstanding work on the Council-owned sites.

Item	2022-23	Est outturn	percentage	Proposed 2023-24	Notes
Capital work	40,000	30,000	75%	*25,000	30,000 drawn from Reserve for Canal Head. * Includes the £10k for developing community plot at Town View
Water	1,800	1,600	89%	1,800	
Rent	900	840	93%	950	Anticipated rental increase for Castle Hags Ext
Pest control	3,000	2,850	95%	3,000	
Maintenance	8,000	8,000	100%	8,800	
Total	53,700	43,290	81%	39,550	

	2022	2023	2024	Notes
Income	22,000	22,300	23,000	

	1 April 2022	Proposed 1 April 2023	Proposed 31 March 2024
Cash	68,119	38,119	13,119

**Resolved:** To recommend the above budget and spending proposals.

**Resolved:** To recommend a 1p (2.5%) increase in the rents for 2024.

**Resolved:** To contact the Chief Executive of the new Unitary authority (Westmorland & Furness) to initiate the process of returning the freeholds of the remaining allotment estate to the town.

**Resolved:** To distribute to members an answer to a query about the apportionment of interest on the allotment reserve.

The meeting closed at 8.07 p.m.