

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED

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Minutes of a meeting of the Culture and Communities Committee held on Monday, 15 April 2024, at 7.00 p.m., in the Lowther Room at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr L Edwards	Present	Cllr M Helme (Vice-Chair)	Present
Cllr H Ladhams (Chair)	Present	Cllr S Long	Apologies
Cllr C Russell	Present	Cllr K Simpson	Apologies
Cllr R Sutton	Apologies	Cllr P Thornton	Present

In attendance: Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw).

Public Participation

The Committee received a verbal presentation from Hester Hetherington, who delivers art sessions in schools under the Lakeland International Comic Arts Festival banner. Hester explained how her project helped to develop a wide range of young people's skills, including fine motor skills, communication and expression. She showed some samples of the artwork produced, and explained how important she felt the work had been and why it was presented under the LICAF branding.

In a discussion, Committee members expressed sympathy for her funding dilemmas, whilst confirming that the Festivals funding was quite limited in its scope and really was for bringing festivals to the streets of Kendal. It was suggested that the School of Science and Art Charity may be a more suitable fit, but this would require a different application, because the Charity was independent of the Town Council's finances. Further conversations should be initiated on this basis. Cllr Thornton also encouraged Hester to make further contact with officers at Westmorland and Furness Council (where Cllr Thornton is also a councillor) and offered to support her in making this connection.

CC26/2023 Apologies

Resolved: To receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Long, Simpson and Sutton.

CC27/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

CC28/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 February 2024, and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

CC29/2023 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings.

It was noted that a date was still being sought for the working group on Christmas lights. Visit Kendal and tourism generally would be topics for a future meeting. Matters relating to the market aspect of the Heart of Kendal LUF funding would also be on a future agenda.

Kendal BID could also be involved in these conversations (on tourism in particular)

Resolved: To note the actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings of the Culture and Communities Committee.

Resolved: That Kendal BID be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

CC30/2023 Budget Monitoring 2023/24

(a) The Committee considered its budget monitoring report for 2023/24 as at 7 April 2024. There were further queries about the precise meaning of headings in the report and the Clerk acknowledged that there was further work to be done in making these things clearer.

Resolved: To receive and note the report.

CC31/2023 Community Grant Applications

The Committee first gave full consideration to each of the applications prior to making decisions on figures in relation to community grant funding, as follows:

(a) *Gateway Church - £1,000 per annum for three years (£3,000 in total)*

The grant, if approved, would be put towards continuing to fund the Community Hub for the next three years. Estimated costs for the current year £9,229.35. The leaflet drop would only go ahead if funds are available. It was noted that this was a Church application, and whilst the committee acknowledged it had made funding allocations to Church groups in the past, it felt the Council needed to be more specific in the terms under which it offered funding to faith-based groups.

Resolved: To defer consideration of this application for further work by the funding criteria working group.

(b) *Kendal Community Theatre - £1,000*

The grant, if approved, would be put towards cost of hire of Castle Street Centre for the production of Kendal community event "The Hound of the Baskervilles" during week 8 to 15 December 2024.

Resolved: To offer a grant of £1,000.

(c) *Netherfield Bowling Club - £500*

The grant, if approved, would be put towards work to carry out deep aeration of the bowling green.

Resolved: To offer a grant of £500

(d) *Netherfield Bowling Club - £5,000 over three years*

The grant, if approved, would be put towards waterlogging relief/future proofing the green; floodlights; site maintenance; Crown Green Bowls promotion. The Committee did not feel able to commit such a sum over the period requested at this stage, noting that the Club was one of a number in the town

Resolved: To decline the application as it stood, but to make clear to the Club that it would accept an application for a further £500 in the future.

CC32/2023 Christmas Lighting 2024

The Town Clerk provided a verbal report on the preparations for the Christmas lighting display and switch-on in 2024. The lighting working group, as previously noted, was still awaiting a mutually convenient date to meet. Preliminary work for the switch-on event had revealed the current shortfall in staffing at the Town Council. A workaround suggestion is to employ the previous Development and Delivery Manager to manage the event on a freelance basis, ensuring that the Council's Events Officer gains the experience necessary to take the project on in future years. It was noted that the budget for this would require some input from the Management Committee and that this was currently being sought. The Ice Rink proposals were now left to the landowner (W&FC) to conclude, in conjunction with the operator and Lakeland Arts.

Resolved: To note the verbal report.

CC33/2023 Grants and Funding Criteria

The Committee was presented with a report from the Grants Criteria Working Group which had met on 26 March 2024 to begin the process of agreeing a revised set of criteria for the awarding of grants and funding from the Council's two, principal budget lines – Community Grants and Festivals.

The Working Group had noted that the Council currently awarded small grants up to £500 for community groups and start-up festivals, and would consider funding organisations up to £5,000, per year, for larger scale projects. The application forms were different for each purpose, but the criteria were identical. The Working Group had further noted that several organisations were Kendal 'institutions', and might reasonably be allocated their own budget line, rather than a requirement for them to apply for reactive grant funding every year/three years.

The Working Group had discussed how a scheme of grants might better support the wide range of community and third sector groups in the town – the ones for whom even a £500 grant might be enough to help them thrive. It was noted that larger organisations tended to be funded from a wide range of sources and sometimes even benefitted from having professional fundraising. In their circumstances, funding from the Town Council was an important indication of local support for match funding, but not critical in actual volume of relative funding.

Although the Working Group made considerable headway in identifying the issues surrounding the Grants Criteria, it did not yet find a working formula that could be applied to future applications. It had noted that the Grants Criteria must support the Council's plan, be within the powers of the Council, and be within budget. On this basis, it had agreed that further work was necessary to bring this issue to a satisfactory conclusion.

Resolved: To note the report. The Working Group will reconvene once the Christmas Lighting Working Group has completed its tasks.

CC34/2023 Festival Grant Applications

There were currently no grant applications to this budget to be considered.

CC36/2023 Community Resilience

The Town Clerk provided a brief verbal report on the progress of Community Resilience planning. The Council's application for funding was due to be considered by Cumbria Community Foundation on 14 May 2024. The funder required a safeguarding policy, which was now in draft form awaiting Management committee consideration. The Clerk will write up a Project brief and share the application details with members. It was suggested that the new officer, should the funding be successful, could be hosted at Stricklandgate House.

Resolved: To note the verbal report.

The meeting closed at 8.55p.m.