

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED

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Minutes of a meeting of the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee held on Monday, 21 November 2022, at 7.09 p.m., in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr M Helme (Vice-Chair)	Present *	Cllr H Ladhams (Chair)	Present
Cllr C Russell	Present	Cllr K Simpson	Present
Cllr R Sutton	Present	Cllr P Thornton	Absent

* Arrived at 7.11 p.m. during consideration of Agenda Item No.3 (Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)).

In attendance: Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw), Council Services Officer (Janine Holt) and Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth).

CLF27/2022 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence, however, it was noted that Cllr M Helme would be late for the meeting.

CLF28/2022 Declarations of Interest

Cllr C Russell reminded Members that, as a Trustee on the Organisation, he had an interest in matters relating to Stricklandgate House, should issues concerning community engagement stray into matters concerning that organisation..

CLF29/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

CLF30/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee held on 26 September 2022 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

CLF31/2022 Budget Monitoring 2022-23

The Committee considered a budget monitoring report for 2022/23.

In response to a query, the Council Services Officer undertook to look into the reason for the cancellation of the Firework Display for which Kendal Rugby Club had been granted £2,500.

A further query having been raised as to the nature of Kendal Micro Fest, the Town Clerk explained that this one-day, accessible, mini music festival had been organised by Music Links in response to concerns raised by carers that some groups were not able to attend a

full-scale festival. The Council Services Officer, in response to a request, undertook to invite a representative from Kendal Micro Fest to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide feedback on the festival and plans for the future.

Resolved:

- (1) To receive the report.
- (2) The Council Services Officer to look into the reason for the cancellation of Kendal Rugby Club's Firework Display.
- (3) The Council Services Officer to invite a representative from Kendal Micro Fest to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide feedback on that festival and plans for the future.

CLF32/2022 Christmas 2022 and Future Years

The Council Services Officer provided a brief verbal report on the Christmas Lights Switch On event which had taken place on Thursday, 17 November 2022. Members were being asked to make any necessary decisions or recommendations for future years. Whilst she had not yet had an opportunity to speak to the Events Officer about the event, the Council Services Officer informed Members that she had herself received positive feedback and that this year's event could be built on in coming years. She pointed out, however, that the feedback with regard to refreshments had been that more could have been done, through the provision of a tea and food kiosk. In addition, it had been raised that the Mountain Festival village had only been open to suppliers and exhibitors on that evening. Also drawn to the Committee's attention was the need for more to be done at Abbot Hall where the parade had commenced.

Some discussion took place as regards the day on which the event had been held. It was suggested that some people had indicated disappointment that this had taken place on a Thursday evening. Attention had been drawn to the fact that some people worked in the evening and to children having to attend clubs which had already been paid for. It was suggested that Outside In could open and run its own mini switch-on for people who could not make the main event.

The Town Clerk noted that Andrei Burton's performance had been very popular with local young people, and that he had still been signing posters when the event closed. He also felt that a lot of other or additional things could be done, for example, moving the stage further back into the Market Place in order to draw people forward. The Town Clerk pointed out that festivals were vital for the town and indicated that he was keen for partnership options to be examined for all events, with the Town Council taking a proactive role. He further drew attention to the opportunity in 2024 to change the style of the Christmas lights. He suggested that the Town Council's branding had not been visible enough at this year's event.

The Council Services Officers stressed the importance for planning to commence much sooner in 2023 and for the need for officer time to be taken into consideration. She informed the Committee that both Wainwright's Yard and the Westmorland Shopping Centre were keen to become involved. The Council Services Officer suggested, therefore, that the January meeting should include a small, focussed group of representatives from Kendal BID, the Mountain Festival, the Town Council, Kendal Futures, the Shopping Centre and the Yards. The Council Services Officer undertook to seek a date during w/c 23 January 2023 for a first meeting, details of which she would circulate. She further reported that a number of lights were not currently working and that she had taken this up with the contractor. In

addition, she had spoken with Kendal BID about the Christmas tree and the potential to purchase commercial grade decorations. Attention having been drawn to the fact that a light nearby to Boyes and Scope was not working, she also undertook to report this.

Members were asked to consider a day and date for the Switch On in 2023, and the Town Clerk suggested that this should, if possible, be carried out with the Mountain Festival again, but also ensuring that everyone felt included, potentially taking the Lions' Santa to Outside In on the Sunday.

Further raised was the potential for an ice rink, although not paid for by the Town Council. It was suggested that the Lakeland Arts Trust should come on board as a partner and that they may be interested in having a rink outside their building space, with the potential also for a German style market in that location, at the same time as the Mountain Festival. Some concern was raised with regard to the potential for people to be drawn to the wrong end of the Town and the need for good linkages along the riverside path between the Town and the Market. Further raised was the potential for local artists to display works within unused shops in Kendal.

Members expressed gratitude to those officers who had been involved in the event. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the work involved was not to be underestimated.

Resolved:

- (1) To receive the verbal report.
- (2) The Council Services to arrange a suitable date w/c 23 January 2023 for an initial meetings of a small group of focussed representatives from Kendal BID, the Mountain Festival, the Town Council, Kendal Futures, the Shopping Centre and the Yards, to commence consideration on the Christmas Light Switch On event for 2023.

CLF33/2022 Festival Grant Applications

The Committee was asked to consider three applications for grant funding.

Lengthy discussion took place with regard to the application for a grant for £5,000 for Kendal Cycling Festival. Concerns were raised about the structure and timing of the festival, its proposed location and the relative chances of it succeeding against some ambitious targets. Cllr Russell had met the organisers and was sharing the benefits of his experience from Torchlight.

Members gave consideration to the actual application, and expressed strong support, also keen to make cycling an every day part of the Town. The Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council could provide complimentary details on cycle routes across the town and hints on how to cycle within and around Kendal. Some Members felt that £5,000 was a large amount for a festival in its first year. Others stressed the importance of ensuring that this festival succeeded and the need to empower the organisers to move forward. It was suggested that the festival had the potential to be massive, and a figure of £4,000 was therefore proposed. It was further suggested that an additional £1,000 was set aside for the Town Council to develop complimentary promotional ideas around the event.

Note - During consideration of the application, the fact that one of the festival directors was a Town Council employee was raised, and a potential conflict of interest acknowledged.

With regard to the application from the Anti-Racist Summit 2022 for a grant towards event running costs, it was noted that this event had already taken place and that the Council did not make retrospective grants. It was pointed out, however, that the application had been missed and that no further communication had been received, which raised the need for an appropriate procedure and deadlines for processing of applications to be put in place. Members wished to ensure that the applicant was informed that the Town Council was supportive of the anti-racism agenda, that this very professionally run event had put Kendal on the map and that the Town Council would be in favour of any further grant applications going forward.

Resolved:

- (1) To make the following grants:-
 - (a) £500 to Charities Christmas Tree Festival towards advertising costs which will enable the group to reach a wider audience; and
 - (b) subject to sight of the Programme Vision, £4,000 to Kendal Cycling Festival An additional £1,000 to be held by the Council for promotional material to complement the event.
- (2) With regard to the application from the Anti-Racist Summit 2022, to write to the applicant to inform them that the Town Council is supportive of the anti-racism agenda, that this very professionally run event has put Kendal on the map and that the Town Council would be in favour of any further grant applications going forward.
- (3) The Council Services Officer to establish an appropriate procedure and deadlines for the processing of grant applications.

CLF34/2022 Active Kendal

Cllr M Helme presented a report on a proposal to develop the Active Kendal programme, explaining that the paper had been presented to Management Committee on 7 November 2022, that Committee having assented to the proposal being considered by the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee under the governance proposals outlined below.

In response to a query, Cllr Helme explained that the Committee was today simply being asked to establish a Working Group to give consideration to Active Kendal. The Town Clerk further explained that the Management Committee had expressed support for the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee to create a budget line for Active Kendal, with a figure of £25,000, and that this was included within the Budget 2023/24 item to be considered later in the agenda, although the full Budget was not due to be approved by Full Council until 6 February 2023. Whilst support was expressed for the scheme, some concern was raised with regard to the mechanism for the proposal. A suggestion was raised for the £25,000 instead to be divided between the 509 Pupil Premium children, it being pointed out that this would avoid administrative costs and that the families were best placed to make choices on what was right for their children. The Town Clerk advised that this would have legal implications and pointed out the potential for risk. Supporters of the substantive approach questioned whether the Town Council should take on board and become too heavily involved in external projects and so stressed the need for involvement by partner organisations. Cllr Helme, however, felt strongly that this should remain the Town Council's outreach project and that it would demonstrate that the Town Council cared. Reference was made to the report which indicated that there could be other options and the fact that Members needed to be clear on the matter.

The Town Clerk suggested that three people from the Committee be chosen to form a Working Group to look into appropriate partnerships and to come back to Committee to report on plans to move forward. He would provide suitable Terms of Reference for that Group which would also allow the Group to bring in other individuals, as necessary.

Resolved: To establish a Working Group to look into plans with regard to Active Kendal, to be made up of the following Members:-

- Cllr M Helme;
- Cllr H Ladhams; and
- Cllr C Russell.

CLF35/2022 Christmas Dinner

Cllr C Russell provided a verbal report on a proposal to support a Warm Hub Christmas Dinner in Kendal Town Hall on 21 December 2022.

The Town Clerk pointed out that there were a number of prior stages required for the Council to support such a project, and it seemed unlikely that Christmas Lights and Festivals was the appropriate committee to take them forward. He suggested that Cllr Russell discuss this matter with the Chair of the Management Committee, the Mayor and the Chair of Audit, Grants and Charities to identify a suitable way forward.

Resolved: To note the verbal report.

CLF36/2022 Budget 2023-24

The Town Clerk presented a report asking Members to consider the budget recommendations for the Committee's planned expenditure in the next financial year (2023-24). The Council's final budget would be considered by the Management Committee in January 2023, before a recommendation was made to the Full Council in February 2023 for a precept to be set. The Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee had been proposing that the Committee assumed a wider brief than its current narrow Terms of Reference would imply. This approach had been sanctioned by the Council's Management Committee on a case by case basis so far, but for budgeting terms, the Town Clerk suggested that the Committee may wish to divide up its proposed expenditure between the 'traditional items' and those it was proposing under a new, enhanced role.

A proposal was made to raise the proposed budget for the Switch on event from £3,500 to £4,500.

The Town Clerk explained that the Infrastructure development and Maintenance budget had decreased from £10,000 to £3,000 and pointed out that the current contract would expire next year. He suggested that should there be an underspend in this area, then this could be used to fund new decorations for the Christmas Tree together with Kendal BID.

The Town Clerk reported that there had been no indication with regard to any price increase in bunting.

Members were asked whether this was the type of budget envisaged by the Committee for next year.

In response to a query as to how the increase in the total budget from £68,000 to £107,600 was to be funded, the Town Clerk explained that if the overall budget of the Council showed an increase of this nature, the Council may decide that the precept would have to be

increased, but a variety of factors meant that this did not necessarily mean that there would have to be an increase in the Council Tax.

The Committee considered a proposal relating to Community Engagement which included a budget allocation of £10,000 in 2023/24. It was suggested that this would enable the Committee to fulfil a wider brief, so that it could do for Culture and Community, what Environment and Highways was doing for Climate Change. Cllr Russell had prepared a report on this matter which he had circulated to Members. He asked that it be appended to the minutes in some way.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Management Committee would take a strategic view on whether such proposals were appropriate when it considered its report for the whole budget.

Resolved: To approve the proposals as attached to the agenda, with the inclusion of the amendment raised at the meeting and outlined above.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.