

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, 25 July 2022, at 6.00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

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

* Took part in discussion via video link, however, took no part in the voting on any of the items.

** Joined part way through consideration of Agenda Item No. 5 (Minute No. CLF16/2022 below).

Also present for Agenda Item No.5 (Minute No.CLF16/2022) below was Paula Pearson, Kendal Torchlight Production Director.

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

CLF12/2022 Apologies

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr K Simpson.

CLF13/2022 Declarations of Interest

Cllr C Russell declared an Other Registrable Interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 7(a) (Minute No.CLF18(b)/2022 below) by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of the Torchlight Board.

CLF14/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

CLF15/2022 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 27 June 2022 and to authorise the Vice-Chair in the Chair to sign them as a true record.

CLF16/2022 Kendal Torchlight

Paula Pearson, Kendal Torchlight Production Director, first suggested that Member may wish to have a look at a video on the Kendal Torchlight Website which provided a good picture of what was involved in the Festival.

M/s Pearson went on to provide Members with detailed information on the Festival, explaining about the developments which had been made in the previous year, particularly with regard to the success of the lantern garden at Abbot Hall. This was to be repeated this year, with parades coming in from four corners of Kendal and conjoining at Abbot Hall for a lantern and fire show on the Friday evening. This year's theme was Scrapheap Legends, with props being made from re-purposed and recycled materials. Each of the four processions would be headed up by a giant sculpture made by local artists. The festival would continue on the Saturday, with street performances throughout Kendal, including students from Kendal College, as well as the street party, bands, buskers, groups, workshops and artwork. The event was to include three main stages, with a dance stage at Kendal Town Hall.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the Rinteln Association was bringing over a 45 member carnival group. Also raised was the fact that funding had been secured from the Arts Council for the second year running which would allow for more investment in the community. Help provided by Kendal Town Council in previous years regarding stewards was mentioned and Cllr K Blamire would shortly be seeking volunteers for this year. The importance of ensuring that the Ukrainian and Syrian refugees were involved was raised.

The Administrative Assistant informed the Committee about the reception which was being organised for 110 dignitaries and representatives of the community on the Saturday and, following the lunch, plans to get them out and into the heart of the Festival.

Amongst other things discussed were plans for light projections on the Parish Church, outreach and engagement of Kendal children in workshops, making local press and media aware and lantern making in schools.

On behalf of the Committee, the Vice-Chair in the Chair thanked M/s Pearson for her presentation.

Resolved: To note the verbal update on developments for the Kendal Torchlight Festival.

CLF17/2022 Christmas 2022 and Future Years

The Vice-Chair in the Chair informed the Committee about Jack Ellerby of Friends of the Lake District who's role was to raise awareness of Dark Skies across Cumbria. He wished to repeat his success of the Big Switch Off in Ambleside, with the idea of a switch off for five minutes at the start of the Christmas Lights Switch on in Kendal, during which he would promote the Dark Skies initiative. Members expressed support for this proposal.

Cllr Helme also raised the potential for a reduction in the hours that the Christmas Lights were on in Kendal. The lights were currently lit from 8.00 a.m. until 12.00 midnight and she was instead suggesting 3.00 p.m. to 12.00 midnight. Members were keen to know the likely impact of this in terms of cost and on carbon footprint, although some reluctance was expressed at switching the lights off during the daytime, particularly when it had originally been this Committee's decision to have them lit from 3.00 p.m. to 12.00 midnight.

The Council Services Officer informed Members that, if the lights were switched off for an additional four hours, and instead turned on daily at 12.00 noon, this would save £150 only. She pointed out, however, that the main thing was to make a statement in relation to the climate crisis. She suggested that the matter be brought back to the September meeting of the Committee at which time detailed statistics could be provided. In addition, she explained that a risk assessment would also need to be carried out, and that this may impact on any decision. Also raised was the need in the meantime to discuss the matter with businesses, it being pointed out that the market would need to be taken down at that time.

The Council Services Officer went on to inform the Committee on progress since the last meeting when she had been charged with carrying out research. She reported that the Markets Officer was fully on board and would find space in a dry area in the Market Hall. He was actively looking for appropriate market stalls and wished to lead in this area. She had also spoken with the Shopping Centre about available space. The Kendal Lions had undertaken to loan their sleigh, however, insurance would be required and the Council Services Officer indicated that she could deal with this. Cllr A Blackman was going to run a Rintlen stall, serving produce such as gluhwein and german sausage; a temporary events licence would be required in this regard. Discussion had taken place with Kendal BID who were running their own Christmas Market on 10 and 11 December. The Council Services Officer questioned whether the Town Council's date of 19 and 20 November may be too early and whether this should be changed. It was suggested that Kendal BID might be invited to run a stall at the Switch On event and advertise their forthcoming event. The Council Services Officer presumed that the Committee were content with the same format as in the previous year, with a stage and choir, and she undertook to come back to the Committee in September with a draft events programme. She added that Taylors Funfair were happy to bring along a small roundabout to the event.

Resolved:

- (1) to note the verbal update; and
- (2) the Council Services Officer to bring to the September meeting of the Committee:-
 - (a) a further report detailing statistics in relation to a reduction in hours of the lighting of the Town's Christmas Lights; and
 - (b) a draft events programme.

CLF18/2022 Event Funding

The Committee agreed to consider funding for Kendal Mountain Festival prior to Kendal Torchlight Festival due to Cllr C Russell's interest in the Kendal Torchlight Festival.

(a) Kendal Mountain Festival

Kendal Mountain Festival had submitted an application for a grant of £5,000 to contribute towards increasing participation and events for children and young people, improved signage and promotion of the event throughout the town and approaches and marketing.

Whilst Members recognised that this festival was very good for the Town, concern was expressed in relation to those who were unable to afford to attend the sessions on offer.

Resolved: To make a grant of £5,000 to Kendal Mountain Festival, also asking the organisation to consider a system whereby any spare tickets could be offered to local residents who were unable to afford to take part.

(b) **Kendal Torchlight Festival**

Note - Cllr C Russell declared an Other Registrable Interest in this item of business by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of the Torchlight Board. Cllr Russell, therefore, left the room for the remainder of the meeting and so took no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

Kendal Torchlight Festival had submitted an application for a grant of £10,000 to contribute towards engaging community groups, logistics, marketing budget, with some to be used as seed funding for the community development work Torchlight carried out across the town and enhancing the creative content with the work of local people.

Members discussed the fact that Kendal Torchlight Festival reached out to different people to those attending the Mountain Festival. Members acknowledged that this was a multi-faceted festival for all of the people of Kendal and that it also brought others into the Town. It was pointed out that any grant made could be revisited at a later date, if necessary.

The need for consistency and fairness in the allocation of grant funding was raised and attention drawn to the need to re-examine the Council's grants criteria.

Resolved: To offer a grant of £8,000 to Kendal Torchlight Festival, subject to verification of the current grant limit. If this is confirmed to be £5,000 then the Committee will offer £5,000 initially and consider the application again at a subsequent meeting, to assess whether the additional funding can be added.

The meeting closed at 7.07 p.m.