

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, 26 June 2023, at 7.00 p.m., in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

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

In attendance: Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw), Council Services Officer (Janine Holt) (part) and Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth). Also in attendance as an observer was Cllr L Edwards.

CLF1/2023 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs M Helme (Vice-Chair) and K Simpson.

CLF2/2023 Declarations of Interest

Cllr L Edwards, whilst not a Member of the Committee, declared an interest in Agenda Item No.9 (Minute No.CLF9/2023 below), by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Kendal Pride Committee. She left the Chamber during the discussion and voting on the item.

CLF3/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

CLF4/2023 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 24 April 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

CLF5/2023 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings and the Town Clerk responded to queries raised by Members.

CLF33/2022 (Festival Grant Applications) – The Town Clerk explained that the Events Officer was in the process of collating the information regarding a procedure and deadlines for processing of grant applications.

CLF47/2022 (Community Resilience) – With regard to the proposal to Management Committee for an appropriate structure to be brought into being in order to address the wellbeing and culture agenda, the Town Clerk advised Members that this was due to be considered by the Management Committee on 3 July 2023.

CLF56/2022 (Festival Grant Applications) – The Town Clerk reported that a staff meeting was due to take place with regard to a suitable and consistent mechanism for the making of grants to individuals.

Resolved: To note the actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings.

CLF6/2023 Budget Monitoring 2023/24

The Committee considered its budget monitoring report for 2023/24 as at 16 June 2023.

The Town Clerk and Council Services Officer responded to queries raised by Members. Attention was drawn to the fact that there appeared to be no provision for Christmas Electricity within the current year's budget and the Town Clerk undertook to look into the matter. The Town Clerk suggested that the Committee may now wish to vire the remaining Jubilee/Coronation budget to another fund. He suggested that officers would first check on the exact figures and bring a report to the next meeting. To this end, the Council Services Officer suggested that the remaining money might be vired to the Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Budget where not much money remained.

Resolved: To check the figures in relation to the Christmas Electricity budget for 2023/24.

Resolved: To bring a report to the next meeting in relation to proposals for virement of the remaining Jubilee/Coronation budget.

Resolved: To receive the report.

CLF7/2023 Christmas Plus Ltd – Kendal Repairs and Additions 2023

The Council Services Officer reported that she had recently met with Christmas Plus in order to discuss what repairs were required this year. She asked Members to consider a quote from Christmas Plus (costs not inclusive of VAT) for repairs and improvements for 2023, as follows:-

- Repairs to existing cross street motifs - £1,020
- String lighting replacements - £270
- Projector replacement (flooding the Town hall with colour projection) – free of charge
- Wheatsheaf socket – to be examined by an electrician
- Ice lights along the shops on Stricklandgate – clips - £681; supply of 24v Clusterline as a replacement to icicle lighting - £5,850
- Changing all festoon lamps to white - £3,877
- Christmas tree improvements – cost to re-rope star in pastel rope light - £166

The Council Services Officer drew attention to the fact that the current lighting contract was due to expire in July 2024. She advised that a total of £7,413 remained in the budget, explaining that this would cover changing the festoons and upgrading the tree.

The Committee discussed the matter at length, acknowledging the value of the Christmas lights to residents in Kendal.

Considered was the potential for use of digital lighting moving forward into the future. Raised was the possibility of using CIL funding, with Christmas lights offering a benefit towards economic development. It was felt that consideration should be given to what could be achieved if more funding was available and that a task and finish group should be established to look into this and to visit other displays that Kendal Town Council could afford and visit, for example at Ilkley. It was further suggested that arrangements could be made for a knowledge gaining demonstration by a lighting company specialising in such displays.

As regards 2023, Members felt that there was a need to repair the motifs. They suggested that officers might look into the cost for hire of a suitable projector for the Town Hall for 2023. Lighting on Stricklandgate, it was felt, should be picked up in 2024. With regard to the festoon lighting, the idea of changing the lamps to white was welcomed, with a mixture of both cold and warm white. Also welcomed were the improvements to the Christmas tree.

Resolved: To approve the repairs as proposed, with the exception of the ice lights along the shops on Stricklandgate, this to be addressed in 2024, officers also to look into the cost for hire of a suitable projector for the Town Hall for 2023.

Resolved: A task and finish group to be established regarding Christmas lighting moving into the future, as outlined above, including visits to other displays and a knowledge gaining demonstration by a specialist lighting company.

CLF8/2023 Mountain and Sky Christmas Lights Switch On 2023

The Committee considered a report from the Events Officer and Development Manager which provided an update on the Christmas Lights switch-on event which was due to take place on Thursday, 16 November 2023. The report provided details on key developments, further details regarding stalls on Finkle Street and an event delivery timetable.

The Town Clerk referred to the world record-breaking slack liner, Lucas Irmiler, who was to be present on the evening, pointing out that this would be a very exciting event. In addition, the Town Clerk pointed out that the theme for the event was "The Joy of Outdoors". Kendal Mountain Festival had indicated a desire for flags, to be developed within the community, through workshops and schools, and that this was being addressed by the Development and Delivery Manager.

Resolved: To note the report.

Note - Cllr L Edwards, whilst not a Member of the Committee, declared an interest in the following item of business by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Kendal Pride Committee. She left the Chamber during the discussion and voting thereon.

CLF9/2023 Festival Grant Applications

The Committee was asked to consider one application for grant funding:-

Kendal Pride (Proud in Kendal) - £500

The grant, if approved, would be put towards the first ever pride festival in South Lakeland, taking place on 21, 22 and 23 July 2023. The festival would be known as "Pride Done Differently" and it was felt that this approach would capitalise on the distinct nature of Kendal and attract visitors who wanted to celebrate LGBTQIA+ identity in an alternative way.

The Town Clerk confirmed that sufficient money remained in the budget.

Resolved: To award a grant of £500 to Kendal Pride (Proud in Kendal) towards the first ever pride festival in South Lakeland.

During consideration of the item, attention was drawn to the redactions within the application under consideration, some of the details of which, it was felt, should have remained within the document. Members questioned the system of redaction and the Town Clerk undertook to give attention to the matter.

Resolved: To consider an appropriate system of redaction of information provided within grant applications.

CLF10/2023 Terms of Reference Review

The Clerk reported that the Council was currently reviewing its Committee Terms of Reference with a view to implementing changes in the Autumn of 2023 (September onwards). The Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee had already stated its outline ambitions to the Management Committee, and it was likely that the resulting changes would see it merge its grant function with the Community Grants function currently operated by the Audit, Grants and Charities Committee. It was also likely that the new Committee will take on a wider brief for Community, Economic Development and Wellbeing.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the Membership of the new Culture and Communities Committee would be nine and he read out a copy of the draft Terms of Reference as attached to the agenda for the meeting of the Management Committee which was scheduled to be held on 3 July 2023. The Management Committee would consider the proposed Committee Structure for recommendation to Council either at the end of July or early September.

The Committee discussed the proposal at length, also considering the need for scoping and for performance indicators and targets to be set for the Committee. It was suggested that the Committee should first meet as an informal group to carry out a scoping exercise to examine priorities and to enable a loose budget to be set in October. During discussion, attention was drawn to the need to consider where the Town Council sat in relation to Westmorland and Furness Council and the potential of discussion with their Sustainable Communities and Localities Portfolio Holder. Further raised was the possibility of talking to Calne Town Council, that authority having taken on board many of the functions of the former district council following Local Government Reorganisation in Wiltshire.

Resolved: To establish a Working Group to carry out a scoping exercise for the proposed new Culture and Communities Committee.

Resolved: To express support by the Christmas Lights and Festivals Committee to the Management Committee with regard to the draft proposals for a new Committee Structure.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.