

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 September 2022, at 7.00 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	Apologies

* Arrived at 7.30 p.m. during consideration of Agenda Item No.5 (Budget Monitoring 2022-23).

In attendance: Council Services Officer (Janine Holt), Events Officer (Flo McMahon) and Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth).

Public Participation

Two representatives of Kendal Community Theatre addressed the Committee.

Chris Taylor, Artistic Director, first thanked Kendal Town Council for its support to the Theatre over its last ten years of existence. He informed the Committee that, to mark the Theatre's ten-year anniversary, the company would be putting on a show in the Town Hall, "A Christmas Carol for Kendal", a re-write of the Dickens story involving a cast of 30 to 40 people. Mr Taylor explained that the Theatre was an all-inclusive group and he referred to projects with Sandgate School and youngsters from 3 Sedbergh Drive, and the company's aim to build on what people could do, allowing anyone to become involved with creative theatre. The company attracted both national and local grants, and was seeking to further broaden inclusivity and to allow for subsidised tickets. Mr Taylor further highlighted the fact that the company had also been able to offer an amount of paid work for young people. Mr Taylor explained to the Committee that his initial starting point was not to seek money but to seek dialogue and a constructive partnership with the Town Council.

Caroline Moir, Writer and Treasurer, stressed the fact that Kendal Community Theatre had always been inclusive and that the company now aimed to further broaden its approach. She went on to provide details of all the shows which had been put on by the company since 2012, a total of 17 plays in 10 years.

Discussion took place during which the representatives of the Kendal Community Theatre answered questions raised by Members. Conversation centred around what the Council could do to assist the Theatre in marketing and raising its profile, particularly at community level. The Committee suggested that local councillors may be able to assist as a group by talking themselves to other community groups and handing out leaflets. Also discussed was the potential for a representative of Kendal Town Council for the Theatre in the capacity of observer. The representatives drew attention to a strong need for connectivity between artistic groups within Kendal. Cllr C Russell agreed that this was of great importance and referred to the new Unitary Authority, advising that discussions were currently taking place in this regard which, he hoped, would address the need for a Council for Voluntary Services

type organisation based in the Westmorland and Furness area. Also raised was the potential for the Visit Kendal site to be used as a central hub for networking.

The Chair advised the representatives that officers would be in touch with Kendal Community Theatre in due course.

Mr Taylor further kindly offered presence of street actors from the Theatre at the forthcoming Christmas Light Switch-on event.

CLF19/2022 Apologies

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr P Thornton.

CLF20/2022 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs H Ladhams and C Russell raised interests in Agenda Item No.8 (Minute No.CLF26/2022 below).

CLF21/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

CLF22/2022 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 25 July 2022 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

CLF23/2022 Budget Monitoring 2022-23

The Committee considered a budget monitoring report for 2022/23. The report indicated that expenditure to date was £21,685, with a total of £16,315 remaining. The Council Services Officer informed Members that nothing could be carried forward into 2023/24 and that the Committee would be asked to look at potential use of any remaining budget early in the new year. The Committee would start to look at its 2023/24 budget at its next meeting in November.

Reference was made to ideas previously raised by Members which may benefit from any remaining money, for example the Kendal Sports for All initiative. The potential for early informal discussions on the following year's budget was queried and the Council Services Officer undertook to look into the possibility.

Resolved: To receive the report.

CLF24/2022 Christmas 2022 and Future Years

(a) Statistics in Relation to a Reduction in Hours of the Lighting of the Town's Christmas Lights

Further to CLF17/2022, the Council Services Officer circulated a document detailing statistics in relation to a reduction in hours of the lighting of the Town's Christmas lights based on 2021 figures. The figures demonstrated an annual reduction in cost

by nearly half (£285.20), however, a large annual saving in units of electricity used (1,460.99).

Various options were considered, including a shorter reduction in hours of lighting and a reduction in hours, with the exception of those lights on the Christmas tree. Members noted, however, that any change would not result in a massive saving in terms of the Council's budget and also strongly recognised the boost provided to the spirit of the community by the Christmas lights, noting that when people were going to school and work it would not be good if the lights were off and would not lift their spirits. It was suggested, therefore, that the hours of lighting be left as in previous years and for the figures to be re-examined next year, bearing in mind the rise in energy costs.

Resolved: That the hours of lighting of the Town's Christmas lights remain as in previous years, with the figures to be reconsidered in Autumn 2023.

(b) Christmas Lights Switch-on Event - November 2022 – Event Schedule

Further to CLF17/2022, the Committee was asked to consider a proposed event schedule for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event. The Committee was further being asked to consider a proposal that the switch-on event be moved to Thursday 17 November, to coincide with the opening of the Kendal Mountain Festival.

The Events Officer informed Members of the potential for adaption of the event to integrate the Kendal Mountain Festival and bring the two audiences together, with people attending the free film following the switch-on event. The Mountain Festival were keen to be involved in the parade on opening night and discussions were due to take place on the following morning when she would be meeting Steve Scott, Festival Director. The Events Officer further drew attention to the Dark Skies message which would be lovely to witness, with visitors being able to take back the experience to their own communities. In addition, she highlighted the opportunity for cross marketing, as well as other potential benefits of linking the two events together.

Cllr M Helme expressed a wish to attend the meeting on the following morning, raising the possibilities for achieving inclusivity for those local families to whom the event would be inaccessible and promoting the potential for free tickets for the Mountain Festival to be handed out at the switch-on event. The Events Officer, however, was keen for officers first to look at the Mountain Festival's vision prior to discussion by Members at a future meeting. She further pointed out that consideration of spare tickets for local residents unable to afford to take part had been a condition of the Town Council's grant to the organisation.

Further raised with regard to amalgamation of the two events was the opportunity to promote the Town and its civic and cultural activity. In addition, Members were keen for the walking band, Blast Furnace, to be involved.

With regard to the potential change in the currently planned date, the Events Officer advised of the need to inform Christmas Plus as soon as possible.

Resolved: To change the date of the switch-on event to Thursday, 17 November, to coincide with the opening of the Kendal Mountain Festival.

CLF25/2022 Cycling and Walking Festival Coordination 2023

The Committee was being asked to consider ways in which the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) could be promoted through the Council's support for the Cycling and Walking Festivals.

Members were presented with background on the matter, detailing the fact that the Town Council was currently supporting plans for a Kendal Cycling Festival in 2023, and for the Kendal Walking Festival. It had been suggested by Members that the Council could link this support to the County Council's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, perhaps with additional input from Kendal Vision through the promotion of their initiatives in these areas. The Committee did not have an appropriate allocation of funding to cover this in the current financial year, however, could consider allocating a suitable budget line in the coming year, if the project was sufficiently within the Committee's brief. This cross-cutting issue would require coordination with the Town Council's Environment and Highways Committee, which would normally see promotion of Cycling and Walking as one of its spheres of operation.

The Committee was being recommended to make its 2023-24 budget proposals at its next meeting and, therefore, to develop ideas for expenditure in the coming financial year in time to present them in an appropriate format for consideration at that meeting.

Cllr C Russell referred to informal discussions which had taken place between himself and Nick Taylor from Kendal Futures around the launching of cycling, walking and running initiatives next spring, including the potential for this to form next year's Torchlight theme. They were trying to bring all of the elements together for a cohesive event. Nick Taylor was keen for Kendal Futures to deliver this initiative alongside the Kendal Town Council team. Cllr M Helme drew attention to the fact that Mark Cropper was also very interested for the inclusion of a green fell race. The Council Services Officer suggested that if the festival was to include running, then a green fell race could be included. She pointed out that consideration would need to be given to an appropriate budget.

Resolved: To consider an appropriate budget at a future meeting.

CLF26/2022 Event Funding – Kendal Torchlight Festival

Note – Cllrs H Ladhams and C Russell declared Other Registrable Interests in this item of business by virtue of the fact that they were members of the Torchlight Board. They, therefore, left the room for the remainder of the meeting and so took no part in the discussion or voting on the item. Cllr K Simpson took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Further to Minute CLF18(b)/2022, the Committee was asked to consider a festival grant application for £3,000 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.

Resolved: To offer a grant of £3,000 to Kendal Torchlight Festival.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.