

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Highways Committee held on Monday, 13 June 2022 at 7.00pm at Kendal Town Hall.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice-Chair)	Apologies	Cllr S Blunden	Present
Cllr D Brown	Apologies	Cllr J Cornthwaite	Present
Cllr M Helme	Present	Cllr E Hennessy (Chair)	Present
Cllr S Long	Present	Cllr C Russell	Present
Cllr K Simpson	Present		

In attendance: Cllr P Thornton (in non-voting capacity as not a Member of the Committee), Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw), Kendal Town Council Project Manager (Helen Moriarty), Projects Officer (Anne-Marie Sanderson) and Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth).

E1/2022 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs G Archibald (Vice-Chair) and D Brown.

E2/2022 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised.

E3/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

E4/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The agenda item had incorrectly referred to the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2022, with no minutes having been attached. A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 March 2022 had, therefore, been circulated to Members prior to the meeting.

Resolved: To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 March 2022 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.

E5/2022 E&H Budget 2022/23

The Committee considered a budget monitoring report for 2022/23. The Kendal Town Council Project Manager indicated that there should be an amount of £300 left in the Environment and Highways Budget for allocation to the Friends of Fletcher Park Group.

Resolved: To receive the report.

E6/2022 Working Groups

Working Group Membership

The Committee considered the appointment of representatives to sit on working groups for the forthcoming year.

Resolved: To appoint representatives to sit on working groups during 2022/23, as follows:-

Working Group	Representative(s)
Kendal Northern Access Route Reference Group	Cllr J Cornthwaite Cllr S Long
Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership	Cllrs S Blunden and K Simpson (joint representatives)
Dark Skies Kendal	Cllr G Archibald Cllr S Blunden Cllr J Cornthwaite Cllr E Hennessy
20mph	Cllr G Archibald Cllr S Blunden Cllr E Hennessy
Solar Made Easy Kendal	Cllr G Archibald Cllr S Blunden Cllr E Hennessy
Natural Kendal	Cllr G Archibald Cllr E Hennessy Cllr C Russell

Working Group Updates

The Committee was provided with verbal updates on the activities of working groups, as follows:-

20mph – The Chair was hopeful for a concrete proposal from the County Council at a meeting scheduled to be held on 11 July and was keen to see how this would align with the Town Council's aspirations. Cllr Peter Thornton suggested that it may be useful for Kendal Town Council to write to the Westmorland and Furness Shadow Authority to indicate what Members would like to see happen in this regard in Kendal, as well as with regards to other aspirations. The Chair explained that it was the Town Council's plan to ensure that the matter was included within the 2023/24 Budget. Attention was drawn to Kendal Vision's plan to look at changes to traffic flow in Kendal and the need to be aware that the outcome of this may influence location of 20mph areas, as well as traffic calming measures. The Kendal Town Council Project Manager drew attention to the need for suitable consultation that would garner positive responses and reminded Members that £19,000 had been allocated by the Town Council to support the 20mph aspiration, some of which would be spent on communications. The need to concentrate on promoting the benefits of the scheme and changing the culture of the Town was stressed. Attention was drawn to the current closure of one of the lanes on New Road and the fact that this had not hugely impacted on traffic flow. It was felt, therefore, that one lane could possibly be dedicated to two-way cycling.

Solar Made Easy – The Kendal Town Council Project Manager reported that she had met with CAfS who had funding to develop Solar Made Easy for Kendal. Data had been examined which showed that there were a number of large buildings in Kendal which were suitable for solar panels. There had been a meeting with Kendal College who were interested in putting up solar panels, as well as a business on Dockray. Kendal Town Council was acting as mediator and introducing businesses to different co-operative solar options. Regarding the residential aspect to the initiative, a meeting had been held with South Lakeland District Council in order to try to break down and simplify the planning process and to provide clear information by means of a flowchart for potential applicants via a resident leaflet. She suggested that the Planning Committee would be able to reference the solar audit tool within their comments on applications and undertook to share details on the tool, which pinpointed suitable buildings for installation of panels, with Members of the Environment and Highways Committee. It was suggested that there were some glitches with the computer tool, which was slow to upload, and the Kendal Town Council Project Manager undertook to find out if this could be addressed prior to it being made publicly available. In addition, she suggested that successful case studies could be included within the leaflet. The importance of South Lakes Housing as the largest housing association in the area addressing the issue of solar panels was raised and the Kendal Town Council Project Manager informed Members that a new Sustainability Officer would shortly be joining the organisation and was keen to meet. Discussion also took place on how capacity for solar panels on new builds could be made a requirement. The need for further research to be carried out and further discussion on this topic at a future meeting was raised.

Natural Kendal – The Chair drew attention to the baseline research which had been commissioned by the Council and included on the agenda. The research covered policies, activities and organisations that would or could have a positive impact on biodiversity across the Town, as well as those with a negative impact. The aim of Natural Kendal was to look at these projects under one umbrella, to provide support and to source funding and create connected corridors. The Chair drew attention to the need to determine the status of the group, either as a CIC or a CIO. He informed the Committee that the intention was to take on around half a dozen projects referred to within the report for further development, for example, on land at Hallgarth and at Vicarage Drive. Attention was drawn to a forthcoming meeting regarding habitat at the Vicarage Drive site and the need to get the Kendal Kingfisher Group, as well as schools, involved.

E7/2022 Project Update Report

The Committee gave consideration to an update from the Kendal Town Council Project Manager on ongoing projects.

Infrastructure Maintenance – There was £1,893 available in the budget, not enough to cover all proposed projects, some improvements might have to wait until next year. It was suggested, therefore, that the repainting of the Thorny Hills barrier be moved to 2023/24.

Biodiversity Schemes and Grants – The £6,000 unallocated budget was highlighted.

Public Realm Improvements – Discussion took place on the fact that the trees planted in planters at the Woolpack Yard had not survived. The Project Manager indicated that new trees were to be planted by a Horticultural Expert. She planned to discuss the matter with the Arboriculture Officer at South Lakeland District Council.

Green Spaces Improvements – A visit to Sizergh Wild Trail had been arranged to inspire natural play provision at Serpentine Woods. Ideas would be reported back to the Committee at its September meeting.

With regard to the unallocated budget of £11,000, it was suggested that this could be put towards the rebuilding of the wall at Nobles Rest which remained an ongoing dispute between the Town and District Councils. Details would be presented to the next Committee once costs were determined.

A number of comments were raised with regard to ongoing projects. Members welcomed the ivy screening at Longpool which was felt to make a great improvement to the area. Discussion took place on anti-social behaviour at Gooseholme and the potential for removal of part of the hedge at the Castle Walk end in order to open up the area. The Kendal Town Council Project Manager explained that it would be difficult to address the situation until the Flood Improvements and bridge installation had been completed at which time appropriate measures could be considered. The Town Clerk provided additional information regarding planned improvements, including on the current status of the CCTV camera and removal of the hardstanding; there would be a clear field of vision in 2023. The Environment Agency was aware of the need to take anti-social behaviour into consideration within the Flood Relief Scheme and both the Town Council and Police were being asked for input.

In response to a climate change query, the Kendal Town Council Project Manager explained that £10,000 per year for three years had been committed to the Sustainability Hub.

Discussion took place on environmental improvements in terms of an art project aimed at uniting people along the riverside in response to the storm Desmond floods. The need for discussion to take place on the type of artwork and to ensure something that resonated with the Town was stressed.

Resolved: That the Project Manager move Thorney Hill repainting to the next financial year.

Resolved: That the Project Manager links with Sticklandgate House and Waste into Wellbeing to provide an update re the sustainability hub for the next meeting.

E8/2022 Happy to Chat Proposal

The Committee considered a report regarding the installation of "Happy to Chat" signs on 50% of Kendal Town Council's 62 benches. Happy to Chat benches were proving to be a popular and effective way to reduce social isolation in other areas. This would be at little cost to the Council, each of the signs costing approximately £3.

Members felt that the proposal for 31 signs was too many and suggested initial installation of six signs, with locations central to Kendal and where there was more than one bench to be considered and decided by the Chair and the Kendal Town Council Project Manager.

A comment on the bench near Dockray Footbridge, which had been removed in preparation for the flood defence works, was raised and the Project Manager undertook to research options for its replacements.

Resolved: To install six Happy to Chat signs on Kendal Town Council benches within the centre of the Town in locations where there are more than one bench, the Chair and the Kendal Town Council Project Manager being delegated to consider and decide on the appropriate locations.

E9/2022 Bike Repair Stand Proposal

The Committee considered the installation of a number of bike repair stands within Kendal, at an approximate cost of £1,000 each. The stands which provided a number of tools enabled cyclists to carry out basic repairs to their bikes.

Attention was drawn to the fact that cyclists capable of using the equipment provided on the stands generally carried their own tools. In addition, the potential for vandalism of the stands was raised. Furthermore, it was pointed out that there was such a stand within the Westmorland Shopping Centre that was not well used and it was, therefore, suggested that this could be moved to a more central location and tested. Also raised was the need for bike lock up provision at the other end of the Town.

The Kendal Town Council Project Manager undertook to carry out further research and, in addition, to find out what Kendal BID was doing in this regard.

During discussion, the need for public drinking fountains and bottle refill points within the Town was raised and it was suggested that this matter should be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Resolved: To audit current bike stand provision and liaise with Kendal Bid regarding current repair stand in Westmorland shopping centre.

E10/2022 Biodiversity

The Kendal Town Council Project Manager reported that the draft Policy had been updated as requested at the previous meeting (Minute No.E50/21/22 b) refers). The Policy included reference to risk assessments for carbon reduction and biodiversity meaning that any future proposals would need to have regard to these issues.

The Chair raised the potential to change the reference regarding “distribution of 500 trees each year” to “distribution of 500 trees or hedge plants”. Further consideration was then given to the figure of 500 and the possibility of an increase, however, it was acknowledged that this aim could be revisited in future. In addition, discussion took place regarding the need to make the Policy feel more tangible by way of inclusion, for example, of an expected outcome and clarification of what the aim of the Policy was. It was suggested that something defining the purpose of the Policy could be included by way of introduction to the document.

Resolved: To update the Biodiversity Policy accordingly and share with members.

E11/2022 Explore Kendal Signage

A condition survey in May 2022 had found that 11 of 17 large information signs which had been transferred to Kendal Town Council in 2019 would benefit from maintenance and refurbishment. The signs offered useful information to visitors and locals alike and featured maps corresponding with the Visit Kendal leaflet and web maps, as well as historical information. There was currently £1,893 remaining in the Infrastructure and Maintenance Budget and Sun Signs had provided a quote of £1,385.60 to repair/replace damaged panels.

Resolved: To give approval for the repair/replacement of Explore Kendal Signage as appropriate.

Note – At 9.00 p.m., in accordance with the Council’s Standing Orders No.3 Meetings Generally x, a meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours, the Committee voted to continue the meeting.

E12/2022 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Kendal Town Council had been asked by Cumbria County Council to review and endorse the LCWIP for Kendal. The Chair of the Committee suggested that the document should be endorsed by the Town Council although not necessarily unqualified. He, therefore, proposed some wording, welcoming the opportunity to pass comment on the document and wholly endorsing and supporting the stated ambition and the acknowledgement of the benefits of active travel, as well as the fact that this was a live and evolving document. He further suggested a number of comments around: the need for consideration for prioritisation of safe routes to school, in particular the east west route from Hallgarth to Queen Katherine School; the fact that Kendal College appeared to have been deprioritised; and concerns that what the Town Council would view as a priority route through the centre of Kendal, linking to Kendal College, was currently deprioritised pending the provision of a Kendal Northern Access Route. Advice from Cycling UK's campaign department was that having some aspects of the LCWIP that could be delivered very quickly from within the local council's existing budget could be beneficial when applying for further funding. It showed political willingness to achieve a modal shift when it came to active travel. Cllr Hennessy believed that potential "quick wins" should be prioritised.

Lengthy discussion took place around the need to carefully make it clear within the comments to the County Council that the Town Council endorsed the LCWIP while suggesting that no aspects of these proposals should be necessarily dependent upon the provision of the NAR.

The Kendal Town Council Project Manager informed Members that the County Council required a response as soon as possible.

Resolved: To authorise the Chair to re-word and share his draft response with Committee Members prior to submission to Cumbria County Council.

E13/2022 Kendal Castle Pumptrack

The Committee considered a report detailing that the Council had commissioned Velosolutions, a national pumptrack provider, to create a visual representation of a pumptrack in situ at the foot of Kendal Castle. The Company had met with Kendal Town Council Officers and the Chair of the Committee onsite and it had been agreed that the picture contained within the report showed the most preferable site to allow easy construction access and provide parking for users going forward. The site, to the east of Castle Hill, was also secluded whilst being accessible to many Kendal residents. The Kendal Town Council Project Manager informed the Committee that the Company had indicated that an amount of £150,000 would create a great pumptrack.

Members were keen for a pumptrack in Kendal, however, referred to the potential for uncontrolled dogs to run across the site shown unless suitable fencing or hedging was installed. Further raised was the potential for anti-social behaviour and the fact that the site was tucked out of site which could lead to some people feeling uncomfortable and unsafe in this location.

It was suggested that the relevant Westmorland and Furness Shadow Portfolio Holder should be contacted for valuable input and, in addition, the need to source more information in relation to the actual asset, including aspects around history and heritage, as well as future maintenance, was raised. It was highlighted that this should be a community-led project and it was suggested that the issue could be suitably promoted through social media.

Resolved: That the Project Manager share the aspiration with the relevant shadow portfolio holder and consider options to engage the facebook group members.

Resolved: That the Project Manager contacts Velosolutions to better understand the maintenance required for Pumptracks.

The meeting closed at 9.41 p.m.