

Kendal Town Council

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



Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Highways Committee held on Monday, 13 March 2023, at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice-Chair)	Apologies	Cllr S Blunden	Apologies
Cllr D Brown	Present	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 **		

* Arrived at 7.02 p.m. between consideration of Agendas Items Nos. 4 (Minutes of the Last Meeting) and 5 (Presentation from Clean River Kent Campaign).

** Arrived at 7.03 p.m. during consideration of Agenda Item No. 5 (Presentation from Clean River Kent Campaign).

In attendance: Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth), Projects Officer (Anne-Marie Sanderson), Development and Delivery Manager (Helen Watson-Moriarty), Cllr D Rathbone (in respect of Agenda Item no.6 (Oxenholme Signage), Sheila Adam and Carole Wood (Clean River Kent Campaign), and one member of the public (Duncan Pollard from South Lakes Action on Climate Change).

E59/2022 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs G Archibald and S Blunden.

E60/2022 Declarations of Interest

Cllr C Russell declared an interest in Agenda Item No.10 (Climate Hub) by virtue of the fact that he was a Trustee of Stricklandgate House.

E61/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

E62/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

E63/2022 Presentation from Clean River Kent Campaign

Carole Wood and Sheila Adam of the Clean River Kent Campaign addressed the Committee, explaining that the group was a coalition of communities living along the River Kent, in Staveley, Burneside and Kendal, established in Autumn 2021 (a copy of a powerpoint presentation had been circulated to Members for information prior to the

meeting). The aim of the group was to keep the River Kent clean for water-based recreation and to protect ecology and wildlife. The Campaign's objectives were to:-

- reduce the amount of effluent discharged into the River Kent from a variety of sources;
- ensure that wastewater treatment facilities met:-
 - current needs;
 - the needs of new housing development; and
 - the additional pressures which would result from climate change;
- work with people and organisations who used the river;
- work with local councils, organisations and potential funders; and
- protect the ecology and wildlife of the River Kent.

The Committee was informed on how the Campaign was established, how it engaged with the community and on recruitment of and working with volunteers.

Highlighted was work carried out by the Campaign during 2022, including a recent application to DEFRA for bathing status at Staveley Recreation Ground, which had sadly been unsuccessful. Also provided were details on surveys which had been carried out and on the outcome of river water quality monitoring. Results showed that at every location tested, the levels of both e-coli and enterococcus were unacceptably high, and would be rated by the Environment Agency as poor. Additional observations had been made, details of which were provided.

The Committee was informed of the Campaign's plans for 2023 around practical citizen science projects with its volunteer group, more visible and effective local campaigning and developing stronger networks of local organisations within Cumbria and beyond.

Reference was made to the Campaign's budget, including on funding received so far and on applications yet to be made to other organisations, including Kendal Town Council. Funding would be used for programme co-ordination, practical citizen science projects / volunteer activities, genetic testing and partnership working and campaigning.

Both Carole and Sheila responded to questions raised by Members, who thanked and commended them for both their presentation and their work. In response to a question by the Chair, the Committee was advised that the Campaign's application to Kendal Town Council for a grant was imminent. The Chair suggested that the group might first discuss the matter with Cllr G Archibald on an informal basis and find out if there was anything that the Council could do with regard to lobbying on the issue. The Chair further proposed, with the grant application being imminent and the next scheduled meeting of the Committee not being until May, that he and the Vice-Chair be authorised to sign off the application, up to a maximum of £1,000.

Resolved: The Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to consider and sign off the forthcoming grant application from the Clean River Kent Campaign, up to a maximum of £1,000.

E64/2022 Oxenholme Signage

Cllr D Rathbone addressed the Committee on various issues at Oxenholme station including the lack of information regarding its proximity to Kendal and the lack of visibility regarding how to easily access Kendal. He explained that he was present at the meeting, partly due to a perception that Oxenholme had been forgotten and also due to the fact that Oxenholme Station belied the fact that this was the entrance to Kendal. He stressed the need to signpost Kendal to those coming to the Town.

Cllr Rathbone reported that since the papers for this meeting had been sent out and published, he had attended a Community Rail Partnership Meeting at which Avanti had been present. He was pleased to draw attention to the fact that he had been able to make arrangements for the installation of a water fountain at the station, with a £500 contribution from Avanti, together with a sum of £500 from his own South Lakeland District Council locality budget.

In response to a query, Cllr Rathbone indicated that Oxenholme residents were keen for changes to be made, with visitors often heading up the hill into Oxenholme in error and also with the main problem being issues with parking in the village by rail users.

The Development and Delivery Manager presented the report which explained that the current Visit Kendal advertisements were easily missed.

The Committee was informed that new infrastructure funding had previously been reserved for handrail installation, however, that following site visits and contractor advice, it had become apparent that those projects were beyond Kendal Town Council's remit and capacity creating surplus funding to support this initiative.

It was proposed that, using the skills of the Kendal brand designer, a vibrant display be created, similar to the Kirkland flags to promote Kendal and the walking, bus and train access options from Oxenholme in the entrance tunnel near the bus stop. The display would be created using vinyl wraps on the existing white surface, sealed with an ultra-hard wearing crystal matt laminate.

It was further proposed to utilise the existing University of Cumbria signs by installing new vinyl wraps highlighting the Kendal brand and the visit Kendal website via a simple brand design on a vibrant green background. Additional phases could be added to upgrade the Kendal College art work in the next financial year.

The Development and Delivery Manager informed the Committee on the costs of the proposals, with the total budget being £3,514 (remaining new infrastructure balance and Cllr Rathbone's contribution).

Timescales were dependent on Avanti partnership working, which was strong but not guaranteed. Therefore, it was being proposed that the Committee vire the sum of £3,514 from the new infrastructure budget to the Public Realm allocated budget within the Development Fund.

Suggestions raised from the floor were for the inclusion of maps, information on buses, mention of the Citizens' Jury and the fact that Kendal was an Anti-Racist Town.

Resolved: To vire the figure of £3,514 new Infrastructure to the Public Realm allocated budget within the Development Fund for the proposals for signage at Oxenholme Station.

E65/2022 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Development and Delivery Manager elaborated on a number of the items contained within the document, explaining that any outstanding were covered within the agenda for this meeting.

E52/2022 (Project Update Report) – Neither Cllrs G Archibald or P Thornton were present to provide an update on discussion on the matter of the handrail at Fountain Brow with the County Council Highways Officer. The Development and Delivery Manager would take this up with them separately.

With regard to alternative greening options at Blackhall Road, the Development and Delivery Manager suggested that this be included within next year's budget and that she would work up details for presentation at the next meeting.

The Chair referred to the production of a set of criteria regarding footpath improvements and suggested that the relevant officers, Vice-Chair and himself should meet for discussion in the following week.

The Chair drew attention to the fact that the Committee had not yet seen the final draft of the Biodiversity Policy and asked for this to be presented to a future meeting. Reference was made to South Lakeland District Council's Biodiversity document which was felt to be a very useful tool and a question raised as to what would happen to this following the move to Westmorland & Furness Council. Whilst it was presumed that the document would be retained, possibly in an expanded form, the Development and Delivery Manager undertook to check with the author.

The Committee praised the work which had been carried out by the Projects Officer in relation to wildflowers at Kendal Green and Members were encouraged to attend the volunteer work parties on 22 and 29 March. Raised was the potential to invite Ukrainian and Syrian refugees and the options for ensuring that they were provided with tools, either by appeal or by seeking assistance from the Appleby Road Community Garden tool library. Further raised was the opportunity for photographs, press piece and use of social media. In response to a query regarding the possibility of wildflowers at Yeats Close where the swings had recently been removed, the Chair suggested that he be sent an email in this regard as he felt that he may be in a position to provide an answer having recently consulted with the District Council on this matter.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to take up the issue of the handrail at Fountain Brow with Cllrs G Archibald and P Thornton who were due to speak with the County Council Highways Officer on the matter.

Resolved: With regard to alternative greening options at Blackhall Road, the Development and Delivery Manager to work up details for presentation at the next meeting.

Resolved: The Chair, Vice-Chair and relevant officers to meet in the following week for discussion on the production of a set of criteria regarding footpath improvements.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to present the final draft of the Biodiversity Policy to the next meeting of the Committee and, in addition, to check with the author of South Lakeland District Council's Biodiversity document the future of that publication.

Resolved: With regard to the to the volunteer work parties for the wildflowers at Kendal Green, Cllr M Helme to invite the Ukrainian and Syrian refugees and officers to seek to publicise the event.

Resolved: The question of the possibility of wildflowers at Yeats Close to be brought to the attention of the Chair who may be in a position to provide an answer.

Resolved: To receive the report.

E66/2022 Environment and Highways Budget 2022/23

The Committee considered a report on the Environment and Highways budget for the current year.

The Development and Delivery Manager drew Members' attention to a number of spend requests, firstly with regard to Green Spaces for £1,000 to be put towards supporting Cumbria County Council's work at Jenkin Rise path. The Chair raised the fact that this matter was not time-sensitive and that it had not been indicated within the papers. Cllr J Cornthwaite also expressed that this had been raised at Allotments Committee. He proposed, therefore, that officers be requested to bring a formal report before a future meeting of the Committee to enable informed consideration of the matter.

The Development and Delivery Manager's second request was with regard to New Infrastructure and the installation of handrails at Sepulchre Lane, at a cost of £960 and, in addition, for £200 towards replacement "Happy to Chat" signs that could not be vandalised. The remaining balance in that budget related to the previous item discussed at E64/2022 above (Oxenholme Signage). Members expressed some concern at any further spend on "Happy to Chat" signs, the original ones having been vandalised, however, were advised that the new signs would be in the form of plaques screwed to the benches. It was acknowledged though that the signs had been successful, some people having raised that they had experienced pleasant conversation. It was suggested, therefore, that it may be worth trialling the new signs at a different time of the year when the evenings were lighter and that the matter should be brought back before the Committee in May.

Reference was made to dual-hatted Members' contributions to the Environment and Highways budget from their District Council locality budgets that did not seem to appear to within the figures shown within the report, and the Development and Delivery Manager was asked to ensure that sight of these was not lost.

The Development and Delivery Manager also sought a sum of £556 from Infrastructure Maintenance for repainting of the crest at Windermere Road, pointing out that the Kendal in Bloom Committee had agreed to the painting for the one at Kirkbarrow to mark the King's Coronation. Members welcomed this proposal.

The Development and Delivery Manager lastly referred to quotations which had been received for painting of the handrails at Rosemary Hill and to those in relation to the benches on Finkle Street. These quotations had come in too high and so these projects would need to be put on hold until the following year.

Resolved: To bring a report to a future meeting of the Committee with regard to a request for a figure of £1,000 to be put towards supporting Cumbria County Council's work at Jenkin Rise path.

Resolved: To bring a report on a request for £200 towards replacement "Happy to Chat" signs to the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held in May.

Resolved: Officers to ensure that the contributions made by dual-hatted Members/ from their District Council locality budgets are clearly displayed within the Committee's budget figures.

Resolved: To approve the request for a sum of £556 from the Infrastructure and Maintenance budget for the repainting of the crest at Windermere Road.

Resolved: To note the report.

E67/2022 Project Update Report

The Committee was presented with an update of ongoing projects and offered the opportunity to ask questions.

The Development and Delivery Manager drew attention to the fact that various projects were already covered within separate items on the agenda. She referred to the wetland planting at Canal Head, explaining that the drainage works were now complete and it remained to be seen how well this was working. Kendal Conservation Volunteers were growing wildflowers and signs had been erected regarding the work and its importance.

With regard to the 20mph scheme, the Development and Delivery Manager was awaiting Cumbria County Council regarding additional data, however, this was taking time due to Local Government Reorganisation.

The Development and Delivery Manager referred to Cycling and Walking informed the Committee that an LCWIP meeting was taking place on the following day which she, the Chair and Town Clerk would be attending. The Chair was keen to ensure that the Town Council was appropriately represented on this body, and sought interest from Members, also pointing out that Cllr S Blunden had indicated a keenness to become involved. He asked those Members who were interested to contact him by email. Cllr M Helme indicated that she would be keen to join. In response to a query, the Chair informed the Committee that the Town Council had made its wishes for Kendal clear around the need for cycle paths to serve schools and some east/west pathways.

The Development and Delivery Manager reported, also in relation to footpath improvements, that the District Council had confirmed content regarding project management of adventure path improvements via Town Council funding. Information had been shared and she was now waiting for District officers to confirm. This matter would be brought back to Committee in May, with the likely cost being £17,000 of the £34,814 allocated. She expressed appreciation for having support from District Council/Westmorland & Furness officers.

The Development and Delivery Manager referred to Public Realm Improvements and the Kendal Yards project, advising that this was progressing. She also drew attention to the need to confirm District Council actions in relation to Nobles Rest.

With regard to Green Spaces, the Development and Delivery Manager provided an update in relation to Fellside and the collaborative working which was taking place.

The Development and Delivery Manager pointed out that the visits to Mintsfeet had been carried out, providing an opportunity to understand the site. This would now start to be progressed. Clarity was sought with regard to this project around the actual site and the depot, which, it was felt, needed to be separated.

The Chair referred to SIDs, pointing out that in future, under the new Unitary Authority, funding would be made available to individual Westmorland & Furness Councillors for specific highways projects.

He further suggested that the issue in relation to repainting of the Thornyhills barrier be brought back to the next meeting. Cllr J Cornthwaite as Chair of the Flood Relief Scheme Working Group suggested that he might approach the Environment Agency to look at carrying out this work.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery to continue to chase Cumbria County Council regarding additional data in relation to the 20mph scheme.

Resolved: In addition to Cllrs S Blunden and M Helme, any Members interested in representing the Town Council on LCWIP to contact the Chair by email.

Resolved: To bring the matter of adventure path improvements management back to Committee in May.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to follow up with the District Council the matter of Nobles Rest.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to separate out the matter of Mintsfeet and the depot.

Resolved: The issue of repainting of the Thornyhills barrier be brought back to the next meeting, with Cllr J Cornthwaite, as Chair of the Flood Relief Scheme Working Group, also to approach the Environment Agency to look at carrying out this work.

Resolved: To note the report.

E68/2022 Climate Hub

Note - Cllr C Russell declared an interest in this item of business by virtue of the fact that he was a Trustee of Stricklandgate House, and took no part in the voting thereon.

The Development and Delivery Manager presented a report which explained that, following the recommendation of the Kendal Climate Change Citizens' Jury, Kendal Town Council had been seeking opportunities to create a 'one stop shop' regarding Climate action to support residents in getting help and/or inspiration to reduce their carbon footprint.

Recognising the impact and benefits of the Waste into Wellbeing initiative, the Council had allocated a budget of £10,000 per year for three years to support its expansion within Stricklandgate House and for that expansion to include a climate hub focus, enabling residents to access both rescued food via the Kendal Peoples Café and information to support their own carbon reduction efforts regarding energy, transport and food.

A hub shaping event had taken place to check with residents and supporters that this initiative would be welcomed in Kendal. The event had confirmed both the need and potential for the project.

It was being proposed to support both the expansion and tenancy costs to enable Waste into Wellbeing to operate from one location within Stricklandgate House.

In order to expand, a café area complete with new professional training kitchen was required. The Town Council's contribution would create an opening between the new café area and the kitchen, enabling access between the two and creating a service area. Waste into Wellbeing had raised the funds to install a professional kitchen.

The hub shaping event had confirmed the need to ensure the look and feel of the space was welcoming to all, and not just those currently within the 'climate action bubble'. Plants, sofas and vibrant signage were needed to create a well-loved space.

Waste into Wellbeing would face increased rental costs as the space expanded beyond the current coach house space; this contribution would support the initial expansion phase. Waste into Wellbeing's strong business plan forecasted self-sufficiency as the café element increased thanks to the new location and the opportunity to increase opening hours.

Combining budget allocations from financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, the total budget was £20,000, to be invoiced from 1 April 2023 and allocated as follows:-

- building expansion costs - £9,000 (to be paid directly to Stricklandgate House);
- increased rent contribution - £7,560 (to be paid directly to Waste into Wellbeing); and
- interior design to create welcoming space - £3,340 (to be managed by Kendal Town Council).

Members welcomed the proposals which fulfilled the Citizens' Jury recommendations and also the opportunity for collaboration between various organisations. The Development and Delivery Manager, in response to a query, explained how Kendal Town Council would be involved in the area of interior design of the welcoming space, by commissioning the work through, for example, Rag Tag Arts, and sourcing décor and furniture. This would form the Town Council's part of the contribution. The Committee would be kept informed on the process, with input being sought as necessary.

In response to a query regarding competition within the Town, Duncan Pollard, South Lakes Action on Climate Change, provided details with regard to the business model for the café, explaining that not only had the café had been extremely busy in recent weeks, but that recipe demonstrations were also being provided, as well as work experience opportunities being given to students from Kendal College. There had been a migration from giving away food to now actually preparing it. Whilst not directly self-funding, the scheme was now largely self-financing, although it was hoped to maintain the "pay as you can" aspect. He stressed the importance of Kendal Town Council maintaining its role in the Scheme.

Resolved: To release the total budget of £20,000 (combining budget allocations from financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24), to be invoiced from 1 April 2023 and allocated as outlined above.

E69/2022 Kendal Together Toward...

Further to E56/2022, the Development and Delivery Manager provided a verbal report, asking the Committee to discuss and endorse a revised approach to the former proposed accreditation scheme, which had been a response to a Climate Change Citizens' Jury recommendation. Since the last meeting, officers had explored alternative options that would engage businesses and support and encourage them to make carbon reductions.

The thinking behind the name of "Kendal Together Toward..." was that it generated and encouraged joint action, enabled businesses to join the dots and define what they were moving towards and met people where they were in terms of their reduction journey. Businesses could join if they had completed one or more of the following criteria:-

- signed up to the refill app and/or promoted their refill service;
- received a "Business Health Check" via Future Fixers, available at green business network drop in sessions;

- attended future training sessions at Stricklandgate Hub (i.e. Solar Made Easy, planning and co-operative options); and
- completed certified accreditation with Small Green Businesses or others.

Promotion would be carried out through the existing Zero Carbon Kendal platform. “Explore our Town” would be changed to “Kendal Together Toward...” and all members would be plotted on the maps accordingly. A logo and icons would be created for the four criteria points and members would be given the Kendal Together Toward... sticker with the icons relevant to their actions and more as and when they engaged further. Refill Members would be the first to be engaged. Multiple press releases would be put out and the scheme would be promoted via newsletter and social platforms.

The Development and Delivery Manager informed the Committee that £2,500 of next year’s Climate Change funding would have to be allocated to cover design and health check costs.

Some concern was raised with regard to Town Council funding and officer commitment to the scheme and as to whether this work formed part of the Council’s remit. The Development and Delivery Manager explained that, whilst this area of work had not traditionally been within the Council’s remit, this was a recommendation which had been made by the Citizens’ Jury and it was acknowledged that the Town Council had agreed to assist in putting the recommendations into practice. In addition, attention was drawn to the Council’s own commitment to carbon neutrality. Members felt that the Council had a duty to assist through raising awareness, and encouraging and empowering businesses to successfully manage carbon reduction themselves, with the aim of the scheme becoming self-driven. A suggestion was raised for the need for the Council to seek grants in this regard and also for the potential to seek a subscription for the scheme.

Members were keen to see a solid paper brought before the Committee, including more information on officer hours and cost, together with a clear proposal.

Resolved: To endorse continuing research into the approach outlined above with a view to bringing a report including solid recommendations to the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.