

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
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Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Highways Committee held on Monday, 16 January 2023, at 7.09 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr G Archibald (Vice-Chair)	Present	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	Apologies
Cllr K Simpson	Present **		

* Arrived at 7.15 p.m. between consideration of Agendas Items Nos. 5 (Presentation from Clean River Kent Group) and 6 (Minute Action Sheet).

** Arrived at 7.35 p.m. during consideration of Agenda Item No.8 (Project Update Report).

In attendance: Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth), Development and Delivery Manager (Helen Watson-Moriarty), Projects Officer (Anne-Marie Sanderson), Cllr P Thornton and one member of the public (Duncan Pollard from South Lakes Action on Climate Change).

E45/2022 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs D Brown and C Russell.

E46/2022 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

E47/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

E48/2022 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Reference was made to Minute No. E35/2022 (Project Update Report) and the allocation of £7,500 towards the development of a project to develop the old Highways Depot at Mintsfeet. It was pointed out that the minutes read that this was contingent on support coming from Cumbria County Council, as well as other stakeholders, but that this had not been the case, with a Member simply having undertaken at the meeting himself to press for match-funding. The Development and Delivery Manager confirmed that this item was shown within the Budget under Green Spaces and Improvements and was not dependent on match-funding.

Further raised was the matter of the Committee's recent recommendations with regard to the apportionment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Budget had not yet been finalised due to a number of outstanding issues but was due to be considered by Full Council on 6 February 2023 and the importance of not missing an opportunity in relation to use of this money was stressed.

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 November 2022 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

E49/2022 Presentation from Clean River Kent Group

The representatives from Clean River Kent were not present at the meeting.

E50/2022 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.

Resolved: To receive the report.

E51/2022 Environment and Highways Budget 2022/23

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

A concern having been raised in relation to the figures shown for Climate Change, which demonstrated that no money remained for New Projects, the Development and Delivery Manager provided a breakdown with regard to the figures shown. She was asked if money would be available for Climate Change New Projects within the 2023/24 Budget, however, she was unable to provide assurance in this regard, not having seen the draft Budget.

Resolved: To request the inclusion of a further £3,000 for Climate Change under the New Projects TBC heading within the 2023/24 Budget.

Further queried was the figure of -£350 shown as remaining regarding Jury Recommendations Sculpture and the Development and Delivery Manager explained that this figure should read as zero. She undertook to confirm this with the Finance and Administration Officer.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to confirm the remaining budget figure with regard to the Jury Recommendations Sculpture Budget.

The Committee discussed the remaining budget of £10,000 shown regarding the Town Centre Recommendations Hub, pointing out that £10,000 per year for three years had originally been authorised. The Development and Delivery Manager explained that £122,102 was the remaining Budget for 2022/23 and that this money remained earmarked as shown, this money having been allocated from the 2022/23 development fund. The Chair undertook to discuss the matter with the Town Clerk and to ensure that the items expected by the Committee in each year were shown within the 2023/24 Budget.

Resolved: The Chair to discuss with the Town Clerk the 2023/24 Budget and ensure that those items expected in each year by the Committee are included.

The Development and Delivery Manager provided a breakdown with regard to the River Connectivity and the FRSWG Scheme (Reserve Pot), again explaining that the document before Members showed only figures for 2022/23. It was, however, suggested that these particular Budget lines needed re-examining and that some confusion may have arisen therein.

Resolved: The Town Clerk be requested to re-examine the Budget lines with regard to River Connectivity and FRSWG Scheme (Reserve Pot).

A Member pointed out that she had recently put her South Lakeland District Council Members' locality allowance of £1,000 towards Kendal Town Council footpaths and explained, for the benefit of other District Council Members present at the meeting, how this could be done.

Resolved: To receive the report.

E52/2022 Project Update Report

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

First discussed was New Infrastructure and the handrail at Fountain Brow. Quotes having been sought for the work, a contractor had pointed out that the flags were unsafe. The issue had been reported to Cumbria County Council and assigned to a Highways team. It was suggested, therefore, that the matter be put to one side until April 2023, when Cllrs G Archibald and P Thornton would discuss the matter with the Highways Officer.

Resolved: Cllrs G Archibald and P Thornton to discuss the matter of the handrail at Fountain Brow with the CCC Highways Officer come April 2023.

Also referred to was the proposed handrail at Vicarage Drive, installation of which would require digging in proximity to electrical cables. It had been suggested that work at this site be passed on to the Highways Team, which was accustomed to carrying out this type of work.

Resolved: Work on the handrail at Vicarage Drive to be passed on to the Highways Team.

Consideration was next given to Infrastructure Maintenance and repainting of rusty handrails on Sepulchre Lane. Also discussed was painting the handrail on Stoney Lane. It was, however, pointed out that the Stoney Lane handrail is galvanized and that painting the structure would only create a maintenance issue. It was, therefore, suggested that the views of the Fellside Forum be sought on this matter.

Resolved: To paint the Sepulchre Lane handrail as per received quote.

Resolved: To seek the views of the Fellside Forum with regard to painting the Stoney Lane handrail.

The Development and Delivery Manager provided updates in relation to Climate Change projects.

The Projects Officer referred to Biodiversity Schemes and Grants and the Committee discussed the Living Roof at Blackhall Road Bus Shelter, details of which were provided within the report around the need for structural reinforcement. The options were to either obtain a structural survey at a cost of circa £1,000 or to use the agreed funding to add value

to bus shelters. Members discussed the matter at length and many expressed concerns with regard to the option of obtaining a structural survey, of the opinion that alternatives should be examined. Also discussed was the possibility of exploring other options for adding greenery to Blackhall Road.

Resolved: To pursue Option (b), to use agreed funding to add value to bus shelters which are currently planned/in development (e.g. on Kirkbarrow) and explore alternative greening options for Blackhall Road

The Projects Officer informed the Committee that quotes for wildflowers at Kendal Green had been more expensive than estimated, with an additional £800 being required in relation to turf costs. Whilst there were no other organisations that would be contributing, it was raised that there were people within the community who were willing to assist in preparing the site. The Development and Delivery Manager explained that it would be wise to ask Continental to deal with the removal of the turf, particularly with them being aware of the need to ensure that wildflower areas were maintained going forwards. The Projects Officer also pointed out the need for signage to remind both contractors and the public of this fact. Members expressed the wish for details of this project to feature in the Newsletter, together with before and after pictures.

Resolved: To allocate an additional £800 to the project for wildflowers at Kendal Green from the Biodiversity budget.

Resolved: Officers to arrange for details of the project for wildflowers at Kendal Green to feature within the Newsletter, together with before and after pictures.

The Delivery and Development Officer talked about Footpath Improvements, advising that quotes were being sought for three priority paths, as detailed within the report. With regard to the St. Thomas' School access footpath, she explained that the District Council was planning to make improvements here, so this no longer needed to feature as a Town Council matter. Members asked for this to be monitored to ensure that the work was carried out.

The quotes for Vicarage Drive to Echo Barn Hill were within budget; the Development and Delivery Manager would be meeting with Estates Officers at the District Council to work out the most suitable way forward. Members were keen for the adjacent area of land to be tidied up and the Chair suggested that there was sufficient interest in that area for local people to become involved. The current owners wanted to install a bench on the site and discussions were taking place. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Management Committee had suggested that the Town Council should propose the location for the bench at Vicarage Drive, together with an inscription regarding the Town Council's donation.

The Chair pointed out that the signs on the "happy to chat" benches had all gone and needed replacing as soon as possible, explaining that there had been positive feedback in this regard.

He also raised the fact that the Council's draft Biodiversity Policy, which had been in development for some time, had not come back before the Committee. The Development and Delivery Manager explained that it had been updated and that a staff training event had taken place.

The need to continue to monitor the footpaths following the recent audit was raised and, in addition, the need to prioritise the next batch for improvement. The Projects Officer suggested that suitable criteria could be developed in this regard and that, in addition, local communities could be asked for their views. The Chair stressed the need for a plan in the event that CIL money was being sought in this regard. Further suggested was the need for

footpaths to bring people into the Town Centre, setting out the time to walk there and making people more likely to walk. A query was raised with regard to the Jenkin Rise to Fowl Ing Lane path and the Projects Officer explained that this was scheduled for work by Cumbria County Council. Cllr Archibald also reported positive feedback received regarding the newly installed handrail at the Triangle Community Garden.

Resolved: Officers to produce a set of criteria regarding footpath improvement prioritisation as works are completed.

Resolved: Officers to action Vicerage Drive bench suggestions to speed up transfer.

Resolved: Officers to reinstall Happy to Chat signs

Resolved: To share the updated Biodiversity Policy.

E53/2022 Canal Head Wetland Area

The Committee considered a report which referred to the recent expansion of the allotment site at Canal Head. Following vegetation clearance, it had become apparent that part of this area was liable to flooding and that as this section of the site could not be let out for allotment purposes, it was being proposed that it be developed as a wetland area to enhance biodiversity. Cumbria Wildlife Trust had provided guidance on suitable wildflower species to include, and quotes had been obtained from wildflower suppliers. Kendal Conservation Volunteers had also expressed an interest in taking on the wetland as a community project.

The Development and Delivery Manager further informed Members that the cost of the project could be met from the Biodiversity Project. In addition, she raised the need for suitable signage to indicate to the general public that the wetland area was intentional and of its benefits to the biodiversity.

During discussion, the possibility of the inclusion of a sculpture was raised. The potential links to Kendal in Bloom were raised and the Development and Delivery Manager said that if the project was completed prior to Britain in Bloom, then it would definitely be included within the tour. Members expressed support for the submission by Kendal Conservation Volunteers to grow wildflowers from seed and to plant and assist with ongoing maintenance.

Resolved: To accept the submission from Kendal Conservation Volunteers, the total cost of the project to be £1,300 as set out within the report.

E54/2022 Finkle Street Benches

Note – During consideration of the item, those Members on the Committee who were also Members of South Lakeland District Council, Cllrs G Archibald, J Cornthwaite, E Hennessy and S Long, expressed conflicts of interest, and whilst taking part in the discussion on the item, took no part in the voting thereon.

The Development and Delivery Manager presented a report following a recent walkabout on Finkle Street by representatives from the Town Council, Kendal Futures, Kendal BID and the District Council following complaints from local businesses regarding the low quality public realm. The report referred to four benches located on Finkle Street, photographs of which were included. The benches were in need of repair, the ends rusting, repainting required and the settings loose, causing them to be unstable. Due to current Local Government Reorganisation priorities, neither the District Council nor the County Council were able to

address the issues, and the District Council had therefore recommended that the Town Council adopt the benches in order to speed up improvement progress.

During discussion, concern was expressed with regard to the Town Council taking on someone else's liability. Cllr P Thornton, whilst not a Member of the Committee, referred to the new Westmorland and Furness Council and suggested that there was an opportunity now to negotiate with that Council an annual payment for the Town Council to maintain all benches within the Town moving forward. Members supported a suggestion for the need for discussion on the bigger picture and the potential for the Town Council to provide better local input on this type of issue. In the meantime, it was felt necessary for the Town Council to adopt and improve the benches.

Resolved: To adopt the four benches and obtain improvement quotes to be funded in the next financial year via Public Realm funding allocations.

E55/2022 Serpentine Woods Support

The Development Manager reported that the Town Council had allocated £5,000 towards the creation of additional play opportunities around Fellside following the closure of the small play area at Nobles Rest Park. The report explained how engagement with the community had gathered ideas on how to improve the existing natural play provision at Serpentine Woods. The proposal would create both improvements and stronger promotion to enable more children in Kendal to enjoy the Nature Trail, Alphabet Trail and additional natural play points, details of which were provided.

Members expressed support for the proposals.

Resolved: To approve spending of the allocated £5,000 on the following enhancements, as detailed within the report:-

- (1) Fairy Gate (£500);
- (2) Fairy Green (£1,000);
- (3) Labyrinth (£600);
- (4) Alphabet Trail Leaflet (£1,000);
- (5) Nature Trail Leaflet (£1,000); and
- (6) Additional Natural Play Areas (£900).

E56/2022 Kendal Accreditation

The Development and Delivery Manager provided a verbal update on the revised approach with regard to Kendal Accreditation. She informed Members that costs had been investigated for the creation of an accreditation scheme in conjunction with Green Small Business, as had been agreed at the previous meeting. The Chair and Vice-Chair had, however, been of the opinion that the costs were too high. Alternative approaches were now being considered, including a network informed by conversations with the District Council, Kendal BID, Kendal Futures and CAfS Green Business Support Network. The advice had been not to create an alternative accreditation system in order to avoid reputational risk around greenwashing and instead create a positive, supportive network rather than an accreditation system that the Council could not regularly assess or maintain. It had been recommended to develop a network along the lines of the "Kendal Together Towards" idea

proposed at the last meeting and linking to Sustainability Hub developments, i.e. by hosting training events to kickstart the network and also linking into the existing Zero Carbon Kendal Website and social media. This was similar to the change in food recommendation from “Promote Plant Based Diets” to “Promote Low Carbon Diets” and the Development and Delivery Manager pointed out that the Jury accepted and, to an extent, expected recommendations to be adapted to enable delivery where possible. A full, researched proposal would follow at the March Committee’s meeting.

Members expressed support for this more aspirational idea. Duncan Pollard from SLACC, who was present at the meeting, indicated that he also welcomed the idea.

Resolved: To note the verbal update.

Resolved: For the Development Manager to develop the idea and present a proposal in March.

E57/2022 Kendal Yards Initiative

The Development and Delivery Manager reported that Kendal Futures had been hosting Place Making Groups with community members and Kendal Town Council as part of achieving the Kendal Vision. Various improvements had been discussed, with Kendal yards having been researched as an aspect of Kendal’s public realm that required improvements. Together with Rag Tag Arts, Kendal Futures had identified four priority yards, based on their proximity to the Town Centre, current condition and how many people used them as an entrance to their property or business. The total costs of the project would £10,000, approximately £2,500 per yard. Enhancements would be bespoke to each yard, but likely to include planting, bin storage, pop up/one off events, murals and hanging installations (where possible). Each enhancement would involve residents and community members to ensure that the designs were approved and supported by those who regularly interacted with the yards.

The Town Council had been asked for a contribution of £2,500, with the additional match funding being sourced by Kendal Futures. Designs would be shared with councillors as they developed. Public realm funding of £3,000 had been vired towards developing an accreditation system, and could be available to fund this initiative.

Members expressed strong support for the scheme, of the view that the Kendal Yards could be a great asset to the Town. A suggestion was raised for artwork to be brought before the Committee for authorisation prior to installation in order to ensure sensitivity, bearing in mind that the Town Council would be accountable. Further raised was the potential for other local artists to become involved in addition to Rag Tag Arts.

Resolved: To approve a contribution from Kendal Town Council of £2,500 towards the Kendal Yards Initiative via virement of Accreditation funding.

E58/2022 Cargo Bike Summary Report

The Development and Delivery Manager presented an update from SLACC in relation to the cargo bike project. The report provided details with regard to recent trials in which around 20 organisations had been involved. Since then, the Development and Delivery Manager advised that the organisation had provided a summary of nine potential options that could be researched further to assess their viability and need in the community, as follows:-

- (1) develop a network of self-employed cargo-bike riders;
- (2) bike library hub:-
 - (a) short term (based on Staveley Community e-bike model);
 - (b) and community café long term (part of the sustainability hub?);
- (3) provision of “try out” opportunities and buddy rides;
- (4) business/organisations trials;
- (5) shared bikes/trailers with businesses/organisations according to geographical locations;
- (6) facilitate businesses to buy their own;
- (7) invite existing cargo bike logistics companies to operate in Kendal and area;
- (8) researching the last/first mile delivery opportunities; and
- (9) carrying people by bike.

The Development and Delivery Manager undertook to circulate the list of options to Committee Members following the meeting.

Discussion took place on the pros and cons of cargo bikes. Cllr P Thornton, whilst not a Member of the Committee, suggested that a Kendal cyclist might travel by bike to a supermarket for their weekly shop, return home with shopping using a cargo bike, and then bring back the cargo bike to the store. He did not feel cargo bikes to be of use to businesses unless traffic was restricted within the Town. Concern was expressed in relation to the safety issue within the Town Centre, with cargo bikes being difficult to manoeuvre and, although some felt that cargo bikes were a good idea in theory, they felt they would not be suitable in Kendal until the Town became more cycle friendly. It was felt that cargo bikes may be a novelty idea and that they were too specialist and niche. Also pointed out was the existing option to use a trailer on a bike. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Staveley model worked well due to its pleasant cycling routes. The potential of holding discussions with fast food delivery companies regarding use of cargo bikes was, however, raised.

Members were informed that Kendal Futures were looking at an e-bike scheme and that an e-bike scheme was also on the Stricklandgate House agenda.

Resolved: To note the update and feedback to SLACC.

Resolved: The Development and Delivery Manager to circulate the list of options provided by SLACC to all Members of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.