

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, 17 July 2023, at 7.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

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

In attendance: Democratic Services Assistant (Inge Booth), Projects Officer (Anne-Marie Sanderson), Development Manager (Helen Watson-Moriarty) and Cllr P Thornton.

E16/2023 Apologies

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr K Simpson.

E17/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised.

E18/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

No issues were considered for exclusion.

E19/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 May 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

E20/2023 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Development Manager advised that all items included within the report had either been actioned or were included for consideration within the agenda.

E7/2023 (Project Update Report) – In response to a query regarding Bowling Fell improvements, the Development Manager advised Members that she was due to attend a meeting on site with Westmorland and Furness Council officers on the following day with a view to exploring possibilities for improvements. On being asked if Members could attend, she said that they would be welcome and that the group was due to meet outside Kendal Town Hall at 11.00 a.m. Cllr R Russell undertook to attend.

E11/2023 (Oxenholme Signage Proposal) – In response to a query on the contract sign-off process, the Development Manager explained that her contact at Avanti had not been back in touch with her for some time and so the Station Master at Oxenholme was looking into the

matter on her behalf. She had explained to Avanti that funding was in place and a design drafted, however, that permission had not yet been received from the company.

E13/2023 (Biodiversity Policy) – The Development Manager explained that she would be putting out a press release in relation to the Council's Biodiversity Policy after this evening's meeting and further drew attention to the related item on the agenda in relation to pesticides.

Resolved: To receive the report.

E21/2023 Verbal Reports from Outside Bodies

Cllr C Russell provided an update on the work being carried out by Natural Kendal, reporting that the group met on a regular basis. A proposal was being put together for core funding for the organisation; the Website had been completed and was due to be launched. Conversations had taken place with experts in biodiversity within the Town and some had indicated that they were keen to become involved. The group had set up a community interest company.

Having been asked to provide more details on the organisation's brief, aims and the area to be covered, Cllr Russell explained that it would cover the whole of Kendal and the surrounding area. Major issues to be considered were in relation to connectivity and green corridors along the river and links to the wider catchment of the Kent down to the sea. In addition, consideration was being given to footpaths within the area and as to how they could be used to enhance biodiversity.

Whilst the work of a like-minded group was welcomed, attention was drawn to those areas which had already been considered by the Environment and Highways Committee and to the need to ensure that the work being carried out by Natural Kendal was not counter-productive. The need for all such groups to work alongside one another was stressed.

Resolved: To note the verbal update on the work of Natural Kendal.

E22/2023 Project Update Report

The Development Manager presented a report including an update of ongoing projects and Members were offered the opportunity to ask questions.

Finkle Street Benches – This project was on track and was due to be completed by the end of the week.

20mph – The additional data had now been gathered by Westmorland and Furness Council and the Policy was due to be reviewed in September. The Chair informed Members that Westmorland and Furness' Overview and Scrutiny Committee was due to consider the draft policy the following week, prior to the Highways and Transport Strategic Board. Consultation work could then commence and the matter brought into the public domain, with the map of Phase 1 being released following adoption of the policy. Discussion took place around publicity, the method of consultation, costs and the importance of ensuring that the project took place. Members were informed that Phase 1 would relate purely to signage, with Phase 2 potentially extending zones and installing traffic calming measures. The fact that most people did not want to break the law was raised and so it was hoped that the measures would be self-enforcing.

Mintsfeet Development – In response to a query, the Development Manager explained that there were a number of projects which required engagement with senior leadership at Westmorland and Furness Council. She informed Members that she had spoken with the

Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities on all the projects being worked on, including footpaths. Mintsfeet was on the list and the Development Manager hoped that this would be considered in time for an application to the Shared Prosperity Fund although, she was unsure about support from Westmorland and Furness Council. Discussion took place in relation to proposals for football pitches and pump tracks at both this site and at Kendal Castle and the need to revisit this matter was raised.

Resolved: Proposals in relation to football pitches and pump tracks in the areas of Mintsfeet and Kendal Castle to be revisited by the Committee.

Solar Made Easy Kendal – Reference was made to the potential for a scheme for a group approach to solar companies, however, the Development Manager explained that this was similar to the current CAfS scheme. Cllr P Thornton undertook to pass on details regarding the group scheme to the Development Manager. Also raised was the need for clarity around planning consent in relation to installation of solar panels and also regarding people's perception of solar panels. It was suggested that Westmorland and Furness planning officers might be invited to a meeting of Kendal Town Council's Planning Committee to seek views on the installation of solar panels in the Conservation Area. It was felt that the Town Council would then have an opportunity to share its more relaxed views with the planners who strictly observed planning guidance on the matter.

Resolved: To invite planning officers from Westmorland and Furness Council to a future meeting in order to discuss the matter of installation of solar panels in the Conservation Area.

Living Roof Blackhall Road – In response to a query, the Committee was informed that no response had yet been received from BT. Living roofs on bus shelters on Blackhall Road had been deemed not to be cost-effective.

Wildflowers at Kendal Green – It was pointed out that the flowers were spectacular and that bees were loving the area.

Resolved: To note the report.

E23/2023 Environment and Highways Budget 2023/24 and Development Budget 2023/24

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

The need for all Members of the Committee to feel confident in understanding the financial information provided and to take responsibility for this budget was stressed. To this end, it was suggested that training was necessary and further suggested that it may be helpful for the Chair to run through the budget at each meeting via slides.

Resolved: Training on interpretation of budget information to be arranged for Members of the Environment and Highways Committee.

Resolved: To note the report.

E24/2023 Cumbria Bee Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Project Officer. Pollinators and other insects were under threat, and many were experiencing declines due to habitat loss, pesticide exposure, disease and climate change.

The Cumbria Local Nature Partnership had recently launched “Cumbria’s Plan Bee - A Pollinator Action Plan”. The plan urged everyone in the county – communities, the new local authorities and other councils, farmers, landowners and businesses – to sign a pledge and take action to help Cumbria’s pollinating insects.

The plan also included actions that could be taken by local authorities to support pollinators, including raising awareness of pollinators and their habitat needs by supporting schools and increasing the number of young people who understand the value of their local pollinators.

The Committee was being asked to consider signing a pledge to support pollinating insects. Furthermore, it was being asked to allocate £360 to provide a bee house for each school in Kendal. These could be locally made and would be supplied to schools together with information on complementary actions that could be taken to support pollinators, for example, leaving some grass to grow long and planting pollinator-friendly plants. Members were advised that £5,267 remained in the Biodiversity New Projects tbc budget.

During discussion, concerns were raised with regard to the fact that honey bees were not necessarily good for the environment. This led to the suggestion for the need for a discussion with the Allotments Committee with regard to control of the number of hives being kept on Council allotments and the need to strike a balance between native and honey bees. Members, however, welcomed the proposal, also acknowledging the fact that non-native honey bees also acted as pollinators. It was further pointed out that two or three quotes should be sought in relation to the making of the bee houses.

Resolved: To sign a pledge to support pollinating insects.

Resolved: To allocate £360 from the Biodiversity New Projects budget for the provision of a bee house for each school in Kendal as outlined above, to be locally made, with two to three quotes first being sought.

E25/2023 Pesticides

The Committee considered a report from the Projects Officer which explained that there was currently a campaign, led by Pesticide Action Network (PAN UK), to create pesticide-free towns across the country. Pesticide was an umbrella term that referred to a wide range of compounds, including herbicides (designed to kill plants), insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, molluscicides and nematicides and more.

The report concerned the use of herbicides in Kendal’s public spaces.

Reasons for wishing to go pesticide-free were numerous, but included contamination of local water supplies; the potential impact of pesticides on human health, the environment, biodiversity, and pollinator populations; and public concern.

Over 80 councils across the UK had either entirely stopped using herbicides or put measures in place to significantly reduce their use.

Details of alternative methods of weed control were provided within the report, including hot foam systems; hand weeding; acetic acid dilutions; manual approaches; flame treatment; steel brushing; high pressure hot water treatment; and electronic control systems.

Kendal Town Council was currently assessing its use of pesticides in line with the Council’s Biodiversity Policy which had been adopted by Full Council on 5 June, 2023.

Westmorland and Furness Council currently used glyphosate-based herbicides on pavements and in parks.

The Committee was asked to consider drafting a formal request to Westmorland and Furness Council to phase out the use of pesticides and trial alternative options for weed control.

The Committee discussed the matter at length and, whilst Members expressed strong support, there were also a number of concerns. These were in relation to how invasive species would be dealt with, there being no other effective means of removal other than to inject them directly with pesticide. In addition, questions were raised regarding the alternative methods suggested within the report, some of which were not in keeping with the Council's Climate Change policy, as well as around additional costs.

It was pointed out that Kendal Town Council only used pesticides on the small triangle of crazy paving nearby the Duke of Cumberland, and it was, therefore, suggested that the Town Council might lead by example and cease the use of chemicals altogether. It was further suggested that the Townscape Officer might be asked to consider patch testing different methods. Another suggestion was for the Town Council to offer to carry out a trial in a Westmorland and Furness Council area.

The potential to carry out research into safer chemicals which may be more appropriate for Council use was raised. It was felt that the Town Council had more work to carry out on its stance prior to approaching Westmorland and Furness Council with a formal request to phase out the use of pesticides.

The Projects Officer emphasised the fact that there were numerous case studies which had proved that it was possible to manage public places without the use of herbicides or pesticides.

Following discussion, it was proposed that a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Environment and Highways Committee for clarity around herbicides and pesticides, examples of other Councils which had ceased to use chemicals and success rates, information on the remaining stock of weed control chemicals kept by the Town Council, etc.

Resolved: To carry out further research as outlined above, with a further report to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

E26/2023 Serpentine Natural Play Update

The Development Manager reported that, in January 2023, Kendal Town Council had allocated £5,000 towards creating additional play and promotion opportunities around Fellside following the closure of the small play area in Nobles Rest Park.

Councillors had agreed to fund a variety of interventions, details of which were provided.

As the project had progressed, some of the funding needed to be reallocated to achieve core aims. It was, therefore, being recommended that the Committee reconsider the reallocation of the £900 for 'Additional Natural Play Ideas' to improving the Nature Trail way markers to ensure the Nature Trail had consistent way markers and look-out posts throughout the trail to complement the leaflet.

The Development Manager provided details on, and circulated copies of, the two separate draft leaflets relating to the Alphabet Trail and the Nature Trail. She explained that it was

hoped to sign off the final drafts within the next couple of weeks, with a view to launching them in September.

Resolved: To reallocate the sum of £900 for “Additional Natural Play Ideas” to fund improvements to the Nature Trail way markers, as outlined above.

E27/2023 Divestment and Banking

The Development Manager presented a report which informed Members that Divest UK was a national grass root organisation which was calling on public and private institutions to support divestment from fossil fuels and take action to secure a safe and healthy planet for future generations.

A Divest Cumbria group had been set up and was in the process of contacting town and parish councils regarding the Cumbria Group Pension fund and its credentials.

A number of local authorities had divested their investments in accordance with their declarations on climate change and included Waltham Forest, Southward, Islington, Lambeth and Cardiff. The Committee was being asked to consider support for Divest Cumbria.

The report further explained that Barclays Bank was widely acknowledged as one of the twelve global banks which continued to invest in fossil fuel extraction, including via the Tar Sands Pipeline Project.

The Town Council currently held one of its accounts with Barclays and, in accordance with its Climate Emergency declaration, could choose to switch to an alternative ethical banking provider.

In presenting the report, the Development Manager drew attention to the fact that the item and a decision actually fell within the remit of the Management Committee. However, Climate Change fell within the remit of the Environment and Highways Committee and, therefore, it could make recommendations to the Management Committee on the issue.

Whilst Members, on the whole, expressed support for the principle of switching to an alternative banking provider, the need to maintain value for money for Council Tax payers was acknowledged. In addition, strong concerns were raised with regard to making changes that could put risk to other people’s pension funds.

Resolved: To ask the Management Committee to give consideration to the matter.

E28/2023 CIL Proposals

The Development Manager reported that, at May’s Environment and Highways Committee meeting, Councillors had been informed of a new process to allocate funding to New Infrastructure projects via existing Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

Councillors had subsequently been contacted via email to share project ideas. Details of the ideas received to date were provided, as follows:-

Proposer	Project	Costs
Cllr Archibald	Replacement handrail alongside Fellside Methodist Church	£3750
Cllr Archibald	New bench at Windermere Road bus stop	£750 (approx)
Cllr Blunden	Community Water Fountain (options include renovating the existing Brewery Arts fountain or installing a new (internal or external) one in the Town Centre)	£5,000 (approx)
Cllr Blunden	New access ramp at 'The Eddington'	£10,000
Cllr Hennessy	20mph contribution	£11,600
TOTAL requested		£31,100
TOTAL CIL Available		£85,000

The Committee was being asked to review the suggestions, against the criteria that the initiative was additional to the statutory services of Westmorland and Furness Council, and to decide which were to be recommended for consideration by the Management Committee.

The Development Manager explained that "The Eddington" was the former United Reform Church on Highgate which Waste into Wellbeing were exploring as a venue for a new kitchen and climate change hub.

Whilst support was expressed for a community water fountain, it was felt that this should be situated within the Town Hall and not by renovating the existing one at Brewery Arts which had lead piping and may lead to health and safety issues. Attention was also drawn to the fact that officers at the former South Lakeland District Council had indicated that refurbishment would not be permitted. Also raised was the potential for the purchase of two new units at the suggested cost of £5,000, with an additional fountain to be installed in the Market Hall.

Resolved: All of the five suggestions outlined above to be recommended for consideration by the Management Committee for Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

E29/2023 Jury Recommendations Review Working Group

The Development Manager reported that, at May's Committee, a working group to review the Jury Recommendations had been established.

The Group had met on 5 June and had focused on the Council's ability to action, its impact and affordability of the various recommendations and had noted that there was always trade-offs and tensions.

Best practice from elsewhere had been cited, including the Global Sustainable Development goals, aligning with the Lancaster Jury experience and Cornwall's decision wheel.

Alex Downes had provided an overview of the actions that Westmorland and Furness were currently progressing, such as EV charging, planning, transport, trees and creating a circular economy tool to enable the sharing of resources. He had stressed that all were

opportunities to work together on normalising best practice particularly around renewables and business support.

The group had discussed the advantages of viewing the recommendations as overarching goals for the entire town rather than recommendations Kendal Town Council had to adopt as their own objectives.

Kendal Town Council's areas of influence and activity had been discussed. The idea of matching recommendations against existing activity, it had been felt, would create better stories and therefore a larger sphere of influence to engage others in helping the Council to achieve the town-wide recommendations.

Therefore, Kendal Town Council would become an organisation that tested ideas, shared best practice and promoted sustainability to others in a positive way. The Town Council would actively consider its impacts and shout about its journey, focusing on what it could do within areas that were stable and known, for example, it would always have to water the civic planting.

Ideas had been shared around current influencing opportunities as follows:-

- Within our green spaces (Alex confirmed this is already working) via wildflower projects and biodiversity grants
- Our engagement via the newsletter, Zero Carbon Kendal FB and instagram
- Our funding and grants – we could ask for more evidence of carbon reduction in application forms and offer free sustainable advise sessions to help create carbon reduction statements and visions for each festival we support
- Our civic events – we can transform the way we feed guests, influence how they arrive to our events and ensure the content of our events conveys the messages of the Jury
- 20mph – we can demonstrate how 20mph support traffic reduction (a Jury recommendation) via supporting the consultation with positive stories / pledges from people who will switch to bikes when 20mph is introduced
- Our planting – we can plant sustainable, drought resilient plants and develop projects to harvest rainwater to water them
- Our vehicles – we can explore EV van option and potentially reduce the size of the van if harvesting rainwater is successful. We can also utilise the van as a blank canvas to celebrate what we are doing
- Our allotments – we can engage our allotment holders to reduce pesticides and donate surplus food to WIW via a volunteer led cargo bike delivery service
- Our sustainability hub – We can be an active partner in the hub developments by commissioning murals, creating a library/resource space and consistent messages about what is currently happening in Kendal and what is in development
- Our decision process – We can utilise the Cornwall decision wheel and consider how potential projects support engagement by thinking about the story it will create and who can we tell it to so KTC can become an open source of best practice

Suggested actions were as follows:-

- Integrate Cornwall's decision-making wheel and 'story making potential' into future E&H proposals
- Develop a cargo bike allotment surplus proposal
- Develop the sustainability hub with civic events in mind
- Develop a rainwater harvesting map and action proposal
- Resurrect EV vehicle conversations

- Develop a sustainable planting approach – utilise Kendal Futures board member expertise to inform tender proposal
- Include carbon reduction support and evidence in community grants criteria and grant process redevelopment
- Continue promoting and processing biodiversity grants, wildflower planting, 20mph and current engagement routes to maintain momentum and demonstrate progress

The Committee was being asked to consider the Working group action points and to confirm support or otherwise for progression in this direction. The Development Manager suggested that the Committee might wish to concentrate on what the Town Council could do to demonstrate support for the recommendations.

Members welcomed the action points and the direction being taken. A query was raised as to the potential for the Town Council to lease the former South Lakeland District Council's electric vehicle and to wrap it in the Town Council's livery.

Resolved: To look into the potential for the Town Council to lease the former South Lakeland District Council's electric vehicle.

Resolved: To confirm support for progression in the direction detailed above.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.