

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, 15 January 2024, at 7.00 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	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		

In attendance: Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw), Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant), and Anne-Marie Sanderson (Projects Officer).

E57/2023 Chair's Announcement

The Chair informed Members of the recent passing of Windermere Town Mayor, Cllr Leith Hallatsch. The Committee paid silent tribute to Leith, who had been a passionate advocate for his community. The Chair asked the Town Clerk to pass on the Committee's condolences to Leith's family and friends and colleagues on Windermere Town Council.

E58/2023 Apologies

There were no apologies for absence, all Members of the Committee being present at the meeting.

E59/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

E60/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

E61/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 November 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

E62/2023 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Projects Officer indicated that work on the Dark Skies Project was due to commence at the end of February and that the remaining items were covered within the agenda for the meeting.

Attention was drawn to Minute No.E51/2023 (Easy Transport Kendal Proposal) of the previous meeting of the Committee and to the fact that the action required in relation to its resolution did not appear on the Minute Action Sheet.

Resolved: To reinstate the action in relation to Minute No.E51/2023 within the Minute Action Sheet.

Resolved: To note the Minute Action Sheet.

E63/2023 Project Update Report

The Committee was presented with a report including an update of ongoing projects.

Discussion took place on Public Realm Improvements at Bowling Fell and as to what work should be prioritised as regards access or interpretation. Committee Members felt that it was important to seek the views of the relevant local councillors and the Town Clerk suggested that he would also approach Fellside Forum for their input. In addition, it was raised that the naming of the area would need to form part of the discussions with Members and local interested groups. It was, however, felt that all three of the area's names (Castle Howe, Bowling Fell and the Monument) should be reflected within the interpretative signs.

Resolved: To approach the relevant local councillors and Fellside Forum with regard to prioritisation of works at Bowling Fell.

Discussion took place on the LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) which had been a key piece of work carried out by the former Cumbria County Council and the need for the Town Council to take a leadership role on how this affected Kendal, also involving Kendal Futures. Raised, however, was the need not to simply focus on the LCWIP but to also bear in mind the work currently being carried out by Westmorland and Furness Council in relation to footpaths and cycleways throughout its area. The need to push Westmorland and Furness Council officers on this and on 20mph was stressed and the Chair drew attention to his forthcoming meeting with Westmorland and Furness Council on 20mph at which he would raise cycling and walking. The difficulty in developing cycle-friendly routes within Kendal was, however, highlighted. Attention was further drawn to the cycle route on Shap Road which, it was pointed out, was not yet an entirely resolved cycle route.

Resolved: To follow up discussions on cycle ways within Kendal and to include as an action point within the project update report.

Raised was the question of future reporting of the Flood Relief Group which currently reported to the Planning Committee, it being pointed out that the Group's work now pertained better to the Environment Committee, with the initial work having been Planning related. The Town Clerk agreed that now was a good time to take a view on where the Group should sit and to re-allocate the task for the wider corridor agenda, with the Council's reserve allocation for the glass panels due to be paid after 1 April. He pointed out that this was a decision for the Management Committee.

Resolved: To ask the Management Committee to consider where the Flood Relief Group should sit moving forward with regard to discussions on the wider corridor agenda.

Resolved: To note the Project Update Report.

E64/2023 Environment Budget 2023/24

The Town Clerk presented a report on the Environment Budget 2023/24. He referred to a quote received earlier in the day of £750 to £800 to repair the bench on Burneside Road which would come from the Infrastructure Maintenance Budget. He was also able to confirm that Westmorland and Furness Council would not be collecting money from the Town Council this year for footway lighting due to the relevant Portfolio Holder having called for a review of how footway lighting was funded. The figure put aside for this had been £4,200, however, the Town Clerk felt that it was prudent to keep this figure in the 2024/25 Budget and then, if unspent, to put that amount back into the Footway Lighting Budget to spend on improvements and to make the Town Council Dark Skies compliant. Members welcomed this stance and asked for Footway Lighting to be added to the Project Update Report.

Resolved: If unspent, to authorise the Responsible Finance Officer to carry forward the sum of £4,200 into next year's Budget for improvements to Footway Lighting.

Resolved: To include Footway Lighting within the Project Update Report.

Clarification was provided around where projects remained incomplete this year, with some money remaining unspent as a result of the current staffing issues. It was pointed out that any money allocated could be carried through the funding cycle. The Town Clerk explained that it was not always easy to spend project money, however, was pleased to report that the first tranche of support for the sustainable hub at 106 Highgate had now been passed to Waste into Wellbeing.

Raised was the importance of the Eddington Centre as a key resource within the Town and the fact that the Council should keep in touch with the project. The need to keep bureaucracy to a minimum was, however, stressed and the Town Clerk drew attention to the relevant budget line which would ensure oversight of the situation.

Resolved: To include the Eddington Centre within the Project Update Report and to alter the title within the Budget from "Climate Hub and Café" to "Eddington Centre".

Some concern was expressed around the footpath from Wattsfield Lane to the Sewage Works and the Vice-Chair undertook to follow this matter up with Westmorland and Furness Council. The Town Clerk drew attention to the fact that this had come forward as a new project and to a £25,000 offer of support from United Utilities for improvements to this footpath. He suggested that this project should be included within the Project Update Report, pointing out that Government arrangements would need to be followed to ensure that the money was spent correctly. The need for a composite footpath log was raised. Attention was drawn to the ambition of the relevant Westmorland and Furness Portfolio Holder to upgrade footpaths throughout the area and the significant figure within that Council's Budget for this work.

Resolved: The Vice-Chair to pursue the matter of the footpath from Wattsfield Lane to the Sewage Works with Westmorland and Furness Council.

Resolved: To include the Wattsfield Lane to Sewage Works footpath project within the Project Update Report.

E65/2023 Natural Kendal

Cllr C Russell, having first outlined the history behind Natural Kendal, provided a verbal update on Natural Kendal's current progress and their plans for a conference in May 2024. The aim of the conference was to publicly launch Natural Kendal; to encourage people to

join in with groups actively promoting biodiversity within and around Kendal; and to establish Natural Kendal as the Nature Recovery Partnership/Network for Kendal, bringing together the work of Kendal Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and all local groups concerned about delivering nature recovery in Kendal. The conference was due to be held on Saturday, 18 May 2024, at Kendal Museum and Kendal College Art and Media Faculty.

Cllr Russell hoped that the Town Council would continue to back the initiative, explaining that whilst the Community Interest Company was to be maintained, a partnership was now also being formed which, he hoped, that Westmorland and Furness Council would also become part of.

Resolved: To note the verbal update.

E66/2023 Oxenholme Environment

The Town Clerk reported that the Council had proposed that new bins be installed on Helmside Road in Oxenholme. Westmorland and Furness Council officers had assessed the proposed sites and had recommended that no new bins be installed. Only one site (at the Station end of Helmside Road) had been considered to be practical and safe, if the Town Council wished to insist on installation. Other issues included the improvements to or maintenance of noticeboards, pavements, open spaces and road safety, that would improve the environment in that neighbourhood.

The Town Clerk asked the Committee to consider the response from Westmorland and Furness Council on the Town Council's requests for more bins on Helmside Road and to consider what further measures were required to ensure that Oxenholme village received the necessary investment in infrastructure services provided by the Town Council.

A lengthy discussion ensued, during which Members expressed the wish to offer support for the installation of a bin at the Station End of Helmside Road. Also discussed was the need to put out regular requests to all Town Council Members to ask what they felt was required in terms of improvements within their areas, also recommending that they discuss the issues with their local Westmorland and Furness Council Member. The Committee could then consider any suggestions to see if the work could be carried out by the Town Council or whether to send on a request to the Westmorland and Furness Council Locality Board.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Westmorland and Furness Council might currently be carrying out a strategic review of bins within its area.

The Town Clerk pointed out that Westmorland and Furness Council had to be relied on to empty bins. He further stressed the need for the development of policies and criteria in relation to improvements on bins, railings, lighting, etc. He referred to the review of lighting also currently being carried out by Westmorland and Furness Council, however, also pointed out that the Town Council was a Footway Lighting Authority in its own right. He explained that the Projects Officer and himself were currently looking at options for solar installations for footway lighting which may be suitable in some isolated areas, particularly in locations where Westmorland and Furness Council did not feel that they did not meet their criteria.

Members wished to clarify whether a new bin, if approved, would be emptied by Westmorland and Furness Council. The Town Clerk explained how this would work, with the Town Council sponsoring a bin and paying a sum each year in order for it to be emptied on a regular basis. He explained that the cost of emptying the proposed bin would be £450 per annum. It was, however, noted that the Council currently paid less for emptying of the bins that it already sponsored. To this end, it was suggested that a detailed report should be brought to a future meeting of the Committee, including a clear framework and policy on bins

and that the relevant Westmorland and Furness Council Portfolio Holder should be approached with regard to the higher tier's policy, that council having responsibility for bins.

Resolved: The Town Clerk to bring a full and detailed report on bins, including a clear framework and policy, to a future meeting of the Committee, also liaising with the relevant Westmorland and Furness Council Portfolio Holder with regard that that tier's policy.

Part Two

The following item of business was considered following a resolution to exclude the Press and Public, due to the confidential or commercial sensitivity.

E67/2023 Mintsfeet Footpath

The Town Clerk reported that contractors working on the Environment Agency flood risk management scheme had suggested that they would be well-placed to commence footpath work on the Town Council land at Mintsfeet. This was with regard to the improvement of the footpath between Mintsfeet nature area and Dockray Bridge, and its connection to Beezon Fields nature area. He further reported on initial costings and necessary procedures to be followed by putting the work out to tender through the Government Portal.

Resolved: To put the work regarding improvements of the footpath between Mintsfeet nature area and Dockray Bridge, and its connection to Beezon Fields nature area, out to tender through the Government Portal.

During discussion, the Town Clerk having advised on the amount of funding available from the Town Council, it was suggested that Westmorland and Furness Council should be approached on the matter seeking financial support for the remaining amount.

Resolved: To write to the Westmorland and Furness Council Finance Officer, relevant Portfolio Holder and Locality Board, copying in the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, seeking financial support for the remaining amount of funding required for the improvement of the footpath between Mintsfeet nature area and Dockray Bridge, and its connection to Beezon Fields.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that Westmorland and Furness Council was currently carrying out a review of pathways throughout its area and Members were keen to hear more about this plan which, it was felt, offered a great amount of potential. In addition, Members expressed an interest in finding out about the work of the South Lakeland Locality Board and its working groups. They wished to find out how the Town Council could become involved and, in addition, how it could be represented on the Group.

Resolved: To invite the relevant Westmorland and Furness Portfolio Holder to address the Committee on its area-wide footpath plan and, in addition to invite the Chair of Westmorland and Furness Council's South Lakeland Locality Board to address the Committee on its work and that of its working groups, and to advise on how the Town Council can become involved and represented.

Part One

The remainder of the meeting was re-opened to the Press and Public.

Note – Cllr G Archibald took the Chair for the following item of business.

E68/2023 Policies Requiring Development/Update

The Town Clerk referred to discussion within the previous item on a bin policy (Minute No.E67/2023 above) and reported that officers were currently drafting policies for consideration by the Committee in the following areas: bus shelters and their adoption; footway lighting; bins; footpath improvements and maintenance; pollinator projects; Japanese knotweed; and tree management. He asked Members whether there were any other areas where policies needed to be developed to ensure the equitable and sustainable distribution of its resources, in line with the Council Plan.

Raised was the need to refer to “invasive species” and not merely “Japanese knotweed”. Members were keen to ensure that Kendal Town Council’s distinct perspective on cycling and walking was addressed and, in addition, to stress that the Council worked in partnership with Kendal Futures on this aspect, particularly with regard to any consultation on the matter and how routes might be developed.

Resolved: To refer to “invasive species” rather than “Japanese Knotweed” and to develop a policy on cycling and walking, as outlined above.

Note – Cllr E Hennessy resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

E69/2023 Items for Press Coverage and the Newsletter

Consideration was given to which items from the meeting should be the subject of press coverage this week.

Resolved: To publicise the following:

- (1) improvements to Bowling Fell around accessibility and waymarking, as well as interpretation of the site’s historical significance and some pollinator planting;
- (2) footpath improvements; and
- (3) the formal ceremony relating to the award of the biodiversity grant to Friends of Nobles rest.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.