

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, 13 November 2023, 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	Apologies	Cllr J Cornthwaite	Present
Cllr M Helme	Present	Cllr E Hennessy (Chair)	Apologies
Cllr S Long	Present	Cllr C Russell	Present
Cllr K Simpson	Apologies		

In attendance: Town Clerk (Chris Bagshaw), Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant), Anne-Marie Sanderson (Projects Officer) and Helen Watson-Moriarty (Development Manager). In addition, Chris Rowley, Trustee of South Lakes Action on Climate Change (SLACC) was in attendance to contribute under Agenda Item No.7 (Project Update Report). One member of the public was present as an observer.

Note - In the absence of Cllr E Hennessy, Chair, Cllr G Archibald, Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

E41/2023 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs D Brown, E Hennessy (Chair) and K Simpson.

E42/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

E43/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

E44/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 September 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

E45/2023 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Development Manager pointed out that all of the items were either complete or were included for consideration on the agenda.

Resolved: To note the report.

E46/2023 New Terms of Reference

Members were reminded that the Environment and Highways Committee had been renamed the Environment Committee at the meeting of Full Council held on 31 July 2023. Members had welcomed the proposed Committee Structure and Terms of Reference and had expressed enthusiasm for the renewed commitment for the Environment Committee to tackle climate change.

The Committee's Terms of Reference were restated within the report included on the agenda.

Resolved: To note the Environment Committee's new Terms of Reference.

Note – During consideration of the following item, Cllr G Archibald declared an interest as an observer on SLACC. Cllr M Helme also declared an interest due to her involvement with Outside In.

E47/2023 Project Update Report

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

The Development Manager introduced Chris Rowley, Trustee of SLACC which managed Waste into Wellbeing, who was present to provide an update on significant developments in relation to the Climate Hub and Café.

Chris Rowley addressed the Committee, referring to the Citizens' Jury recommendation of two years ago regarding the need for a physical presence in Kendal of a Climate Hub to support people over the next 20 to 30 years. He pointed out the challenges involved and referred to a decision which had been made for the provision of funding to create a physical presence. He drew attention to the current best option location of the United Reformed Church Hall and provided a detailed update on partnership work which had been carried out to secure this property. Significant progress had been made, including confirmation from the owner the building could become a community asset managed by a community interest company. Terms had been negotiated to enable work to start on that building. Heads of Agreement set out not only the terms but also indicated that ownership of the building would eventually transfer to the Community Interest Company. Of significance was the fact that the Hall would ultimately come into an equivalent to public ownership. To this end, Mr Rowley asked whether the allocated funding could now be released by Kendal Town Council, and he drew attention to a Memorandum of Understanding which was ready for signing.

The Vice-Chair in the Chair, whilst showing support, explained that it was for Town Council officers to make this decision, first ensuring that appropriate conditions and legalities were in place. He thanked Mr Rowley for his contribution to the meeting and offered Members an opportunity to ask questions.

Members offered congratulations on progress in terms of the securing of the building, welcoming the fact that the Town Council's financial contribution was going to a worthwhile public cause. Members expressed a desire for regular monitoring reports to be submitted to the Town Council and the Town Clerk confirmed that this could be included within the Memorandum of Understanding. Attention was also drawn to CIL funding which had been applied for towards the provision of a disabled lift, with Waste into Wellbeing also having identified a contribution. The CIL application had been deferred until Environment

Committee funding was drawn down and it had, therefore, been recommended that they re-apply once the Memorandum of Understanding had been signed.

Resolved: To reconsider the request for CIL funding for a disabled lift for Waste into Wellbeing via the Management Committee.

Resolved: Officer to consider the release of funding to Waste into Wellbeing, first ensuring that appropriate conditions and legalities are in place.

Resolved: To note the Project Update Report.

E48/2023 Environment Budget Proposals

(a) The Committee considered a report on the Environment and Highways Budget 2023/24.

With regard to Budget Code 9411, Green Mintsfeet Development, it was suggested that the name related to the time when the projected related more to the Cumbria County Council depot and that "Green" could now be removed from the title.

Resolved: To remove the word "Green" from the title of Budget Code 9411.

In response to a query in relation to Budget Code 9308 and Cllrs Contributions, the Development Manager explained that the figure of £6,700 was the total which had been contributed by Members. Only Cllr S Long's Cllr Contribution had been specifically for Kirkbarrow Connections. It was suggested that all Members should be updated on progress in relation to the Kirkbarrow footpaths.

Resolved: The Committee and local ward councillors to be provided via email with an update on Kirkbarrow Connections.

In response to a query, the Projects Officer confirmed that the funding allocated to the small footpath in the Vicarage Drive area was sufficient.

The need to examine the list of projects and to ensure that they could be delivered was stressed and that, where this was not possible, for the allocated funding to be put back into the Development Budget for other aspirations. The Development Manager explained that two projects were dependent on partners:

- Oxenholme Signage awaited permission from Network Rail and this was currently being sought by the train provider on behalf of the Town Council.
- The Kendal Yards project which was being carried out in partnership with Kendal Futures was dependent on landowner permission and upgrading the condition of the walls for murals.

Resolved: To note the report.

(b) The Committee considered funding for two bins at Oxenholme. The Town Clerk explained that proposal was as a result of a request from a ward member and two Westmorland and Furness colleagues following consultation with residents. The cost of the bins was approximately £800 each and would be drawn from the Infrastructure Maintenance Budget due to the fact that not enough money remained in the New Infrastructure Budget, resulting in the need for a virement.

Members expressed disappointment that not enough information had been provided and felt that a decision could not be made without specific details.

Resolved: Subject to specific details being presented to and agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair, the funding for the two bins at Oxenholme be approved, the sum to be vired from the Infrastructure and Maintenance Budget.

(c) The Committee considered a report including proposals for the next Budget year (2024/25).

As discussed at September's Committee meeting, Councillors had been encouraged to suggest projects for funding in the financial year of 2024/25. The Chair had emailed all Members, and the Chair and Vice Chair had met with the Clerk and Development Manager to collate results and provide the overview provided, as set out below.

Environment Committee Budget Requests				
Item	Proposer	Purpose	Cost	Source
Birdcage Design	Cllr Russell	To provide design visuals of an improved Birdcage support a request to W&F Council to improve	£5,000	2024/25 Budget
Kendal Biodiversity Grant & Projects continuation	Cllr Hennessy and Cllr Archibald	To continue to provide local community groups with biodiversity and nature recovery grants	£10,000	2024/25 Budget
Kendal Wildflowers*	Environment Committee	To continue to enhance Kendal's biodiversity with additional wildflowers at five new locations	Maintain at £10,000 (therefore top up by £6400)	2024/25 Budget
Footpath Enhancements	Environment Committee	To improve footpaths to enable more children to walk and cycle to school	£30,000	2024/25 Budget
Total 24/25 Budget Requests (in addition to core Environment budget commitments)			£55,000 - 2024/25 Budget	
Easy Travel Kendal*	Environment Committee	To improve the sense of arrival, public realm and welcome at key transport hubs and provide bike storage facilities	£50,000	Proposed CIL
Kendal Pumptrack*	Environment Committee	To provide a pumptrack for the young people of Kendal	£50,000	Proposed CIL

Total CIL Requests (in addition to current Environment Committee approved CIL projects, 20mph contribution, water fountain and bus seat at Windermere Road)	100,000 - CIL Request
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**Additional info paper to follow for committee mtg*

Current CIL balance £90,000 (more expected in 2024)

Current Enviro CIL Approved projects Water Fountain (£5000)

Windermere Road Bus Stop Bench (£750) 20 mph contribution (£11,500)

Proposed Core Budget Detail (in addition to proposals shown above)

Item	23-24	Proposed 24-25	
New Infrastructure	0	0	New infrastructure was funded through projects budget and CIL
Infrastructure Maintenance	8,438	5,000	Additional added from reserves to complete specific project in 2023. This is the money allocated to service existing infrastructure including CCTV
Footway Lighting charges	4,200	5,000	These costs are allocated by W&FC
Bin servicing charges	3,000	3,250	These costs are allocated by W&FC
	15,638	11,750	

The Town Clerk explained how some of the items could be met from CIL and others from the ongoing budget. The Committee's recommendations would be forwarded to the Management Committee Budget Working Group which would make recommendations for subsequent consideration by Full Council. The Committee today was being asked if it was comfortable with these proposals to move forward.

A lengthy discussion ensued, particularly around plans in relation to the Birdcage and the need for this eyesore to be addressed as soon as possible. It was questioned whether the amount of £5,000 was sufficient, however, it was pointed out that this sum was purely in relation to the preparation of a design visuals in order to support a request to Westmorland and Furness Council for improvements. Members acknowledged the need for the Town Council to demonstrate a commitment to improving the infrastructure of the Town, together with Kendal Futures, however, wished to be clear first that other sources of funding were available to carry out the work. It was felt that careful consideration needed to be given to the whole area in this location and that there needed to be clear commitment demonstrated by other partners.

Resolved: To write to Westmorland and Furness Council advising that the Environment Committee will recommend allocation of the sum of £5,000 within its 2024/25 Budget for the provision of design visuals of an improved birdcage to support Westmorland and Furness to carry out the improvements, subject to obtaining commitment to any other available partnership funding.

A request was then raised from the floor for additional funding towards footpath enhancements, it being felt that £30,000 was not sufficient. It was, therefore, proposed to increase this request to £50,000 and that it be pointed out that this was likely to be an ongoing demand year on year.

Resolved: To increase the proposal of £30,000 towards footpath enhancements to £50,000 and to point out that this is likely to be a demand year on year.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the Committee's recommendations were subject to agreement by Full Council which would determine the 2024/25 Budget and precept.

Resolved: Subject to the changes detailed above relating to the request for £5,000 for Birdcage Design and an increase from £30,000 to £50,000 (and the likelihood of an ongoing demand year on year), to recommend the proposed budget requirements for the next financial year, as attached to the report and outlined above, for consideration by the Management Committee prior to presentation to Full Council.

E49/2023 Wildflowers Kendal

The Projects Officer reported that wildflower planting in 2022 had been well-received by the public and that informal observation showed that these plantings had benefitted pollinating insects by providing a variety of nectar sources over several months from May to September. A budget proposal had been included in Agenda Item No.8 (Environment Budget Proposals) (Minute No.E48.2023 above refers) to allocate £10,000 to wildflower projects in the next year.

Officers were now working together with colleagues at Westmorland and Furness Council to secure permissions for planting at a number of sites including:

- Bowling Fell
- Kendal Green (North end, near St Thomas')
- Kendal Castle (west side)
- The Adventure (Kirkbarrow)
- Kirkbarrow roundabout (corners of junction of Anchorite Fields/Anchorite Rd/Glebe Rd)
- Hallgarth (to complement tree planting recently completed by Natural Kendal)

The Projects Officer pointed out that the list of sites was not exhaustive and that there were other possibilities.

Two methods of planting were proposed, either spring seeding or Autumn plug planting. Both methods would benefit from volunteer involvement via organised work parties which would be promoted to residents living within the locality of each project and via Kendal Town Council social media. Kendal Conservation Volunteers (KCV) were aiming to grow up to 6,000 wildflower plugs for the Town Council's use, to be provided for a nominal donation. Depending on success rates across different species, additional plugs from other local suppliers might be required. Signage would accompany each new wildflower site to inform the public and grounds maintenance contractors of the presence of wildflowers. Details in relation to costs which would be incurred were provided, at an estimated total of £6,500 which fell within the budget of £10,000.

Members welcomed the report, praising the success of the work which had already been carried out. It was pointed out that any funding would be dependent on the outcome of consideration of the Council's Budget. A suggestion was raised that if the projects were lined up to be carried out at a similar time, then this might result in the total cost being cheaper. Also raised was the need to involve specialist consultants with regard to the correct blend of wildflowers to suit the soil in the locations chosen, as well as the need for signage providing information on the project. It was pointed out that a lot had been learnt with regard to the mix of wildflowers planted at Kendal Green. The Projects Officer pointed out although she had talked with experts in the field, she would be keen to hear of any other resources. Finally, stressed was the hope that elderly residents were engaged to join in as it was felt that they would gain considerably from taking part. If the project was addressed within the Budget, the project would need to be publicised, inviting people to participate.

Resolved: To note the report and to take on board the comments raised at the meeting and outlined above.

E50/2023 Water Fountain Proposal

The Projects Officer referred to councillors having identified a need for accessible, free of charge drinking water stations in Kendal Town centre. Providing drinking water to the public would help to alleviate heat stress experienced during hotter temperatures of recent summers; it would also help to reduce the amount of single use plastic bottles consumed in Kendal, in keeping with the Citizens' Jury's recommendation #23 – "that Kendal is promoted as a single-use plastic free town and works towards ways of achieving that."

Several local businesses already participated in the Refill scheme (a national scheme spearheaded by City to Sea). There was also a water station available upstairs in the library, but this was not widely known. £5,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding had recently been approved by the Management Committee for this project.

Locations within and outside of the Town Hall had been considered, but constraints of space, water mains connection, and limited opening hours, as well as necessary listed building consent, made this location impractical. It could be possible to install a water fountain in a prominent outdoor location in future, but it was felt that this would be better incorporated into a larger scheme, such as potential redevelopments of the Birdcage, with partnership working.

The indoor market within Westmorland Shopping Centre was owned by Westmorland and Furness Council and presented the opportunity for partnership working. The report included an image which illustrated a suitable location within the indoor market which would benefit from relatively high footfall and good visibility from the Shopping Centre's entrance on the Market Place. The units were available on a rental basis, which, it was felt, could be a good way to gauge levels of use before committing to it as a permanent fixture. Units were fitted with an LED display bottle counter. A hands-free option was recommended to ensure public acceptance. Unit casing could be customised to display the Kendal brand, relevant logos and messaging. Details of the potential costs involved were provided within the report. Also outlined within the report was the need for permission to be sought from the landlord, Westmorland and Furness Council, and clarification on future planned improvements to the Indoor Market to ensure compatibility.

The Committee was being asked whether officers should move forward with the project to instal a water fountain at the proposed location.

During discussion Members questioned the robustness of the proposal in the face of the work due to be carried out by Westmorland and Furness at the Market Hall. Raised was the potential for the unit to be situated in a more prominent place outside, however it was pointed out that there were a number of reasons as to why this was not appropriate, for example lack of water supply. In response to a suggestion for locating the unit at a completely different site, the Projects Officer explained that the two other sites belonging to Westmorland and Furness were the Town Hall which would require Listed Building Consent and the Library which already had a water fountain. Also suggested was locating the unit at the front of the Westmorland Shopping Centre by Waterstones, and the Projects Officer advised that this could be investigated, although pointing out that this area was owned by the Shopping Centre which could cause complications.

Resolved: Subject to robustness around whether the water station can be suitably integrated into the works due to be carried out by Westmorland and Furness Council at the Market Hall, officers be delegated to move forward, however, should it become apparent that the proposed location is unsuitable, then to investigate alternative locations for siting the unit.

E51/2023 Easy Transport Kendal Proposal

The Committee considered a report from the Development Manager. Kendal Town Centre was accessible via train, bus and cycling. However, the sense of welcome and facilities at these arrival points were not currently celebrated with high quality, welcoming public realm. Instead, arrivals by bus, train or bikes were faced with navigation issues, underwhelm, and a lack of places to safely store bikes.

The report proposed to seek to address these issues by improving the public realm and signage and providing cycling facilities, potentially highlighting Kendal's transport link and encouraging more people to utilise them. To achieve everything set out within the proposal, both significant funding and partnership working were required.

Kendal Futures placemaking and Vision Groups had contributed to the outlined ideas and would be supportive of delivery via their 'Creative Group' regarding the mural recommendations. Permissions and maintenance agreements would need to be confirmed with both Westmorland and Furness Council and the Shopping Centre owners.

The proposal outlined actions for year one – focusing on the Bus Station and Cycling Storage – and suggestions for Years 2 and 3, as follows:

Year 1 - Bus Station Improvements & Cycling Storage £50,000 -

- Bus station mural - £5000
- New bus station signage - £2000
- New directional Signage - £2000
- Improved public realm area - £10,000
- Roof cleaning - £2000
- New covered bike shelter, including cargo bike storage - £20,000
- New covered bin area for Police Yard (repurposing Woolpack yard Bin shelter) - £3000
- Contingency - £5000

Year 2 - South Bound Green Roof Shelter and Kendal Train Station Improvements
£50,000 -

- South bound shelter
 - Create a single uniformed bus shelter with green roof (potentially 'upcycling' existing infrastructure)
 - Improve the seating
 - Improve the planting
 - Install wayfinding decals to zebra crossing

- Kendal Train Station
 - Longpool is a challenging crossing for pedestrians leaving the train station and the route into the town centre is not clear. The pedestrian section of the approach is also badly faded and creates a poor first impression. The train station is not visible from Sandes Avenue.
 - Install decals on the approach, way marking the route the pedestrian crossing 'Town Centre via safe crossing'
 - Installing decals after the crossing with the simpler message 'To the Town Centre' until Strammongate where it would change to 'Welcome to Kendal'.
 - Repainting approach
 - Installing Kendal Train Station sign at the platform so visible from Sandes Avenue

Year 3 – Blackhall Yard Welcome Square £50,000 -

- Repaint the pedestrian walkway in vibrant colours to tie in with mural and bus station signage
- Replace the current cycle storage with new storage
- Install a vibrant mural on the uncovered brick wall
- Trim vegetation and replant in gaps
- Investigate parking usage (to support long term vision of creating a square)
- Investigate bin usage (to support long term vision of creating a square)

Attention was drawn to the fact that the funding had already been requested within the forthcoming proposed Budget and that the Committee had today to consider whether or not the project should move forward.

Whilst Members expressed strong support for the improvements to the Town Centre, it was felt that the specifics required further consideration together with key partners. It was suggested that both Kendal Futures and Kendal Bid should be consulted to see if they wished to work in partnership on the proposals. Stressed was the importance of bike storage and the need to consult cyclists. In addition, should the proposal be included within the approved Budget, then it was felt that the manner in which consultation and community engagement should take place, as well as collaboration at councillor level, should be well considered. It was further highlighted that several budget allocations already existed in relation to infrastructure. Whilst Members acknowledged the need to liaise directly with Kendal Bid's working groups, it was raised that the decision-making aspect should remain with the Town Council. Attention was also drawn to the need to discuss the proposals with Westmorland and Furness Council and the Environment Agency. No plan would be implemented without full consultation.

Resolved: The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee to convene a discussion with the principal bodies involved on the proposals and the issues raised at the meeting and outlined above in order to establish the priorities and how funding will be used to make improvements to infrastructure within Kendal Town Centre.

Note – At this stage in the proceedings, Cllr G Archibald declared an interest in the following item of business by virtue of the fact that he had attended meetings of Friends of Nobles Rest and due to having used some of his Westmorland and Furness Member Locality Budget to offer support. Cllr Archibald, Vice-Chair in the Chair, having declared an interest and that he would take no part in the discussion or voting, Cllr C Russell took the Chair for the duration of the item.

E52/2023 Biodiversity Grant Proposal

The report outlined the aims of Friends of Nobles Rest and asked the Committee to approve a Biodiversity Grant of £500 to:

- contribute to a new wildflower area notice board to outline the establishment and value of wildflower areas, to be designed in conjunction with Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumbria Wildlife Trust (£300); and
- replace two trees that had died, one Damson as part of the Damson Orchard established five years ago and one Shady Oak.

All of the relevant paper work and evidence had been received as part of the grant application process.

Resolved: To offer a Biodiversity Grant of £500 to Friends of Nobles Rest in support of the items outlined above

Note – Cllr G Archibald, Vice-Chair, resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

E53/2023 Pumptrack Design Proposal

Members considered a report which explained that, in 2022, Velosolutions had provided a design overview for a potential pumptrack at Kendal Castle. Following the design and a planning application from a different applicant, the Town Council had been advised that the castle location would not be suitable for a pumptrack.

An alternative site, at Sandylands Park, had been researched by Town Council officers together with Westmorland and Furness Council officers.

To confirm the suitability and potential resident buy in for this site, a design was needed to create a strong visualisation and talking point. A design would also support future funding applications to Westmorland and Furness Council and others.

The Committee was asked to consider spending the remaining pumptrack funding of £2,000 on a sketch design to demonstrate how and where a pumptrack could fit into the existing space at Sandylands park without impacting the current play park, multi-use games area and/or the communities annual fete space.

The Town Clerk confirmed £2,000 of the £4,000 pumptrack funding remained.

Resolved: To allocate the remaining pumptrack funding of £2,000 on a sketch design, to demonstrate how and where a pumptrack could fit into the existing space at Sandylands park without impacting the current play park, multi-use games area and/or the communities annual fete space.

E54/2023 Kendal Rotary Proposal

It was reported that Kendal Rotary were in the early stages of planning the Centenary Celebrations. The actual date would be 25 April 2025, though the Centenary year would be from July 2024.

Kendal Rotary had, over the years, benefitted the Town. For example, they had been involved with the founding of Sandgate School, and continued to help the staff and students. They ran a number of youth projects and competitions and, of course, had planted crocuses which adorned the roadsides of the Town.

The Committee was asked to consider providing a brass plaque for the bench outside Oxfam commemorating the centenary year.

In response to a query, the Development Manager informed Members that the likely cost of the plaque would be no more than £100. In addition, she confirmed that the bench belonged to Kendal Town Council. The need to ensure that either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor were present when the plaque was affixed to the bench.

Resolved: To provide a brass plaque for the bench outside Oxfam commemorating the Rotary Centenary Celebrations.

E55/2023 Footpath Investment Proposal

It was reported that, following the completion of the Kendal Footpath Audit, quotes and partnership working with Westmorland and Furness Council had begun to implement improvements which, over time, would enable all children in Kendal to access school easily via an excellent network of local footpaths.

The Committee was asked to consider a number of quotes which had been received to deliver improvements to the footpath between Dean Gibson School and Vicarage Park School. The Projects Officer confirmed details in relation to the fourth quote which included delivery of both the fencing and footpath improvements within reasonable timescales, drawing attention to the potential for a slight cost in the figure dependent on the amount of earth removed. The Town Clerk advised that the figure fell within the remaining budget of £7,576. The Projects Officer further highlighted the fact that the work would be carried out during either school half term or Easter holidays in order to address safeguarding concerns.

The need to ensure that the three relevant ward councillors were advised of plans was raised and, in addition, the need for a suitable press release including a quote from one of them. Also raised was the need to liaise with Westmorland and Furness Council with regard to a contribution towards signage relating to dog fouling. The question of arrangements for suitable diversion during the time of the works was also raised.

Resolved: To award the contract to deliver improvements to the footpath between Dean Gibson School and Vicarage Park to the contractor identified at the meeting.

Resolved: To contact the three relevant ward councillors with a view to seeking a quote and producing a suitable press release.

Resolved: To liaise with Westmorland and Furness with regard to a contribution towards signage relating to dog fouling.

Resolved: To look into the matter of suitable diversion during the time of the works being carried out.

E56/2023 Announcement

The Committee expressed sincere thanks to the Development Manager, Helen Watson-Moriarty, who would shortly be leaving the employment of the Town Council. Helen had been involved in a tremendous amount of work over the last eight years in the delivery of many projects throughout the Town. Members took the opportunity to wish her the very best for the future.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.