

# Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED  
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**Minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Arts Committee held on Monday, 23 January 2023, at 7.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.**

Cllr J Brook	Apologies	Cllr S Coleman	Absent
Cllr J Dunlop (Vice-Chair)	Present	Cllr L Hendry	Present
Cllr D Rathbone (Chair)	Present	Cllr M Severn	Absent
Cllr G Tirvengadam	Present		

**In attendance:** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Simon Unsworth (Heritage Officer) and Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant).

## **MA25/2022 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair referred to the visit prior to the meeting by Members to the Kendal Town Council Picture Store, which, he felt, had been very useful.

The Heritage Officer took the opportunity to inform the Committee of three further tours of the Mayor's Parlour, due to take place on the evening of 1 February, the morning of 7 February and the afternoon of 9 February. He suggested that any Members wishing to attend should first contacting him by email to express their intention. These three dates would enable the Heritage officer to gauge popularity and how to move forward with further such events.

## **MA26/2022 Apologies**

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Cllr J Brook.

## **MA27/2022 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

## **MA28/2022 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**

No items were considered for exclusion.

## **MA29/2022 Minutes from the Last Meeting**

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Arts Committee held on 24 October 2022 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.

## **MA30/2022 Minute Action Sheet**

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings.

The Town Clerk referred to MA17/2022 (Twinning) and a response received from Kerry County Council who had advised that they took the matter of the twinning arrangement seriously and that the matter was being passed to someone who would respond.

In response to a query relating to MA16/2022 (Kendal Museum), the Town Clerk advised that he had, on 16 January, made an approach to Kendal Museum with regarding to arranging a familiarisation tour for Kendal Town Councillors.

The Heritage Officer referred to MA18/2022 (Town Council Collection) and reported that he had contacted the Town Hall Manager with regard to obtaining a sign to the Mayor's Parlour but had not yet heard back. The Town Clerk suggested that this matter should be put to one side pending the commencement of the new Westmorland & Furness Council and developments in relation to the image of that Council's buildings. He added that he had a number of other issues to address with regard to the Parlour with regard to, for example, keyholders.

In response to a further query, it was reported that the Mayor's Dinner would take place in February once dates and locations had been confirmed.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **MA31/2022    Review of Spend against Budget**

The Town Clerk presented the Committee's budget monitoring report (April to December) for 2022/23.

The Town Clerk suggested that there should be a shift in emphasis and that the Committee should look to properly fund what it was currently doing as opposed to any additional matters.

With regard to Mayoral Travel and concern raised, the Town Clerk was of the opinion that the Finance Officer was suggesting that there may be additional costs in relation to the trip to Rinteln. Reference was made to the Town Council Collection and the potential of employing temporary staff to look through it, attention being drawn to the fact that there was enough material for several exhibitions.

**Resolved:** To note the budget monitoring report (April to December) for 2022/23.

#### **MA32/2022    Council Collection – Storage, Retention and Discard Policy**

Consideration was given to the production of a Policy with regard to the storage, retention and discarding of items in the Council Collection. The Council held over 500 items in its collection, including artworks, pictures and historic ephemera. Committee Members had been sent copies of a catalogue of the collection by email to assist them in their consideration of the item.

Members raised the importance of the collection in relation to the social and economic history of Kendal. Acknowledged was the need to consider practicalities and resources.

The Heritage Officer informed Members that there were 700 items shown within the catalogue of the collection and that additional items existed which were not included on the list. He raised the need to consider a framework by which to decide what to store, where to store it and what to get rid of. He suggested that he would seek example templates from other organisations and send them on to Members as a starting point. The Town Clerk felt it may be of value to see if there was an individual who could fulfil the role of sorting through

everything, potentially through external funding for two years. He raised the potential for the collection to be taken out to schools, expressed pride in the fact that the Town Council had made the decision to look at Kendal in relation to slavery and drew attention to the potential to look into a series of further similar themes, for example, Women in Kendal.

Members felt excited about the potential for a series of themes being developed around the Council's collection. They further raised the possibility of linking with the Civic Society and the Kendal Historical and Archaeological Society to find out how those organisations could contribute, whilst ensuring that the Council did not lose control of the situation, as custodian of the collection. Concern was expressed in relation to the budget for this work and the Town Clerk said that there was already £2,000 for the exhibition, adding that this funding could continue, with a proposal being made in the next budget setting round.

The Heritage Officer drew attention to the need for the Policy to include what to do in relation to requests to borrow or purchase items.

**Resolved:** To draft a suitable policy on the Storage, Retention and Discard of the Council's Collection.

### **MA33/2022 Slavery and Kendal Exhibition**

The Committee considered a report on plans for the Slavery and Kendal Exhibition and was asked for proposals for the Exhibition which would use the Town Council's collection as a basis for exploring the role of slavery in the historic development of the Town. The report contained proposals in relation to venue, dates, format and content, and proposed actions moving forward. Members welcomed the proposed format for eight large display boards, each dealing with an element of Kendal and the slave trade. With regard to dates, a suggestion was raised with regard for the potential to launch the exhibition on 17 June 2023, on the same day as the Unity Festival.

Discussion took place, during which a suggestion was raised for inclusion of a map showing Kendal in the centre and links to all other Cumbrian areas, for example Whitehaven, Maryport and Carlisle, where Kendal's goods were being traded to. It was further suggested that the slave grave at Storrs Hall in Bowness-on-Windermere be included on the map. The Chair informed Members that he had made arrangements for a themed cookery demonstration on the Saturday. The Heritage Officer also drew Members' attention to history relating to Ecroye Claxton, a Kendal Surgeon who had helped to abolish the slave trade, providing evidence to Parliament and a suggestion was made to obtain the relevant hansard extract. Also raised was the need to bring on board the Anti-Racism in Cumbria group. The Heritage Officer undertook to provide Members with links to Cumbria County Council's School packs. Attention was drawn to work previously carried out by John Bateson and, in addition, Samantha Bagshaw who had made a television documentary on Slavery in Cumbria. The Heritage Officer would check with Kendal Museum to see if anything specific existed there.

The Chair stressed the need for Members to come up with as many ideas as possible, pointing out that the exhibition was about telling a story that people had not heard before and to start them on their own journey. He further informed Members of the need to come up with as many ideas as possible and the Heritage Officer, therefore, suggested that any ideas be sent to him, by 20 February 2023, in order to provide a framework for him to pull together.

**Resolved:** Members to provide ideas on the Exhibition to the Heritage Officer by 20 February 2023.

**Resolved:** The Heritage Officer to progress suggestions raised.

### **MA34/2022 Kendal Museum**

Consideration was given to actions required to further the Town Council's relationship with Kendal Museum.

The Town Clerk first raised the need for Members to visit the Museum. The Town Clerk felt that there was then a conversation to be had with Kendal College as to what Kendal needed from a Museum, based on the need to reflect the Town. He raised the need for the Council to reimagine its relationship with the Museum, and reminded Members that the Town Council was Trustee of the building, with the District Council being Trustee of the collection. He also referred to the potential for funding, as well as the need to home the Town Council's own collection, ideally within Kendal Museum.

The Committee reflected on the recent presentation made to Council by the Development Manager of Kendal Museum, and commended his keenness to reinvigorate a consultative group. Members stressed the need to bring the Museum into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, also suggesting the potential for a Museum of Lakeland Life which would bring people into Kendal.

The Town Clerk again recommended that the first thing to do was for Members to visit the Museum, to meet the staff and to see for themselves the current situation. Following the visit, the Town Clerk suggested that, on behalf of the Town Council, Trustee of the Kendal Museum building, he would approach the Principal of Kendal College with regard to looking at the possibilities for a new vision, a Museum for Kendal.

**Resolved:** A visit be arranged for the Committee, and any other interested Members, to visit Kendal Museum.

**Resolved:** Following Members' visit to Kendal Museum, an approach be made to the Principal of Kendal College with regard to looking at the possibilities for a new vision, a Museum for Kendal.

### **MA35/2022 Twinning**

The Town Clerk provided a brief verbal report on the activities and affairs of the Town's two twinning relationships with Killarney and Rinteln. He informed the Committee that he had recently made contact with Kerry County Council and that it was possible now to move forward and establish how to progress and reimagine Kendal Town Council's relationship, given their new local council framework. The Town Clerk intended to try to persuade the Municipal Officer at Kerry to see if they were still interested in the twinning arrangement. The Chair indicated a keenness to reinvigorate, if at all possible.

Members discussed options should continuation of the twinning prove impossible, some keen to consider twinning with a town in Ukraine in order to demonstrate solidarity. The Chair drew attention to the purpose of twinning, to the theory, practicalities and feasibility. The Town Clerk suggested that he should bring a paper to Committee on this idea, pointing out the importance of officers being able to visit to see how local government worked in the twin towns, and the huge amount of learning that could be gained from any town in Eastern Europe. It was suggested, however, that this should only be actioned should it become apparent that Kendal's twinning with Killarney had definitely come to an end.

The Vice-Chair took the opportunity to inform the Committee that the Mayor of Rinteln was keen to attend the 2023 Mayor-making and Members referred to Kendal Town Council's

financial situation and the fact that the Town Council was not always able to reciprocate visits. The Town Clerk pointed out that it was usually the Kendal Rinteln Association that funded trips to Germany. He drew Members' attention to the twinning budget of £2,500 which, he believed, looked prone to be trimmed down in the following year, potentially by £1,000. It was, therefore, proposed that a sum of £750 be earmarked from the 2022/23 budget to continue the process of reinvigorating Kendal Town Council's links with its twin towns.

**Resolved:** To pursue with Kerry County Council the potential of reinvigorating the twinning arrangement with Killarney.

**Resolved:** Subject to reinvigoration of the twinning arrangement with Killarney proving to be impossible, a paper to be brought to Committee on options for twinning arrangements to be made with a town in Eastern Europe.

**Resolved:** A sum of £750 be earmarked from the 2022/23 budget to enable continuation of the process of reinvigorating Kendal Town Council's links with its twin towns.

### **MA36/2022    Newsletter and Publicity**

Reference was made to a recent article in the Westmorland Gazette, to the need to minimise risk and to improve the Town Council's relationship with that Newspaper. The fact that a Local Democracy Reporter no longer attended meetings was raised and that the current reporter now simply reported on the Council's written reports and minutes.

The Town Clerk explained that he had now changed the manner in which Press Releases were written and sent within the body of an email rather than in an attachment. He proposed that he would be keen now for Members to discuss, at the end of each meeting, in addition to consideration of items for the Newsletter, what they would like to put forward for inclusion in a press release on the meeting, in the form of positive information. In response to a query, he explained that the Editor in Chief was based somewhere else and that they looked after a number of regional newspapers. He also drew existence to the existence of Cumbria Crack which was used by some reporters as material for inclusion within local newspapers.

The Town Clerk suggested a grab-bag approach, telling the story of what the Council wanted to do and why. The Chair, therefore, suggested that, in relation to this meeting, the Press Release should centre on Members consideration of the Town Council's collection and the potential for its broader use, including for future exhibitions, how it could be stored and how it could be made more accessible to the public and how Members were excited by the opportunities discussed.

**Resolved:** A press release to be written along the lines outlined above.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.