

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
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Minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee held on Monday, 25 March 2024, at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr J Brook	Present	Cllr S Coleman	Apologies
Cllr J Cornthwaite (Vice-Chair)	Present	Cllr J Dunlop (Chair)	Present
Cllr D Rathbone	Present	Cllr M Severn	Absent
Cllr G Tirvengadam	Present	Cllr C Russell	Present
One vacancy			

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

MH26/2023 Apologies

Attention was drawn to the fact that Cllr S Coleman, who had been appointed by Council on 5 February 2024 to take up one of the vacancies on the Committee, had been omitted from the membership list on the front sheet of the agenda in error. In addition, Cllr L Hendry, who had recently left the Committee, appeared in the membership list in error.

Resolved: To receive and accept an apology for absence from Cllr S Coleman.

MH27/2023 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

MH28/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

MH29/2023 Minutes from the Last Meeting

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee held on 22 January 2024 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

MH30/2023 Minute Action Sheet

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

MA41/2022 and MH5/2023 – With regard to signage for directions to the Mayor's Parlour and on the room door, the Heritage Officer reported that he had corresponded with the relevant officer at Westmorland and Furness Council who had indicated that they would be happy to deal with this. Westmorland and Furness Council would liaise with the individual producing the signs and would ensure that the Heritage Officer was provided with proofs.

The Town Clerk indicated that updates on the remaining items within the Minute Action Sheet were included within the agenda for the meeting.

Resolved: To note the report.

MH31/2023 Review of Spend against Budget 2023/24

The Committee considered its budget monitoring report.

The Town Clerk advised that any remaining money within the 2023/24 Mayoralty Budget would be put towards corporate banners which he had already commissioned. In addition, he suggested that any money remaining within the Exhibitions budget could be put towards assisting in the retention of the remaining items from the K-Shoe Heritage Centre, as detailed under Agenda Item No.10 (K-Shoes Collection) (see Minute No.MH35/2023 below).

Resolved: To note the budget monitoring report as at 17 March 2024.

MH32/2023 Reimagining the Wildlife Collection at Kendal Museum

Cllr C Russell, through his role with Natural Kendal, had been involved in a group working at Kendal Museum to 'reimagine' the way that the world wildlife collection was presented. Some of this had been inspired by the academic work of Joe Rigby, who had shown that many of the core items of the collection had been donated by a local English Colonialist, who had acquired them in East Africa, often in circumstances which would not be considered acceptable by modern ethical standards. The group was exploring ways that this collection could be given context, and that links could be made with some of the local East African communities from whom they had been taken.

Cllr Russell gave a detailed verbal report on the contact he had had through Natural England with Kendal Museum on reimagining the presentation of the historic wildlife collection at the Museum, the details of which were available within the notes of a meeting held at Kendal Museum on 15 March 2024 which had been attached to the Agenda to support Cllr Russell's report on this and other meetings on the issue.

Cllr Russell drew particular attention to a major issue which had been unearthed relating to three significant ritual objects from Kenya and Uganda which had been brought to Kendal and which, it was felt, should be given back to the Nandi people in an appropriate manner. Cllr Russell drew attention to Cllr A Blackman's strong connection to the area through the Open Arms International Charity and to a forthcoming visit to Kendal by several Kenyan partners, including a visit to the Museum.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Westmorland and Furness Council were the trustees of the Kendal Museum Collection and the question raised as to that Council's feelings with regard to the potential to hand back the items. Also raised was the question regarding how the items would be handed back and funding of that process.

In terms of this Committee's involvement, Cllr Russell suggested that this was the appropriate body to hold initial discussions. He further drew attention to the fact that Cllr E Hennessy was the Westmorland and Furness representative on the Museum Development Committee, however, that it had not met for over 11 years and, he felt, needed to be reconstituted. Cllr Russell explained that he had asked Cllr Hennessy to look into this matter. This Committee would need to wait until Cllr Hennessy came back with news before it could establish its future role. Cllr Dunlop asked Cllr Russell to keep the Committee informed so that its role, if any, could be established.

Cllr Russell took the opportunity to point out that Carol Davies, Curator at Kendal Museum for the past 37 years, was retiring. There would be a presentation to celebrate her work at the Nature Recovery Conference on 18 May 2024 and Cllr Russell asked for a means to ensure that Members were invited to contribute to a collaborative gift. The Town Clerk agree to allow a facility to ensure that this was possible.

Resolved: Cllr Russell to keep the Committee informed of the situation so that its role, if any, can be established.

Resolved: To note the report.

MH33/2023 Slavery and Kendal Exhibition

The Heritage Officer provided a brief verbal report on progress of plans for the Slavery and Kendal Exhibition.

Following meetings with representatives at Kendal Museum, instead of a static, six day exhibition, the plan now was for a trail which would become part of Kendal's cultural offering. The Heritage Officer was now trying to develop the beginnings of a trail, initially with eight points, detail of which he circulated to Members at the meeting. The points included an introduction and information relating to items and places within the Town relating to the Slave Trade - the Cumberland Sausage, Rum Nicky, Grasmere Gingerbread, Cumbrian Rum Butter, Kendal Black Drop, Kendal Mint Cake and Tobacco. The intention was to produce a trail sheet and to include information on the Council's Website. The launch of the trail would take place at the Unity Festival and would include information on how the Council was trying to further to develop the trail and invite local people to include their stories. The Heritage Officer sought the Committee's approval to continue with this direction of travel.

Members thanked the Heritage Officer for his work. They welcomed the new direction, also seeking a presence and something visual for the Unity Festival on 20 July, based within the Kent Room, and the potential for a taster trail session. The need for a more meaningful partnership with other organisations was stressed and, in particular, the need to involve the Civic Society. The Heritage Officer pointed out that this was a collaborative piece of work on which the Town Council would lead. Discussion took place with regard to the fact that snuff was still manufactured on the Mintsfeet Estate, however, the Heritage Officer pointed out that the trail would not, as yet, reach out to that area, although details relating to the Kendal Brown House could be included within the leaflet.

Resolved: To organise a presence, visuals and a taster trail for the Unity Festival on 20 July.

Resolved: To note the verbal report and support the new direction of travel.

MH34/2023 Museum Provision

The Town Clerk reported that work was progressing in the right direction, and he drew Members' attention to work being carried out by the Town Council together with the Museum to draw in additional partners.

Resolved: To note the report.

MH35/2023 K-Shoes Collection

The Town Clerk reported that the K-Shoes Heritage Collection had been mostly removed to Street, Somerset when the K-Village Heritage centre had closed circa 2018/19. In Street, it was in the care of the Alfred Gillett Trust, which had acquired the heritage collections of Clarks when the firm had been restructured. The Gillett Trust had given assurances that the Collection was in good hands, though obviously it was now 300 or so miles from its original home. Still in the K-Village building

remained a number of additional files and boxes which had not been taken to Street, either because they had not been on site when the items had been collected or they had not been considered directly valuable to the Gillett Trust. Also remaining on site were the glass display cabinets, and a Waring and Gillow shop front, which had been a feature of the heritage centre. The centre's large graphic displays were also stored on site.

The long-serving manager of the K-Village site had retired on 13 March, leaving custody of the remaining items in the hands of the site's managing agents, Savills. The agent had a tenant lined up to occupy the space currently used to store the remaining items, and had suggested that the items could and should be removed from the site as soon as possible to ensure that they did not end up in a skip.

Following discussions with officers, it was apparent that Kendal Futures currently had a remaining restricted fund for the Collection of approximately £2,300. Additionally, the Town Council currently had revenue funding for its exhibition, which would not be rolled over into the next financial year.

It was, therefore, being proposed that the Town Council remove the remaining items to a safe store, where it could be appraised by curatorial and archive experts and preserved, retained or disposed of appropriately. An appeal for storage space had been put to Westmorland and Furness Council, but in the meantime, inside safe storage for items could be found at several places in Kendal, with prices at around £120 per month. The Town Council had appropriate curatorial contacts for an initial assessment to be made at approximately £30 per hour.

Discussion took place during which the potential to site the Waring and Gillow shop front within the new market area was raised. Also raised was the fact that the Gillett Trust had indicated a willingness to lend out some of its items in Street from time to time. In addition, the Trust was happy to share its catalogue of the items with the Town Council. The Clerk reconfirmed the details relating to funding of the proposal.

Resolved: To approach the Gillett Trust to obtain a copy of the catalogue of the Kendal K-Shoe items.

Resolved: To retain the remaining items from the K-Shoe Heritage Centre in Kendal for appraisal, as outlined within the report and set out above.

MH36/2023 Twinning

Cllr J Dunlop first talked about Rinteln, reporting that the AGM had recently been held at Kendal Rugby Club. Five representatives from Rinteln were due to attend the Council's Mayor Making in May 2024, and a small programme of events to entertain them was being developed. Rinteln's Alstadtfest would be taking place in August and 14 representatives from Kendal would be attending. In addition, Kendal Concert Band would be taking 47 people and would perform at various venues in the area.

Cllr Dunlop next referred to her recent visit to Killarney, from 15 to 17 March 2024. Groups from Killarney's other twin towns, Pleinfeld in Bavaria and Casperia in Italy, had also been in attendance. Cllr Dunlop had taken part in the Killarney Park Run on the Saturday morning. In the evening the twinning association had been invited to a Chopin Recital. On the Sunday morning, St. Patrick's Day, there had been a ceremony for the representatives from the twin towns to sign a visitors' book, with each signatory being presented with a wooden pen made from fallen trees by Killarney's Men in Sheds. The St. Patrick's Day Parade had taken place at 2.00 p.m. Prior to her visit, Cllr Dunlop explained that she had spoken with Kendal Rotary Club who were keen to make contact with their opposite group in Killarney. The group in Killarney had indicated that they were also keen to develop the link. Cllr Dunlop had met the Mayor of Killarney and its councillors, who wished to return to Kendal, subject to re-election. Cllr Dunlop had also had discussions with Killarney's Mountain

Festival group who had acknowledged the help and supported provided by the organisers of Kendal Mountain Festival. Cllr Dunlop drew attention to the fact that this September would be the 20th anniversary of the twinning link with Killarney and, pointing out that this relationship was being revitalised, questioned whether the anniversary should be marked. If this was the case, then she felt that former Mayor Marilyn Molloy would need to be in attendance, also suggesting that this might take place around either the Torchlight Event or the Mountain Festival and Christmas Light Switch-on.

Members thanked Cllr Dunlop for her work, expressed support for the marking of the 20th Anniversary and furthering the relationship with Killarney. Also raised was the potential to invite representatives from Killarney to the Kendal Whiskey Festival in December 2024.

Resolved: To take steps to mark the 20th anniversary of the twinning of Kendal with Killarney.

Resolved: To note the verbal update.

MH37/2023 Newsletter and Publicity

The Committee was asked to consider which items discussed at the meeting, if any, would be included in a press release and, in addition, items for the next edition of the Council's Newsletter.

Resolved: To publicise the following:

- (1) the Mayor's visit to Killarney and the revival of the relationship;
- (2) the return of the Town Crier/Bellman; and
- (3) forthcoming Heritage Events Mayor's Parlour open days.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.