

# 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, 22 January 2024, at 7.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.**

Cllr J Brook	Present	Cllr J Cornthwaite (Vice-Chair)	Present
Cllr J Dunlop (Chair)	Present	Cllr D Rathbone	Apologies
Cllr M Severn	Absent	Cllr G Tirvengadam	Present
Cllr C Russell	Present		
Two Vacancies			

**In attendance:** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk) and Simon Unsworth (Heritage Officer)

## **MH14/2023 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Rathbone.

## **MH15/2023 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

## **MH16/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

## **MH17/2023 Minutes from the Last Meeting**

It was noted that the new Discard Policy referred to the Mayoralty and Arts Committee, but this should now be the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee.

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of the meeting of the former Mayoralty and Arts Committee held on 9 October 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

## **MH18/2023 Minute Action Sheet**

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

Emails had been sent to the appropriate officer at W&FC concerning the brass signage plaques in the Town Hall. To date, no response had been received, and these were being chased up. Cllr Brook asked that he may be copied in to future correspondence, in his role as Leader of W&FC, so as to ensure appropriate notice is taken. A suggestion was also made that the sign on the Parlour door includes the date at which it was created.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

### **MH19/2023 Review of Spend against Budget 2023/24**

The Committee considered its budget monitoring report.

The Clerk drew the Committee's attention to the relatively low spend against Torchlight, this year, because no grandstand or marquee had been required.

**Resolved:** To note the budget monitoring report as at 8 January 2024.

### **MH20/2023 Slavery and Kendal Exhibition**

The Heritage Officer provided a brief verbal report on progress of plans for the Slavery and Kendal Exhibition. A meeting had been held with Anti Racism Cumbria and others, and it had been suggested that they may be able to supply volunteers to staff the exhibition, which may allow a different style of exhibit to be used. He was expecting to finish the text for the display boards in the next month and would circulate them to members for feedback, prior to design. He was due to meet with Cllr Rathbone later in the week to discuss what lessons could be learned from the Lancaster City exhibition on a similar topic.

He confirmed that the Exhibition was on track to be delivered the week before the Unity Festival in July. It was suggested that the Heritage Officer make links with staff at Kendal Museum who were working on a re-imagining of the Wildlife exhibition in the light of current knowledge about its creation.

**Resolved:** To note the verbal report. Cllr Russell will provide appropriate contacts at the Museum.

### **MH21/2023 Kendal Town Crier/Bellman**

The Town Clerk provided a brief verbal report on the return of the Town Crier/Bellman. Richard Mathews has returned to the post after a period in which the post was briefly held by a former Mayor of Kendal, and then was vacant. The Heritage Officer reported that new Risk assessments had been drawn up, new terms of reference agreed, and new procedures for the Crier's booking, remuneration and reporting put in place. Booking the Crier can be direct through him, or through the [office@kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk) address.

**Resolved:** To note the verbal report.

### **MH22/2023 Collection Management**

(a) The Heritage Officer presented a report asking Members to consider the acquisition of a medallion commemorating the re-building of the Town Hall in 1897 at a cost of £30 from the Art Reserve.

According to the Council's Acquisition Policy, items were to be considered for acquisition if they met one of criteria stated. To this end, the badge being ranked as No.1, an item which has a direct link to the Mayoralty and/or Kendal Town Council, it was clearly linked to the Council and the development of its based in the Town Hall, and acquisition should be strongly considered. As such, it was being recommended that the Council purchase the item due to its ranking and the fact that the cost was not high.

**Resolved:** To purchase the medallion for £30, from the Arts Reserve.

(b) The Committee was asked to note the continued loan of 'King Lear in the Tempest' by George Romney to Lakeland Arts for display in the Abbot Hall Gallery. A copy of the loan agreement form was attached to the agenda for information.

**Resolved:** to note the report.

(c) The Heritage Officer provided an update on the progress made towards developing a priority list for acquisition, retention and discard in the collection. As part of the ongoing work to most effectively manage the Collection, all of the existing Heritage items had been assessed against the following criteria:

1. Item has a direct link to the Mayoralty and/or Kendal Town Council. Not to be disposed of unless under point 6.
2. Item has a direct link to the town of Kendal's history and development. Not to be disposed of unless under point 6.
3. Item has a direct link to key individuals or groups associated with the town **and** also has a direct link to the Mayoralty and/or Town Council. Not to be disposed of unless under point 6.
4. Item has a direct link to key individuals or groups associated with the town **but** has no direct link to the Mayoralty and/or Town Council. Disposal can be considered.
5. Item has no obvious link to town, Mayoralty and/or Town Council. Disposal can be considered.
6. Item is irretrievably damaged. Disposal should be considered.

Once a better understanding of the makeup of the collection as understood, further discussion could take place about those items placed into categories 4, 5 and 6. The assessment and categorisation had been carried out in the first instance by the Heritage Officer, and could be changed following discussion if required.

The assessment showed that the Heritage collection broke down as follows:-

Category 1: 231 items (38%)  
Category 2: 73 items (12%)  
Category 3: 56 items (9%)  
Category 4: 156 items (26%)  
Category 5: 65 items (10%)  
Category 6: 0 items (0%)  
Unsure: 27 items (5%)

This meant that almost 60% of the Heritage Collection was Categorised 1-3 and so could be considered to be in the correct hands, with only a small amount listed as 'Unsure' until further research could be undertaken. The items that could be considered for disposal should now be the subject of further discussion to make any decisions needed about their retention. It was important to clarify that an item falling into the categories 4 or 5 did not mean that they should be discarded, only that it was something that could be considered if the need arose (where 'need' should be assessed not merely on financial grounds but for reasons of (for example) space, storage requirements or other factors as laid out in the original policy).

Members were now being asked how to progress this work. Following a discussion of a number of examples, where specific experts had expressed interests in specific works, it was suggested that this process next would require the services of both an art historian, and a valuer, so that the current care, value and context of relevant items in the collection could be considered.

**Resolved:** To progress this issue with relevant experts and report back to the committee.

## **MH23/2023 Museum Provision**

The Town Clerk presented a report summarising progress made so far towards creating a new "Museum for Kendal". The report explained how museum provision telling the story of Kendal was currently split over a number of collections held by a range of providers: Kendal Museum; Lakeland Arts; Kendal Town Council; the former Cumbria County Archive; Kendal Library; The Quaker Tapestry; K Shoes Collection; and other local archives and a number of other local collections.

At recent meetings, and those held prior to the sale of the Old Kendal Grammar School by Lakeland Arts in November 2023, it had been agreed that the Town Council would like to support an initiative to develop a public museum offer which specifically told Kendal's story. Because of the diversity of the town's historic collections, and the physical range of its historic sites, it had been suggested that a single physical site was unrealistic, and that attention should be given to developing innovative alternative ways of telling the town's story.

At a meeting with stakeholders and Westmorland and Furness Council (W&FC) staff and councillors in November 2023, it had been suggested that W&FC staff may be available to assist in developing the idea of an innovative Museum for Kendal. To date there had been little further movement in this regard. Assuming that W&FC staff time became available in due course, the Committee was asked for its consideration of what the Town Council's role in a future initiative might be, and whether in due course, it would be an issue to which the Council was prepared to allocate funding.

The Committee agreed that the Town Council should take a leading role in ensuring the story of Kendal is told. There was considerable sympathy for the roles of W&FC officers who were working across the wider unitary district with very different corporate cultures and experience in Museums. It was noted that one of the part-time, long serving Curators at Kendal Museum had retired after Christmas, and this presented a considerable potential loss of local expertise. New curatorial staff were being trained, and the Town Council could have a role in shaping Kendal Museum's future directions. However it was reiterated that the Kendal story wasn't just about a fixed-site Museum, but included many aspects of the town's heritage, and the Mayor and Council officers could take a role in leading this issue forward.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

**Resolved:** The Mayor and the Town Clerk to liaise over developing a plan of action for developing a wider project with stakeholders.

## **MH24/2023 Twinning**

(a) It was reported that the Mayor had been invited to the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Kendal's twin town Killarney. The trip might require a small virement from the underspent Mayoral events budget to the Mayoral Travel budget. The Committee suggested it might also come from the Twinning budget line. It was noted that the Killarney Mountain Festival was still a great opportunity for making further linkages.

**Resolved:** To support the Mayor's re-engagement with Killarney, and to utilise the Twinning budget to support the trip.

(b) Members of the Kendal Rinteln Association provided a brief verbal report on the activities of the Association. It was meeting for its agm on Wednesday at 7pm, and all councillors had been invited.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

## **MH25/2023    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:** The return of the Town Crier, and new dates for public tours of the Mayor's Parlour were suggested as suitable articles.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm