

# Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED  
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## Minutes of a meeting of the Management Committee held on Monday, 6 November 2023, at 7.30 p.m., in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr A Blackman	Apologies	Cllr H Ladhams	Present
Cllr S Coleman (Chair)	Present	Cllr S Long	Present
Cllr J Dunlop	Apologies	Cllr D Rathbone (Vice-Chair)	Present
Cllr A Finch	Apologies	Cllr C Russell	Present
Cllr E Hennessy	Present		

**Also present:** Cllr G Archibald as substitute for Cllr A Finch and Cllr J Cornthwaite, in the capacity of Deputy Mayor) as substitute for J Dunlop (Mayor).

**Officers in attendance:** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk) and Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant).

### **M38/2023 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs J Dunlop and A Finch.

### **M39/2023 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

### **M40/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)**

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

### **M41/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of the Management Committee held on 4 September 2023 and to authorise the Chairman to sign them as a true record.

### **M42/2023 Minute Action Sheet**

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

- *Ref. No.28* – The Town Clerk informed Members that, whilst Divest Cumbria would like to have returned to address the Committee again, it had been felt that they had put forward their views very eloquently on the last occasion. He reported that the matter remained ongoing and that he was due to attend a meeting of the Pension Fund Committee on 10 November 2023, at which Divestment would be explained; he would report back.
- *Ref. No.31* – The Town Clerk reported that Westmorland and Furness had responded saying that they were supportive of altering the Town Council's electoral cycle and a review of boundaries and that they would be addressing this in due course. They were seeking information on what

boundaries the Town council wished to change and, to this end, the Town Clerk was in the process of obtaining the necessary maps. He suggested that it would be worthwhile for a working group to look into the matter and to report back to the Committee. Members felt that this was something best suited to the Planning Committee. Members further asked whether any feedback had been received from Westmorland and Furness in relation to land allocations and any potential new housing strategies. The Town Clerk explained that the status of the Local Plan had been complicated by the passing in the previous week of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which would result in a job of work for the Planning Committee, with the new system being subtly different.

**Resolved:** To pass on the issue of responding to Westmorland and Furness on a review of the Town Council's boundaries to the Planning Committee.

- *Ref. No.2* – In response to a request for an update in relation to Mintsfeet, the Town Clerk referred to a recent meeting with the Rivers Trust at which attention had been drawn to the presences of Japanese Knotweed. This would require an appropriate management plan to be put in place. He further drew attention to inroads made by Cllr G Archibald regarding the revitalisation of the river corridor, pointing out that this subject would eventually become part of the Environment Committee's remit. The Town Clerk also reported that the Environment Agency had completed footpath work at Mint Fields, which meant that the path network was now complete, however, that there had been a potential offer for extension of the path through the Town Council's land. This matter also now lay with the Environment Committee. A query having then been raised in relation to publicity around the acquisition of land at Vicarage Drive, the Town Clerk explained that this was yet to be done due to recent staffing shortages. Cllr E Hennessy, Chair of the Environment Committee, undertook to put a press release together.

**Resolved:** Cllr E Hennessy to draft a press release in relation to the acquisition of land at Vicarage Drive.

- *Ref. No.16* – This also related to Ref.No.1, the Town Clerk explaining in response to a query that a full report on a review of outside bodies would be made to the April 2024 meeting of Full Council, with representation on Brewery Arts being fed into that report.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

### **M43/2023 Council Activity Report**

The Town Clerk presented a report on progress made across the various actions the Council was involved in, highlighting a number of very positive areas around the success of Silver Gilt award for Britain in Bloom and the forthcoming Christmas Lights Switch-on Event.

Discussion took place in relation to the need to review the Visit Kendal Website and, in addition for this area to move across to the Culture and Communities Committee rather than Mayoralty and Heritage. The Town Clerk explained that the Council currently paid someone to update this site and that the content was reviewed by staff from both the Town Council and Kendal Futures. Of all of the Council's media platforms, the Visit Kendal site was the most up to date. Members stressed the fact that this was a highly visited site, by both visitors and the local community, and that its content should be appropriate and up to date. It was felt that the site currently focussed on events and festivals but that the content should be broader, including, for example, an events calendar, details in relation to businesses and a broader mix of cultural events. In addition, the need for the leaflets to be appropriately focussed was stressed.

**Resolved:** To seek to make the improvements outlined above to the Visit Kendal Website and leaflets.

Concern having been expressed regarding the the vast number of items included within the Activity Report, the Town Clerk explained that this was an indication of work that was currently being delivered. He confirmed that if staffing levels could be maintained then most of the items would be prioritised and delegated to individuals within the Team.

Discussion turned to the Council's Newsletter and to the fact that not all councillors had received a copy. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that he had not, as yet, collated the information requested from Members in relation to this issue but that he was surprised how many had not received a copy. He suggested that he would need to take the matter up with Royal Mail and also referred to alternative options for delivery. Members stressed the need for this to be addressed as soon as possible and asked for a link to be sent to all councillors as soon as the next edition of the Newsletter was published on the Council's Website. The Town Clerk indicated that the next edition would be available prior to Christmas.

**Resolved:** The Town Clerk to address the matter regarding delivery of the Council's Newsletter as a matter as soon as possible and, in addition, to ensure that a link is sent to all councillors as soon as the next edition of the Newsletter is published on the Council's Website.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **M44/2023      Kendal Futures Programme Proposal**

Cllr S Long, as the Council's representatives on the outside body, introduced a programme proposal from Kendal Futures, details of which were included within the agenda. Kendal Futures wanted to transform Kendal as a Place, developing the aspirations and principles set out in its Vision to inspire change and ensure the town's future success. Kendal Futures would do this by working with the Kendal Futures Board, Kendal Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, other partners (including the private sector) and the local community via the Vision Action Groups.

The report detailed Kendal Vision's Core values and provided a link to Kendal Futures priorities for 2023-24; these would continue to be progressed.

Details of the funding request to the Town Council were provided, showing a Year 1 total of £49,800, Year 2 £55,500 and Year 3 £51,000.

Further details of projects and their alignment with Kendal Town Council's priorities were provided. Attention was drawn to the fact that Kendal Futures had the ambition to progress and ultimately deliver the projects shown, but their success and actual delivery was often dependent on other parties, including Westmorland and Furness Council, for funding, expertise, permissions, development and physical completion. Many of the activities outlined were to bring projects closer to a stage where they would be sufficiently progressed to bid for future Government funding rounds if made available. Kendal Futures had project development funding to contribute towards the Year 1 activities and was committed to finding funding for some projects via alternative sources such as private sector contributions and crowdfunding. However, gaining commitments from Kendal Town Council and Westmorland and Furness Council would help to leverage other support. Costs were estimated for the different project elements, and a range of funders would be required. Some of the project work could be completed using existing staff/team resources only, and did not have a direct cost attributed to them.

Year 1 (2024/25) projects were as follows:

- Extending the Stramongate public realm scheme to Kent Street
- Develop a public realm improvement scheme for Market Place and Finkle Street

- Meanwhile projects
- Canal Head Masterplan
- Influence the development of the revised Local Plan to align with the Vision's principles
- Community Wealth Building (ongoing work see current priorities for details)

Year 2 (2025/26) projects were as follows:

- Extending the Stramongate public realm scheme to Kent Street
- Public realm improvement scheme for Market Place and Finkle Street
- Meanwhile projects
- Canal Head revised masterplan
- Influence the development of the revised Local Plan to align with the Vision's principles
- Masterplan for Busher Walk/County Hall

Year 3 (2026/27) projects were as follows:

- Public realm scheme for Market Place and Finkle Street
- Continue to influence the development of the revised Local Plan to align with the Vision's principles
- Busher Walk/County Hall Masterplan
- Enhancing the Kendal Conservation Area
- Station Gateway Masterplan

Details of each of the projects were provided.

In presenting the report, Cllr Long referred to Kendal Futures' recent presentation to the Town Council, expressing disappointment that not many councillors had attended.

The Committee discussed the matter at length, and it was suggested that the Budget Sub-Group might give consideration to this funding request for inclusion within the budget as a possible set of projects that would justify an increase in the precept. Whilst there was some apprehension, Members on the whole felt that this was an opportunity to demonstrate the Town Council's support for the valuable work carried out by Kendal Futures. This was an opportunity for the Town Council's to show its commitment to community engagement and an opportunity to make a huge difference. Highlighted also was the potential for unlocking additional money should the Council provide funding to Kendal Futures. It was stressed that clear measures of success would need to be set and monitored to ensure that Kendal Futures were delivering and, if not met, then payments could be withheld as necessary. Attention was drawn to the potential for use of CIL money and also to the fact that residents might wish to know how Westmorland and Furness were contributing their share to Kendal; it was pointed out that this question had already been raised with Westmorland and Furness. It was suggested that the work of Kendal was predominantly Kendal Town Centre focussed and questioned how it may benefit outlying areas of the Town; it was felt that a wider agenda was required. It was pointed out, however, that the proposal demonstrated enhancement opportunities for the whole of the Town.

**Resolved:** The Budget Sub-Group to give full consideration as to how the funding request from Kendal Futures might be included within the Council's budget as a possible set of projects that would justify an increase in the precept, and to report back to Management Committee prior to any recommendation being made to Full Council.

The need for a repeat presentation to be made by Kendal Futures to Kendal Town Council Members was raised, with suitable advance notification.

**Resolved:** Kendal Futures be requested to deliver a repeat presentation to Kendal Town Council Members, with suitable advance notification to be provided.

#### **M45/2023 Budget 2023-24**

The Committee reviewed the expenditure against budget in the current year. The Town Clerk referred to the recent Local Government pay settlement for 2023/24 and pointed out that this had been estimated for within the budget.

Some concern was expressed that no details had been provided in relation to the revenue budget whilst it had been thought that information was going to be provide on a regular basis about the development fund and reserves. The Town Clerk pointed out that this information would be seen by the Budget Sub-Group but that it was the Audit Committee's role to examine these details. He accepted, however, the need for the Management Committee to be aware, and undertook to bring a regular report to future meetings.

**Resolved:** To bring a regular report on the revenue budget to future meetings of the Management Committee.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **M46/2023 Budget 2024-25**

(a) The Committee was asked to consider its expenditure aims for the next financial year and to make recommendations to the Council. Expenditure had to be in keeping with the aims of the Council Plan.

The following table showed the current budget and estimated outturn, the estimated amount required in the next financial year to complete the Council's actions and the percentage variance on the previous year's budget.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Current year</b>	<b>Expected outturn</b>	<b>Proposed 24-25</b>	<b>% variance</b>
<b>Staffing</b>	Staffing	278,000	281,000	295,700	+6%
	Staff Training	2,000	2,000	3,000	+50%
<b>Premises</b>	Rent and Services	16,872	16,872	17,000	+1%
	Equipment	2,678	2,678	2,778	+4%
	Alarms	1,850	1,850	1,850	0%
	PPE	100	100	1,000	+900%
<b>IT</b>	Support	6,854	6,854	7,050	+3%
	Website	1,250	1,250	1,500	+20%
	Equipment/software	5,879	5,879	7,400	+26%
	Other	317	605	750	+137%
	Newsletter	12,500	12,500	13,000	+4%
<b>Insurance and Finance</b>	Insurance	5,386	5,387	5,400	0%
	HR	4,000	4,000	4,500	+13%
	Audit	2,800	2,800	3,800	+36%
	Vouchers and payroll	884	720	720	-19%
	Other	530	100	100	-81%
<b>Office</b>	Printing and stationery	2,100	2,100	2,100	0%

	Item	Current year	Expected outturn	Proposed 24-25	% variance
	Equipment and Consumables	1,000	1,000	1,000	0%
	Photocopier	1,398	1,398	1,500	+7%
	General inc repairs	2,902	500	500	-83%
	Subscriptions	3,000	2,896	3,000	0%
<b>Vehicle</b>	Fuel	1,250	1,000	1,200	-4%
	Repairs	2,500	2,100	2,600	+4%
	Ins/tax/mot	1,300	1,300	1,300	0%
<b>Elections</b>	Ward	0	0	0	
	Fund	30,000	30,000	12,000	-60%
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	Training	150	150	150	0%
<b>Futures</b>	Manager	10,000	10,000	10,800	+8%
	Vision	5,500	5,500	5,000	-9%
<b>Wainwright</b>	Award	250	250	250	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>403,250</b>	<b>402,789</b>	<b>406,948</b>	<b>+1%</b>

The Town Clerk, in presenting the report, advised that the table showed a few small increases. He drew attention to the 900% variance in relation to PPE which was a result of the Council needing to make improvements, particular in staff clothing when out on site. He further drew attention to an element of uncertainty around staffing costs relating to the recent Local Government pay settlement for 2023/24 and following the recent resignation of a member of the Team and the potential for cost implications. This, however, afforded the opportunity to review how the Council delivered projects moving forward.

The need to examine the possibility of increasing the Council's staffing resources was raised, this in order to ensure delivery building on the excellent work which had been carried out to date. Attention was also drawn to the cost of recruitment which had not been accounted for within the proposed budget. Also stressed was the need for resilience and the potential for a Deputy Clerk role. It was felt that these matters should be considered by the Budget Sub-Group.

The Town Clerk further referred to vehicle costs and the fact that the Council hoped to transfer to a different type of vehicle moving forward, which would mean an increase in the proposed budget. This could also be examined by the Sub-Group.

**Resolved:** To delegate consideration of the Management Committee budget to its Sub-Group, with a view for an increase in staffing costs, including recruitment; the implications of the Local Government finance settlement 2023/24; and the potential costs related to the Council transferring to a different type of vehicle.

(b) The Committee was further asked to review the Council's budget making process and make any necessary related to decisions. It was raised, however, that this matter had already been addressed under Minute No.M46/2023 (Budget 2024-25) above.

#### **M47/2023      Employment and Staffing Matters**

(a) The Committee was provided with a report from the Staffing Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee had held its first meeting on 12 October 2023. It had reviewed the current state of appraisals and had agreed that all staff should have a more structured appraisal and training plan with time-framed outcomes. The Committee had reviewed a report from the Council's Human Resources advisor, Meraki HR. This was the result of an audit of Council

policies and a series of 'Stay Interviews' which had been held with members of staff earlier in the year.

There had been a number of recommendations raised relating to GDPR, best practice record keeping, recruitment and retention. The Town Clerk would be working through these recommendations, with support from Meraki HR, over the next couple of months. In addition, the Council had engaged a temporary worker to cover recent staff absences more effectively.

Moving forward, a series of action plans would be developed on HR best practice, including continuing professional development, compliance, Health & Safety, and GDPR, with the aim of bringing the Council up to date with current legislation and good operating systems as soon as possible. The Sub-Committee would be looking at priorities and preparing a list of policies for review/creation at its next meeting

The Town Clerk drew attention to the fact that at the time of the meeting of the Sub-Committee, there had been no need to consider recruitment. However, following the recent resignation of a member of staff, a further meeting would need to be convened in the near future.

**Resolved:** To note the report from the Staffing Sub-Committee.

(b) The Town Clerk reported that there were currently no staffing matters requiring the Committee's consideration and guidance.

#### **M48/2023 CIL Funding for Town Hall Exterior Projector**

The Committee was asked to consider allocating Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to the cost of a replacement exterior projector for Kendal Town Hall. The projector used to display poppies, Christmas motifs, etc., on the Town Hall was irreparably broken due to water ingress. A new one could be installed in time for Remembrance for £4,750. There were, however, insufficient funds in the Christmas lighting budget to cover this. An allocation of CIL funding was, therefore, proposed to cover the shortfall. A contribution from Westmorland and Furness Council was likely, however, it was unclear at this stage how much. There was currently around £167,000 in the CIL fund, the most recent allocation (October 2023) of £56,000 being roughly equal to the allocation from the last meeting.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk explained the contractor had confirmed that new projector would be more sophisticated than the previous one. He further drew attention to the fact that Westmorland and Furness had promised a contribution from their Communications Department but that this had not yet been received. The Chair suggested the need to ensure that this contribution was reclaimed.

**Resolved:** To allocate the sum of £4,750 from the CIL fund for the cost of a replacement exterior projector for Kendal Town Hall, with the Town Clerk to ensure that the contribution promised by Westmorland and Furness Council is reclaimed.

#### **M49/2023 Newsletter and Publicity**

The Committee was asked to consider what items discussed at the meeting to include in a press release and, in addition, items for inclusion in the next edition of the Council's Newsletter.

The Town Clerk explained issues in relation to resources and a delay in the production of the next Newsletter. He pointed out, however, that whilst the deadline had been met in the

previous year, many people had not received the Newsletter until after the Christmas Lights Switch-on event. Efforts would be made to ensure that the Newsletter would be out before Christmas. The Town Clerk also referred to Cllr E Hennessy's earlier undertaking to draft a press release in relation to acquisition of land, suggesting that this could be sent out as a press release on the following day (Minute M42/2023 above refers).

In response to concern that the Newsletter would not be out in time to advertise the Switch-on event, the Town Clerk drew attention to the Council's Events Management Plan and the reasons for a need for simply a soft launch. In addition land acquisition, Members pointed out the need for publicity around the Council's Silver Gilt award for Britain in Bloom. It was raised that a number of items, for example the wildflowers at Kendal Green, had been included in the last Newsletter, copies of which had not been received by many people. The potential the wildflower item to be revisited within the next Newsletter was raised, including photographs, and, in addition, this item to be forwarded the Westmorland Gazette.

**Resolved:** To make efforts for the next Newsletter to be sent out before Christmas.

**Resolved:** Cllr E Hennessy to draft a press release in relation to acquisition of land by the Council, to be sent out the next day.

**Resolved:** Publicity in relation to the Silver Gilt award for Britain in Bloom to be included within the next Newsletter and publicised as necessary.

**Resolved:** The item on wildflowers at Kendal Green to be revisited within the next issue of the Newsletter, including photographs, as well as forwarding this item to the Westmorland Gazette.

The meeting closed at 9.17 p.m.