

# Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED  
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**Minutes of the meeting of Kendal Town Council held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, on Monday, 2 December 2024, at 7.30 p.m.**

## Councillors

G Archibald	Apologies	A Blackman	Present
S Blunden	Present	J Brook	Present
D Brown	Apologies	A Campbell	Apologies
S Coleman	Apologies	J Cornthwaite (Mayor)	Present
J Dunlop	Present	L Edwards	Present
R Edwards	Present	D Evans	Absent
C Hardy	Apologies	A Finch	Present
L Hendry	Present	M Helme	Apologies
H Ladhams	Present	E Hennessy	Present
D Miles	Present	S Long	Apologies
C Russell	Present	D Rathbone	Apologies
K Simpson	Present	M Severn	Present (part)
P Thornton	Present	G Supka	Apologies
R Sutton (Deputy Mayor)	Present	G Tirvengadam	Apologies

**In attendance:** Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Inge Booth (Democratic Services Officer) and Natalia Williams (Development and Delivery Officer (Deputy Clerk)).

**Also present:** One member of the public.

### 43/2024 Apologies

Raised was the fact that a number of Members had not attended meetings for quite some time and the resulting potential impact on both their ward residents and fellow committee Members who had to shoulder more burden. This, it was felt, required addressing. The Mayor pointed out, however, that this matter had already been considered by the Management Committee.

**Resolved:** To receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllrs Archibald, Brown, Campbell, Coleman, Hardy, Helme, Long, Rathbone, Supka and Tirvengadam.

### 44/2024 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

### 45/2024 Exclusion of Press and Public

There were no excluded items included within the agenda.

### 46/2024 Minutes of Last Council Meeting

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 October 2024 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

#### **47/2024 Minute Action Sheet**

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

Reference was made to Item Ref. No.23 (Representation on Outside Bodies) and a query raised as to whether there had been any tangible progress in relation to the Museum Partnership. Council was advised that there had been some action on this matter and that a progress update was due to be brought to the next meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **48/2024 Mayor's Communications and Announcements**

The Mayor presented a report on his recent activities, pointing out that the Deputy Mayor had attended a number of events on his behalf and highlighting a number of areas. He explained that a few festive events were yet to take place and referred to the forthcoming Mayor's Coffee Morning due to take place on 14 December, asking Members to try to attend and to contribute raffle prizes.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were thanked for their commitment and diligence.

Reference was made to Inter Faith Week which had taken place in November and it was suggested that the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee might consider the potential to invite other faith communities to attend Remembrance Sunday in 2025 alongside the Christian community. Information was sought with regard to the World AIDS Day event, however, the Deputy Mayor explained that he had been unable to attend. Some confusion had arisen with regard to the date, with the event being held on a Wednesday and World AIDS Day being on the Sunday. He hoped, however, that the Council would become involved in the future.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the List of Engagements included events which had not yet taken place, and the Town Clerk undertook to address this matter.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

#### **49/202 External Auditor's Report**

The Council's Audit Committee had reviewed the External Auditor's Report for 2023-24., which had been published alongside the Notice of Conclusion of Audit on 1 October 2024. The Committee had accepted the proposed actions by the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO).

The External Auditor's report was appended to this report. As last year, it was an unqualified audit, with two minor 'except-fors', which the Council needed to address and account for in the 2024-25 AGAR.

The 'except-fors' in 2023-24 were:

- (1) *The Internal Auditor has omitted the Council's website address from the top of their submitted report.*

This had been corrected immediately, and had been noted by the Internal Auditor.

- (2) *The External Auditor, in noting the Council's levels of reserves, and their relationship with earmarked reserves, recommends that the Council works towards ensuring that the unallocated (and therefore available cash) reserve is in the region of three months operating costs. This is in line with the recommendations in the JPAG Practitioners' Guide.*

This would be around £175,000 on current budgets. It was difficult to predict the precise level of general reserves at year end, but a conservative estimate suggested that the Council would be on track to have at least £60,000 unallocated on current expenditure. Further reserves could be identified if project funding was more aggressively reviewed. The Council needed to set out a three-year medium term financial plan as a part of its annual budget process, which should show how these reserves would be identified. This would be reported to Management Committee in the first instance, and the Full Council at its Precept setting meeting in February 2025.

Cllr Russell, in presenting the report, commended officers for their work and was proud to affirm that the Council was in a good position.

The need for such a large reserve for such a small council and whether it could be used for unexpected community need as well as emergencies was questioned, with attention being drawn to the question as to whether the Levelling Up Funding of £13.5m would actually come forward. The Town Clerk explained that the External Auditor's recommendations could not be ignored and added that Kendal Town Council was becoming bigger, with the Precept now being over £410,000. He added that there was nothing to say that unallocated reserves could not be accessed. It was suggested that the definition of unexpected expenditure might form part of the budget discussion.

**Resolved:** To note the External Auditor's report and accept the proposed mitigating actions.

## **50/2024 Minutes from Committees**

The Council was presented with the following minutes from recent meetings of the Council's standing committees and committee chairs were invited to give a brief account of their committee's recent activities, if they so wished:

- (a) Audit Committee on 21 October 2024 – Cllr Russell presented the minutes. He drew particular attention to Minute No.A22/2024, pointing out that the Committee had placed on record Members' heartfelt thanks to the former Events Officer for her work and commitment to the Council during her employment. The Council's thanks had since been conveyed, however, Cllr Russell now asked Council also to acknowledge and place on record its thanks for the work which had been carried out by the former postholder.
- (b) Allotments Committee on 30 September 2024 - Cllr Finch presented the minutes.
- (c) Kendal in Bloom Committee on 22 October 2024 – Cllr Blackman presented the minutes. He reminded Council of the Committee's decision not to enter Cumbria in Bloom 2025, however, pointed out that the Committee remained extremely busy in planning the trajectory moving forward.

Cllr Russell, in his capacity as Chair of Natural Kendal, took the opportunity to refer to money which had been set aside by the Environment Agency a number of years earlier for an arts event. He asked now whether the Council would be willing to back

a festival which was due to take place in the Town in July 2025. To this end, Cllr Hennessy raised a Point of Order, saying that this was an inappropriate request from a Member representing another organisation.

- (d) Mayoralty and Heritage Committee on 23 September 2024 – Cllr Cornthwaite presented the minutes. Reference was made to the recent Remembrance Sunday event and the need in future to use the road in the best way possible, ensuring that the two minute silence took place at the War Memorial. Queried was whether there had been any more thought with regard to the forthcoming anniversaries and, in particular, the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Borough Charter, potentially utilising the Jubilee Budget. Members were advised that the anniversaries were due to be discussed at various committees, particularly Mayoralty and Heritage. Members would be kept informed. Also referred to was Minute No.MH25/2024 regarding Twinning and the invitation for the mayor equivalent of Killarney to attend Kendal Mountain Festival (and not Mintfest as referred to within the document). It was queried as to whether there had been any feedback. The Town Clerk explained that there had been mixed responses, however, pointed out that the mayor equivalent of Killarney was not actually local to that Town. He believed though that there was still enthusiasm from the Killarney Twinning Association and he would be bringing a report to the next meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee on the latest progress.
- (e) Planning Committee on 7 October, 21 October and 4 November 2024 - Cllr Ladhams presented the minutes. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Town Council was due the next day to make representation to Westmorland and Furness Council's South Lakeland Local Area Planning Committee with regard to the Town Hall planning application.

**Resolved:** To receive the minutes of recent meetings of the Council's standing committees shown above.

#### **51/2024 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Council considered reports from the Council representatives on the following outside organisations:

- (a) Integrated Community Care (a written report from Cllr R Sutton)
- (b) Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership (a written report from Cllr L Hendry) – Cllr Hendry took the opportunity to draw attention to the success of the “Great British Rake-Off” which had taken place on 30 November. Attention was drawn to the need for additional information boards along the canal towpath.
- (c) South Lakes Action on Climate Change (SLACC) (a written report from Cllr S Blunden) – Cllr Blunden drew attention to the fact that the meeting referred to had taken place on 14 November, although two dates were mentioned in error within the report. He also stressed the fact that he had not been present at the meeting.

Cllr Hennessy hoped that he was speaking on behalf of all Members in expressing the Council's thanks to SLACC for the work carried out over the last 15 years. The organisation was shortly going to close down and Cllr Hennessy commended the work which had been carried out in Kendal and the wider area.

**Resolved:** To receive the reports from representatives on the outside organisations shown above.

## **52/2024      Budget 2025/26**

The Town Clerk provided an update on actions taken to date in relation of the making of budget recommendations for the 2025/26 financial year.

The Council's committees had been making their budget recommendations for the forthcoming financial year, and the Management Committee's Budget Working Group had met to begin the process of drawing them together into a single budget. The next stage in the process was for the Management Committee itself to receive the recommendations of the Budget Working Group, with particular reference to delivering a balanced budget, with appropriate reserves allocated. This would be done at the January 2025 meeting of the Management Committee, from which there will be a recommended budget, precept and Council Tax level, for the Full Council to consider at its meeting in February.

Cllr Russell explained that the full draft budget was not being considered this evening due to the External Auditor's recent recommendation for the Council to work towards ensuring that the unallocated reserve was in the region of three months' operating costs, i.e. around £175,000. This would be discussed by the Management Committee on 6 January 2025 prior to the Budget being set by Council in February. Despite the need to address this recommendation, Cllr Russell stressed that the Council remained in a strong position. He reminded Members that the Council needed to plan for a budget to meet its expected requirements. Should unexpected need emerge, then this would be something that could be accommodated from reserves, if necessary.

**Resolved:** To note the progress made to date towards the delivery a balanced budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

## **53/2024      Wainwright Award 2024**

The Town Clerk provided details of the timetable in relation to the Wainwright Award 2024, which would culminate in Council considering nominations received at its meeting in April 2025. The Town Clerk explained that, following approval of the timetable, he would post the information and application form on the Council's Website.

**Resolved:** To approve the timetable in relation to the Wainwright Award 2024-25.

## **54/2024      Schedule of Payments**

The Council was presented with the schedule of payments for September and October 2024 and the Town Clerk responded to a number of queries raised by Members.

Raised in particular was the need to alter the reference to "Consultant Fees Christmas Switch on" to something more meaningful, for example "Organisation Support for Christmas Switch on" to better reflect the work which had been carried out. The Town Clerk acknowledged the fantastic work which had been carried out in this respect, pointing out how much the parish precept was reinvested in the Town.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the reference to Abbot Hall Bowling should sit within the heading of Community Grants and the Town Clerk undertook to address this matter.

Stressed was the need to source locally where possible and the purchase by the Projects Officer from Bookshop.org by the Projects Officer in relation to books for the Eddington was commended. The Town Clerk took the opportunity to inform Members that the Projects Officer would shortly be leaving the employment of the Town Council. This would be a great loss to the Council, however, the Town Clerk was pleased to say that this would allow the Projects Officer to concentrate on her music career.

**Resolved:** To receive the schedule of payments for September and October 2024.

#### **55/2024 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor made a number of announcements, in particular referring to the latest edition of the Council Newsletter. He asked those Members who had not received a hard copy of the document or who know of others who had not to contact the Development and Delivery Manager (Deputy Clerk) so that she could look into the reasons as to why they had not been delivered.

The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.