

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
www.kendaltowncouncil.gov.uk



Minutes of a meeting of the Allotments Committee held on Monday, 23 June 2025, in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, at 7.00 p.m.

Kendal Town Council Members

Cllr G Archibald (Vice Chair)	Absent	Cllr J Cornthwaite	Present
Cllr L Edwards	Present	Cllr S Falshaw	Present
Cllr A Finch (Chair)	Apologies	Cllr L Hendry	Apologies

Co-optees

Jon Cox (and Castle Hags Ext Representative)	Present
Chris Rowley (and Underley Road Representative)	Apologies
Ros Taylor (and Wattsfield Representative)	Present

Other Site Representative present

Canal Head	Deborah Allison
Castle Drive	Liz Kelly
Castle Hags	Gwen Tordoff
Sedbergh Road	Julie Sykes
Town View	Helen Belton

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk) and Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant).

Note – In the absence of both Cllrs Finch (Chair) and Archibald (Vice-Chair), and following a vote having been taken, Cllr Cornthwaite took the Chair for the meeting.

A1/2025 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Kendal Town Cllrs Finch (Chair) and Hendry, from Co-optee Chris Rowley (and Underley Road Representative) and from Site Representative Bryan Williams (Crow Tree).

A2/2025 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

A3/2025 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no confidential items included within the agenda.

A4/2025 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved: To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Allotments Committee held on 24 February 2025 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

A5/2025 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Town Clerk provided updates in relation to a number of the items.

Ref. No.3, A40/2022, Site Signage – Changes in Council typeface and logos had been awaited, with a new masthead and updates in relation to telephone numbers and the Council's website. New signs would be installed by the end of the month.

Ref. No.18, A18/2023, Review of Tenancy Agreements – All should have seen a copy of the new model Tenancy Agreement and the Council Services Officer would circulate the document to tenants at the end of the month. The new Agreement would come into power in January 2026 when new tenancies were renewed. All allotment holders would have to sign the new Agreement. A query was raised with regard to the possibility of two individuals signing up for one Agreement. Whilst the Town Clerk believed that this was not possible, he undertook to ask colleagues. Where there were split plots with two tenants, he believed that it was the lead tenant that signed the agreement.

Ref. No.46, A29/2024, Site Representatives – This was with regard to the matter of the access road to Castle Hags Ext and was a complex issue. It was suggested that the residents of the adjacent housing would be content to agree to the access being used by allotment holders. The Town Clerk undertook to pursue the matter and to bring Westmorland and Furness Council on board. In response to a query, the Town Clerk agreed that the work necessary would be worth doing at the Town Council's expense.

Ref. No.47, A29/2024, Site Representatives – This was with regard to the matter of access for allotment holders by vehicle to the Town View compost area via Maude Street and Maudes Meadow. The Town Clerk reported that the landowner had confirmed this would not be possible.

Resolved: To ask the Council Services Officer to confirm arrangements regarding the signing of tenancy agreements where plots are shared or split.

Resolved: To note the report.

A6/2025 Review of Spend against 2025/26 Budget

The Committee considered a report reviewing spend against the budget as at 12 June 2025. The Town Clerk provided details in relation to a number of the figures, drawing particular attention to Pest Control. This was one of the largest budget lines and the Town Clerk suggested the need to try to reduce it by following some of the measures recommended in the report on research findings on the risk of secondary poisoning in owls due to be discussed at the next agenda item (Minute No.A7/2025 refers).

Resolved: To note the report.

A7/2025 Research Findings on the Risk of Secondary Poisoning in Owls

The Committee considered a detailed report from Ros Taylor, Co-optee and Site Representative, Wattsfield Site. This was following the last meeting of the Committee at

which she had agreed to research the risk of secondary poisoning in owls and birds of prey. She had contacted the RSPB for advice and they referred her to Dr Ed Blane, a retired DEFRA wildlife poisoning expert and investigator who now worked with Wild Justice. Dr Blane's lengthy and informative response was provided within the report. He hoped that mentioning all the issues raised explained why this was a difficult question to answer. However, his advice was simply not to use Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs). Even if these poisons were used indoors, rodents would often move out, taking their poison loads outside with them. The classic example was when chicken sheds (which often had high mice levels) were cleared out and then cleaned. Here, all the mice left in plague numbers and all the surrounding wildlife predators got poisoned. He suggested that a council who was employing a professional pest controller to control rodents on the allotment sites should be asking them to use a Cholecalciferol product.

The Committee was asked to consider the report and to decide if any follow up action was required.

A lengthy discussion ensued. The need to keep sheds and all areas tidy and to keep moving things around was stressed. Attention was drawn to the strip of land between the Cemetery and Castle Hags Ext where a dead zone of tarpaulin had been installed; this was unattractive to rats to cross. This had helped, although had now become overgrown and required work.

In response to a query, the Town Clerk advised that the Town Council used an expensive gel poison, however, pointed out that this type of intervention should only be used as a last resort. There needed to be a move towards a system where there was less opportunity to allow rats to flourish. The need to ensure that all tenants were informed that rat poison was being used was stressed, and, in addition, progress following attendance by pest control, although the difficulties in doing this were pointed out. The Committee was reminded that tenancy agreements encouraged tenants not to use rat poison, although it may be better to say instead that tenants should do things to discourage rats.

Cllr Cornthwaite, in the Chair, thanked Ros Taylor on behalf of the Committee for her research and attention to detail. He hoped that through adopting the various options moving forward that the Council could try to improve matters in a friendly manner.

Resolved: To ask the Townscape Officer to attend to the dead zone at Castle Hags Ext allotments.

Resolved: To put into place a system to advise tenants when poison is being used.

Resolved: To note the report and to act on the recommendations contained therein.

A8/2025 Allotments Project Update and Statistics Report

The Town Clerk presented a report from the Council Services Officer.

The report referred to the improvement works at Town View, outlining the work which had been carried out in preparation by the Townscape Officer and providing details of the work carried out by the contractor which had been completed on 28 March 2025. The improvement works had been well-received and had made a positive impact on site safety.

After using the task list for approximately 12 months, it has become apparent that the Townscape Officer task list had its limitations and flaws. The Council Services Officer was currently looking at an alternative and hoped to trial a new system over the coming weeks. Details would be reported to the next meeting.

The Council Services Officer was scheduled to undertake visits week commencing 30 June and it was suggested that anyone wishing to meet her on site should make contact with her.

The new Tenancy Agreement was based on the standard NALC template. There were some comments from Committee Members that still needed to be considered before the document was finalised. The Council Services Officer would be seeking advice from the Town Clerk with regard to amending the draft document and hoped shortly to circulate the document.

The report included statistical details in relation to the Allotments Waiting List which currently stood at 30 individuals, having decreased since the last meeting by 40. 5 plots remained vacant, details of which were provided within the report. 54 plots had been let since the last meeting. Performance indicators on allotments occupancy at 12 June were also attached to the agenda for information.

The Council Services Officer explained within the report that the high number of vacant plots at the beginning of the season had been a cause for concern. With this in mind, she had changed her approach to letting plots. She had offered out the vacant plots to all prospective tenants, regardless of which site waiting list they were on. The uptake had been good and had reduced the overall waiting list significantly. Also, to note, on sites where there had been no waiting list but vacant plots, if an allotment enquiry had been received, the individual had been offered a plot straightaway. The Council Services Officer thanked site representatives who had been very helpful in directing interested parties to the office.

Discussion took place during which attention was drawn to inaccuracies in the data and the Town Clerk undertook to ask the Council Services Officer to look into the matter. The Committee welcomed the work which had been carried out by the Council Services Officer who had worked hard to let 40 plots since the last meeting. It was suggested that, moving forward, the Council Services Officer be allowed to continue to follow the system of offering vacant plots to all prospective tenants. Also raised was the potential to carry out research into uptake of allotment plots, for example whether the individuals new to Kendal and whether take up was influenced by the new estates. This could also be considered as a Planning matter where housing without gardens was proposed with the potential to seek Community Infrastructure Levy money to create additional allotment sites.

Resolved: To ask the Council Services Officer to look into the inaccuracies within the Statistics Report.

Resolved: To consider in the future carrying out research in relation to the uptake of allotments.

Resolved: To note the report.

A9/2025 Site Representatives

Helen Belton, Town View Site Representative, said that the work which had been carried out on the site was looking good. There were three new tenants who were all working hard. These people had not been on the waiting list for Town View and, to this end, she welcomed the blanket email regarding vacant sites which had been sent to all individuals on the waiting list.

Jon Cox, Castle Haggs Ext Site Representative, had nothing further to add.

Gwen Tordoff, Castle Haggs Site Representative, had nothing further to add.

Deborah Allison, Canal Head Site Representative, raised the issue of the need for a site representative for the new section of the site, also drawing attention to a couple of empty plots. The Town Clerk pointed out that the statistics report indicated that all plots were taken and undertook to ask the Council Services Officer to seek volunteers to act as site representative. He also asked M/s Allison whether there had been any problems with the wetland filling up during the recent spell of rain. She advised that this had not been the case.

Liz Kelly, Castle Drive Site Representative, said that whilst there was nothing to report on the site itself, she had spotted workmen on the perimeter of the site, with retarmacking taking place in the parking area above the cricket field. She undertook to advise officers if the access became blocked.

Ros Taylor, Wattsfield Site Representative, had nothing further to add.

Julie Sykes, Sedbergh Road Site Representative, explained that she had just started in this role. She reported that there were five plots which were not currently being used, however, that the statistics report indicated that they were all taken. She referred to previous theft of vegetables and fruit from the site and enquired whether it may be possible for locks to be installed on the gates. The Town Clerk, in response, undertook to ask the Council Services Officer or Townscape Officer to re-install locks at the site in order to act as a deterrent. He stressed the need to ensure that allotment holders did not leave anything of value on the sites and suggested that sheds should remain unlocked. In addition, he suggested the need to report theft to the Police.

Discussion took place further around payments for allotment rental which were due in January, which sometimes proved a difficult financial time following the Christmas period. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that, whilst the system did not allow for monthly or quarterly payments, the Council remained flexible in situations where there were problems relating to payment. Further raised was a suggestion for WhatsApp groups to be set up so that inexperienced allotment holders could seek advice from those more experienced. The Town Clerk drew attention to the availability of notice boards located on all sites and recommended allotment holders to raise the suggestion with their site representatives.

Resolved: To note the verbal reports from Site Representatives.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.