

Kendal Town Council

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



Minutes of a meeting of Kendal Town Council held in the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, on Monday, 5 February 2024, at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors

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

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk) and Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant). In addition, eight members of the public were present at the meeting.

Public Participation

No items were brought forward by the public at this stage in the meeting.

Laura Fitzgerald (Assistant Head of Brathay Trust), Mary Biddle (Youth Presence) and Vicky Haley (Police) were all present at the meeting on behalf of **Kendal Youth Work Partnership**. Laura Fitzgerald and May Biddle addressed Council on the current work of the Partnership which aimed to bring together organisations in the Town which worked with young people. They informed Members about two current projects, Party in the Park and YouthFest, and explained that they would be seeking support and funding from Kendal Town Council.

The representatives responded to questions raised by Members, who expressed strong support for the scheme. The Mayor thanked the representatives for their contribution to the meeting, recommended that they contact the Town Clerk with regard to applying for funding and wished the Partnership every success for the future.

67/2023 Apologies

Resolved: To receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllrs J Brook, C Hardy, L Hendry, K Simpson and G Tirvengadam.

68/2023 Declarations of Interest

Cllr G Archibald, E Hennessy, D Rathbone, M Severn and P Thornton all declared interests in Agenda Item No.11 (Notice of Motion – Divestment Policy of Cumbria Pension Fund), Minute No.70 below, for the reasons indicated within that Minute.

69/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

70/2023 Notice of Motion – Divestment Policy of Cumbria Pension Fund

Note – Cllrs D Rathbone, G Archibald and P Thornton declared interests in this item of business by virtue of being Chair, Vice-Chair and Member of the Cumbria Pension Fund Committee respectively. Cllrs E Hennessy and M Severn declared interests by virtue of the fact that their partners paid into the Cumbria Pensions Scheme. They all left the Council Chamber during discussion and voting on the item.

The following written motion, proposed by Cllr S Blunden and seconded by Cllr L Hendry presented had been included within the agenda.

“Kendal Town Council:

i) has taken action to address climate change. The Kendal Citizens’ Jury has made recommendations to help combat the effects of climate change, and the council’s committees have also discussed the role of Cumbria Pension Fund’s current investments, with regard to fossil fuel.

ii) recognises that

- The transition to renewable sources of energy is happening very quickly. With little or no warning, at some point soon, investors will decide they don’t want to invest in fossil fuels anymore as they are a dying technology. When that happens there will be a severe market revaluation (or crash) as investors withdraw their shares with accelerating urgency. If Cumbria Pension Fund still holds assets in fossil fuel companies, they will be stranded and worthless.*
- despite the Cumbria Pension Fund's current belief that it is better to remain as a shareholder in these companies in order to influence things through 'engagement', there is no evidence that this has made any difference to the way that fossil fuel companies operate. By remaining as shareholders, the Pension Fund is legitimising fossil fuel companies' climate-damaging operations.*
- Cumbria Pension Fund's investment in fossil fuel companies funds the extraction of ever more oil, coal and gas, which climate scientists are absolutely clear must stay in the ground if we are to avoid the worst effects of the building climate breakdown. Kendal Town Council has declared Climate Emergency, and asking Cumbria Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels is in alignment with, and support of, that declaration. Time is fast running out in which we can prevent runaway climate catastrophe, and we all need to do what we can now, and use our voices, however small they seem.*

iii) accordingly resolves to write to Cumbria Pension Fund, through Westmorland and Furness Council, asking it to divest its fossil fuel holdings.

iv) further resolves to

- *inform the local media of this decision*
- *write to Tim Farron MP (who is believed to be in support of divestment from fossil fuels) to indicate Kendal Town Council's support for Cumbria Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuel companies."*

At the meeting, Cllr Blunden read out and moved an amended motion, with bullet point iii) now reading, "*accordingly resolves to write to Cumbria Pension Fund asking it to divest its fossil fuel holdings*". Cllr Blunden referred to the links to additional information which had been included within the agenda to help Members in their consideration of the issue and which had provided a useful insight as to why this motion had been proposed. Cllr M Helme seconded the amended motion, thanking Cllr Blunden for raising this important issue, whilst she also recognised the need for security of those who paid into the Fund.

Anne-Marie Williams, representing Cumbria Divest, addressed Council on the subject of Divestment, drawing attention to the Council's commitment to taking action to support its declaration on climate emergency. She stressed the speed at which it was becoming a risk to invest in fossil fuels which could suddenly lose value at any stage and the need to instead invest in sectors such as renewable energy and low carbon infrastructure. She referred to other local authorities which had now committed to phase out fossil fuels from their pension funds.

It was stressed that the Council needed to ensure that those paying into the fund were not disadvantaged in the long term and. Clarification was sought with regard to whether the Pension Fund stood alone or whether other partners were involved. The Town Clerk responded, explaining that the risk was on the employers, which would have to make up any difference for any actuarial loss. The need for appropriate information to be provided to the local media was raised. Members acknowledge the fact that those with responsibility for running the Pension Fund would ensure that the matter was deal with correctly.

Members were content to vote on the amendment as the substantive motion and it was, subsequently,

Resolved: To carry the motion as amended at the meeting.

71/2023 Minutes of Last Meeting

Cllr D Miles pointed out that he was marked as being absent within the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 December 2023, however, he believed that he had tendered his apologies for the meeting. The Clerk undertook to look into the matter and he took the opportunity to remind Members that they should provide their apologies to either the Chair or himself by no later than 5.00 p.m. on the day of the relevant meeting.

Resolved: To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 December 2023 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

72/2023 Minute Action Sheet

Members considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings of the Council. The Town Clerk reported on the current recruitment process for a Deputy Town Clerk and an Administrative Officer. He hoped that the new postholders would ease workload within the Team which would assist in the ability to move forward on the actions contained within the minute action sheet.

Resolved: To note the report.

73/2023 Mayor's Communications and Announcements

The agenda included a report from the Mayor on her recent activities. The Mayor drew particular attention to a number of events contained within the report, highlighting the Life Steps and Friends' Carol Service at the Unitarian Chapel, which had been a joyous occasion; the Kendal South Choir's performance of Handel's Messiah, which had been superb; and a visit to Bendrigg Trust Lodge at Old Hutton, which had given the Mayor an insight into this superb facility which provided a lot of employment in the immediate area and brought joy to many children and adults who visited the centre from across the country.

Members thanked the Mayor for all her hard work and she responded that it had been a privilege to have the opportunity to carry out her work.

Resolved: To note the report.

74/2023 Committee Memberships

Attention was drawn to the fact that two vacancies remained on the membership of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee. Cllr S Coleman volunteered to take up one of the vacancies.

Resolved: To include Cllr S Coleman in the membership of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee, with immediate effect.

75/2023 Budget and Precept 2024/25

It was reported that the Council had agreed a Draft Budget at its meeting in December 2023. This had now been set alongside the Council Tax Base figure published on 22 December 2023 to calculate the actual Band D rates from which bills were calculated.

Following the meeting of the Management Committee held on 8 January 2024, the Budget Working Group had been asked to accommodate a 10.5% rise in the Council Tax, alongside adjustments to the Council's staffing structure, which included provision for a Full time (37 hours) position to replace the 30 hours previously undertaken by the Development Manager. This was to be supplemented by an additional administrative post, from within the budget proposed.

The resulting budget was shown within the report, along with a table showing how the Council Tax base of 10933.36 affected bills. The previous year's (2023/24) Tax Base had been 10785.7 (10730.14 in 2022/23). Because the Council Tax Base has grown, a 10.5 per cent increase in the Council Tax resulted in a 12 per cent increase in the Precept.

The Council was asked to approve the Revenue Budget detailed within the report and to submit a Precept demand of £636,157 to the collecting authority.

Attention was drawn to the vast amount of new houses being built in Kendal, to the fact that these may not be used as principal homes and to forthcoming legislation with regard to a potential increase in Council Tax on second homes. It was pointed, however, whilst it was an ambition of Westmorland and Furness Council to make the increase, that this could not be done in this financial year and so would not affect the 2024/25 Budget.

Members welcomed the revised draft Budget for 2024/25, expressing strong support for the inclusion of funding for additional staff which would enable the Council to deliver its commitments, thereby adding value to the community. This was an ambitious Budget for an ambitious Council, and attention was drawn to the ongoing work around, for example, footpaths, play areas and Christmas lights. Also noted was the incorporation of Kendal Vision within the Budget. The Chair of the Flood Relief Scheme Working Group requested that the short heading 'Flood' be changed on future budgets to something more meaningful. Those involved in putting together the Budget were thanked for their work.

It was unanimously

Resolved: To approve the Revenue Budget detailed within the report and appended to these minutes and to submit a Precept demand of £636,157 to the collecting authority.

76/2023 Reports and Minutes from Committees

The Council was presented with the following minutes from recent meetings of the Council's standing committees:-

- (a) Environment Committee on 15 January 2024.
- (b) Management Committee on 8 January 2024.
- (c) Mayoralty and Heritage Committee on 22 January 2024.
- (d) Planning Committee on 18 December 2023, 8 January and 22 January 2024.

Attention was drawn to Minute No.E64/2023 (Environment Budget 2023/24) of the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on 15 January 2024 and to the resolution which stated "If unspent, to authorise the Responsible Finance Officer to carry forward the sum of £4,200 into next year's Budget for improvements to Footway Lighting." It was pointed out that individual committees could not take forward their own budget lines. The Town Clerk explained that this was to do with the news that Westmorland and Furness Council would not be collecting the sum of money set aside for footway lighting until further notice. Clarification was provided, Members being advised that Westmorland and Furness Council was indeed carrying out a review of the inconsistencies in relation to footway lighting as a result of four authorities being brought together and that it was likely that a new policy requiring contributions would be in place by the following year. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the matter of the carry forward of £4,200 would need to be brought to the Management Committee for consideration should this be necessary.

The Mayor referred to Minute No.MH23/2023 of the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee held on 22 January 2024 and her forthcoming trip to the St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Killarney at which there would be an organisational video promoting Kendal on display.

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

77/2023 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

The Council considered the following reports from representatives on outside bodies:

- (a) Integrated Care Community (ICC) Delivery Group Meeting (a written report from Cllr R Sutton).
- (b) Kendal Community Theatre (a written report from Cllr R Sutton).
- (c) Kendal Unity Festival (a written report from Cllr G Tirvengadam).
- (d) Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership Executive Meeting (a written report from Cllr L Hendry).

In response to a query regarding Kendal Community Theatre, Cllr R Sutton confirmed that the street festival was due to take place on 26 May.

The Mayor informed Members that the organisational video due to be taken to Killarney in March would include the footage on Kendal Unity Festival.

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

78/2023 Schedule of Payments

The Council was presented with the schedules of payments for November and December 2023. The Town Clerk referred to the two payments made in December in relation to the Eddington Centre, highlighting the huge potential of the project. It was raised that this fantastic achievement had been as a result of the recommendations of the Citizen's Jury on Climate Change and that Kendal Town Council was proud to be able to back the project. Also raised was the need for volunteers moving forward.

The Town Clerk answered questions raised on the schedules. Attention was drawn to the need the inclusion of an improved level of information in relation to payments made

Resolved: The Town Clerk to arrange for inclusion of improved details within the schedules in relation to payments made.

Resolved: To receive the schedules of payments for November and December 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

Kendal Town Council
Appendix to the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 5 February 2024

Revenue Budget 2024-2025

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Forecast spend	From other sources	24-25
Allotments	Water	1,800	1,800		1,950
	Rent	950	960		1,050
	Pest Control	3,000	3,000		3,200
	Maintenance	8,800	8,800		9,000
Bloom	Displays	26,500	26,500		30,000
	Projects and Grants	8,500	6,000		6,000
Culture & Community	Community Grants	43,000	43,000		43,000
	Festival Grants	25,000	25,000		23,000
	Christmas Lighting	18,000	18,000		30,000
	Lights infrastructure	4,726	4,726		5,000
	Electricity	850	850		1,100
	Switch on	6,742	8,470		10,000
	Bunting	1,250	1,250		1,500
	Coronation	6,032	6,032		-
	Cultural initiatives	-	-		5,000
Environment	Infrastructure Maintenance	3,700	3,700		5,000
	Footway lighting	4,200	4,200		5,000
	Waste Bin servicing	3,000	2,650		3,250
	Project Birdcage	-	-		5,000
	Project Biodiversity Grants	-	-	-	10,000
	Project Wildflower planting				6,400
	Footpath enhancements	-	-	50,000	
	Project Easy Travel	-	-	50,000	

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Forecast spend	From other sources	24-25
	Project Pumptrack	-	-	35,000	
Management	Premises Rent and services	16,872	16,872		17,000
	Premises Equipment	2,678	2,678		2,778
	Premises Alarms	1,850	1,850		1,850
	Premises PPE	100	100		1,000
	IT Support	6,854	6,854		7,050
	IT Website	1,250	1,250		1,500
	IT Equipment/ software	5,879	5,879		7,400
	IT other	17	605		750
	Newsletter	12,500	12,500		13,000
	Insurance	5,386	5,387		5,400
	HR	4,000	4,000		4,500
	Audit	2,800	2,800		3,800
	Vouchers and Payroll	884	720		720
	Other	530	100		100
	Printing & Stationery	2,100	2,100		2,100
	Equipment	1,000	1,000		1,000
	Photocopier	1,398	1,398		1,500
	General inc repairs	2,402	500		500
	Subscriptions	3,000	2,896		3,000
	Vehicle fuel	1,200	1,000		1,200
	Vehicle Repairs	2,500	2,100		2,600
	Insurance/tax/MO T	1,300	1,300		1,300
	Staffing	278,000	280,000		319,000
	Staffing Training	2,000	2,000		3,000
	Elections Ward	-	-		-
	Elections Fund	30,000	30,000		10,000
	Futures Manager	10,000	10,000		10,800
	Futures Vision	5,500	5,500		5,000
	Kendal Vision support	-	-	30,000	
	Diversity	150	150		

Committee	Item	23-24 Budget	Forecast spend	From other sources	24-25
Mayoralty & Heritage	Mayoral Allowance	5,524	5,000		5,000
	Mayoral Travel	800	500		800
	Mayor Making	2,200	2,200		2,500
	Torchlight	1,730	1,730		2,000
	Remembrance	300	300		350
	Pictures and others	100	100		250
	Functions	3,170	3,170		4,000
	Twinning	1,500	1,500		1,500
	Exhibition	1,000	1,000		1,000
	Museum	2,000	2,000		2,000
	Visit Kendal	16,600			
	Kirkland Banners		1,500		1,600
	VK leaflets		8,280		9,000
	VK Website		2,500		3,000
	VK Content Coordinator		6,770		7,250
Planning	Flood	20,000	20,000		20,000
	Neighbourhood Planning	-	-		2,500
	Training	-	-		2,500
Total		623,624	623,027	170,000	697,548
Income	W&F Support Grant	33,046			33,000
	Allotment Rents	23,500			24,200
	Bank interest	0	4,000		4,500
	23/24 Precept	567,997		Proposed precept	636,157
	Revenue total	624,543			697,857

How this affects Council Tax Payers in Kendal civil parish.

Numbers refer to the parish element of Council Tax bills.

Council Tax Band	Council Tax in 22-23	Proposed Council Tax 23-24	Percentage increase	Equivalent in pence per week
Band A	35.11	38.79	10.5%	7
Band B	40.96	45.25	10.5%	8
Band C	46.81	51.72	10.5%	9
Band D	52.66	58.18	10.5%	11
Band E	64.36	71.11	10.5%	13
Band F	70.22	77.58	10.5%	14