

# Kendal Town Council

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



**Minutes of a meeting of the Kendal in Bloom Committee held on Tuesday, 23 July 2024, at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.**

## Kendal Town Council Members

Cllr A Blackman (Chair)	Present	Cllr D Brown	Present
Cllr A Finch	Present	Cllr E Hennessy	Present
Cllr L Hendry	Present	Cllr R Sutton (Vice-Chair)	Apologies

## Co-optees

J Cottam	Absent	C Stuart-Smith (Horticulture)	Absent
A Yates (Kendal Civic Society)	Present		

**In attendance:** Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant), Janine Holt (Council Services Officer) and Pierre Labat (Townscape Officer).

## B1/2024 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair welcomed two new Members, Cllrs Finch and Hennessy, to the Committee and introduced them to Toni Yates, Co-optee. For the benefit of the new Members, he explained that now was usually the busiest time of the year for the Committee, with both Cumbria in Bloom and Kendal in Bloom looming. He pointed out that this year was different for various reasons, including the current flood relief scheme works, which was affecting the overall aesthetics of the Town. This had resulted in a decision to cease the Kendal in Bloom initiative for 2024 and to withdraw the application for Cumbria in Bloom.

## B2/2024 Apologies

**Resolved:** To receive and accept an apology for absence from Cllr Sutton.

## B3/2024 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

## B4/2023 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

## B5/2023 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

**Resolved:** To receive and accept the minutes of the previous meeting of the Kendal in Bloom Committee held on 19 March 2024 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

## **B6/2023      Minute Action Sheet**

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

Ref. No.4 –Police Yard Installation – To explore the installation of a metal display arch ensuring costings are included. In response to a query, it was reported that this had not gone ahead due to cost and planning implications.

Ref. No.5 –Civic Planting Maintenance – The Town Clerk to liaise with the Environment Agency on the planting at Beezon Fields. In response to a query, it was reported that there had been a delay on this project and that the plants had been purchased but were beginning to die. It was further reported that the sculpture which had due to be erected at Beezon Fields had been deemed unsuitable due to health and safety reasons. Discussion turned to the need to find alternative locations as soon as possible for siting of those plants which continued to thrive. Suggestions included the bed at the corner of Dowker Lane by the entrance to Abbot Hall. This did not belong to the Town Council, however, required a thorough overhaul, and could benefit from advertising on Facebook for volunteers for a gardening group; funding would be available. Other locations suggested were Gillinggate Park and Bowling Fell; Cllr Hendry was due to attend a meeting at which Bowling Fell would be discussed and would raise the potential at that meeting.

**Resolved:** Cllr Hendry to report back by email to Committee Members regarding the potential to plant the remaining plants originally purchased for Beezon Fields at Bowling Fell, with the second option to be for the plants to be planted at Dowker Lane.

Toni Yates referred to other plants at Kendal Conservation Society which were waiting to be used. Attention was further drawn to a corner at Blackhall Road which required attention.

**Resolved:** Toni Yates to come back to Committee with recommendations for the Blackhall Road corner.

The Council Services Officer reminded the Committee that Lakeland Gardens were currently carrying out a survey on all planting areas within Kendal, the results of which were due to be reported at the next meeting.

Ref. No.9 –Kendal in Bloom – To post a call out for volunteers for a Bloom Gardening Group on Facebook. The Council Services Officer reported that this had not yet been actioned.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

## **B7/2024      Review of Spend against Budget 2024/25**

The Council Services Officer presented a review of spend against budget 2024/25 as at 7 July 2024. She explained that the £15,716 remaining for Floral Displays was sufficient. She pointed out, however, that the Council was currently out of contract, and that the current supplier would now need to order £5,000 to £6,000 for winter plants. She further anticipated additional expenditure in next year's budget. The amount of funding required would be informed by the findings of the survey being carried out by Lakeland Gardens; this survey would form the basis of the civic planting strategy. With regard to the Projects and Grants Budget, the Council Services Officer undertook to get back to Members with details around the committed expenditure of £3,131.

**Resolved:** To provide Members with details relating to the committed expenditure of £3,131 in the Projects and Grants Budget.

**Resolved:** To note the report.

## **B8/2024      Bloom 2024 Update Report**

It was reported that, following on from concerns raised by the Council Services Officer, a meeting had been held on 28 May 2023. Present at that meeting had been Councillor Blackman, Chair of Kendal in Bloom, Councillor Liz Hendry and the Council Services Officer. After a thorough discussion about the 2024 Bloom initiative, the decision was reached to cease the Kendal in Bloom initiative for 2024 and to withdraw the application for Cumbria in Bloom. Several factors had influenced this decision, namely:

- The ongoing installation of flood defences in Kendal. Resulting in traffic congestion and the building work affects the overall aesthetics of Kendal
- A key wildlife/biodiversity area which it was hoped could form a large part of the Cumbria in Bloom judging tour is behind schedule by approx. 18 months and would not be ready to be viewed by the Cumbria in Bloom judges
- Civic planting has been planted late due to the weather in spring. Thus, resulting in underwhelming displays in early July
- The contract for civic planting is currently being reviewed. This has resulted in Officers having no input into the planting scheme or design preferences of the civic planting
- Renovations to the Birdcage resulting in the removal of the 12 floral displays from a key area and unsure of the installation date
- The local Kendal in Bloom initiative struggled to attract entries this year
- Shortage of staff within the office resulting in a change in priority areas for the Council Services Officer

Kendal would still host the Cumbria in Bloom awards ceremony.

The Chair, in presenting the report, expressed disappointment and elaborated on some of the reasons outlined above. He further pointed out that it was likely that the flood works would not be completed before 2028. He suggested, therefore, that this was an opportunity to take a step back and to give some thought as to how to reimagine Kendal and Cumbria in Bloom. He suggested that a review should take place before Christmas in order to establish the appetite for people in Kendal, schools and organisations to become involved. The need for the fact that the planting strategy was in the early stages of development to be considered in future plans was stressed. The initial report on this was expected in September 2025.

A lengthy discussion ensued during which a number of suggestions were raised, as follows:

- The potential to carry out work around the SUDS drainage system at Meadow Rigg, Brigsteer Road and Strawberry Fields developments, along the same lines as at Hallgarth where wildflowers, trees and bulbs had been planted with the involvement of residents and schools.
- A flower festival at the Edington Centre.
- A flower bed to celebrate the Rinteln twinning initiative.
- The need to consider the distance between planting areas in order for a more simple judging trail as well as for easier watering and long-term maintenance.
- Developing a community-led approach, making more use of Facebook, creating community groups, inspiring, encouraging and empowering individuals to take ownership of specific areas.
- Tapping into allotment-holders' skills to take on board areas surrounding them.
- Offering support through the provision of bulbs, plants, equipment and storage.
- Litter picking.

- Bearing in mind the fact that not all people use Facebook, to also produce leaflets promoting community involvement.
- To look at the survey carried out earlier by the Environment Committee which identified local groups involved in various projects, as well as asking Town Council Members to identify groups within their wards.
- To identify community champions.
- Instead of the annual Kendal in Bloom celebratory event, to hold an open meeting and to invite friends of Fletcher Park to talk about the successful work carried out there.
- To bear in mind the availability of funding through the Westmorland and Furness Council Locality Board.

The general consensus of opinion was that there was a need to try to inspire local communities to adopt the Bloom Initiative and to give them a sense of ownership to take their community in their desired direction, with help from the Town Council.

Some discussion took place on the information pack which had been sent out with regard to both Cumbria in Bloom and Kendal in Bloom and to the fact that this may have caused confusion. Whilst Cumbria in Bloom had garnered more entries than ever before, Kendal in Bloom had attracted only eleven people.

**Resolved:** To hold a Working Party meeting at 10.00 a.m. on 20 August 2024 in the Mayor's Parlour, with all Members of the Committee welcome to be involved.

**Resolved:** To launch a Kendal in Bloom Facebook page in September, followed by a positive press release.

**Resolved:** To look into holding an open event in Autumn, with a provisional date of 6 November 2024 at the Castle Green Hotel.

The meeting closed at 7.07 p.m.