

Kendal Town Council

Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal LA9 4ED
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Minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee held on Monday, 23 September 2024, at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal.

Cllr J Brook	Present	Cllr J Cornthwaite (Chair)	Present
Cllr J Dunlop	Present	Cllr D Rathbone	Apologies
Cllr C Russell	Present	Cllr M Severn	Present
Cllr R Sutton (Vice-Chair)	Present	Cllr G Tirvengadam	Present

In attendance: Chris Bagshaw (Town Clerk), Inge Booth (Democratic Services Assistant), Simon Unsworth (Heritage Officer) and Natalia Williams (Development and Delivery Manager (Deputy Clerk)).

MH12/2024 Apologies

Resolved: To receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllr D Rathbone.

MH13/2024 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were raised under this item.

MH14/2024 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

There were no excluded items on the agenda.

MH15/2024 Minutes from the Last Meeting

Attention was drawn to the fact that, at the meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2024, whilst not under the "Declarations of Interest" item (MH2/2024), Cllr Dunlop had raised during discussion on the "Twinning" item (MH10/2024) an interest with regard to the award of a grant to the Kendal Concert Band, by virtue of the fact that she was their President; this declaration of interest had not been included within the minute. Attention was further drawn to the second sentence within the same Minute and the need to refer to the fact that the Band would be performing in Rinteln and also in nearby Hamelin.

In response to a query as to councillors' positions as members of the Rinteln Twinning Association, the Town Clerk provided guidance around declarations of interest, explaining that where Members had additional interests to those already outlined within their Register of Interest forms, then these should be raised at meetings. In addition, those interests included within the form could be reiterated at meetings, should Members so wish. He pointed out that several Members of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee had an interest in the Twinning Associations and so attention could be drawn to this under the Declarations of Interest item at each meeting. This interest, however, he said was usually non-pecuniary and so there was no need to leave the room unless there was a specific request for funding.

Resolved: Subject to the amendments raised and outlined above being made, to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee held on 17 June 2024 and to authorise the Chair to sign them as a true record.

MH16/2024 Minute Action Sheet

The Committee considered a report on actions taken by officers on resolutions or recommendations made at previous meetings. The Town Clerk pointed out that updates on a number of the actions formed individual items on the agenda for the meeting. With regard to Item 14 relating to storage of the remaining items from the K-Shoes Collection, the Town Clerk pointed out the need to follow this up as a matter of urgency and the Heritage Officer undertook to do this.

Resolved: The Heritage Officer to follow up on Item 14 relating to storage of the remaining items from the K Shoes Collection as a matter of urgency.

Resolved: To note the report.

MH17/2024 Review of Spend against Budget 2024/25

The Committee considered its budget monitoring report as at 11 September 2024. The Town Clerk drew attention to the money which had been allocated to the Slavery Trail and informed Members what this would shortly move into production stage. The amount allocated for the Museum was in relation to a grant, and the invoice was awaited.

The Chair drew attention to the Mayoral Allowance, explaining that this incorporated the allocation for the Deputy Mayor. He suggested that, for clarification, this budget should be split in future years. The Town Clerk undertook, therefore, to split this budget line in the forthcoming 2025/26 budget.

Resolved: To split the Mayoral Allowance into two separate lines within future budgets, one for the Mayor and one for the Deputy Mayor.

Resolved: To note the budget monitoring report as at 11 September 2024.

MH18/2024 Museum Provision

This was a standing item for the Mayor and officers to report back on progress made towards the development of a Museum for Kendal and to initiate consideration of any concerns members may have relating to this issue.

The Town Clerk reported that he had again recently raised the issue with both colleagues at Westmorland and Furness Council and with new connections at Lakeland Arts who were keen to refocus efforts into Abbot Hall which they felt had been neglected in recent years. He intended to follow up on this and to report back to Committee, hopefully with positive news.

Cllr Russell felt that this was a good time to look at Museum provision within Kendal as a whole and to potentially develop a Lakeland Museum within the Town; Cllr Russell believed that Abbot Hall was the best location for this to be housed, with the Kendal Museum building also being used by the College as a theatre and studio which created noise and dust and was not conducive to the housing of a historical collection. Cllr Russell hoped that Kendal Town and Westmorland and Furness councils could collaborate on a vision for a Lake District Museum in Kendal. He felt strongly that this was a priority and pointed out that there would be budget implications to consider moving forward. Of particular importance, Cllr Russell said, was the need for Kendal Town and Westmorland and Furness councils to lead on this project.

The Committee discussed the matter at length and the Town Clerk referred to the very complex array of interests involved, with various stakeholders being the Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, the College and Lakeland Arts. Members felt that more clarity was required with regard to individual responsibilities prior to consideration on how to move forward. It would also be of importance to find out from Lakeland Arts what their plans for Abbot Hall for their own collection were. Also referred to were earlier discussions which had been held on the matter when the question of whether there was even room to amalgamate both collections had been raised. The need for a vigorous piece of work to be carried out in relation to what was held within the collections was stressed. Questions were raised around the legacy of the wildlife collection which, it was recognised, did not form part of the history of Kendal as such; Members were simply keen for the story of Kendal to be told, for a museum about Kendal and not a museum in Kendal.

The Town Clerk highlighted the need to seek legal advice on scope for the trustees to seek to alter the status of the building and collection. He suggested that conversations should be reignited as a matter of urgency between the Town Council, Westmorland and Furness Council and Lakeland Arts, particularly with issues having now been made more serious with County Hall staff moving into the Town Hall. He further suggested the need to include the Lake District National Park Authority in conversations, with that organisation currently holding some of the wildlife collection at Brockhole.

With regard to Cllr Russell's proposal for the development of a Lakeland Museum within the Town, Members felt that there would not be the capacity to do this and were set on a central location in Kendal to tell the story of the Town.

Resolved: To reignite discussions between Kendal Town and Westmorland and Furness councils, Lakeland Arts and, in addition, the Lake District National Park Authority with regard to the development of a single Museum in the Town telling the story of Kendal, and to report back to the next meeting of the Committee on developments.

MH19/2024 Kendal and the International Slave Trade Trail

The Heritage Officer provided a brief verbal report on the development of the Kendal and the International Slave Trade Trail. He informed Members that he had offered the trail to the Kendal Unity Festival and that this had been a success. He further referred to having offered the trail during Heritage Open Week, pointing out that the sessions had been over-subscribed and that he had received positive feedback.

The Heritage Officer explained that he had taken the leaflet to Lancaster Black History Group for oversight of the script, and that they had drawn attention to the fact that there was currently no black voice included. He would address this point prior to taking the leaflet to print.

The Heritage Officer said that he would continue in the meantime to offer the guided trail, as he had done at the Unity Festival. He was also keen to meet with a professor at Lancaster University with regard to commissioning a review of the leaflet text to ensure it is as appropriate as possible.

In response to a query, the Heritage Officer undertook to provide the guided trail during Black History Month in October.

Resolved: to offer the Trail during Black History Month in October.

Resolved: To note the verbal update.

MH20/2024 Heritage Collection Risk Assessment

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the development of appropriate risk management policies and procedures for the Mayor's Parlour and the Heritage Collection which had come about as a result of the Council's new Internal Auditor raising the matter. The Town Clerk explained that a body of work was required in relation to risk assessment and the preservation of the collection in its entirety, as well as its vulnerable position in the building in terms of the picture store. The Internal Auditor was of the opinion that the collection was due to be re-valued and for consideration to be given to retention and disposal.

The Town Clerk took the opportunity to refer to a recent gift of two paintings of Kendal. He also referred to the potential to bring the collection into the public domain and to display some of the works on the walls within the Town Hall.

Members acknowledged their role as custodians of the collection and endorsed the need for a re-valuation and consideration in terms of retention and disposal. Also supported was the potential for discussion with regard to bringing some of the items into the public domain, potentially within the Town Hall. Furthermore, raised was the potential of making people aware of the existence of Catherine Parr's prayer book.

Resolved: To identify an appropriate professional to carry out a re-valuation of the Council's heritage collection, prior to giving consideration to retention and disposal as appropriate.

Resolved: To instigate conversations with Westmorland and Furness Council around the potential to display some of the Town Council's heritage collection on the walls within the Town Hall.

MH21/2024 Forthcoming Events

The Heritage Officer presented a report on forthcoming Civic Events.

The way events were managed and run was, of necessity, constantly assessed and evaluated to ensure that they were as inclusive, compliant, safe and cost-effective as possible. Policing changes, and the requirements for trained marshals on road closures, had already forced a number of alterations to the way in which Mayor's Sunday was managed. An additional challenge to future events would be presented, from the start of 2025, by the loss of Town Hall rooms to Westmorland and Furness staff relocating from County Hall. This would leave just the Assembly Room, Georgian Room and the large kitchen available for events. The Bindloss Room was expected to return to public use in due course.

With regard to Remembrance Sunday, to ensure police coverage of the parade, it was being proposed to take it in one direction only, from the War Memorial to the Church. As in the previous year's parade and this year's Mayoral parade, the civic salute would be taken from a static inspection in front of the Church, rather than an 'eyes right' outside the Town Hall. This allowed the Police to manage the parade under their existing powers, which meant an outside contractor was not required. As an additional assistance to returning service personnel, the Council could offer dinner for any veteran (subject to verification) in the adjacent Ring o' Bells. The landlord had offered to do this at the reduced cost to the Council of £9.95 per head (a saving of £2). It was not clear what the take-up of this offer might be, but this could be capped on a first come, first served basis, at 30.

A lengthy discussion took place on the potential format and route for the parade and the possibility for the Town Council to finance management of the return trip, with the Police having offered to manage one way only. Members were keen for the salute to be carried out in the usual manner in the usual place. The Committee also supported the provision by the Town Council of dinner at the Ring o' Bells for up to 30 veterans. With regard to the parade, suggestions were to take the salute at the start of the parade or in the churchyard after the service.

The Town Clerk turned to Mayor making 2025, suggesting that the ceremony could take place in the Assembly Room as usual, but that the reception could not be held in the usual way in the Town Hall, as there was insufficient capacity in other rooms. The Reception could be held within the Assembly Room, but this would mean laying out the buffet before the Ceremony took place, and would significantly reduce the capacity of the event. An alternative option would be to hold the formal reception at another nearby venue. These were limited, but enquiries had been made so far for the use of the South Lakeland House atrium, the Venue and the Parish Rooms. There were very few other venues nearby with a large enough capacity.

Also suggested as a venue was the Council Chamber itself, and the Town Clerk undertook to also give this some consideration.

Resolved: To note the report.

MH22/2024 450th Anniversary of the Borough Charter

The Town Clerk reported that the Corporation of the Borough of Kirkbie Kendal had been formally created by a Charter of Elizabeth I in 1585. The Local Government Act, 1972 had made Kendal Town Council the successor council to the Charter, which had later been amended by Charles I and Charles II to create the Mayoralty and Councillors exercised today. The issue of an appropriate anniversary celebration had also been considered by the Council's Culture and Communities Committee which had proposed that a joint working group of both committees be established in this regard.

The Committee was asked to consider what actions the Council should take to commemorate the 450th Anniversary of the Borough Charter, and to note the decision to allow Kendal South Choir to formally badge their 2025 performance of Carmina Burana as an anniversary event.

Suggestions raised were around garden parties and an upgrade to the Mayor's Parlour and how the charters could be displayed. The need to ensure that events throughout the Town were co-ordinated was stressed. It was also pointed out that the Culture and Communities Committee had indicated that it would be content for the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee to lead on this matter and had suggested that a joint working group be formed for further consideration. Also to be considered was the change of mayors during this time period, with the celebrations due to be carried out throughout 2025.

Resolved: To note the decision to allow Kendal South Choir to formally badge their 2025 performance of Carmina Burana as an anniversary event.

Resolved: To form a joint working group of the Mayoralty and Heritage Committee (Cllrs Cornthwaite, Dunlop, Russell and Sutton) and a number of Members of the Culture and Communities Committee to consider commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Borough Charter.

MH23/2024 80th Anniversaries of the End of World War Two

The Town Clerk reported that Victory in Europe (VE) Day would be commemorated in Britain on 8 May 2025 (9 May in Eastern Europe). Victory over Japan (VJ) Day would be commemorated on 15 August 2025, which was also designated as a memorial day for those prisoners of war returning from the Far East (FEPOW Day). Between these dates was the 80th anniversary of the only wartime use of nuclear weapons, at Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August), commemorated on 6 August as Hiroshima Day. The issue of an appropriate anniversary commemoration had also been considered by the Council's Culture and Communities Committee which had proposed that a joint working group of both committees be established in this regard.

The Committee was asked to consider what actions should be taken by the Council to commemorate the 80th anniversaries the end of World War Two.

Members felt strongly that commemoration of these anniversaries was something that would be expected by the public and that something appropriate must be done and funding committed. It was suggested that the Town Council should consult with the Royal British Legion in order to co-ordinate events; the Heritage Officer undertook to raise the matter at a meeting he was shortly due to attend with that organisation and to come back to Committee to advise on the Legion's perspective. Suggestions raised included the formal laying of a wreath at the Cenotaph, re-enactment, parades, a concert on New Road Common. Also noted was the date of 8 May 2025 and the need to consider attendance by both the outgoing and new mayor.

Resolved: The Heritage Officer to liaise with the Royal British Legion and to come back to Committee to advise on the Legion's perspective.

Resolved: £5,000 to be put aside in the 2025/26 budget towards an appropriate public event to commemorate VE Day.

Resolved: To give consideration as to how to mark the other End of World War II anniversaries at a future meeting of the Committee.

MH24/2024 Kendal Flag

The Mayor had requested that consideration be given to whether a flag depicting the coat of arms of Kendal could be purchased for display on the Town Hall and other venues. Currently, decisions about flag raising on the Town Hall in Kendal were made by officers at Westmorland and Furness Council, the building's owners. In the past the Town Council had considered whether other flagpoles should be erected in the Town that it could have more control over. To date these considerations have not been conclusive.

Members supported the proposal for a Town Council flag, however, questioned the occasions on which it would be flown, thereby raising the need for appropriate protocol. The Town Clerk pointed out that the Government had in recent years become ambivalent about when flags could be flown. He also reported that the Royal British Legion was also keen for a new flagpole and had suggested the Market Square for its location. To this end, he raised the potential for a Town Council flagpole situated at the Coronation Garden in Kirkland.

Resolved: Officers to look into costings, suitable locations and a set of protocol for a Town Council flag and flagpole for future consideration by the Committee.

MH25/2024 Twinning

The Committee was provided with verbal reports on the activities and affairs of the Town's two twinning relationships.

Cllr Dunlop referred to Killarney and thanked the Town Clerk for sending an email to the Town's new equivalent to a mayor who had been elected at the end of June. The lead of the Town's Twinning Association had also been copied in to the letter, and had expressed disappointment that the communication had not been sent direct to him. He had, however, indicated that the matter would be included on the agenda for the next meeting. The invitation had been for the mayor equivalent to attend Kendal Mountain Festival.

The Chair referred to his recent visit in August Altstadtfest in Rinteln and to an article on the event which had been published in the Westmorland Gazette. He referred to both Towns' aspiration to bring fresh, young blood on board and to the start of a potential exchange between the two youth football teams. He also referred to the official unveiling by himself and Rinteln's Burgermeisterin, Andrea Lange, of the stone artwork depicting the coats of arms of the two towns.

Resolved: To note the verbal updates.

Note – At 9.03 p.m., in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No.3 Meetings Generally x, a meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours, the Committee voted to continue the meeting.

MH26/2024 Newsletter and Publicity

The Committee was informed that there would be a press release around recent Mayoral Events within the next couple of days and was also pleased to report that the next edition of the Council's Newsletter had gone to the designer earlier in the day.

Resolved: To note the verbal update.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.