



## Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 11th September 2019

3.00 to 5.00 pm, The MintWorks

### Present:

Martyn Nicholson, Chair

Paula Scott, Kendal Futures

Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council

Louise Shrapnel, Kendal College

Brian Harrison, Kendal BID

Geoff Cook, South Lakeland Local Committee

Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals

Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation

Derek Armstrong, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

Mark Cropper, Large Employers

Matt Williams, SLDC

Mandy Dixon, K Village

### Apologies:

Julie Chapman, Cumbria Tourism

Jamie Allison, Young Professionals Group

Robin Ashcroft, South Lakeland District Council

### 1. Apologies and membership

Miriam Randall, representing Creative Industries and Innovation, and Rhian Harris, representing Culture and Festivals, were elected to the Kendal Futures Board (proposer: M Dixon, seconder: G Cook).

M Cropper was elected as Vice Chair (proposer: M Dixon, seconder: G Cook).

### 2. Declarations of interest

None declared.

### 3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July were agreed as a true record.

**New Board Structure:** P Scott discussed the new board structure proposal with Andrew Bass, from Cumbria CVS. He is unable to regularly attend meetings and agreed to come off the Board, but continue to receive the meeting minutes. He will be invited back on a task and finish basis should future work or projects require voluntary sector input. P Scott will also discuss a similar arrangement with Paul Foster from the FSB.

**Climate Emergency:** Work has now begun to prepare for a Kendal based Citizen's Jury, involving those with a particular expertise and interest in this area and additional funding is being sought. The Citizen's Jury will work to a

specific mandate, whereas the Vision for Kendal has a wider remit and is not prescriptive in that it encourages the community to discuss whatever issues they are concerned about. It is expected that many people will be concerned about green issues, and the Vision consultants are very aware of this. S Long answered questions in KTC about concerns from Cllr Chris Rowley about the timing of the Vision, the process, possible duplication and a mismatch in the strategies. KTC see both as great initiatives. Cllr Rowley has spoken to the consultants and M Cropper has also arranged a meeting. The KFB agreed that the Vision should have sustainability (in its widest sense) at its heart and there will be issues to address. The Vision will capture the views of the town and it will be important to make sure all the learnings are recorded, shared and integrated in future.

G Cook reported that CCC has recently passed a motion which has agreed to increase its focus on climate issues and to work with the Government to set some clearer national policies.

**s106 update:** M Williams said that the work programme has been slightly delayed due to the demands placed on CCC to repair Victoria Bridge. SLDC are waiting for a scheme design from CCC and intend to look for further match funding, including approaching Network Rail or Northern.

**Footfall figures:** P Scott reported that Beverley and Northallerton aren't members of the Springboard scheme so she is progressing sourcing other contacts at those towns or finding similar towns to share figures with.

## 4. Business Marketing Toolkit

B Harrison and Sarah Williams presented Kendal BID's plans and initiatives to promote Kendal. Sarah explained that they aim to provide small businesses with access to same promotional packages as larger businesses.

**Swipii:** The Kendal loyalty card was introduced a few years ago and 23,000 people regularly use it. It is specifically for smaller businesses who don't have their own loyalty schemes. Kendal was the first town in England to trial this scheme and participated at a discounted rate. It has recently been updated and works on the debit/visa card system.

**Kendal Gift Card:** The gift card can only be spent in Kendal and it retains money in the town. Shaped like a piece of Mintcake, it's available to all BID levy payers who accept Mastercard, including nationals.

**Fantastic Kendal:** Sarah runs the Tourist Information Centre on a not-for-profit basis, with some funding from SLDC and KTC. It is run by volunteers (more are always needed) and additional funds are raised by selling advertising space etc. The shop is providing a hub for the coach parking trial, with coach drivers booking their parking and promotional package via the centre.

**Coach parking package:** 40 coaches have used the parking promotion to date, with parking provided at the Leisure Centre who are voluntary levy payers to the BID. A database of coach companies is being developed to promote the initiative in future. A Macclesfield company is bringing 8 coaches to Kendal between now and Xmas. Drivers receive a £15 Kendal Gift Card to spend in the town and get a free taxi into the centre. A marketing pack, advertising local businesses, is being developed to send out to coach companies ahead of their visit.

**ShopAppy:** This new initiative creates Kendal's virtual high street by enabling local businesses to offer their products for online sale via the ShopAppy website. Products can be purchased online from different businesses, and then collected locally. Kendal BID has committed to a 3 year licence agreement and fee and are charging businesses £49 a year, subsidised from £300 a year. The scheme currently operates in 27 other towns it's working in. It will be promoted with links from visit-kendal.co.uk when launched in late September.

## 5. Victoria Bridge closures and repairs

The closure of Victoria Bridge over two separate periods this summer caused major disruption across the town and was a particular burden to businesses in the north. M Nicholson and J Rayner have written and spoken to CCC councillors and officers whose response was to press for more action on the development of the Northern Access Route. While this is important, a more effective contingency plan is needed to better manage any future bridge closures, including traffic re-routing, signage and key messages. Signage at J36 and radio bulletins implied Kendal

was closed and shouldn't be visited. M Nicholson is pressing for a meeting with CCC colleagues but diaries are proving extremely difficult to co-ordinate, and a date is now being considered in November.

The KFB suggested that the contingency plan also needed a contingency plan as was shown when Parkside Road rail bridge was damaged. The M6 diversion route uses Victoria Bridge, and the impact of the building of the flood defences on the road network will also need to be considered.

## 6. Vision for Kendal

The launch event for the Vision for Kendal will be held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September and around 40 to 50 people are expected to attend. Some separate sessions have been arranged for local councillors to discuss their views with the consultants. The team are also running sessions with local schools, Kendal College and funders and stakeholders.

The most important task is to get the public to attend the workshops over the weekend of 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October and the awareness raising work continues via Twitter, Instagram, posters and emails. The KFB were urged to share the information and encourage their friends, family and staff to attend.

The group felt that those unable to attend the workshops needed to be able to share their views via a short questionnaire or similar, highlighting their problems, dreams and solutions for Kendal. A social media wall or similar was suggested using #visionforkendal, along with hard copies of leaflets for people to write on and hand back.

**ACTION: P Scott to organise:**

- A clearer, punchier message on the promotional posters
- A questionnaire or written feedback method
- Investigate who has the Town Hall banner space and see if they would be willing to let the Vision use it for 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> October
- Contact M Randall with information to share with the Brewery's contacts.

The feedback session will be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October at the Town Hall and the KFB were all encouraged to attend.

### Kendal Town Centre Strategy

M Williams updated the KFB about progress with this document which was previously known as the Kendal Masterplan. Work to develop this strategy preceded the Vision. It was intended to be a guiding document to develop some creative thinking about specific sites in the town centre along with transport improvements. It has taken longer than anticipated to complete and has now been shared with M Nicholson and P Scott. SLDC are keen for it to feed into the Vision process, which they support, without causing confusion or duplication. M Nicholson said that the strategy is useful and shares some good information about the potential for several opportunity sites. It was agreed to share the strategy with the Vision Working Group and consultants to inform the Vision. M Williams will discuss how to use the Strategy once the Vision findings are known with SLDC colleagues, and arrange for a presentation by AECOM to the KFB. **ACTION: P Scott to share the Town Centre Strategy with the Vision Working Group and consultants.**

## 7. Partner and project updates

**Footfall figures:** The KFB briefly discussed the footfall figures which remain down on the previous year. D Armstrong reported that businesses in Market Place have noticed a severe drop. **ACTION: P Scott to analyse the trend in footfall during the main shopping hours.**

**Kendal College:** The College has just been voted the 10<sup>th</sup> best college in the country by its students. They have run out of classroom space and L Shrapnel appealed for ideas for sourcing additional space from the KFB.

**K Village:** M Dixon reported that she has a meeting date planned with R Harris to determine ownership of the K Shoes Heritage Collection, after which a stakeholders meeting will be held. Building work at K Village is expected to be completed by May next year.

**KTC:** S Long reported that the KTC Action Plan has been agreed and work is progressing to ensure the best outcome for the town from the Flood Relief Scheme. Additional funding and grants will be needed.

**Culture and festivals:** R Harris commented on the excellent Lakes Alive festival which provided further inspiration for the development of the Abbot Hall site. The ACE funding and planning permission are now in place and the building will be closed for 18 months from next year. They have opted out of the EA flood scheme and will incorporate their own resilience measures as part of the development work. The team are hoping to open a pop-up shop in the town centre to provide a drop in, create a profile and encourage more visitors. Abbot Hall celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022 and will look to revision their offer, with Kirkland as the town's heritage quarter.

**Creative industries and innovation:** M Randall said 2022 is also a big year for the Brewery as it turns 50. Next year sees the start of a £1m capital project to redevelop the cinema complex and wider site into one of the best arts centres in the country. Working in partnership will be key to the success of the project.

**Kendal BID:** The BID Board has committed to funding the existing festival programme for the remaining life of the BID to provide security and continuity. Funds are short, however, with £138,000 raised through the levy this year.

**SLDC:** The team are beginning to develop a list of opportunities to attract investment from the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region. Plans formed as a result of the Vision may have funding potential via this route in future. M Cropper asked about progress with the redevelopment of Kendal's markets. **ACTION: M Williams to seek an update about progress with the redevelopment of Kendal's markets from Sion Thomas at SLDC.**

**SLLC:** G Cook reported that a contract has been agreed to provide a basic Sunday bus service for households on the east side of the town, funded via the Sainsbury's developer contributions. Work on the land to the rear of County Hall is about to begin to convert it into a public pay and display car park, with charging likely to start next year.

**CoC:** D Armstrong said the CoC is still delivering the Catalyst programme aimed at the retail sector and providing 5 hours of advice. The Growth Hub marketing subsidy has increased from £2k to £4k (up to 40% of a business's marketing spend) with an advisor available to provide up to 12 hours of free support.

A Brexit event will be held at the Castle Green Hotel on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September to highlight how to prepare. The annual Chamber/SLDC dinner will be held on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020, also at the Castle Green Hotel.

## 8. Any other business

There was no other business.

## 9. Date of next meeting

**3 pm, Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October, Kendal Town Hall**

This meeting will focus on the Kendal Vision findings.