

Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 20th May 2020

3.00 pm - 5.00 pm

Video Meeting via Zoom



Present:

Martyn Nicholson, Chair

Paula Scott, Kendal Futures

Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council

Julian Rayner, Transport/Distribution

Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation

Mark Cropper, Large Employers

Robin Ashcroft, South Lakeland District Council

Matt Williams, SLDC

Mandy Dixon, K Village and Tourism

Cath Purdy, Housing

John Haley, Professional Services

Brian Harrison, Kendal BID

Geoff Cook, South Lakeland Local Committee

Graham Booth, Board Observer for Cumbria LEP

Apologies:

Louise Shrapnel, Kendal College

Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals

Derek Armstrong, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

Jamie Allison, Young Professionals Group

1. Apologies and membership

Election of KFB Chair

M Nicholson announced his retirement as Chair of the KFB and M Cropper was elected as the new Chair. (Proposed by M Dixon and seconded by M Randall.) M Nicholson thanked the Board for their support and wished everyone well with the interesting challenge ahead.

M Cropper led the meeting from this point. He stressed that KF is at an interesting point in its history having managed the Vision process and developing the group and its aspirations is even more important in light of the COVID-19 issues. Issues facing the high street have been accelerated and reimagining Kendal is vital. More people may continue to work from home, but a quality offer will tempt the public back and spending again. KF must become a stronger organisation in the next 3 – 5 years to bring people and ideas together, with additional funds, to effect change. The KFB agreed that the current crisis presents an opportunity for Kendal as a rural town with a fantastic quality of life and diverse cultural offer. Kendal has great foundations to build on.

New CIC Director Appointment

John Haley has agreed to become a director of the Kendal Futures CIC to replace M Nicholson. **ACTION: P Scott to organise the Director filing and resignations with Companies House and the CIC bank account.**

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th April were agreed as a true record.

Matters arising

Updates to the previous minutes were circulated ahead of the meeting. P Scott said the references to Gooseholme Bridge in the first update should have referenced Victoria Bridge. G Cook confirmed that Victoria Bridge works are still planned between June and September with no road closures expected, weather permitting.

The Common Land issue for Gooseholme footbridge will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate but has been delayed by COVID-19. The new bridge's funding is still in place and works will be completed in line with EA flood defence scheme.

M Williams confirmed that the s106 money (c£250k) for highways and infrastructure improvements from the railway station to the town centre can be used for both capital works and associated professional fees. However, because the works involve the highway, any consultants procured would need to be on the CCC Highways Framework. **ACTION: P Scott to investigate the CCC Highways Framework further and report back.**

M Williams had previously provided a planning team update and confirmed that SLDC's Planning Committee was meeting on 28th May.

A Flood Relief Scheme update had been shared by the EA, but the KFB felt the timings and details were still vague, particularly around the order of works and impact on the road network. S Long confirmed that KTC had been told the scheme was scheduled to go ahead in the autumn, and the EA are considering how best to communicate and publicise the work in light of social distancing rules. Planned communications will include some 'myth-busting' articles to present the facts of the scheme. M Williams reported that no town centre works are planned until January 21 at the earliest and mitigations will be in place to keep traffic disruption to a minimum. **ACTION: P Scott to invite Craig Cowperthwaite from the EA to a future meeting for a wider flood scheme update, including details of the Transport Management Plan and Communications Plan.**

Visit-kendal.co.uk still has a funding gap of £3-£4k to support the hosting, maintenance and content manager role. **ACTION: P Scott to discuss Visit-kendal.co.uk funding and options with KTC and Kendal BID.**

4. COVID-19 update and developments

Board members were asked to discuss only key issues and developments affecting their organisations, including any issues which needed to be raised with the local authorities or LEP. Discussions included:

- Traffic management plans and schemes to make it easier to walk and cycle in Kendal.
- SLDC has had notice of a small amount of funding to help them support town centre reopening across the District. The Government is keen to improve cycling and walking but this must be done with the aim of getting the local economy moving again, such as improving movement around the town centres and facilitating safe movement for pedestrians.
- M Cropper reminded the group that traffic, cycling and walking were key priorities in the Vision. A request has been submitted to CCC to pay £7,000 for KF to commission a new study to look at traffic flow around the town. CCC had already offered in kind support through data and information sharing and information. **ACTION: P Scott to report back at the next meeting.**
- The Government has also announced additional funding to support large infrastructure projects, and town centre cycling and walking improvements. **ACTION: P Scott to ask CCC officers for an update on this and the Northern Access Route business case progress.**
- S Long reminded the meeting that KTC are supporting further investigation into 20s plenty.

- Kendal BID has identified a source of PPE for their members and has held meetings with their members and developed a series of recovery options and initiatives. **ACTION: B Harrison to include M Randall in future reopening plans and meetings to support a joined up approach with the Brewery Arts Centre.**
- J Haley has raised the issue of reopening timescales with the LEP and Tim Farron MP and is keen to understand why a phased strategy to reopening the visitor economy isn't being developed. For example, self-catering units, B&Bs and hotels could be opened in different phases rather than putting pressure on the supply chains on 4th July. **ACTION: M Cropper to contact the LEP and BERGG about developing a co-ordinated phased reopening for Cumbria and G Booth to feedback comments to the Visitor Economy panel for the post response C-19 MACMAP matrix.**
- SLDCs Environmental Health team are working on providing reopening guidance to businesses via their website.
- The Board discussed the potential for future unemployment issues in Kendal when rates have traditionally been low.

ACTION: G Booth agreed to share LEP information with the KFB via P Scott. The KFB would like the opportunity to comment on plans and proposals at draft stage when they can still be influenced.

5. Kendal Vision update

Funding request

An annual funding request was submitted to SLDC for £95k to provide additional resources to KF and support the development of the Vision. SLDC have subsequently asked for that request to be reduced and asked for more detail about match funding/additional income to be provided in a revised proposal. There was an understanding and acceptance that the private sector contributions originally envisaged are unlikely to emerge during the current COVID-19 crisis but as the economy recovers this may change. R Ashcroft emphasised that SLDC are supportive of the Vision and furthering its aims is a priority and opportunity for the town. However, funding is also challenging for SLDC at the current time. They are also keen to ensure the Town Centre Strategy is aligned with the Vision. The KFB agreed that the next Local Plan should also be high on the agenda.

M Cropper thanked SLDC for considering the request, particularly at such a challenging time for the private sector. He believes that some initial resource will help to develop a large investment for the town, potentially up to £1bn via housing and premises and a level of development that can be transformative. **ACTION: M Cropper and P Scott to revise and resubmit the funding request to SLDC.**

Vision Manager role and Action Groups

P Scott shared a paper outlining the role of a Vision Manager who would be contracted if the funding request is successful. Nick Taylor could be re-contracted in this 2 day a week role to form the action groups, help attract additional inward investment, and manage conversations with stakeholders and partners. Another paper outlined what the action groups could look like and how they could be managed. There have already been some positive conversations with various groups and individuals, such as the Civic Society, Community Rail Partnership and others who are keen to contribute.

The KFB agreed that the papers offered a good start but care must be taken to minimise duplication and use the limited resources efficiently. The Vision Manager role asks a lot for 2 days, even with additional support from P Scott. Board members must be focused on how they can contribute and get involved in some action groups to relieve some of that burden. C Purdy volunteered to be involved in the housing group.

The Action Groups may need to be managed virtually for the foreseeable future. Nick believes the groups must be open to anyone who wants to be involved. Members could also be recruited directly if they have the right expertise and experience. It is essential to link to existing groups to avoid duplication and firm goals, terms of reference and good leadership are vital. Another group would then link all the Action Group Chairs together to share information and project information. Good management is needed and the KFB agreed that the groups should be open as possible.

Important to all the groups is ensuring there is a balance of younger voices along with an innovative approach and great communication. M Randall offered to lead a young person's group to get their views and ideas.

ACTION: P Scott to outline more details about possible Action Groups and present back to the KFB.

KF and Vision Website

P Scott is working with a local firm to develop a KF and Vision website. The site will host the Vision, plus general KFB documents, project information and minutes.

6. Town centre recovery ideas

A paper written by Nick Taylor was shared ahead of the meeting with suggested ideas for Town Centre Recovery initiatives. It was agreed to share the ideas with Kendal BID with KF endorsement. Many of the initiatives are strategic, such as developing an Enterprise Zone, and are for all partners to consider and get involved in actioning. Some of the recovery ideas could form part of the High Street Task Force work in future. SLDC has requested that this work continues virtually at the current time but hasn't yet received a response from MCHLG.

ACTION: P Scott to forward again to B Harrison and S Williams for future consideration.

Markets

M Williams reported that the SLDC markets tender process is complete with 3 submissions received. KF will be involved in the discussions to consider the proposals in more detail. The tender is awarded to the successful bidder for 10 years with a 5 year break clause. The evaluation criteria includes how visionary the proposals are, the number of events to be held, diversity and number of stallholders and satisfaction ratings for traders and visitors. M Cropper thanked SLDC and said KF would welcome the opportunity to be involved.

Consent Street

P Scott asked the KFB to consider whether a Consent Street should be considered for Market Place. A few years ago there was an issue with permissions for markets outside of the usual Saturday and Wednesday markets due to CCC highways issues and the restrictions of the Market Charter. An idea was to make Market Place a Consent Street which means traders need permission to trade there but a license can be granted by SLDC annually for a whole year of events. CCC would not then need to grant permission for each event or market. The KFB agreed that the option should be explored once again, but alongside alternative options to solve the problem, and consider the wider area, including Stricklandgate, Finkle Street and Lower Stramongate. SLDC are constrained by their legal framework but would like to consider options that can bring benefits for the town centre. M Randall requested that cultural organisations and festivals are included in the group discussing the options. **ACTION: M Cropper and P Scott to discuss how to best involve Board members in the markets process and Consent Street discussions.**

7. Citizens' Jury & Oversight Committee

S Long provided an update about the Kendal Climate Change Citizens' Jury which will hold virtual sessions in July until September and report in October. An Oversight (management) Group has been formed which M Cropper sits on, and S Long and P Scott are part of the Support Group. Jury members will be recruited via 4000 letters requesting applications from which 25 people will be selected to form a representative group. It will be important to ensure everyone is working towards a common objective and that the outcomes will support KTC and SLDC's climate change position.

8. Partner and project updates

Dealt with by exception and nothing further to the meeting was reported.

9. Any other business

M Cropper said he would like to give some thought to the frequency of meetings, structure of the Board and how to ensure KF is an effective and efficient team. A succession plan for a future Chair also needs to be considered. Options will be discussed at a future meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8th July 2020 – 3 pm

According to social distancing rules – likely to be a video conference.