

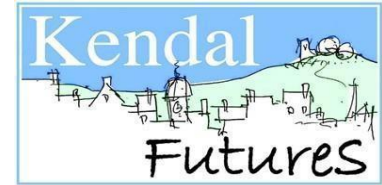
Kendal Futures Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday 17th May 2023

3.00 – 4.30 pm

Hybrid Meeting via Teams and in person

Georgian Room, Kendal Town Hall



Present:

Mark Cropper, Chair *
Rhian Harris, Culture & Festivals
Tina Dulson, Kendal BID
Jonathan Brook, Westmorland & Furness Council *
Peter Thornton, Westmorland & Furness Council *
Paula Scott, Kendal Futures
John Haley, Professional Services
Cath Purdy, Housing
Nick Taylor, Kendal Futures
Miriam Randall, Creative Industries & Innovation

Apologies:

Noel Farrer, Delivery Advice & Govt Liaison
Chris Davies, NFU
Matt Williams, South Lakeland District Council
Graham Booth, Large Employer
Angela Jones, Westmorland & Furness Council
Laura Miller, LAWSA
Susanne Long, Kendal Town Council
Kelvin Nash, Kendal College
Jamie Allison, SL Professionals Group

*Attended online via Teams

1. Apologies and membership

- Mark was re-elected as Chair for a further 3 year term. He emphasised that he wants to ensure KF makes a difference in supporting the future prosperity of the town and uses the time of Board members effectively.
- Alastair Kirkbride has resigned from the KFB. His expertise in sustainable travel can still be requested when needed and he will remain a critical friend.
- Cllr Jonathan Brook and Cllr Peter Thornton were welcomed to the KFB in their new roles for WFC. They spoke of a new culture emerging and looked forward to working openly with partners to deliver on opportunities.
- **ACTION: Paula to organise re-elections of other KFB members as required at the next meeting.**

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations were made for the meeting agenda.

3. Minutes & matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd March were agreed as a true record.

An informative meeting was held with Preston City Council about their Community Wealth Building (Preston) Model, attended by Graham, Paula and Gareth Candlin and Karen Johnson from WFC. Everyone agreed that keeping money in the local economy with local suppliers was important and should be explored further. A follow up meeting will be held with WFC and more information discussed with the KFB at a future meeting. KF is keen to investigate and encourage the adoption of best practice models across the WFC region.

The public engagement event will now take place in the autumn.

4. Better Balanced Streets Feasibility Study

Paula reported that the study was progressing well. An overall direction has been agreed with the consultants, focused on the development of a new strategic traffic route through the town via Aynam Road and a new vehicle bridge. Access to the town centre would be for local traffic only on Kirkland and Highgate. The team are exploring whether there is potential for creating some 2-way road access in this area, particularly for some of the car parks.

Andrew Cameron has been commissioned for a couple of days to support KF on the client side to sense check the proposals and information. Visuals have been agreed as part of the study to demonstrate the placemaking approach to the designs and how it can benefit the town. The report is due to be finalised in late July.

Mark said KF is aiming to move the Vision and earlier Movement and Placemaking Review on a stage by creating a long term plan that the town overall can support, and ideally provides scope for some smaller earlier, interventions. The UK model for movement and transport is very different to the EU model and funding tends to be available for segregated lanes for bikes and pedestrians. However, in a constrained environment like Kendal town centre, shared spaces and lower speeds may create a better scheme. KF is conscious that the study may differ to the LCWIP proposals and LTN120 guidelines.

Peter discussed some complimentary options being considered by the highways team, including improvements to Longpool junction and a potential new bridge. The Government has scaled back funding for walking and cycling projects recently. A discussion followed about previous Canal Head Action Plans which Paula confirmed had been shared with the consultants. The cost of the Carlisle Southern Link Road has recently escalated and rising costs can make some large infrastructure projects unviable.

The KF study aims to reduce the impact of the car but not cars in general. A town like Kendal must be able to accommodate car users from a wide hinterland who need to access the town regularly.

A stakeholder meeting is planned for 6th June to share the overall direction and get feedback ahead of finalising the report. Early feedback has already been sought from Gilkes, Mealbank Properties, the Brewery Arts Centre and Abbot Hall Art Gallery, as well as officers at WFC. As Peter and Jonathan are unable to attend it was suggested Cllr Helen Chaffey be invited. **ACTION: Paula to invite Cllr Helen Chaffey to the stakeholder workshop as Chair of the Locality Board.**

5. Old Grammar School

Rhian discussed the Old Grammar School; a grade 2 Listed building, owned by Lakeland Arts and currently divided into two houses. No 11 was bought in 1969 and no 9 in 2014. They are in a dilapidated condition, not in use and they cost £25-£60k per year to look after creating a risk to the organisation. They are unable to fund repairs which would be required to bring them back into use at museum standard and so Lakeland Arts plans to sell the building. Planning permission is being sought to turn no 11 back into a dwelling and disconnect it from the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry (MoLLi).

KF and KTC have spoken to Rhian about their concerns about the loss of a heritage asset, and that a private owner may be a barrier to future development plans for MoLLi. There was a discussion about potential uses for the building, whether private philanthropists would be interested in helping to fund an acquisition and whether the buildings could be converted back into a single dwelling. It was accepted that conversion costs would be problematic. **ACTION: Rhian to share the sale particulars when available and keep the KFB informed with progress.**

6. Stramongate Improvement Scheme

An update from WFC was provided. A contractor has been appointed to deliver the scheme following a tender process. Updated pricing is awaited on 3 options which are based on the use of:

1. Natural stone materials and tree pits
2. Natural stone materials and tree planters

3. 'Off the shelf' stone and tree pits or planters

KF is concerned that the costs/funding issues, and lack of proactive partnership working may result in a scheme being delivered which isn't faithful to the agreed design and materials and which does not align with the principles of the Vision.

Jonathan and Peter offered reassurance that the Council must explore the different options, and that officers were investigating an application to the UK SPF to cover some of the budget shortfall. WFC shares the ambition to deliver a high quality scheme.

7. Opportunity sites

An ambition for Kendal Futures is to influence or inspire the creation of some form of development corporation for the town. It would need to be led by WFC, but could have a board involving different partners across the town or wider area. The recent Levelling Up Fund bid feedback recognised the value of the Vision informed by community engagement. However, the task of assembling land, raising finance and engaging appropriate developers to build housing and/or mixed use developments needs additional expertise and experience.

As WFC develops, KF would like to work with the Economic Development team to explore the potential further. The opportunity sites identified in the Vision would benefit from more detailed masterplans or similar supplementary planning documents. Waterside and Canal Head, for example, must be considered together to provide the type and quantity of town centre housing needed. **ACTION: KF to raise the ambition with Sam Plum and Angela Jones at an appropriate time and discuss how WFC could take this further.**

8. Arts & Creatives Action Group

Nick reported that the first meeting of this new Action Group was attended by 25 creatives from a variety of businesses. There was enthusiasm for seeing the sector succeed and working together. The Terms of Reference, agreed by the group's founders, was shared with the KFB. **ACTION: ALL to send any changes or additions to the Terms of Reference to Nick.** Discussions focused on the challenging housing situation and importance of the creative economy.

Cath said WFC will shortly be developing a Housing Strategy and it would be useful to assess the need for live/work homes with this group. **ACTION: Nick to keep Cath updated about progress in relation to housing and workplace living issues.**

The yard mural project being led by the Placemaking group is still awaiting permission to progress from the landlord. Ragtag Arts has agreed to lead the mural artwork and will engage local schools in the activity. The KFB suggested sensitivity is needed about commissioning artwork. It is vital that the work is of the right quality, and proposals are shared in advance. Ragtag Arts were selected because of their involvement with the Placemaking group and local schools.

Nick will encourage more discussion and communication between groups via Vision Delivery Groups meetings in future which bring members of all the Action Groups together a couple of times a year. He reminded KFB members that they are welcome to attend these and Action Group sessions.

9. Partner updates

Rhian announced that Abbot Hall Art Gallery reopens at the weekend. Its usual opening hours will be Wednesday to Saturday 10 am - 4pm. There has been a radical change to create a very welcoming, inclusive and more creative space. A special exhibition is on display with the permanent collection to return in the spring. A new partnership with Holker Hall also sees a huge sculpture in their gardens and Windermere Jetty is running Lego Lakes through the summer.

Miriam introduced the Brewery Arts Centre's busy summer programme. She is working with the arts and creative sector across the county and feeding into new WFC arts and culture strategy. The feasibility study to explore possible expansion into The MintWorks is nearing completion, along with other plans to realise their ambition to be a place which grows local talent.

Cath said South Lakes Housing has been awarded £3.5m in funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and is hopeful to see a planned project for new homes at High Sparrowmire underway soon.

10. Any other business

A progress/engagement event will be planned for September to update the public about the work of Kendal Futures and partners. **ACTION: Paula to check and share the date.**

Summer drinks are being held on 6th June at the Brewery Arts Centre. All welcome.

11. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 12th July – 3pm – 4.30pm

South Lakes Housing, Bridge Mills