



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23





# Kendal Futures

Kendal Futures wants to transform Kendal as a Place, developing the aspirations and principles set out in the Vision to inspire change and ensure the town's future success.

We aim to do this by working with the Kendal Futures Board, Westmorland and Furness Council, Kendal Town Council and other partners, and with the local community via the Vision Action Groups.

## Kendal Vision

INSPIRATION FOR CHANGE IN KENDAL

### The Kendal Vision aims to:

- Improve the quality of public spaces in Kendal town centre.
- Enhance Kendal's key assets and their surrounding areas.
- Repurpose underutilised space in the town.
- Deliver quality, affordable housing close to the town centre.
- Deliver employment and start-up opportunities in Kendal.
- Improve public transport.
- Increase cycling and walking by reducing traffic dominance and developing better balanced streets.
- Create a more sustainable Kendal.

### Priorities for the development of the Vision are:

- Kendal Station Gateway
- Market Hall, Market Place and Westmorland Shopping Centre
- Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Brewery Arts Centre and connecting areas
- Riverside Corridor
- Sustainable Kendal

## What is this report?

This 14th Annual Report details the work of Kendal Futures from April 2022 to March 2023.

## 2022 -23 highlights

- Public progress update event held in Kendal Town Hall in July to share information about the work of Kendal Futures and partners since the publication of the Vision in 2020.
- Working together, the Town Team\* and others, including Kendal College, developed priority projects in a bid for investment from round two of the government's Levelling Up Fund. The bid, led by South Lakeland District Council, included plans to:
  - Repurpose the Westmorland Shopping Centre to provide new education accommodation, creating a third campus for Kendal College.
  - Regenerate and reimagine Kendal's historic Market Hall.
  - Renew Market Place and Kent Street with high quality public realm.
  - Transform the riverside path into an active travel route from Abbot Hall, along Waterside and linking to the town centre up Kent Street.
- The Levelling Up Fund application was unsuccessful, but the Vision and its public consultation led approach was praised in feedback from Government. The Town Team\* partnership and the projects can be further developed and future funding sought.
- Continued to work with South Lakeland District Council to realise the Stramongate public realm improvement scheme at the junction of Blackhall Road. The scheme design was approved by the Town Team in 2022, but was subject to delay due to drainage and legal issues. It will use high quality materials to embed the ambition and quality of the Vision into future town centre improvement schemes. It will include:
  - A proposed new raised footpath across the mouth of the junction to prioritise pedestrians.
  - Planting and trees to reduce traffic noise and air pollution and create a more pleasant shopping and visitor environment.
- Co-ordinated a walkabout of the Town Team\* partnership to discuss priorities for future improvements in the town centre and consider how to raise the necessary investment.
- Developed the Kendal Futures Planning Strategy to identify practical ways to embed the Vision's principles in the next Local Plan.
- Held a workshop with South Lakeland District Council's Local Plan team to discuss how to give the Kendal Vision policy substance in the review process. (The Local Plan Review process and timescales within the new unitary authority are not yet known.)
- Objected to Story Homes' proposal for land at Burton Road, and held a positive meeting with them about the Vision's aspirations for future housing development to be located closer to the town centre using underutilised or repurposed sites.
- Held site visits with the Environment Agency to influence the detailed design and aesthetics of the Flood Risk Management Scheme in line with the aspirations of the Vision. Discussions have included railings, hard and soft landscaping and planting schemes.
- Successfully applied to the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund via South Lakeland District Council for £40,000 for the delivery of a feasibility study (below).
- Commissioned the Better Balanced Streets feasibility study in February to conduct a detailed review of key town centre traffic junctions and explore the potential to re-imagine Kendal's one-way system (the issue most talked about by the public in the development of the Vision.) Consultants were appointed to:
  - Assess practical junction arrangements for possible two-way working or alternative traffic flow.
  - Develop a wider improvement scheme for the traffic network.
  - Focus on placemaking improvements to make Kendal's streets more attractive and feel less traffic dominated to encourage more walking and cycling.
- Moved into a new office in the Kendal Business Hub.

\* South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Kendal Town Council, and Kendal Futures.



## Vision Action Groups

Successful community engagement uses the expertise and experiences of local people to find solutions. To harness the knowledge shared through the Community Planning process in developing the Vision, Action Groups aligned to the themes of the Vision were created.

The groups are supported by Nick Taylor, Vision Manager, and each is chaired by a local volunteer with a specialist interest in that subject area. The monthly meetings are open to all and are attended by representatives from existing societies and organisations, as well as individuals who wish to share their views and ideas or lend their expertise.

### Transport and Getting Around

Attendees have a range of interests and expertise covering buses, trains and the railway and cycling. The group has held discussions and site visits to consider how to encourage more people to ride their bike or walk, considered the improvement scheme for Stramongate and explored how to implement the Vision's ideas to improve traffic flow.

### Placemaking (Landscape and Environment)

This group has influenced the development of projects for the Levelling Up Fund application for the town centre regeneration, championed the principles of the Vision and encouraged good design with developers, and influenced the designs for the public realm improvement schemes on Stramongate. They are also co-ordinating a project to enliven one of the town's yards with a painted mural commissioned from a local arts organisation.

### Arts and Creatives

(Launched April 2023)

This new group brings together visual and performing artists, graphic designers, photographers and film-makers, musicians, museum and education professionals and many others to discuss their needs and aspirations for the town.

## Other Projects

### Visit-kendal.co.uk

(Funding: Kendal Town Council)

Kendal's destination website promotes the town's offer and quality of life to visitors and local people. Kendal BID funded a promotional campaign to develop new content for the BID area businesses with enhanced directory listings, photography and videos.

- Up to 12,000 visitors per month
- Social media accounts reach 20k audience
- 600 businesses listed in the directory

### Kirkland Banners

(Funding: Kendal Town Council)

Create a welcome to Kendal and promote **visit-kendal.co.uk**

### Kendal Courtesy Toilet Scheme

(Funding: SLDC)

15 venues participated in the scheme during 2023.

### Town Centre Footfall counts

(Funding: SLDC)

Monitored via Springboard and data shared with partners and local businesses. While 2022 saw a strong increase in footfall figures on the previous two years, they are still lower than pre-pandemic figures.

2022 - 1,809,896

2021 - 1,517,848

2020 - 1,300,420

2019 - 1,986,911

2018 - 2,087,136

### Kendal shop vacancy rate

South Lakeland District Council's shop vacancy survey wasn't updated in the period of this report. The previously reported figure was a vacancy rate of 16% with 71 empty shops out of 438.





# Future Focus for 2023

The creation of Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC), the area's new Unitary Authority, presents an opportunity to further embed the principles of the Vision in their policies and projects for Kendal. Kendal Futures will continue to champion the needs and ambitions of the town, while working in partnership with the public and private sector.

Kendal Futures priorities for 2023-24 are to:

- 1 Deliver a successful Stramongate pilot improvement scheme to demonstrate the effect of great design and high quality materials on public space.
- 2 Work with WFC to secure further UK SPF investment for Kendal public realm improvements.
- 3 Investigate how to attract additional funding for one or two specific public realm improvement projects from public and private sector sources. Priority areas include Stramongate, Market Hall, Market Place, Finkle Street/Bird Cage, Kent Street, Station Gateway and connecting the Brewery Arts Centre to Abbot Hall and the cultural quarter.
- 4 Commission Kendal based studies aligned to the Kendal Futures planning strategy to find practical ways to embed the Vision's principles in the next Local Plan.
- 5 Publish the Better Balanced Streets feasibility study and use it to:
  - Evolve a clear and compelling strategy to transform movement around the town alongside placemaking improvements.
  - Steer the development of a radical Local Transport Plan within the next Local Plan.
- 6 Develop the third Action Group for the creative sector and continue to support the Action Groups to realise practical projects around civic pride, people and place, working in partnership with Kendal Town Council and others.
- 7 Encourage WFC to adopt the Preston Model (Community Wealth Building) as a procurement policy which favours working with local and SME suppliers
- 8 Scope and recommend a suitable vehicle/structure for enabling housing and mixed use development in Kendal town centre and recommend this approach to WFC.
- 9 Hold a public engagement event with partners to help inform future activities which deliver for Kendal and its community.
- 10 Encourage the Town Team to continue momentum, revise some aspects of the Levelling Up Fund application and seek alternative funding sources.
- 11 Continue to ensure work aligns with the recommendations of the Kendal Citizens Jury for Climate Change.
- 12 Continue to secure the position and quality of visit-kendal.co.uk

# The Kendal Futures Board

The voluntary Board provides governance and oversight to the delivery of the Kendal Vision. Their expertise and views, and that of the public and private sector audiences they represent, are essential to ensure our work is well formed and based on a broad base of knowledge and opinion. Meetings encourage good quality debate, discussion and an understanding of the issues and constraints facing the town.

## Board members

and their representative organisations, groups or sectors (for all or part of April-22 to March-23)

<b>Mark Cropper</b>	<b>Chair</b>
<b>Miriam Randall</b>	<b>Creative industries/innovation</b>
<b>Rhian Harris</b>	<b>Culture/events/festivals</b>
<b>Tina Dulson</b>	<b>Kendal Business Improvement District</b>
<b>Kelvin Nash</b>	<b>Kendal College</b>
<b>Cllr Susanne Long</b>	<b>Kendal Town Council</b>
<b>Cllr. Jim Bland</b>	<b>NFU</b>
<b>Cllr Robin Ashcroft</b>	<b>South Lakeland District Council</b>
<b>Cllr. Geoff Cook</b>	<b>South Lakeland Local Committee (Cumbria County Council)</b>
<b>Cllr Jonathan Brook</b>	<b>Emerging WFC</b>
<b>Cllr Peter Thornton</b>	<b>Emerging WFC</b>
<b>Jamie Allison</b>	<b>South Lakes Professionals Group</b>
<b>Cath Purdy</b>	<b>Housing</b>
<b>John Haley</b>	<b>Professional Services</b>
<b>Graham Booth</b>	<b>Large Employers</b>
<b>Noel Farrer</b>	<b>Delivery Advice and Govt Liaison</b>
<b>Alastair Kirkbride</b>	<b>Transport</b>
<b>Laura Miller</b>	<b>LAWSA</b>

## In support

<b>Paula Scott</b>	<b>Kendal Futures General Manager</b>
<b>Nick Taylor</b>	<b>Kendal Futures Vision Manager</b>
<b>Matt Williams</b>	<b>SLDC</b>

For the list of current Board members see [kendalfutures.co.uk/about](https://kendalfutures.co.uk/about)

## Funding:

- South Lakeland District Council agreed a funding package of £50,000 per year for 3 years to support the work of the Vision Manager and Action Groups. A further £135,295 of project development funding was received in May 2022.
- Kendal Town Council provided £5,000 to support the work to progress the Kendal Vision.
- Thank you to Kendal Town Council, South Lakeland Local Committee (Cumbria County Council) and South Lakeland District Council for funding the Kendal Futures General Manager role (part time).
- Other financial contributions from partners are noted elsewhere in this report.

## Kendal Futures CIC

Kendal Futures Community Interest Company undertakes activities that benefit Kendal and its community of residents, businesses and visitors. The not-for-profit company funds are reinvested in the town to ensure Kendal remains an attractive and vibrant place to live, work and visit.

## The CIC Directors:

<b>Mark Cropper</b>	<b>Jamie Allison</b>
<b>John Haley</b>	<b>Noel Farrer</b>
<b>Tina Dulson</b>	





Kendal Futures is a partnership that represents businesses and stakeholders. We have developed a bold Vision for the town which will guide future decision making and change in Kendal.



Paula Scott | General Manager | Kendal Futures  
 Tel: 01539 793284 | Mobile: 07585 665636  
 Email: [paula@kendalfutures.co.uk](mailto:paula@kendalfutures.co.uk)

KENDAL

[kendalfutures.co.uk](http://kendalfutures.co.uk)